



The story of...

Ben and the Tiny Turtle

Written by Thomas Parsons

Hi, my name is Ben and I live on Mon Repos Beach, near Bundaberg in Queensland, *'where the sand meets the sea'*. This is my Dad and he is a Marine Biologist, which is just a fancy name for someone who likes to take care of animals, that live in the sea. My Dad is very interested in Leathery Turtles, because they are an endangered species. I didn't know what all this meant either, until I asked my Dad and he said "it means that the turtles are a group of animals, that are in danger of being hurt or killed off". My Dad thinks this is horrible and we need to try to protect and save these wonderful reptiles, before they are gone forever and become extinct.



<https://www.queensland.com/en-au/attraction/mon-repos-beach>

One day, Dad and I went down to the beach, to check if any of the mother turtles had laid their eggs on the shore overnight. 'Wow!, That's cool!, Look at that!' I said as I pointed and noticed a large mound of sand on the shore. Dad explained that the eggs are buried under the mound, called a nest and it will take two full months for the baby turtles, called hatchlings, to hatch and waddle down to the sea to start their new lives.



https://www.123rf.com/stock-photo/the_little_footprints_in_the_sand.html?sti=m5g9huag5t7unzvp3p

Over the next two months, Dad and I went down to the beach every day, to see if the baby turtles had hatched. On one cold, windy morning, I suddenly saw a tiny turtle peeping out of the sandy nest. I watched with amazement, as more tiny flippers rose out from the nest. The tiny turtles were hatching and they quickly scurried down to the beach. Dad looked around frantically searching for something, I asked Dad 'What's wrong?'...



Dad quickly explained that the baby turtles are now in danger of being eaten by predators such as, foxes, wild dogs and birds. Then a few seconds later, a big flock of noisy, angry seagulls arrived. They then started squawking and swooping at the tiny turtles. 'Aaah' I screamed. I started running around, flapping my arms in the air, scaring the hungry seagulls away. But sadly, I wasn't fast enough and all of the tiny turtles were gone, gobbled up by the seagulls. I sat in silence by the empty nest and Dad came and sat down next to me.



Dad broke the silence and whispered, softly, 'Ben, look in the nest', I looked and was surprised to see one, very tiny baby turtle trying to free himself from the hole. I gasped and watched as the turtle slowly crawled to the top of the nest and began his long journey to the sea.



Dad and I followed him down to the shoreline, scanning the sky for any sign of hungry seagull flocks. The tiny turtle then disappeared into the deep blue sea. 'I'm glad at least one tiny turtle survived' I said to Dad, 'I'm glad too Ben' Dad said, 'The Leathery turtles really DO need our help' I said to Dad. 'Can we come back every year to try to save the turtles?' I asked 'That's a great idea Ben,' Dad replied.

