

## ANIMAL NEWS

# NESTING SECRETS

**A NEW study has shown that some sea turtles try to lead predators away from their nests by making pretend nests and trails.**

Hawksbill and leatherback turtles lay their eggs in the sand on beaches. Experts have discovered that the clever turtles go to great effort to throw predators off the scent to protect their eggs!

In the seven-year study, the female turtles were watched very closely during the nesting process. The experts noticed that the mothers moved around on the beach for quite a while after they laid their eggs.

It was known that the mothers flick sand around to hide the nest, but now the experts think they are creating extra trails in the sand. Some even make decoy (pretend) nests. The aim seems to be to confuse predators to make it less likely their eggs will be discovered.

The turtles spend a long time doing this, even though they are exhausted and in danger of attack themselves. The professor in charge of the research said: "What they do must be extremely important to their offspring [young], which they will leave behind as eggs in the sand and never see."



iStock

## DID YOU KNOW?

- Sea turtles are reptiles.
- There are seven species (kinds) of sea turtle.
- After years of swimming in the ocean, turtles return to the beach where they were born to lay their own eggs. No-one knows exactly how they do this!
- Turtles have lived in our seas for more than 100 million years, but most are now endangered (at risk of extinction).



A leatherback turtle making her nest

iStock

## Questions on: 'Nesting secrets'

1) Which **two** kinds of turtle were studied by the experts?

- Loggerhead
- Hawksbill
- Green
- Leatherback

2) How long was the study?

3) What did we **already** know the turtles do to sand on the beach after laying their eggs?

4) What have the experts now discovered the turtles do to trick predators?

5) Can you explain why they do this?

6) What is a decoy?

- A type of tropical turtle
- Something soft and vulnerable
- Something fake, made to trick

7) True or false?

	True	False
There are ten species of sea turtle.		
Sea turtles are mammals.		
Turtles usually lay their eggs on the beach where they were born.		
Turtles use the sun and stars to find the beach where they were born.		

8) The first paragraph of a newspaper report often gives a summary of the story. Does this one?

Why do you think there is often a summary in the first paragraph?