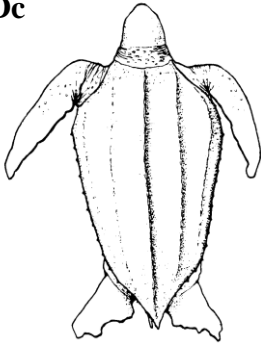


Identification Key for Sea Turtles and Sturgeon Found in Northeast U.S. Waters

SEA TURTLES

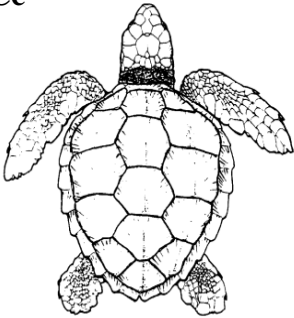
Dc



Leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*)

Found in open water throughout the Northeast from spring through fall. Leathery shell with 5-7 ridges along the back. Largest sea turtle (4-6 feet). Dark green to black; may have white spots on flippers and underside.

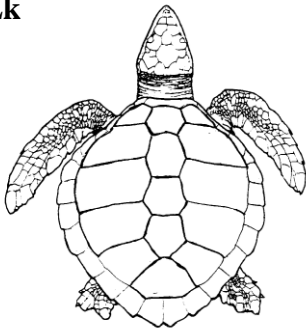
Cc



Loggerhead (*Caretta caretta*)

Bony shell, reddish-brown in color. Mid-sized sea turtle (2-4 feet). Commonly seen from Cape Cod to Hatteras from spring through fall, especially in southern portion of range. Head large in relation to body.

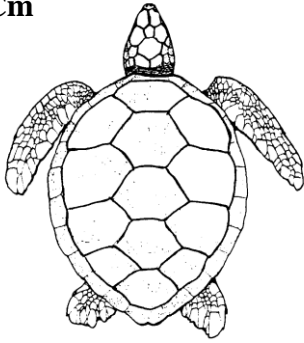
Lk



Kemp's ridley (*Lepidochelys kempii*)

Most often found in Bays and coastal waters from Cape Cod to Hatteras from summer through fall. Offshore occurrence undetermined. Bony shell, olive green to grey in color. Smallest sea turtle in Northeast (9-24 inches). Width equal to or greater than length.

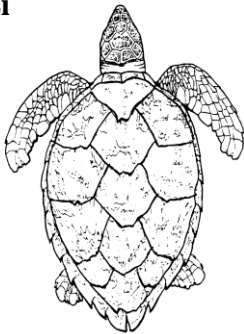
Cm



Green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*)

Uncommon in the Northeast. Occur in Bays and coastal waters from Cape Cod to Hatteras in summer. Bony shell, variably colored; usually dark brown with lighter stripes and spots. Small to mid-sized sea turtle (1-3 feet). Head small in comparison to body size.

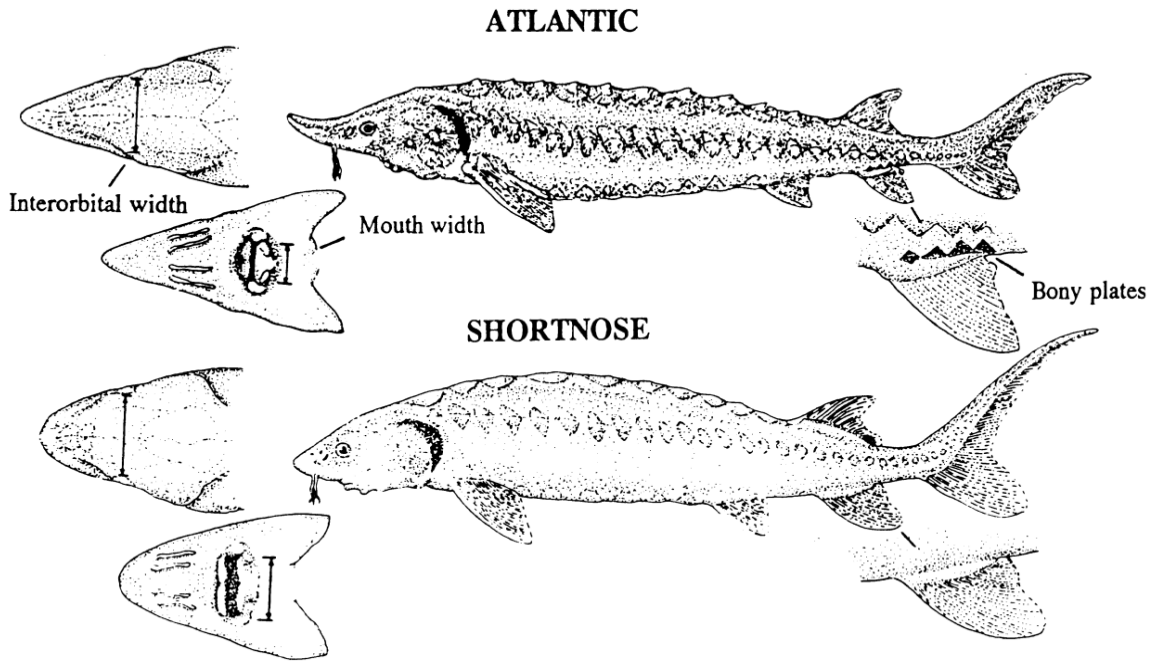
Ei



Hawksbill (*Eretmochelys imbricata*)

Rarely seen in Northeast. Elongate bony shell with overlapping scales. Color variable, usually dark brown with yellow streaks and spots (tortoise-shell). Small to mid-sized sea turtle (1-3 feet). Head relatively small, neck long.

SHORTNOSE AND ATLANTIC STURGEON



Distinguishing Characteristics of Atlantic and Shortnose Sturgeon

Characteristic	Atlantic Sturgeon, <i>Acipenser oxyrinchus</i>	Shortnose Sturgeon, <i>Acipenser brevirostrum</i>
Maximum length	> 9 feet/ 274 cm	4 feet/ 122 cm
Mouth	Football shaped and small. Width inside lips < 55% of bony interorbital width	Wide and oval in shape. Width inside lips > 62% of bony interorbital width
*Pre-anal plates	Paired plates posterior to the rectum & anterior to the anal fin.	1-3 pre-anal plates almost always occurring as median structures (occurring singly)
Plates along the anal fin	Rhombic, bony plates found along the lateral base of the anal fin (see diagram below)	No plates along the base of anal fin
Habitat/Range	Anadromous; spawn in freshwater but primarily lead a marine existence	Freshwater amphidromous; found primarily in fresh water but does make some coastal migrations

* From Vecsei and Peterson, 2004