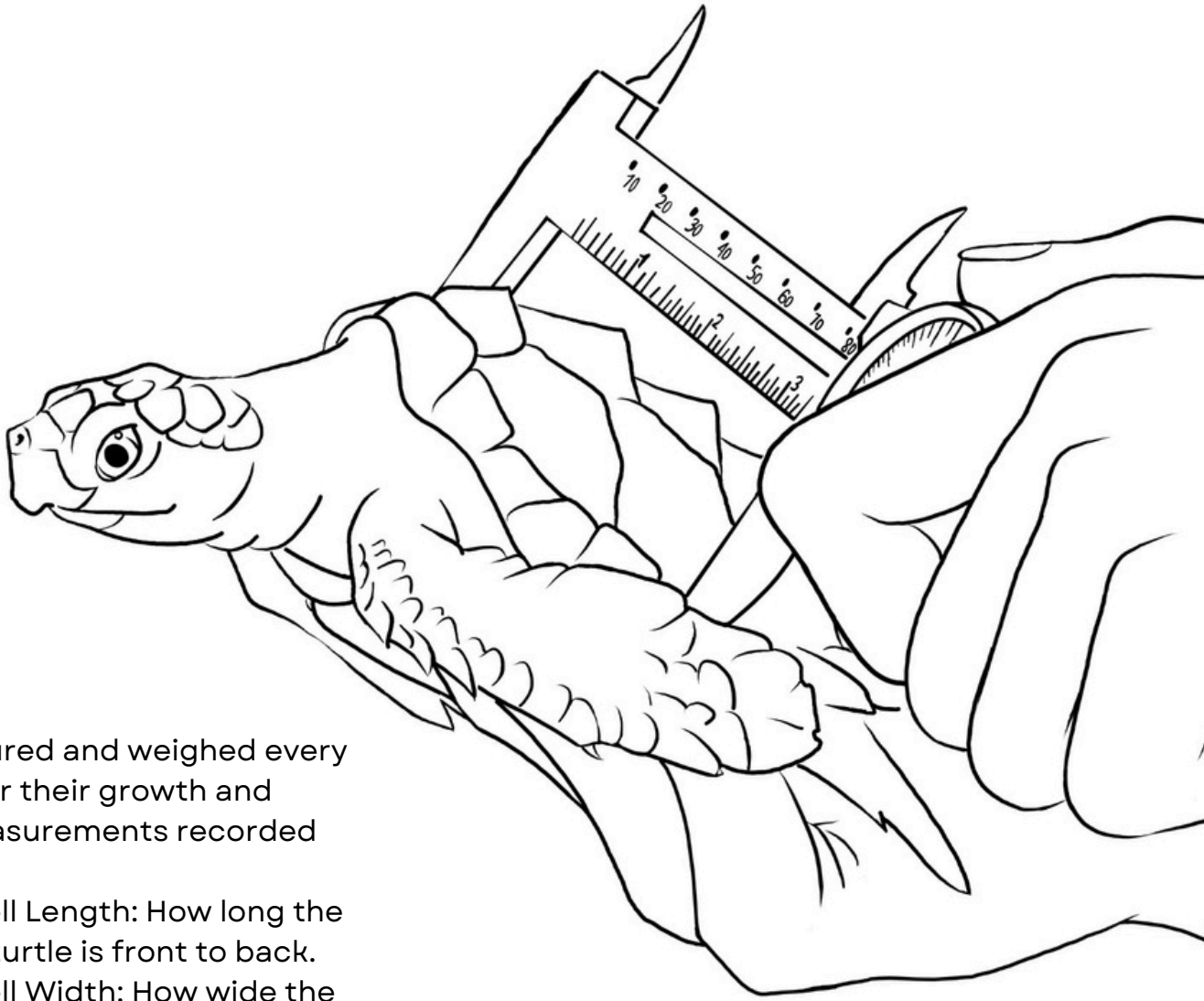


Marine Science Laboratory
Charles E. Schmidt College of Science
Florida Atlantic University®

Every sea turtle season (March-October) the FAU Marine Lab brings in local sea turtle hatchlings for different research projects. This is a loggerhead sea turtle (*Caretta caretta*)! Loggerheads have five lateral scutes lining along the sides of their carapace (shell) and 5 central scutes running over the spine. As hatchlings, their scutes running down the spine look like a the turtle has a mohawk haircut! Loggerhead hatchlings are typically brown in color.



They are measured and weighed every week to monitor their growth and health. The measurements recorded include:

1. Straight Shell Length: How long the shell of the turtle is front to back.
2. Straight Shell Width: How wide the shell of the turtle is at its widest part.
3. Body Depth: How thick a turtle is top to bottom.

As they age, their scutes grow taller and sharper and protect the young turtle from predators. The sharp points makes these small turtles difficult for their oceanic predators to handle.