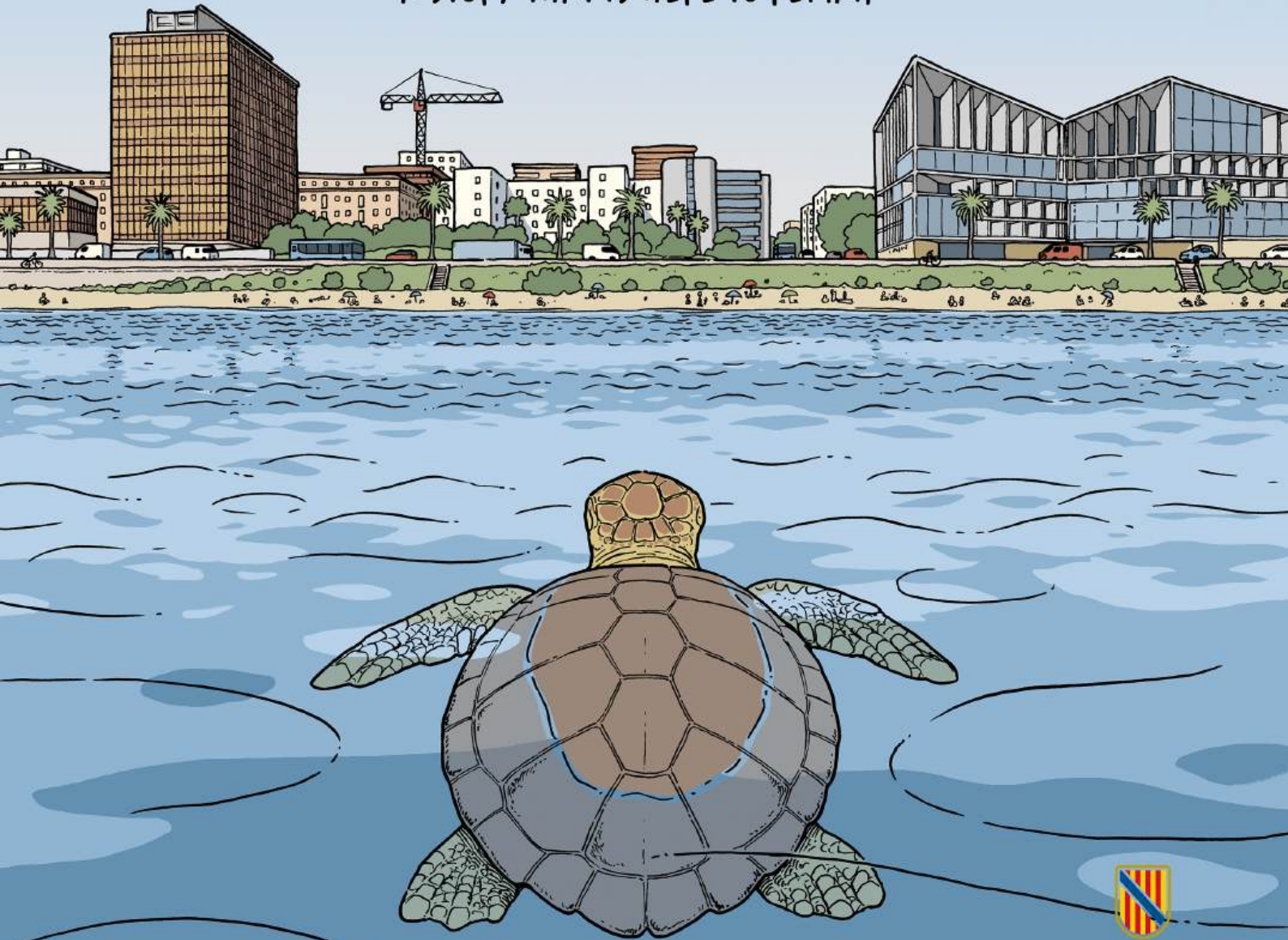


THE SEA TURTLE

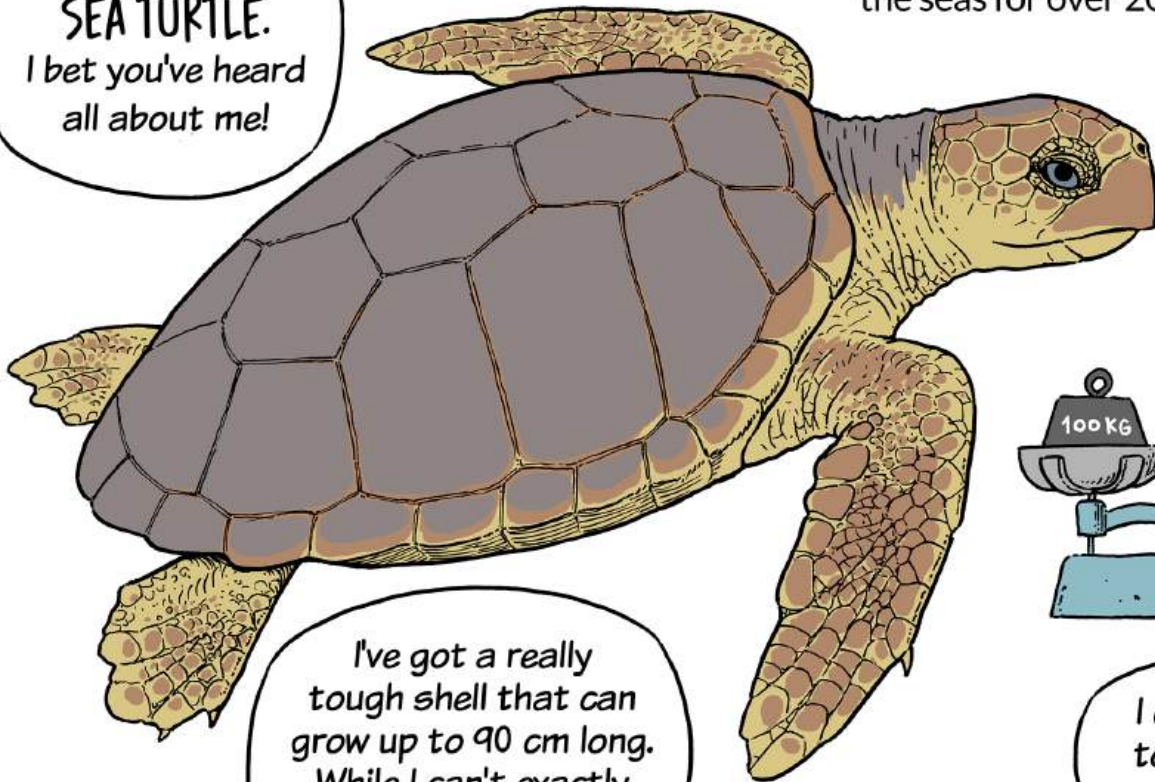
A STORY THAT IS HERE TO REMAIN



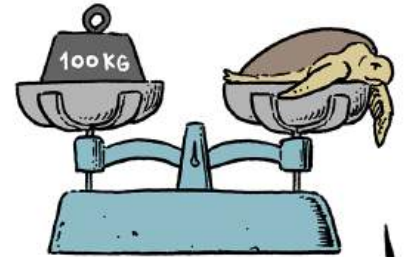
Govern de les
Illes Balears

The sea turtle, which has the scientific name of *Caretta caretta*, is an incredible reptile that has been living in the seas for over 200 million years.

Hi there! I'm the
SEA TURTLE.
I bet you've heard
all about me!

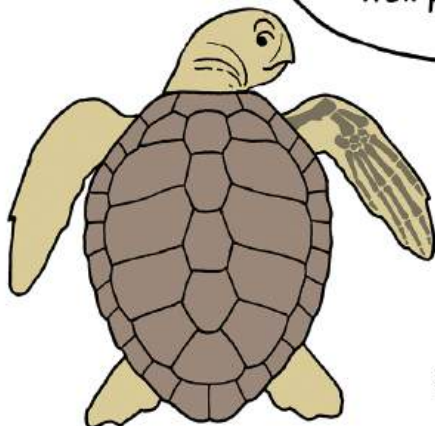


I've got a really
tough shell that can
grow up to 90 cm long.
While I can't exactly
hide in it, it keeps me
well protected.

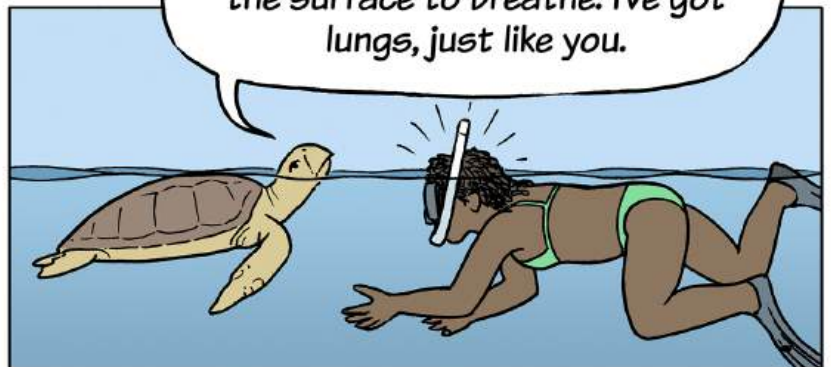


I can weigh up
to a whopping
100 kg!

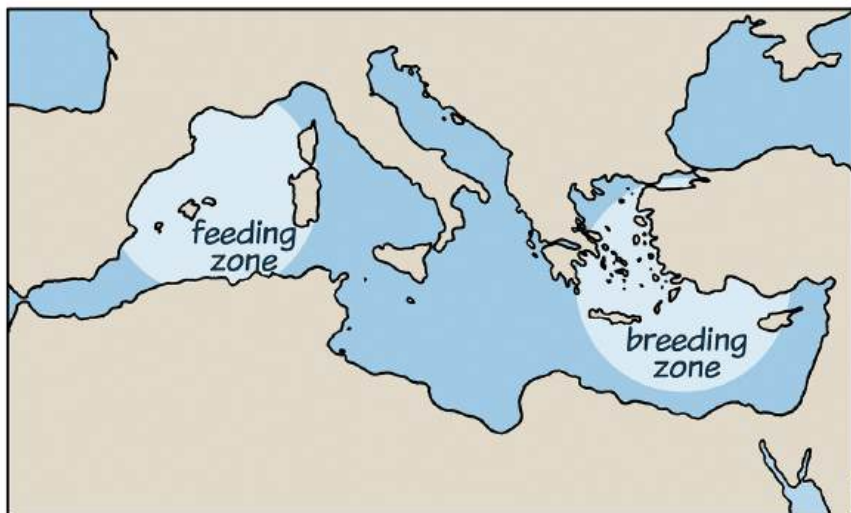
Since I can't breathe
underwater, I need to come up to
the surface to breathe. I've got
lungs, just like you.



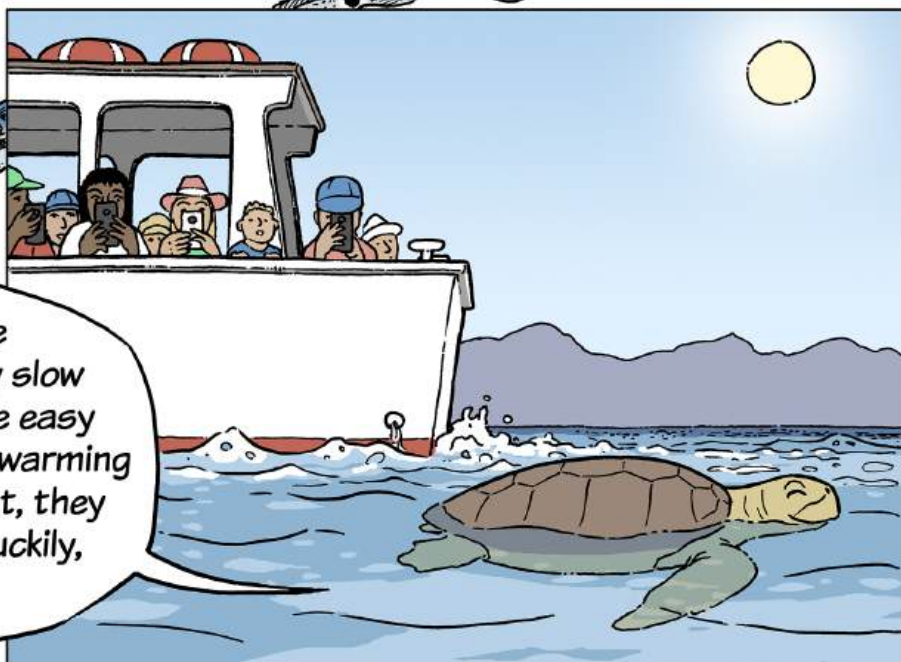
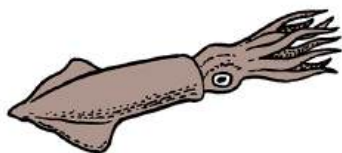
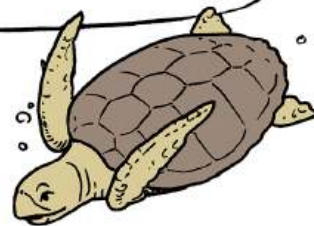
bony
flippers



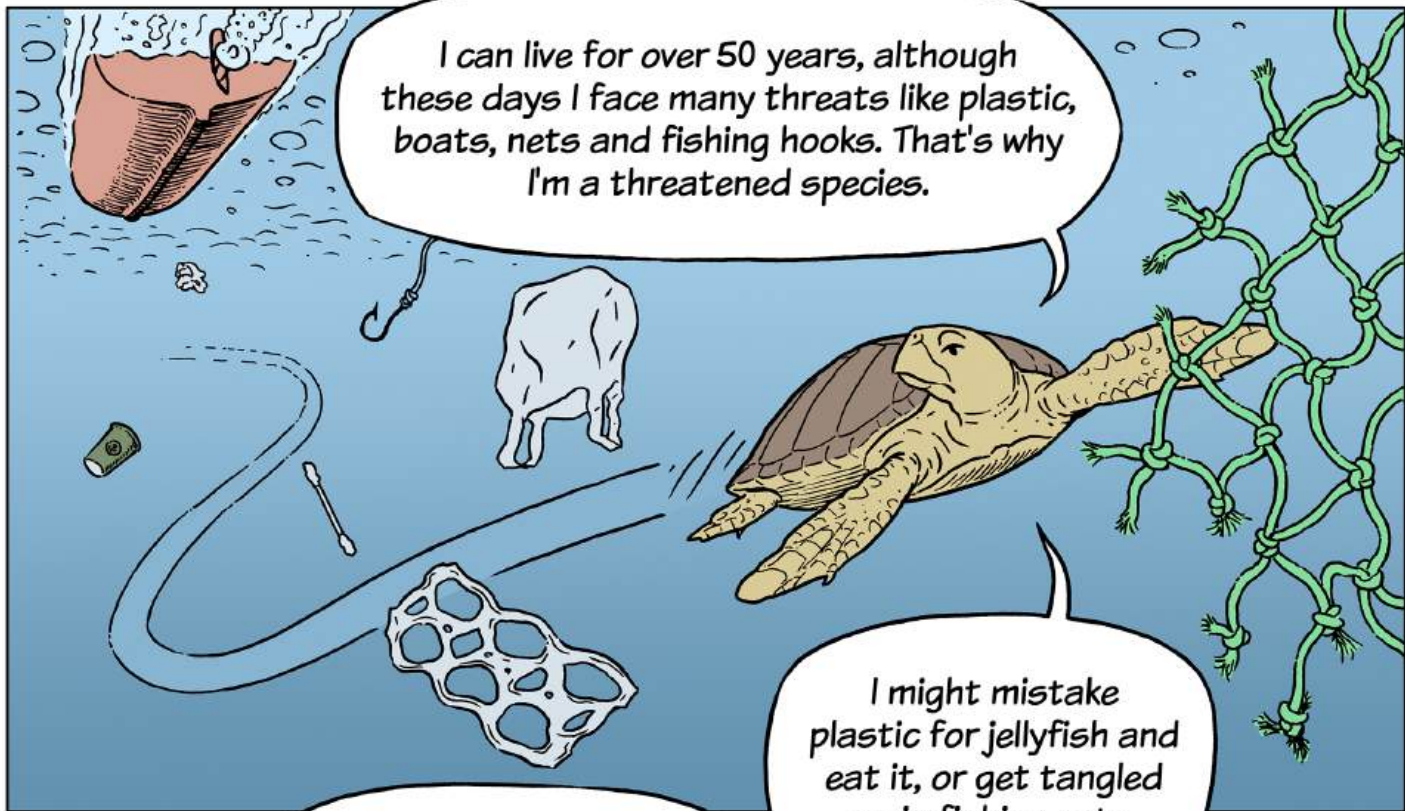
Sea turtles can be found in all of the temperate seas and oceans on the planet. Those living in the Mediterranean typically feed in the western part of the sea. But when it comes to laying eggs, they prefer the eastern area (Greece, Turkey or Cyprus).



In the western Mediterranean, I find everything I love to eat: fish, crabs, algae, molluscs and jellyfish.



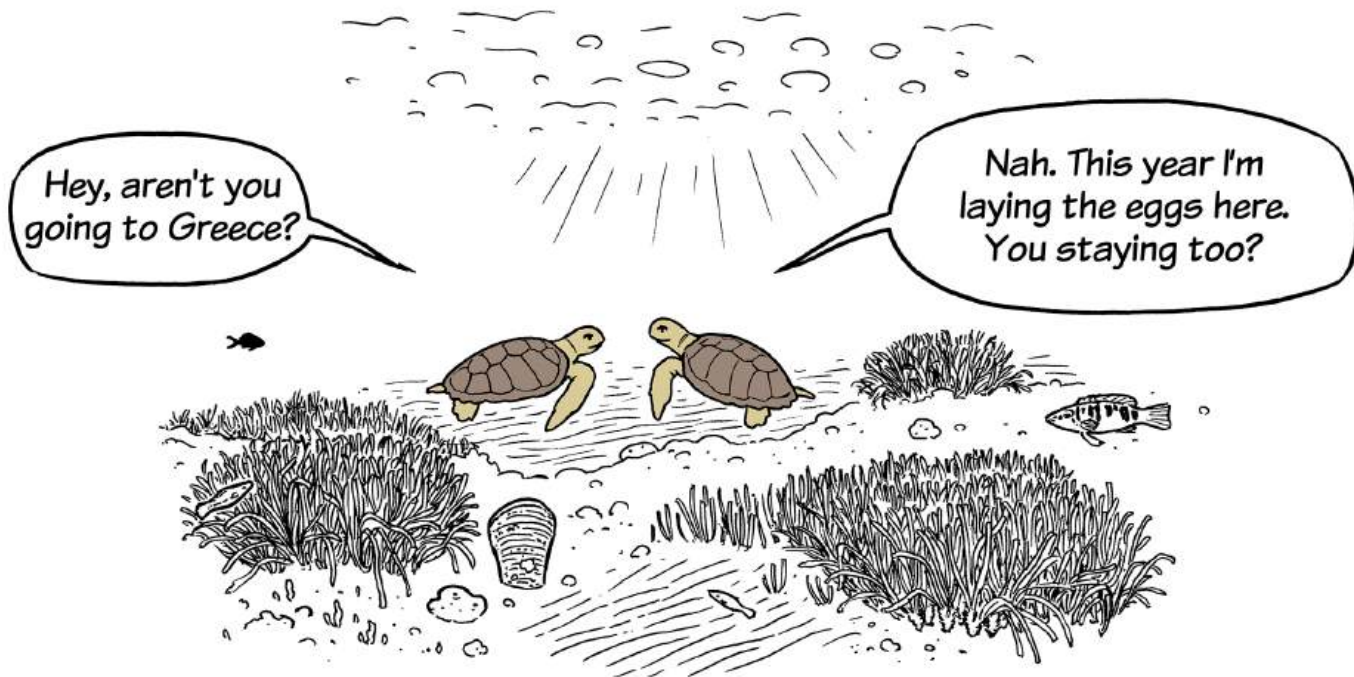
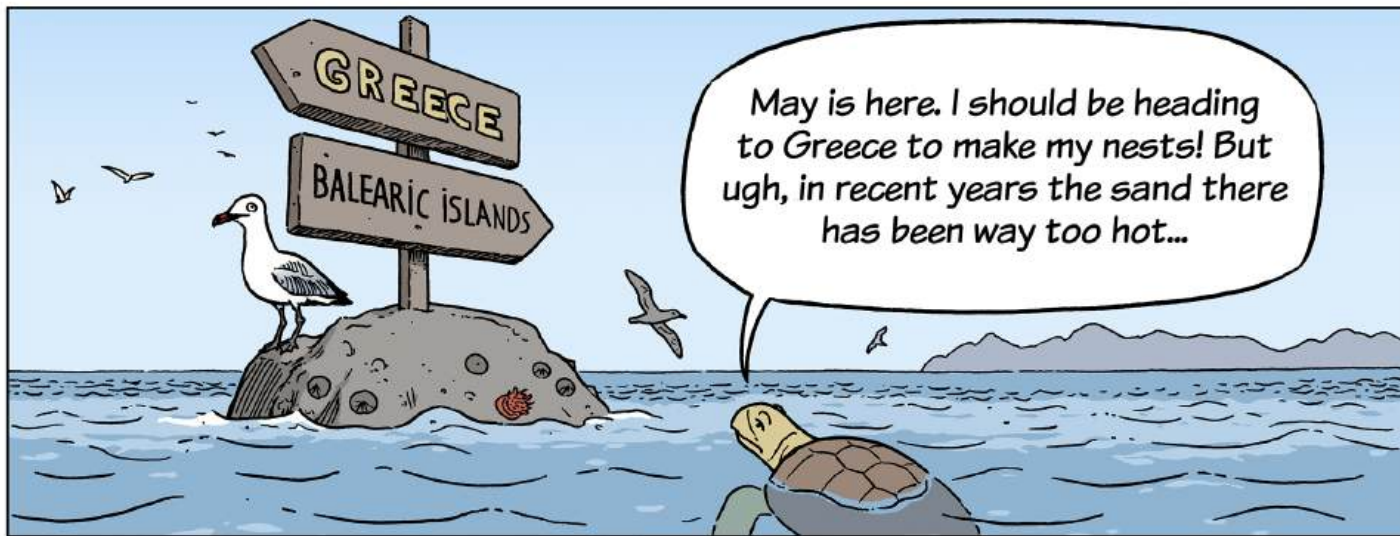
Sailors used to call me 'loggerhead', because of my slow movements, which makes me easy to catch when I'm resting and warming up at the surface. In the past, they would catch me for food. Luckily, I'm now protected.



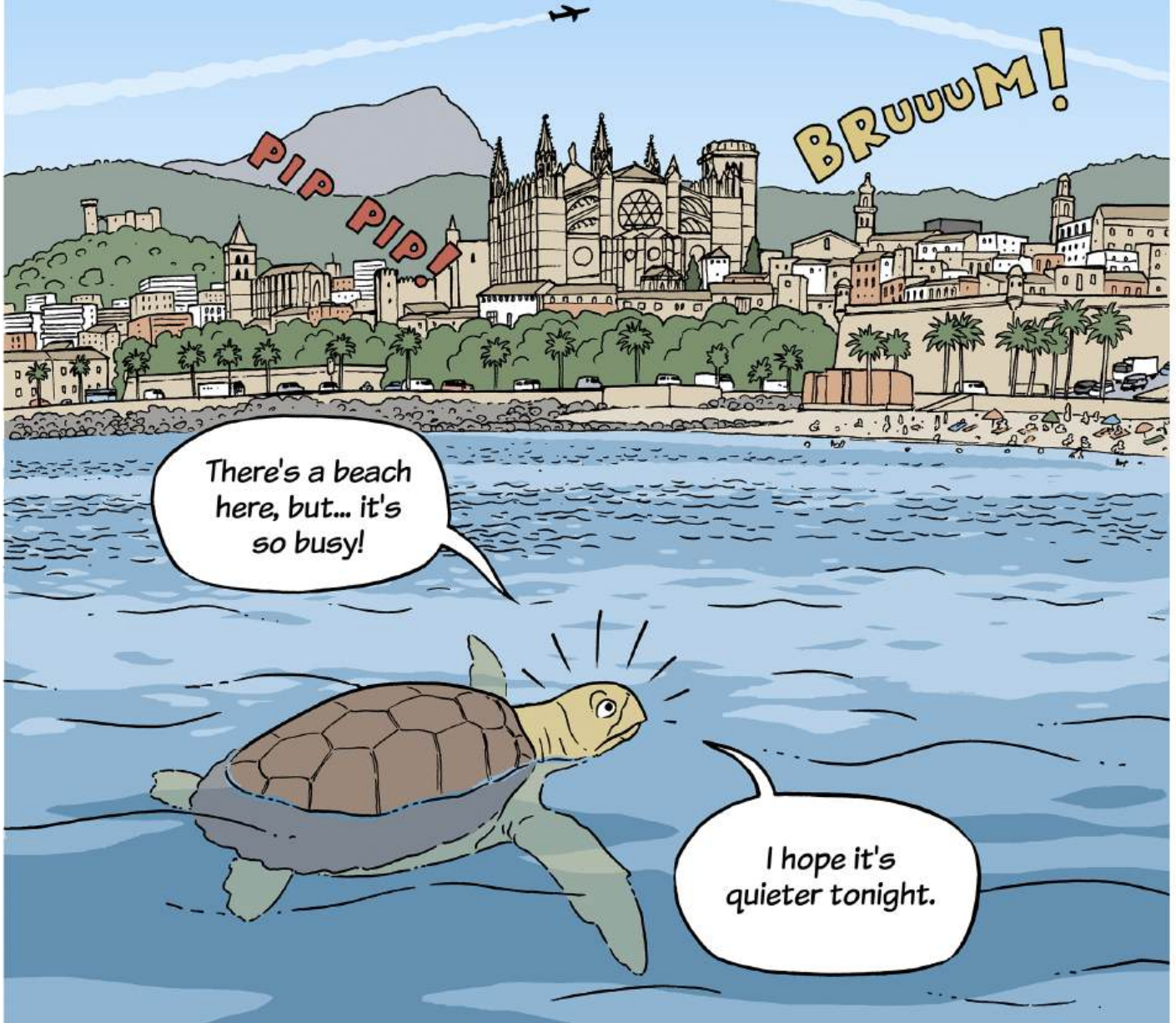
If you find a sea turtle that's injured or in trouble, call **112** and wait for instructions. Sometimes, we want to help, with the best intentions, but, without proper knowledge, we might make things worse.

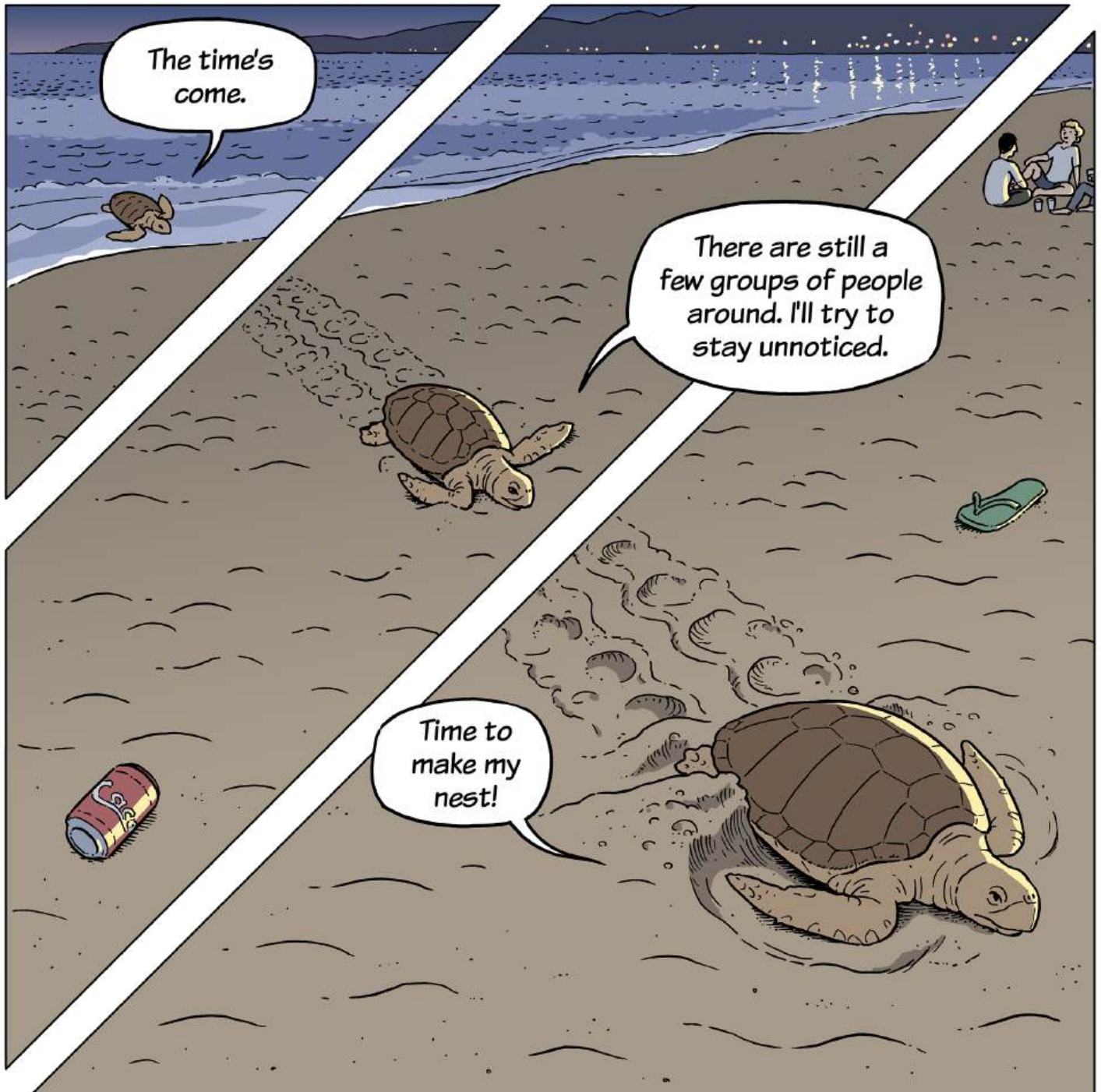


When sea turtles reach sexual maturity, between 15 and 25 years old, they return to the beaches where they were born to reproduce. In recent years, however, they've been creating nests in new areas, like the Balearic Islands, possibly due to temperature increases caused by climate change in their usual spots.



A few days after mating, female sea turtles need to come onto the beach, usually at night, to make a nest and lay their eggs.



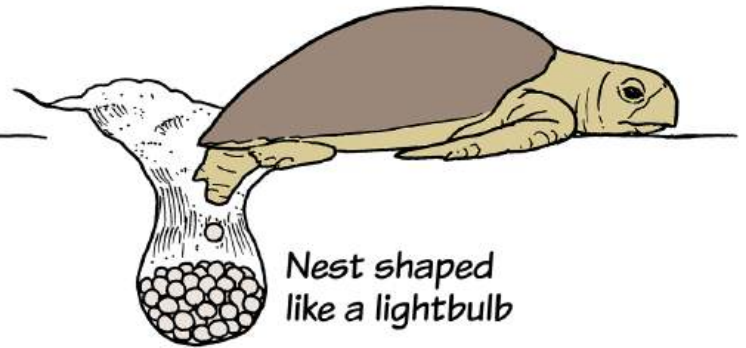
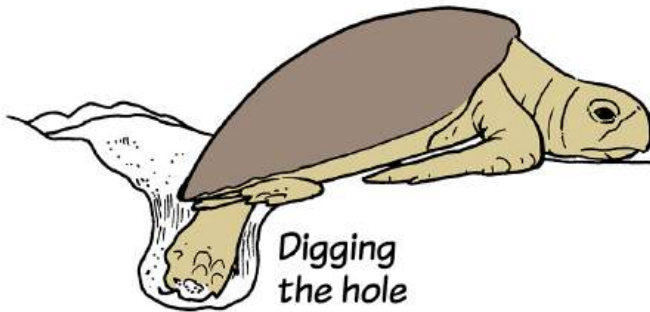


The time's
come.

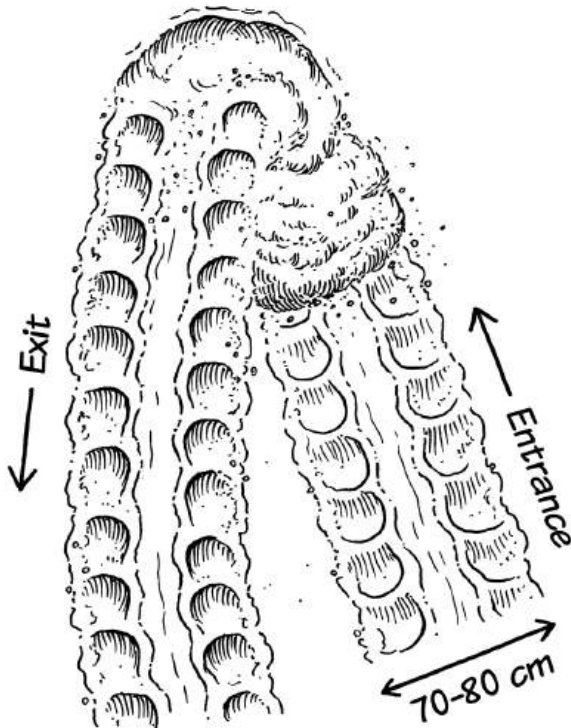
There are still a
few groups of people
around. I'll try to
stay unnoticed.

Time to
make my
nest!

In a process that can take several hours, the turtle digs a hole in the sand about 40–50 cm deep, called a chamber, where she deposits her eggs. Female sea turtles typically lay between 60 and 130 eggs in each nest. Afterwards, they carefully cover and camouflage the nest with sand.



Nest tracks and turtle footprints



Unfortunately, there are sometimes interruptions...

Hey look!
A sea turtle!

Turn that off,
you idiot, you're
blinding me.



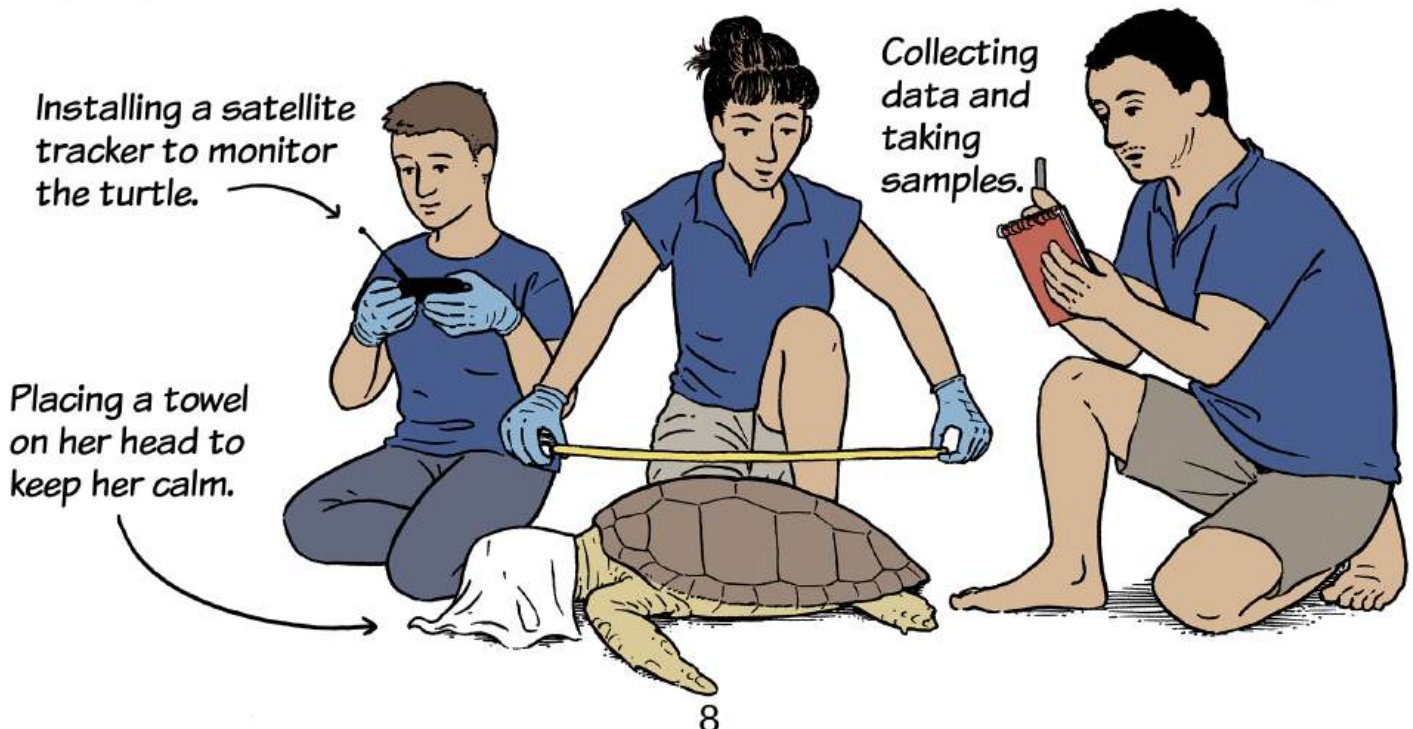


Hey! Leave her alone! Don't touch her or shine lights on her and give her space. If you disturb her, she'll leave and won't finish her nest. I'm calling 112.

If you find a sea turtle, its tracks, or baby sea turtles on the beach, it's crucial to call **112** and follow their instructions.



While the turtle finishes laying her eggs and covering the nest, workers from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Natural Environment arrive. They are responsible for taking care of and assisting the wildlife of the Balearic Islands. In this case, they will protect the nest, which will increase the chances of survival for the hatchlings.



Installing a satellite tracker to monitor the turtle.

Placing a towel on her head to keep her calm.

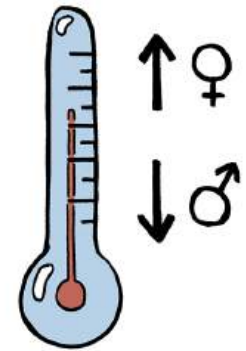
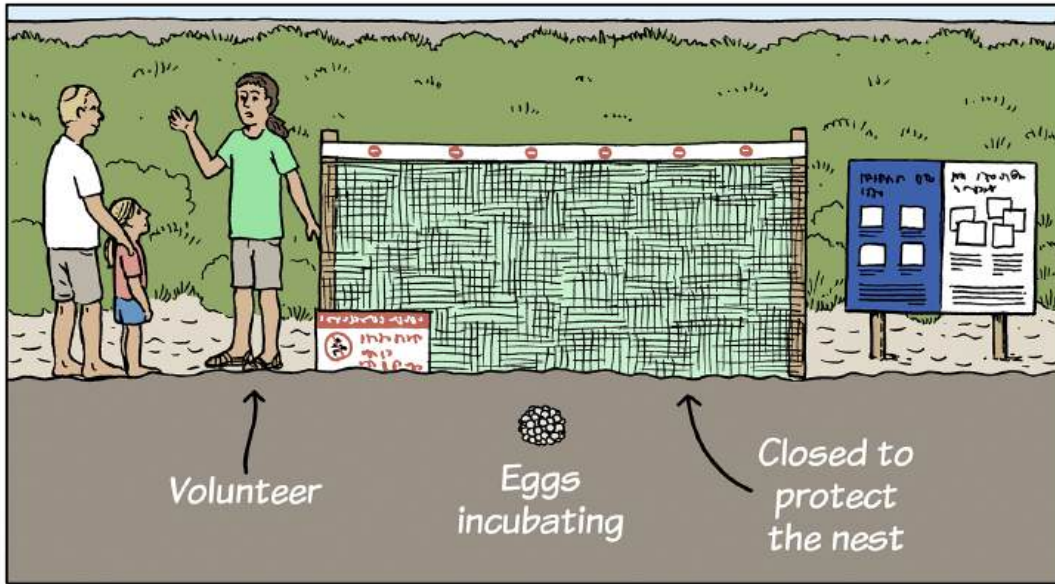
Collecting data and taking samples.

After the nesting process, the turtle leaves her eggs in the nest. When the little turtles hatch, they'll have to fend for themselves.



The workers from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Natural Environment open the nest and transfer a small portion to the incubator. Then, they insert a thermometer into the nest to monitor the incubation temperature.

If the beach or area isn't suitable for the eggs to develop properly, the nest will be relocated.



The eggs will incubate on the beach for about sixty days. Turtles will be male or female depending on the sand temperature during incubation.

The egg is 4 centimetres, about the size of a ping-pong ball. New-born turtles weigh between 13 and 15 grams, with a shell about 4.5 centimetres long. You can see their actual size here:



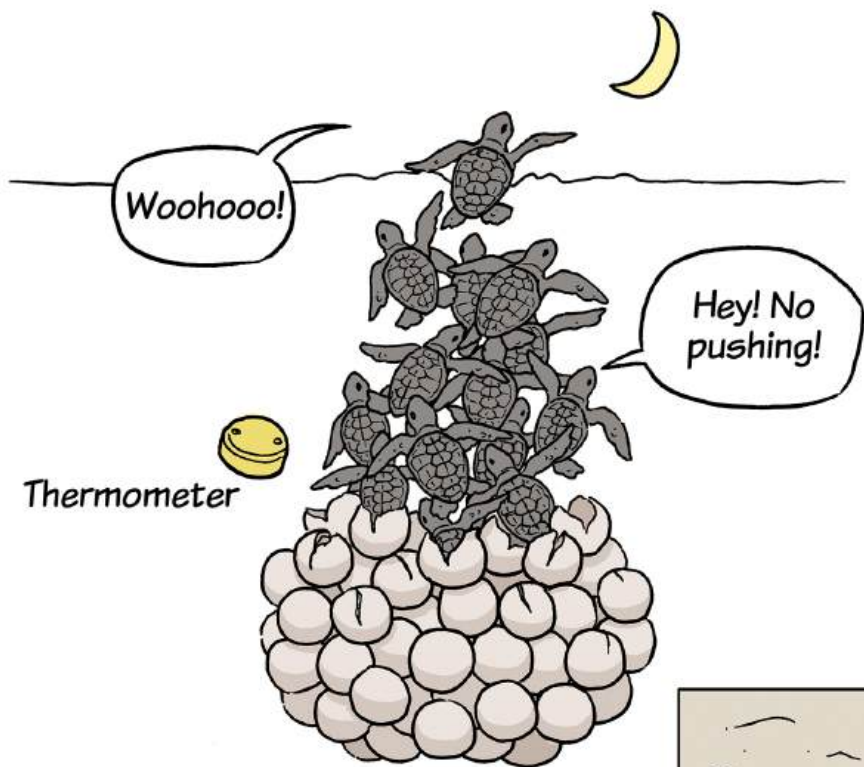
Egg



Hatching turtle



New-born turtle

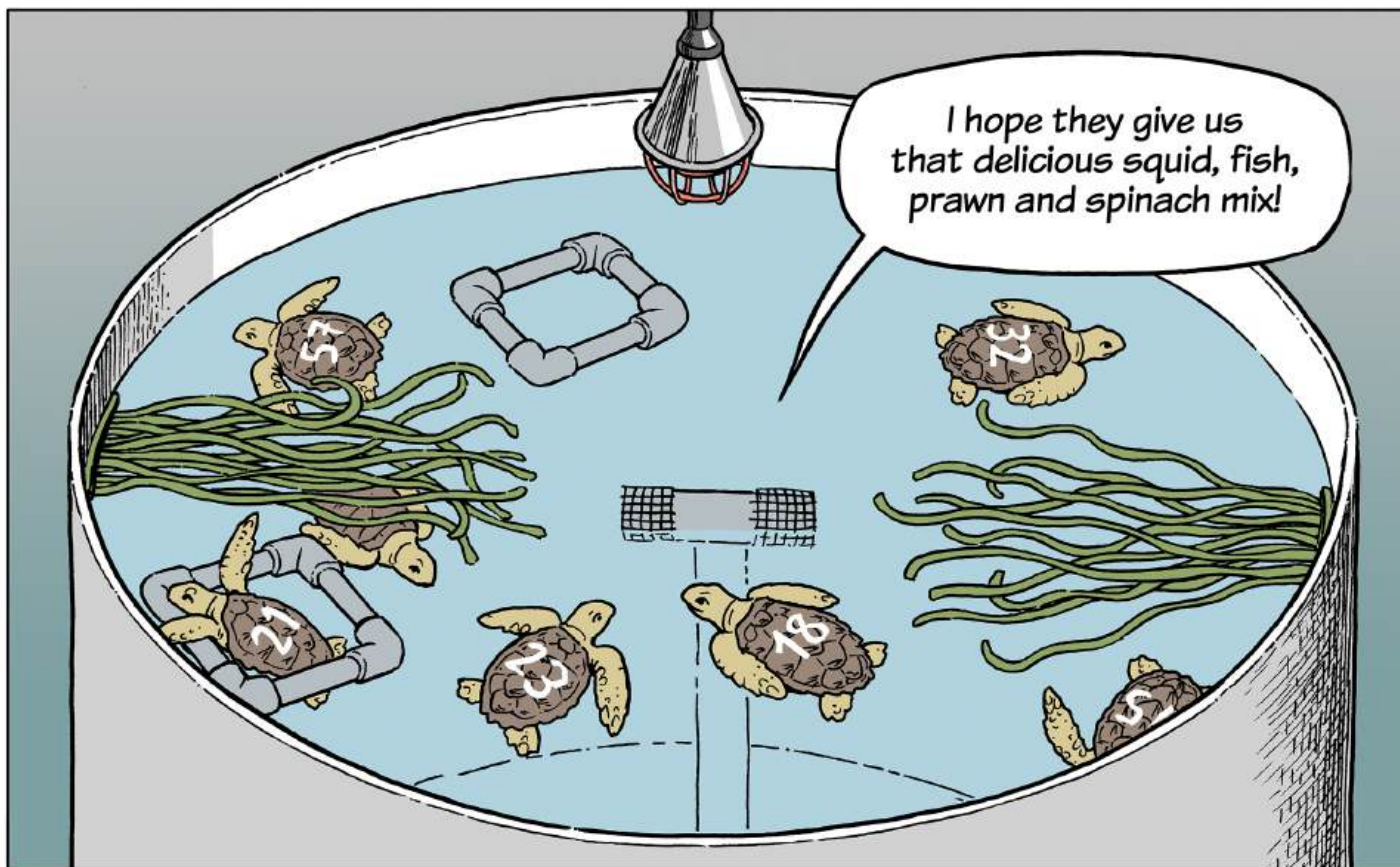


When the turtles hatch, they wait until night-time to come out and head to the sea. At this moment, they're very vulnerable to predators!

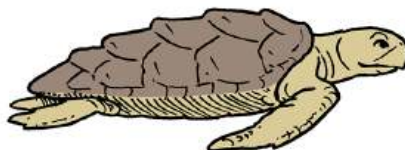
The volunteer staff attend to them and record their size and weight. Some of these turtles are released into the sea, while others are taken to a recovery centre with a Head Starting program, where they'll stay for a few months.



In the Head Starting program, turtles are cared for and fed for ten to twelve months to boost their growth and survival chances once released into the sea. In the Balearic Islands, the Head Starting program is carried out at different centres: LIMIA-(IRFAP), Palma Aquarium Foundation and the Cabrera Visitor Centre.



At the centre, each turtle is given a number so that their growth can be tracked. Finally, when they weigh approximately 1.5 kg, they're released on the beach where they were born to carry on with their lives.



The adventure begins!



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TEXTS: Guillem Félix Torrilla, Rita Font de Benito i Lara Saiz Merás (COFIB)

COORDINATION: Servei de Protecció d'Espècies

MARCH 2025



Govern de les Illes Balears

Conselleria d'Agricultura,
Pesca i Medi Natural



**Conselleria d'Agricultura,
Pesca i Medi Natural**

Consorti per a la Recuperació
de la Fauna

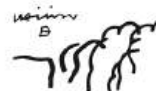


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Institut de Recerca i Formació
Agroalimentària i Pesquera



**Fundación
Palma Aquarium**



**ARXIPÈLAG DE
CABRERA
PARQUE NACIONAL
MARÍTIMO TERRESTRE**

FUNDACIÓN
OCEANOGRÁFIC



VALENCIA



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RECUPERACIÓN DE ANIMALES MARINOS



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