

# Identification Notes for wildlife law enforcement

CATEGORY:

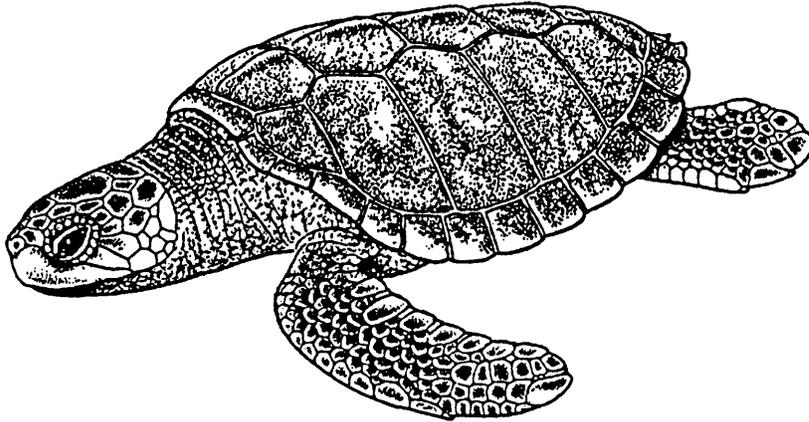
**REPTILE**

Scientific Name/s: *Lepidochelys kempii*

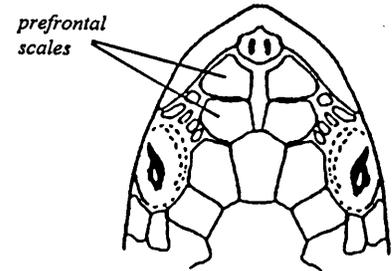
Common Name/s: Kemp's Ridley (Sea) Turtle

**PROBLEM:** Verification of identification to species level of whole sea turtles is often required. This Quick Take, a supplement to Quick Take R-91-2, provides additional diagnostic information.

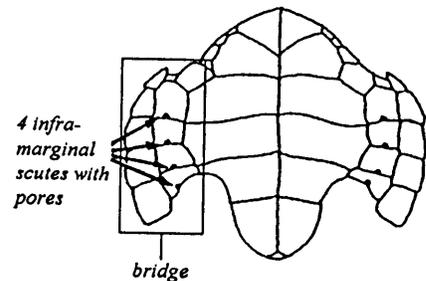
*Lepidochelys kempii* (from CITES, 1984)



Dorsal View of Head



Plastron



## DIAGNOSTIC FEATURES:

Carapace (viewed from above) nearly round, width **95%** of length. Carapacial scutes include 5 vertebral, 5 pairs of pleurals, and 12 pairs of marginals.

**Plastron** bridge with four **inframarginal scutes**; openings for **Rathke's** glands present as pores on rear of each.

Head narrow, almost triangular, length averaging **20%** of straight carapace length. Two pairs of prefrontal scales.

Front flippers with one visible claw on the anterior margin; rear flippers with one or two claws.

Color: Adult carapace plain **olive-grey**, **plastron** white or yellowish.

## REFERENCES:

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Ernst, C. H. & R. W. Barbour. 1989. Turtles of the World. Smithsonian Inst. Press. 313 pp.

Marquez, M.R. 1990, FAO species catalogue. Vol. 11: Sea turtles of the World. An annotated and illustrated catalogue of sea turtle species known to date. FAO Fisheries Synopsis 11(125):81 pp.

Pritchard, Peter C. H. 1979. Encyclopedia of Turtles. T.F.H. Publications, Inc. 895 pp.