

#8735

# GIANT SEA TURTLES

Grade Levels: 4-10

26 minutes

NATIONAL FILM BOARD OF  
CANADA 1999

## DESCRIPTION

Peter Pritchard has seen each of the world's 300 species of turtles, but has a real affinity for the giant leatherback sea turtles on a Guyana beach. His conservation efforts with a local community insure that children learn about the turtles' habitats, behaviors, and characteristics. Watch a turtle lay her eggs and see the newly hatched babies race for the sea. Gives additional pertinent facts about this ancient species.

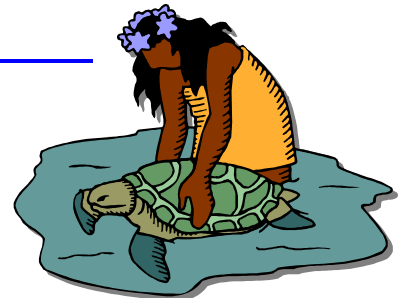
## ACADEMIC STANDARDS

### Subject Area: Life Sciences

- ◆ Standard: Understands relationships among organisms and their physical environment
  - Benchmark: Knows that changes in the environment can have different effects on different organisms
  - Benchmark: Knows how the interrelationships and interdependencies among organisms generate stable ecosystems that fluctuate around a state of rough equilibrium for hundreds or thousands of years
  - Benchmark: Knows ways in which humans can alter the equilibrium of ecosystems, causing potentially irreversible effects

## INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

1. To explain the characteristics of sea turtles.
2. To realize the dangers that nesting turtles and young hatchlings face.
3. To understand why some groups advocate conservation efforts for sea turtles.
4. To develop an awareness of the effects of ecosystem destruction.



## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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Over the last 35 years, Peter Pritchard has traveled the globe, learning as much as he can about sea turtles and working with local people to protect them.

It was in Guyana that Pritchard saw his first wild sea turtle. And it is to the small Arawak community of Moruka that he returns every year to oversee a remarkable conservation program.

Pritchard first met his Guyanese neighbor, Audley James, on the beach with a group of turtle hunters one night. He recalls that he and James came to develop a set of protocols over turtle hunting and protection. Today, thanks to their work, turtle hunting in the community is rare, and a new generation is growing up with a healthy respect for some of the most marvelous creatures of the sea.

The beach is filled with hatchlings racing on a dangerous trip to the relative safety of the ocean. Some will make it, others won't. And the females that reach the sea swim off, not to return for 10 or 20 years, or perhaps even more. When they do return to lay their eggs, some encounter beaches filled with tourists, where all-terrain vehicles and motorbikes race across the sand. Others find the beach of their birth relatively unchanged—but that doesn't mean their eggs will be safe from human and animal predators seeking a tasty treat.



## BEFORE SHOWING

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1. How long do you think a turtle can stay underwater before coming up for air?
2. What dangers do you think nesting turtles and young hatchlings face?
3. Why have people killed sea turtles over the years?

## AFTER SHOWING

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### Discussion Items and Questions

1. How does a turtle manage to go so long without breathing?
2. What are some key factors in the success of Peter Pritchard's Moruka Conservation Program?
3. What are some of the threats sea turtles face today? Is there anything we can do to protect turtles from these threats?
4. Discuss Pritchard's major principle of conservation: "People are always the problem, and people are always the solution. And it may be the same people in some cases who are the solution to the problem."

## RELATED RESOURCES

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### Captioned Media Program

- Protecting Endangered Animals #2000
- The Turtle #2438



### World Wide Web



The following Web sites complement the contents of this guide; they were selected by professionals who have experience in teaching deaf and hard of hearing students. Every effort was made to select accurate, educationally relevant, and "kid-safe" sites. However, teachers should preview them before use. The U.S. Department of Education, the National Association of the Deaf, and the Captioned Media Program do not endorse the sites and are not responsible for their content.

- **TURTLE TRAX**

<http://www.turtles.org/>

Read the story of the first sea turtle this group met. Follow updates. Lists things you can do to help sea turtles.

- **CARIBBEAN CONSERVATION CORPORATION**

<http://www.cccturtle.org/>

"Learn About Sea Turtles," "Sea Turtle Tracking Education Program," "Sea Turtle News & Alerts," and other topics available.

