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.

Dorsal View of Head

Lepidochelys kempii (from CITES, 1984)

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:


