

## GREEN SEA TURTLE

*Chelonia Mydas*

Hawaiian name (Honu)

### Description:

The Green Sea Turtle is the largest hard shell sea turtle. Adults commonly reach 100 cm in length and 150 kg in mass. The Green Sea Turtle becomes orange and yellowish as it matures and the carapace remains predominately black with various shades of olive and yellow gold forming swirls and irregular patterns on their shells.

### Habitat:

The Green Sea Turtles nest almost exclusively in the French Frigate shoals. When they are not nesting, they can be found in pelagic convergence zones and benthic feeding grounds in relatively shallow waters.

### Diet:

The Green Sea Turtles are herbivores for the most part; feeding mainly on sea grasses and algae. They have, however, been observed feeding upon jellyfish and other invertebrates which do not make them a true vegetarian.

### Reproduction:

Female turtles emerge on isolated beaches during the night to deposit eggs. They deposit a "clutch" of eggs, which average in size of 100-110 eggs. They return in 12 to 14 days to deposit another clutch and can repeat this cycle up to 7 times. Females do not produce clutches in successive years. Usually 2-4 years pass between breeding seasons. Mating occurs in the water off the nesting beaches.



**Movement:** Hawaiian Green Sea Turtles nest in the isolated French Frigate Shoals, but forage throughout the entire Hawaiian Archipelago. It has been suggested that the turtles seem to settle at a specific foraging ground and leave only to reproduce. It is believed that the earth's magnetic field plays a significant role in the turtle's navigation process between nesting grounds and feeding grounds.

**Note of Interest:** In the picture you will observe surgeonfish "cleaning" the turtles. The turtles show up at various cleaning stations to have these fish feed upon the algae and other animals that have attached themselves to the turtle's shell and skin. This cleaning process makes out well for the fish as well as the turtles and is a symbiotic relationship known as mutualism.