

## Turtle Profiles

### Leatherback turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*)

**Stock:** Part of the leatherback—Nesting in Australia (LB) stock

**Status:** Australia Endangered, Queensland Endangered

**Population Trend:** Unknown (3)

**Preferred habitat:** Tropical and temperate waters including open ocean waters

**Diet:** Carnivorous (jellyfish and other soft-bodied invertebrates)

**Important nesting sites:** None reported in Queensland since 1996 (previously Wreck Rock and Rules Beach)

**Mating:** December-January

**Nesting:** Functionally extinct in Eastern Queensland



Image: Leatherback turtle adult. Photo: Colin Limpus.

### Physical characteristics:

#### Leatherback Adult

- Carapace with 5 distinct ridges and no large scales
- Colour, black with light spotting
- Adult carapace approximately 1.6 metres

#### Leatherback Hatchling

- Colour, white blotched plastron
- Carapace 5.88 cm long

Note: Leatherback turtles that feed and migrate through oceanic waters adjacent to the Sunshine Coast are the largest species (up to 2m in length), however their numbers are severely depleted. This species is of specific concern because they belong to a very small population that is subject to ongoing threats, and they are assumed to no longer nest in Queensland (1). An observation of mating leatherback turtles was, however, recorded in October 2021 on the southern Great Barrier Reef.



Image: Leatherback turtle hatchling. Photo: Colin Limpus.