

A turtle is a reptile that has a shell covering its body. Turtles eat worms, snails, insects, jellyfish, and shellfish. Warmer temperatures generally produce females, while cooler temperatures produce males. Most live in freshwater ponds, lakes, or rivers. The smallest turtles are less than 4 inches (10 centimeters) long. In contrast, the Atlantic leatherback turtle can be more than 7 feet (2 meters) long. The female digs a hole and lays her eggs in it. The temperature in the nest usually affects the sex of the baby turtles. There are more than 350 species, or types, of turtle. Some turtles live in forests or even in the desert. Land turtles are often called tortoises. Some water turtles are known as terrapins. Turtles are all different sizes. It can weigh more than 1,500 pounds (680 kilograms). Many tortoises eat only plants. Turtles are known for moving very slowly. Turtles are found in most parts of the world. Turtles can store food in the form of fat. Some turtles can store water, too. All turtles lay their eggs on land. Turtles live longer than most other animals. Some species can live more than 100 years.