

Thursday, December 12, 2013

## Green Sea Turtles Return to Florida

*Florida's green sea turtles are doing much better!*

In 1979, there were only 62 green sea turtle nests in Florida. The large, shelled creatures were in danger of disappearing from Florida forever! Then the state took action. This fall, there were 35,000 nests on its shores!

The turtles were in trouble for a few reasons. People were building on the beaches where turtles laid their eggs. And others were killing them to make turtle soup! In order to help, the United States added the turtle to the list of **endangered species** in 1978. "That made it **illegal** to harm or kill them," Robbin Trindell, a worker for Florida's wildlife, told *News-O-Matic*. Now, no one in America is allowed to eat sea turtles.

People have also helped make the beaches a safe **habitat** for sea turtles. After they hatch out of their eggs on the beach, the baby turtles must crawl into the ocean — *before they're eaten* by other animals! It's the most **dangerous** part of a green sea turtle's life.

People also helped turtles by controlling the lights in the area. The **hatchlings** often use the moonlight on the water to know where the ocean is. By keeping the areas around the beach dark, the babies can more easily find their way to the water!

"Every person who visits the beach can help protect sea turtles," says Trindell. "If there are holes dug in the beach, they can get trapped," she explained. "Sand castles can block them getting across." You can flatten the sand to help the hatchlings!

Trindell warned there is more work to do. "We're not calling it a recovery yet," she said. "But we had a really good year."

By Russell Kahn



The baby turtles are making it safely to the water!

### FACT:

Female sea turtles lay 100 to 200 eggs in the nest on the beach. Then they return to their life in the sea.

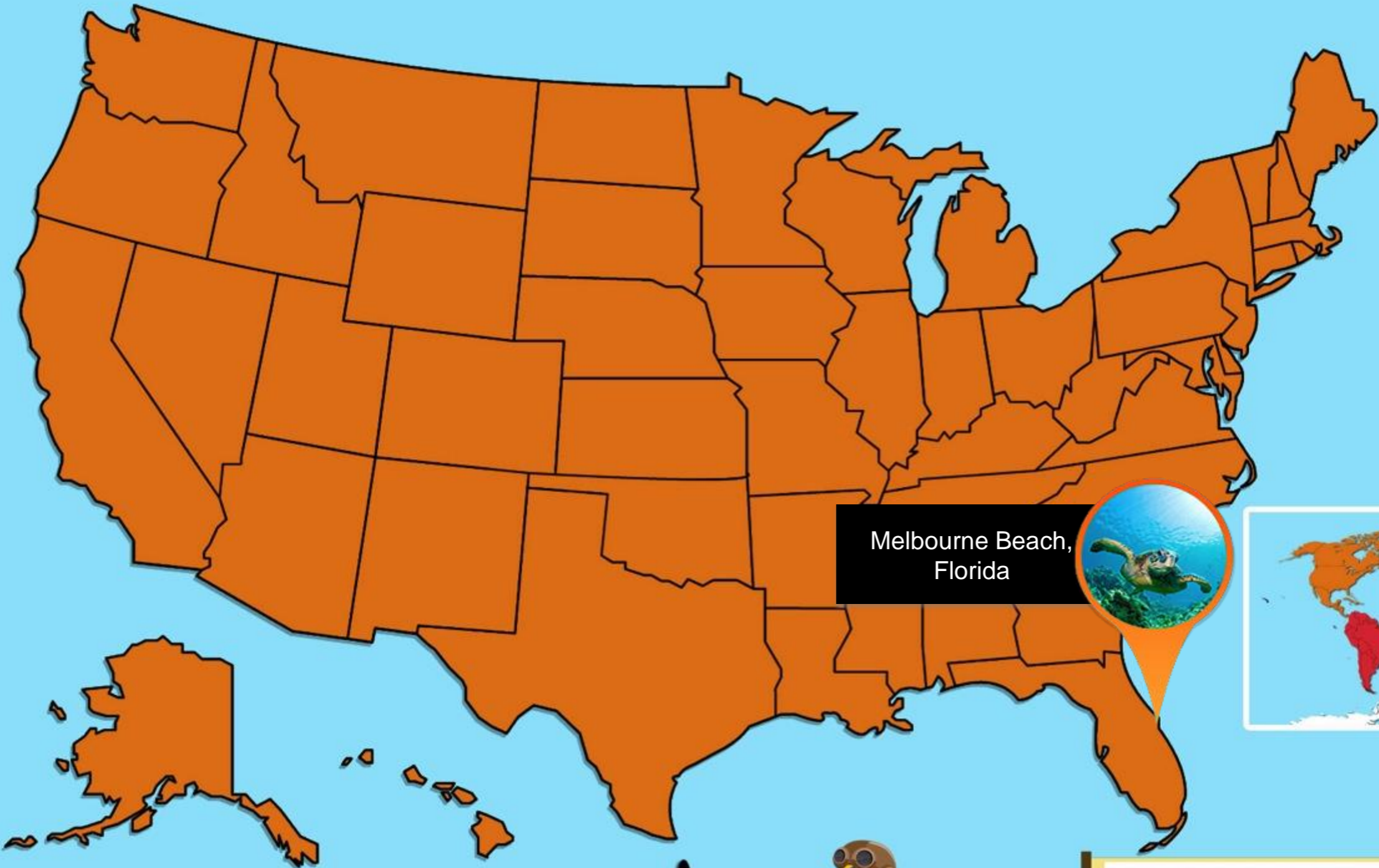
### ACT:

Next time you're at a beach, get rid of any trash, fill any holes with sand. "Kids are the ones who can make a difference," said Trindell.

### VOCABULARY:

endangered species: animal in danger of being gone forever  
illegal: against the law  
habitat: home; place where something lives  
dangerous: scary; unsafe  
hatchlings: baby sea turtles; animals that have just hatched

Thursday, December 12, 2013



Melbourne Beach,  
Florida



One of the first European explorers to America may have landed near Melbourne Beach, Florida. Juan Ponce de Leon came nearby in 1513.