Florida Sea Turtles

Dichotomous Key

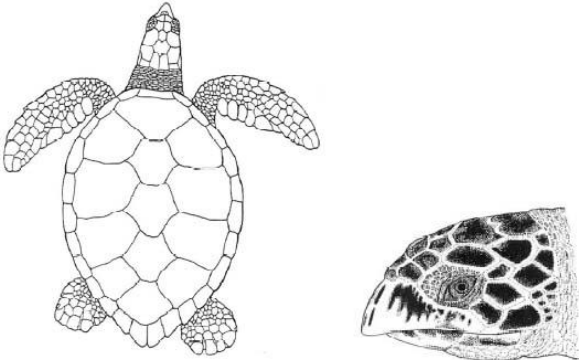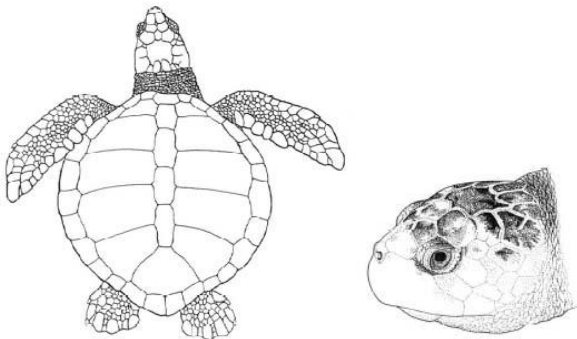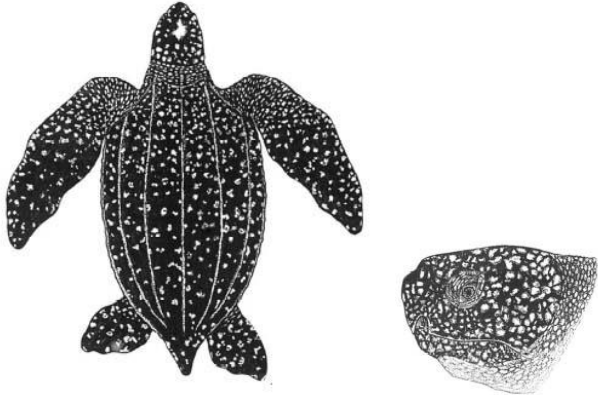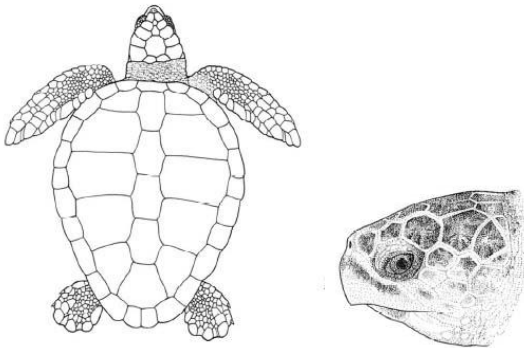**Directions:** Using the following descriptions, create a dichotomous key that will allow you to correctly identify the 5 sea turtles which can be found off Florida's coast.

Dorsal View
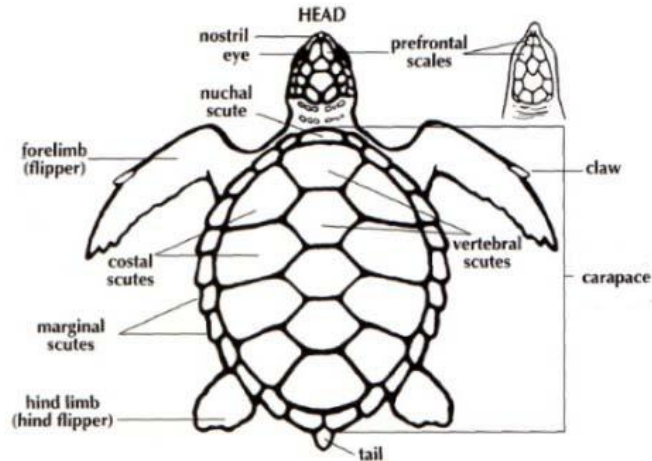
Sea Turtle	Picture	Description
Green		Coloration: Radiating streaks, brown, buff Carapace: 4 costal scutes Length: 120cm Head: round face, serrated jaw, 1 pair elongated prefrontal scales
Hawksbill		Coloration: amber and brown streaks Carapace: 4 costal scutes, overlapping and oval Length: 90-110+cm Head: curved beak, distinct overbite, 2 pair of prefrontal scales

Kemp's Ridley		Coloration: gray to light olive green Carapace: round, 5-6 costal scutes Length: 70cm Head: triangular, relatively large, 2 pair of prefrontal scales
Leatherback		Coloration: dark gray/black with white spots Carapace: tapered, leathery with 5 ridges Length: 165-190+cm Head: tooth-like notch on either side of upper jaw, no scales
Loggerhead		Coloration: reddish brown/brown Carapace: longer than wide, 5 or more costal scutes, first pair very small Length: 90-110+cm Head: large head, 4 or more prefrontal scales

Florida Species Size Comparison Chart

Feet

Adult Human — Kemp's Ridley — Hawksbill — Loggerhead — Green Turtle — Leatherback
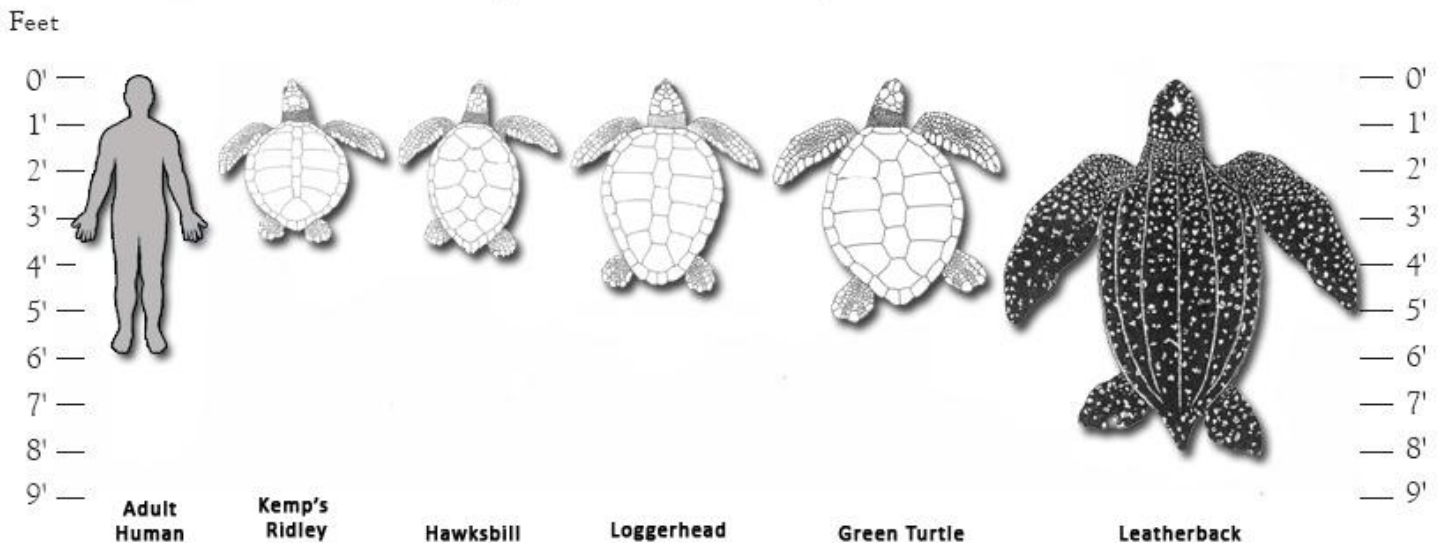
Florida Sea Turtles Dichotomous Key

Description	Identification
1a. b.	a. b.
2a. b.	a. b.
3a. b.	a. b.
4a. b.	a. b.

Dichotomous Key Flow Chart

Draw a flow chart, based on your dichotomous key, that will help you identify the 5 species of sea turtles found in Florida waters.

Questions

1. **Define** dorsal: _____

   Define scute: _____

2. In your own words, **describe** how a scientist uses a dichotomist key.

   _____
   _____
   _____

3. Which sea turtle **characteristic** was most *valuable* to you when distinguishing between the different sea turtles? **Explain** why was this characteristic is useful for identification?

   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

4. Which of these sea turtles has evolved the **most unique** characteristics? **Describe** the *difference* between the characteristics of this sea turtle and the others.

   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

5. If you were snorkeling over a reef, **explain** how you would know if you were swimming next to a *Kemp's Ridley* or *Loggerhead* sea turtle?

   _____
   _____
   _____

6. **Discuss** how size might affect a sea turtle's *diet*, *reproduction*, *population size* and *conservation efforts.*

   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____