

First State, Green State, Green Turtle

Loyalty, vitality, and curiosity are three core values at the heart of all Delawareans across our coastal (and cozy) state. As we name Delaware's Sea Turtle, it is imperative that our turtle embody our state's values, and moreover, inspire us to pursue environmental stewardship. Selecting the Green Sea Turtle as Delaware's Sea Turtle is the best choice we can make as a collective, given that it has a multitude of unique ties to our state, extraordinary characteristics, and provides us with opportunities to learn more about sea turtles, and their conservation.

Since the beginning, we've all identified ourselves as the *Blue and Gold State*, whether it be the vibrant university flags flying from homes, or the local elementary school bumper stickers on our cars. Taking a step back to art class, when these colors mix, the resulting hue is green, very similar to our future State Sea Turtle. Along with their symbolic color, Green Sea Turtles were the first to lay over 140+ eggs on our beaches after four decades, more than any other sea turtle up for consideration. This is great news for the future, because turtles are also extremely loyal, and female Green Sea Turtles always travel back to the same beach as they were born, to lay their own eggs. So, let's welcome the next generation, as our first generation of Delaware's Sea Turtles.

Along with their dedication to our beaches, Green Sea Turtles also display impressive vitality, as most live to be over 100 years old. In their long life-spans, they are very well-traveled, and experience the world. Exceedingly active, Green Sea Turtles travel over 1,600 miles each time they migrate, or the distance between Delaware and Puerto Rico. Given that

Delaware is situated perfectly between the cities and our beaches, we've found a balance between travel and time at home, and so has the Green Sea Turtle.

Although Green Sea Turtles have proven themselves to be a great fit as our State Sea Turtle, we must ask what we can do for them. By naming the Green Sea Turtle as Delaware's Sea Turtle, we will be able to secure further resources for promoting sea turtle health and safety, along with conservation efforts. In turn, commercial fishing and related industries will know to be more careful around these species, especially with increased public awareness and curiosity towards sea turtles.

As we look for Delaware's Sea Turtle, it is important that it be our own. The three other sea turtles in question are already other state's sea turtles, with Texas naming the Kemp's Ridley, South Carolina naming the Loggerhead, and California naming the Pacific Leatherback their own. It is important that we be original, and choose a sea turtle which reflects the values of loyalty, vitality and curiosity we all share as Delawareans. We were the First State, are the First State, and will be the First State to name the Green Sea Turtle as our state's official sea turtle.

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