

## **Turtles**

### **Green turtle / *Chelonia mydas* / Aoumi-game / アオウミガメ**

Amami-Oshima is known as a migratory stop for two of the world's seven species of sea turtles. The green turtle is one of the largest of these, and can grow up to 180 kilograms. The turtles leave the sea to nest on sandy beaches between May and September. Unlike other sea turtles, this one is herbivorous, feeding largely on algae, sea grass, and seaweed. It gets its name from the green color of its fat, which scientists believe is due to the turtle's plant-based diet. Its shell is usually a brown or olive color. Young green turtles can often be seen feeding in the reef waters off Amami-Oshima. The species is listed as endangered, though researchers have noted a recent increase in their numbers.

### **Loggerhead turtle / *Caretta caretta* / Akaumi-game / アカウミガメ**

The loggerhead turtle, which is omnivorous, gets its name from its huge head and a powerful jaw that allows it to crush the hard shells of the clams and sea urchins on which it feeds. Though they migrate immense distances, loggerheads prefer warmer coastal areas. Their shells are reddish brown and have a heart-like shape, and the males tend to weigh about 120 kilograms. Loggerheads are an endangered species, and their numbers in Amami-Oshima have decreased in recent years. Over 100 sites on the island have been identified as nesting areas for sea turtles, who use the earth's magnetic field to navigate the world's oceans and return to nest in the same place where they were born.