



Reading

1 Read the text below to check your answers.

1 _____ No less than four out of the seven known species of marine turtle have been observed in the coastal waters off the UAE, the most populous species being the Hawksbill Turtle. Because turtles spend time on land only to build a nest and lay eggs – all of which happens in a single night – scientific observation of turtles is difficult. It is only the relatively recent development of satellite tracking – known as telemetry – that has helped us build up a picture of migration patterns, feeding habits and nesting rituals.

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nesting grounds.

- 2 _____ Turtles typically migrate for 5–20 years in the open ocean. Once they reach maturity (30–50 years old) a cycle of mating and nesting starts. Males never return to land once they are born, but move between the feeding areas and the mating areas. During the nesting season, a female turtle will return to the beach in two-week cycles. The female will usually lay her eggs within 100 metres of the spot where she herself was born. Scientists believe this incredible feat is possible as turtles are able to read the Earth's magnetic fields to navigate back to their nesting grounds after migrating thousands of miles at sea.
- 3 _____ The female turtle will use her flippers to move loose sand away before digging a deeper hole in which to lay anything from 80 to 120 eggs at a time. The eggs are then covered over with sand as a way of disguising the nest from predators and the

turtle makes her way back to the open sea, never returning to tend the nest. During the laying of eggs the female turtle appears to be in a trance-like state and to shed tears. Scientists have concluded that this phenomenon is, in fact, the secretion of salt absorbed from time spent at sea.

- 4 _____ Baby turtles hatch from the eggs approximately 60–70 days after the laying of the eggs. Hatching always occurs at night and the babies use a sharp claw called a caruncle – which eventually drops off – to crack the shell from the inside. Turtles then leave the nest and use the moonlight to guide them towards the sea. However, the life of a newborn turtle is full of danger and the attentions of sharks, birds and bigger fish mean that survival rates of infant turtles are as low as one in a thousand.

- 5 _____ Added to this are man-made challenges which are increasingly threatening the marine turtle. Fishing nets, marine debris such as floating plastic and general pollution reduce survival rates. Building developments along the coast have also disturbed nesting grounds, with the added problem of light pollution which confuses newborn turtles who move towards the city lights instead of the sea.

Task Two: Match the headings to the paragraphs.

- a. Human threats To Turtles
- b. How The Female Turtle Lays her Eggs
- c. How baby turtles are born
- d. Scientific Studies of the Hawksbill Turtles in the UAE
- e. Nesting Season