

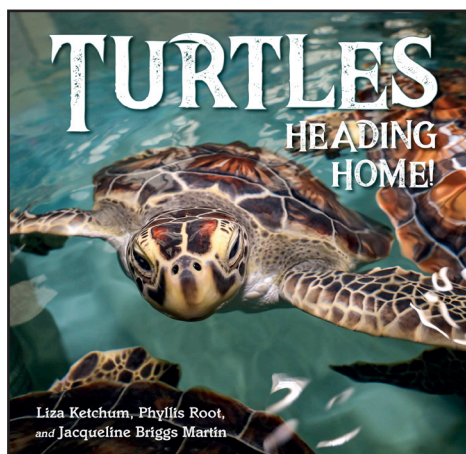
# TURTLES

## HEADING HOME!

### ACTIVITY KIT

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978-1-62354-586-4 HC  
by Liza Ketchum, Phyllis Root,  
and Jacqueline Briggs Martin  
e-book available

#### About the Book

The waters around Cape Cod used to cool off gradually, signaling to sea turtles that it was time to swim south. But now, due to climate change, the water stays warm too long and cools off too quickly, making the turtles too cold to migrate. Follow an amazing conservation operation as hundreds of volunteers and professionals work to save the Kemp's ridley sea turtle—the most endangered sea turtle in the world.

#### About the Authors

Liza Ketchum is the author of many books for young people, including *The Life Fantastic* and *Where the Great Hawk Flies*, winner of the Massachusetts Book Award. Her books have appeared on the ALA's Best Book lists and the New York Public Library's "100 Titles for Reading and Sharing." She and her husband divide their time between Vermont and Massachusetts.

Phyllis Root is the author of over fifty books for children, including *Big Belching Bog*; *Plant a Pocket of Prairie*; *One North Star*; *Big Momma Makes the World*, a Boston Globe–Horn Book Award winner; and *The Lost Forest*, a National Outdoor Book Award winner. Phyllis resides in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Jacqueline Briggs Martin is the author of many picture books for children, including award-winners *Snowflake Bentley*, a Caldecott medal winner, and *Creekfinding: A True Story*, recipient of the Green Earth Award for Environmental Writing for Children and a Riverby Award. Jacqueline lives in Iowa with her husband.

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## Discussion Questions

Use these conversation starters to get kids thinking and learning.

### Before Reading

1. After looking at the cover of the book and reading the title and subtitle, ask kids what they think *Turtles Heading Home!* is about. Write their responses on chart paper.
2. What do kids know about sea turtles? How are sea turtles different from pond turtles or tortoises?
3. This cover is illustrated with a photograph. Would kids' expectations be different if this book had an artist's illustrations instead?

### During and After Reading

1. Revisit the predictions kids made before reading. What predictions (if any) were correct? Did *Turtles Heading Home!* surprise them?
2. The Kemp's ridley sea turtle is a migratory animal. What is their migration path? How is their migration impacted by climate change?
3. The sea turtle rescue volunteers have many responsibilities. What roles would kids like to fill if they could volunteer with this operation?
4. Look up some of the organizations named as part of this rescue operation. Are kids already familiar with one or more of these organizations? How does each organization contribute (i.e. resources, volunteers, facilities, expertise) to the whole operation?
5. This book describes one of many endangered wildlife rescue operations. Can kids think of other wild animals that need help from humans?
6. Read the section "Why does everyone work so hard to save the turtles?" in the back matter. Why do kids think it's important to help save the sea turtles?
7. What are some ways kids can fight climate change and help protect sea turtles? Do they already do some things to help protect our planet? Look in the back matter for more information.

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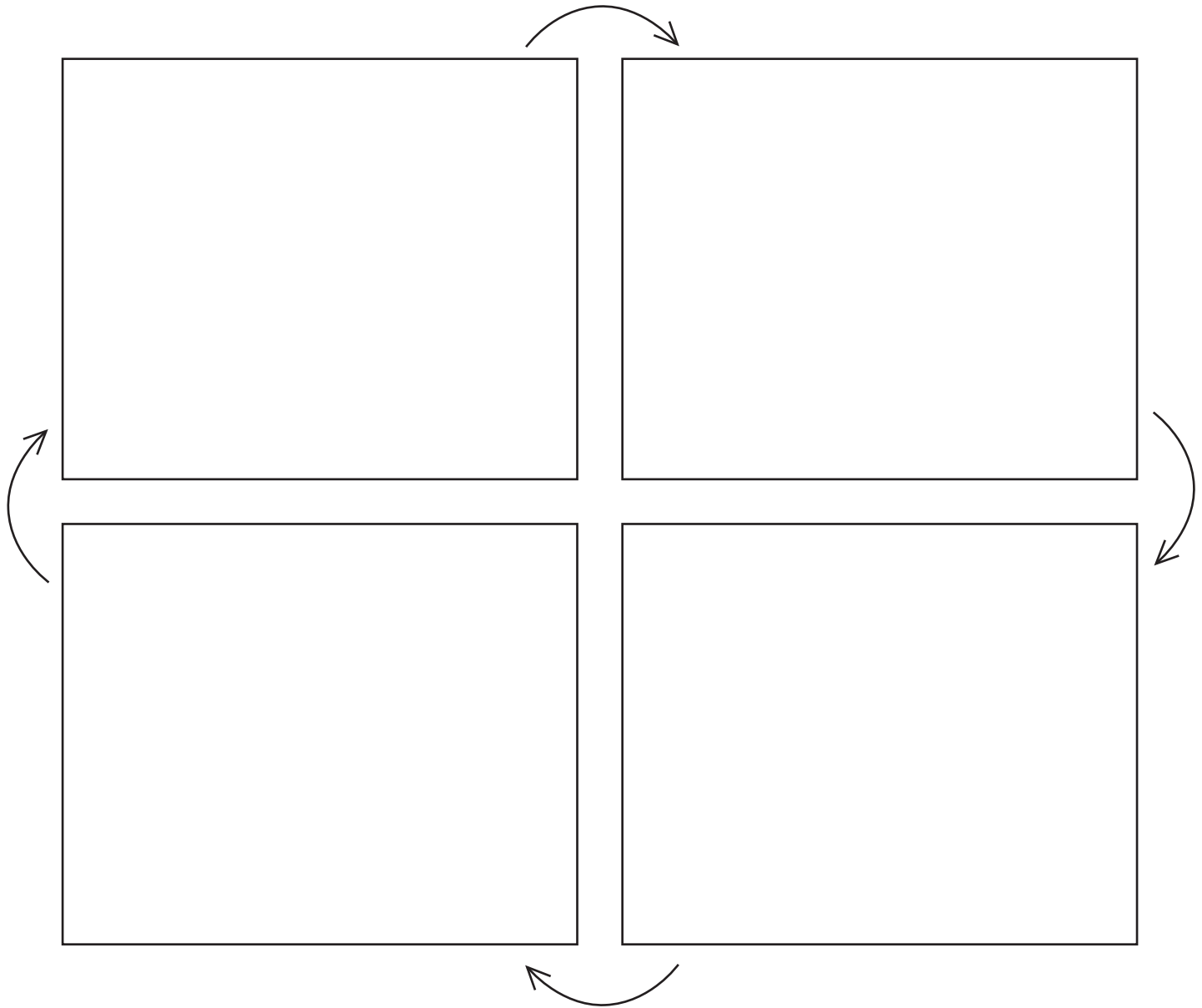
## ACTIVITY KIT

### Science: Sea Turtle Life Cycle

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

In the spaces below, draw the stages of the sea turtle life cycle. Label each stage.



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## ACTIVITY KIT

## Science Connection: Sea Turtle Tracker

Use this project to get kids invested in migration and geography concepts!

### Materials

- Computers for student research
- Drawing and writing materials for each student

### Procedure

1. **Project introduction.** As a class, visit the New England Aquarium's Sea Turtle Tracker page at [www.neaq.org/conservation-and-research/studying-and-protecting/sea-turtle-rescue/sea-turtle-tracker](http://www.neaq.org/conservation-and-research/studying-and-protecting/sea-turtle-rescue/sea-turtle-tracker). Explain that like the turtles in *Turtles Heading Home!*, these turtles are tracked after their release to learn more about their behavior in the wild. Students will select a turtle from the map and create a report about their journey.
2. **Concept review.** Review the concept of migration as a class. Why do sea turtles migrate? How is sea turtle migration like or unlike the behavior of animals that migrate by land or air?
3. **Select a turtle.** Invite students to explore the available turtles in the tracking map during class computer time and select a turtle for their report. They should note that some turtles are Kemp's ridley sea turtles, like those in *Turtles Heading Home!*, and some are other species.
4. **Provide work time.** Allow students time in class to draw a map of their turtle's journey and look up three facts about the turtle's species. Students should also measure the distance from the turtle's first location to their current location and measure how far the turtle traveled on its journey (none of these turtles swam in a straight line!). Ask students to use this information to write a paragraph describing their turtle's journey.
5. **Sharing work.** Divide students into small groups and ask them to share their turtle journey reports with each other. Invite the groups to reflect together: How were their turtles' journeys similar? How were they different? Ask the groups to share their observations back to the class.

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## ACTIVITY KIT

## Writing Connection: Conservation for Kids

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

What can you do to help sea turtles? Brainstorm below.  
Look in the back matter of *Turtles Heading Home!* if you  
get stuck.

**Kemp's ridley sea turtles need . . .**

**They are threatened by . . .**

**I can help by . . .**

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## ACTIVITY KIT

## Further Reading

Make connections and enrich the learning experience with these additional resources!

### About Sea Turtles and the Ocean

Bearzi, Maddalena, and Alex Boersma. *The Secret Life of a Sea Turtle*. Roaring Brook Press, 2025.

Cousteau, Philippe, Deborah Hopkinson, and Meilo So. *Follow the Moon Home: A Tale of One Idea, Twenty Kids, and a Hundred Sea Turtles*. Chronicle, 2016.

Davies, Becky, and Jennie Poh. *Little Turtle and the Changing Sea: A Story of Survival in Our Polluted Oceans*. Tiger Tales, 2020.

Hirschi, Ron, and Kirsten Carlson. *Ocean Seasons*. Arbordale, 2007.

Gutiérrez Hernández, Beatriz. *Pearls in the Sand: Protecting Sea Turtles in Oaxaca*. Godwin Books, 2025.

Moore, Lindsay. *Yoshi and the Ocean: A Sea Turtle's Incredible Journey Home*. Greenwillow, 2022.

Sayre, April Pulley, and Annie Patterson. *Turtle, Turtle, Watch Out!* Charlesbridge, 2010.

### About Climate Change and Conservation

Heffernan, Nanette, and Bao Luu. *Earth Hour: A Lights Out Event for Our Planet*. Charlesbridge, 2020.

Herman, Gail, and John Hinderliter. *What Is Climate Change?* Penguin Workshop, 2018.

King, Heidi Tyline, and Ekua Holmes. *Saving American Beach: The Biography of African American Environmentalist MaVynnee Betsch*. Putnam, 2021.

Messner, Kate, and Matthew Forsythe. *The Brilliant Deep: Rebuilding the World's Reefs*. Chronicle, 2018.

Metcalf, Lindsay, Keila V. Dawson, and Jeanette Bradley. *No World Too Big: Young People Fighting Global Climate Change*. Charlesbridge, 2023.

Miller, Debbie, and Jon Van Zyle. *Glaciers Are Alive*. Charlesbridge, 2023.

Reynolds, Emma. *Drawn to Change the World Graphic Novel Collection: 16 Youth Climate Activists, 16 Artists*. HarperAlley, 2023.

Spiro, Ruth, and Irene Chan. *Baby Loves Green Energy*. Charlesbridge, 2018.

Spiro, Ruth, and Teresa Martínez. *How to Explain Climate Science to a Grown-Up*. Charlesbridge, 2025.

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## ACTIVITY KIT

## Science Connection: Sea Turtle Tracker

Use this project to get kids invested in migration and geography concepts!

### Materials

- Several sheets of writing paper per kid
- Colored construction paper, at least one sheet per kid
- Art materials for decorating the journals
- Writing materials for each student
- Stapler or other binding tool

### Procedure

1. **Project introduction.** As a class, visit the Sea Turtle Conservancy's Turtle Tracking Research and Education page at <https://conserveturtles.org/project/sea-turtle-tracking>. Get kids excited as you explain that just like real scientists, the class is going to work together to track a real turtle as it migrates.
2. **Concept review.** Review the concept of migration as a class. Why do sea turtles migrate? How is sea turtle migration like or unlike the behavior of animals that migrate by land or air?
3. **Create a tracking journal.** Provide materials and invite kids to create and decorate their own turtle tracking journals.
4. **Select a turtle.** Visit the Tracking Rehabilitated Sea Turtles page at <https://conserveturtles.org/field-site/rehabilitated-sea-turtle-tracking/> and scroll to the bottom to select an individual turtle. Note that these are loggerhead turtles, not Kemp's ridley sea turtles as portrayed in *Turtles Heading Home!* Ask students to write down the name of the turtle being tracked in the front of their books, along with its species and some biographical information from its tracking page. They should also enter today's date and the turtle's current location.
5. **Track the turtle.** For at least a few weeks, make a daily class practice of checking the turtle's tracking page and updating its location in kids' journals. Encourage kids to reflect: are they surprised by the speed or direction of the turtle's migration? Where do they think it will go next? What do they know about the area where the turtle is?
6. **Capstone.** At the end of the tracking period, celebrate the turtle's journey as a class. Mark its origin and final location on a map and measure how far the turtle traveled.