

Sea turtles: lesson 2 of 3

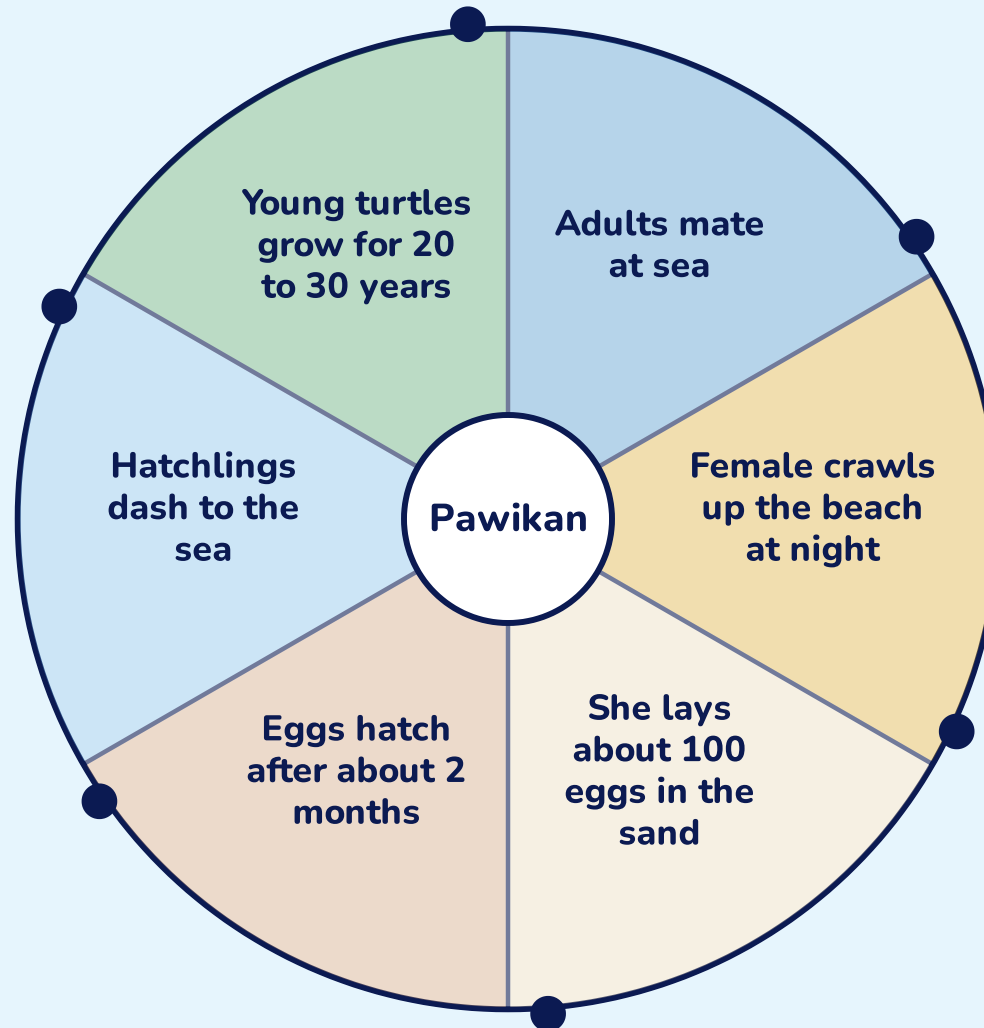
The life of a turtle

From an egg on the beach to a grown-up turtle



Green turtle. Photo: MCP

A turtle's life cycle



Nesting night

A female turtle comes ashore at night, often to the same stretch of coast where she hatched many years before.

She digs a hole with her back flippers and lays her eggs, often around 100 of them. Then she covers them and goes back to sea. She never sees her babies.



A nesting coast, Negros Oriental. Photo: MCP

Warm sand, more girls

The eggs hatch after about two months. The temperature of the sand decides whether each baby is a boy or a girl.

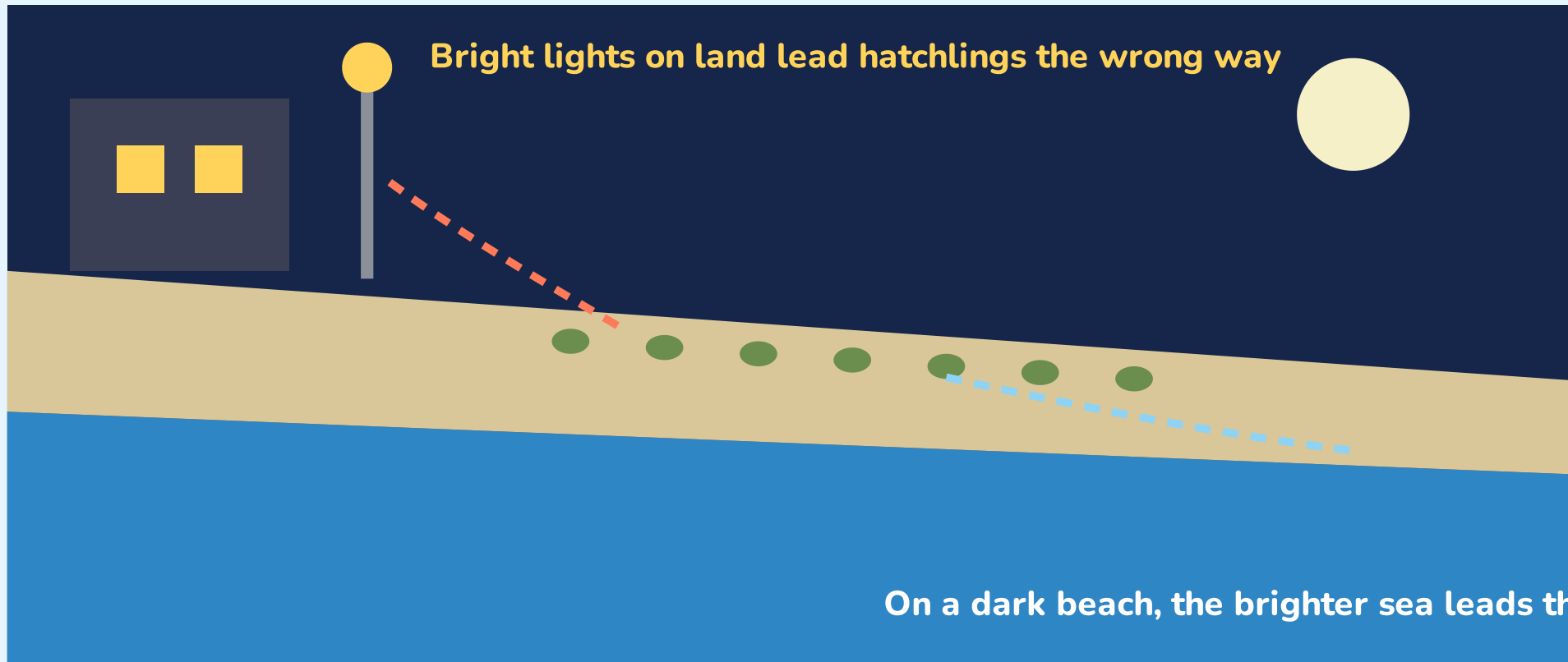
Warmer sand makes more girls. Cooler sand makes more boys. Around 29°C, you get about half of each.

What might happen to turtles if beaches keep getting hotter?



The dash to the sea

Hatchlings dig out at night and head for the brightest direction, which on a natural beach is the sea.



The hatchling survival game

1. Everyone is a hatchling. Stand up!
2. At each stage, your teacher reads what happens.
Roll a dice.
3. If you roll the number on the card, sit down: your turtle did not make it.
4. Keep going through all six stages. How many of you are still standing?

Round 2

Play again. This time the beach lights are switched off and the fishers use turtle-safe nets. Skip stages 2 and 5. What changes?



In real life

about 1 in 1,000

hatchlings is thought to survive to become an adult

20 to 30

years before a turtle is old enough to lay eggs

Our game was kinder than real life. That is why every nest, and every adult turtle, matters so much.

How we know: National Fish and Wildlife Foundation



Talk about it

How many survived in round 1, and in round 2?

Which dangers can people change? Which can't they?

Why does a mother turtle lay so many eggs?

Next time: how we can help turtles



Photos and sources

Photos: turtle and coast by MCP. Drawings made for this lesson. All illustrations drawn for this lesson by Marine Conservation Philippines.

Sources:

- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (2021). Saving sea turtles, by land and sea.
- State of the World's Sea Turtles (SWOT). How temperature determines sex in sea turtles.

Full links are in the teacher reading. Free to use and share for education. Made by Marine Conservation Philippines. More free lessons: marineconservationphilippines.org/resources/teachers-resources/

