

# Identification Notes for wildlife law enforcement

CATEGORY: \_\_\_\_\_

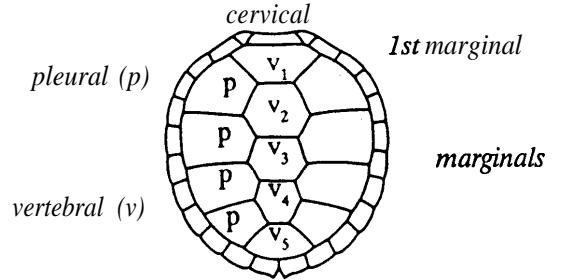
**REPTILE**

Scientific Name/s: *Cheloniidae*

Common Name/s: Sea Turtles

PROBLEM: Species source of Sea Turtle shells is difficult to **determine**; whole **carapaces** (upper shells) are imported from areas of the Pacific and Caribbean by unsuspecting tourists, etc.

## CARAPACIAL SCUTES OF SEA TURTLES



### GUIDE TO THE SPECIES SOURCE OF SEA TURTLE CARAPACES:

1. Four pairs of pleural scutes; cervical scute does not touch first pleurals .....2
- Five or more pairs of pleural scutes; cervical scute touches first pleural scutes...3

2. Scutes on carapace do not overlap .....4
- Scutes on carapace overlap ..... *Eretmochelys imbricata* (Hawksbill)

3. Carapace longer than broad (elongate) ..... *Caretta caretta* (Loggerhead)

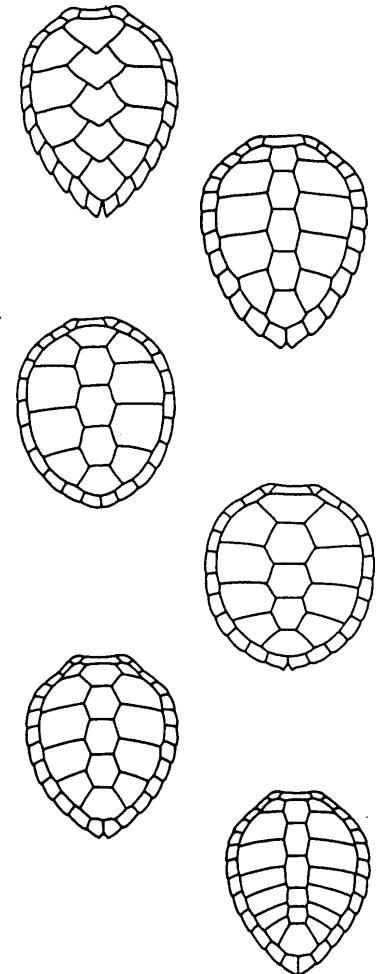
Carapace circular ..... 5

4. Carapace heart-shaped with sloping marginal scutes; First vertebral in broad contact with first marginal ..... *Chelonia mydas* (Green)

Carapace oval with upturned marginal scutes; First vertebral separated from or in extremely narrow contact with first marginal ..... *C. depressa* (Flatback)

5. Generally five pairs of Pleural scutes ..... *Lepidochelys kempii* (Kemp's Ridley)

Generally more than five pairs of pleural scutes ..... *L. olivacea* (Olive Ridley)



### REFERENCES:

Dollinger, P. (Ed.). 1984. Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) of Wild Fauna and Flora, Identification Manual, Volume 3. Secretariat of the Convention, Lusanne, Switzerland.  
Ernst, C., & R. Barbour. 1989. Turtles of the World. Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, DC.