

Identification Notes for wildlife law enforcement

CATEGORY: _____

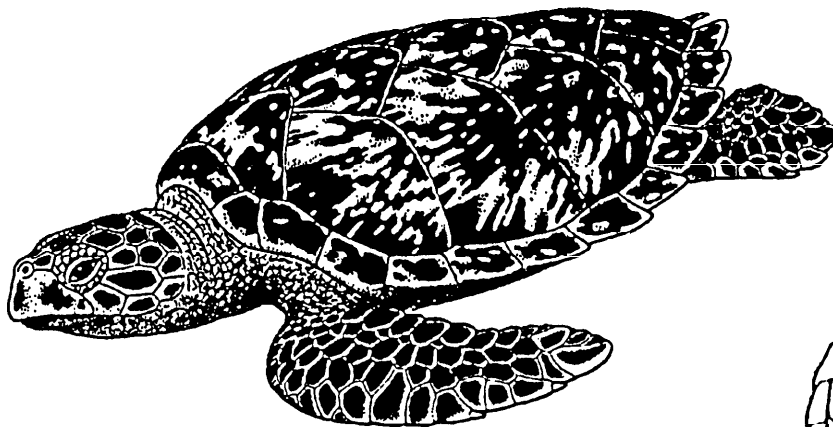
REPTILE

Scientific Name/s: *Eretmochelys imbricata*

Common Name/s: Hawksbill (sea) Turtle

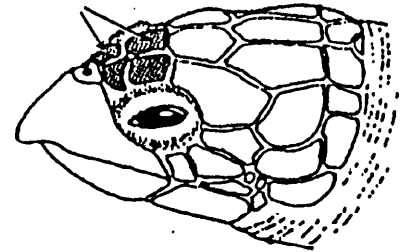
PROBLEM: Verification of identification to species level of whole sea turtles is often required. This Quick Take, a supplement to Quick Take R-91-2, provides additional diagnostic information

Eretmochelys imbricata (from CITES, 1984)

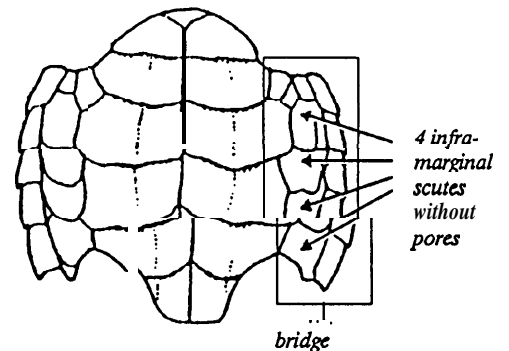


Side View of Head

2 pairs of
prefrontal scales



Plastron



DIAGNOSTIC FEATURES:

Carapace (viewed from above) elliptical, covered by overlapping (imbricate) scutes. Carapacial scutes include 4 pairs of pleurals (the most anterior one does not touch the cervical scute).

Plastron bridge with four **inframarginal scutes**, without pores.

Head narrow, with two pairs of prefrontal scales. Upper jaw smooth (not serrated), with “hawk-like” appearance.

Flippers with two claws on the anterior margin.

Color: Carapace with densely arranged, very small blotches of black or dark brown on a greenish, fawn, blond, golden-yellow, or reddish background. Plastron yellow, usually with a few black blotches on anteriormost laminae.

REFERENCES:

Carr, A. 1952. Handbook of Turtles. Cornell Univ. Press. 542 pp.

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.