**Active Learning Exercise 16.1**

to accompany

*Vertebrate Life*, Tenth Edition

Pough • Janis

**Sea Turtle Status in the US**

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**Source:** www.seaturtle.org

**Activity**

Seaturtle.org has been around since 1996. It began as an effort to support research and conservation of sea turtles, and serves as a clearinghouse for sea turtle data worldwide. There are nesting data for specific beaches and tracking data for numerous tagged turtles. There is a wealth of information here. Let’s see what we can find out about sea turtles in the US. (We’re going to focus on the US because otherwise you have to become a member of the site and log in to access data.)

You will do this in a team of 3 students. Each of you does your own data collecting, but then you will compare notes to answer the final questions.

A. Go to seaturtle.org

B. In the Resources menu select Nesting

C. Choose a state within the US where sea turtles nest. Everyone in your team should use the same state.

D. Each team member select a different beach in your chosen state.

E, Everybody look at the same 3 years on your beaches prior to the present year. Spread out the years but go back as far as you can. This will vary depending on the beach so you’ll have to adjust so everybody can use the same years.

F. Record the following information. Each of you should be looking at the same three years, but on different beaches in the same state. When you compare notes you have a good bit of data to look at.

**Questions**

1. What types of turtles were found on your beach? What is the most common? Was that the same for all 3 years?

2. Choose the most common type of turtle found on your beach and note the following for each of your 3 years. It would make sense to make some kind of table to do this.

#nests

#relocated

#lost

#false crawls

#estimated eggs

#emerged hatchlings

#mean incubation

#mean clutch

#mean nest success

#beach success

Reasons for losses by percentage?

Get all your groups data together. If there was more than one dominant species, group by species. Look for patterns. Sketch some graphs. Consider the description of the beach and the data and answer the following questions. You may not KNOW why or why not, but you can read the descriptions of the beaches and speculate.

3. What is a false crawl? Did the number of false crawls increase or decrease or stay the same over time at all beaches? Why or why not?

4. Are numbers of nest increasing or decreasing or staying the same over time at all beaches? Why or why not?

5. Are numbers of hatchlings increasing or decreasing or staying the same over time at all beaches? Why or why not?

6. What is the most common reason for egg loss on your beaches? Was it the same for all beaches you looked at? Was it the same every year? Why or why not?

7. If you were sea turtle conservation managers for this state, what would you conclude about the turtles’ status at this point in time? Based on what data? What would you do next year?