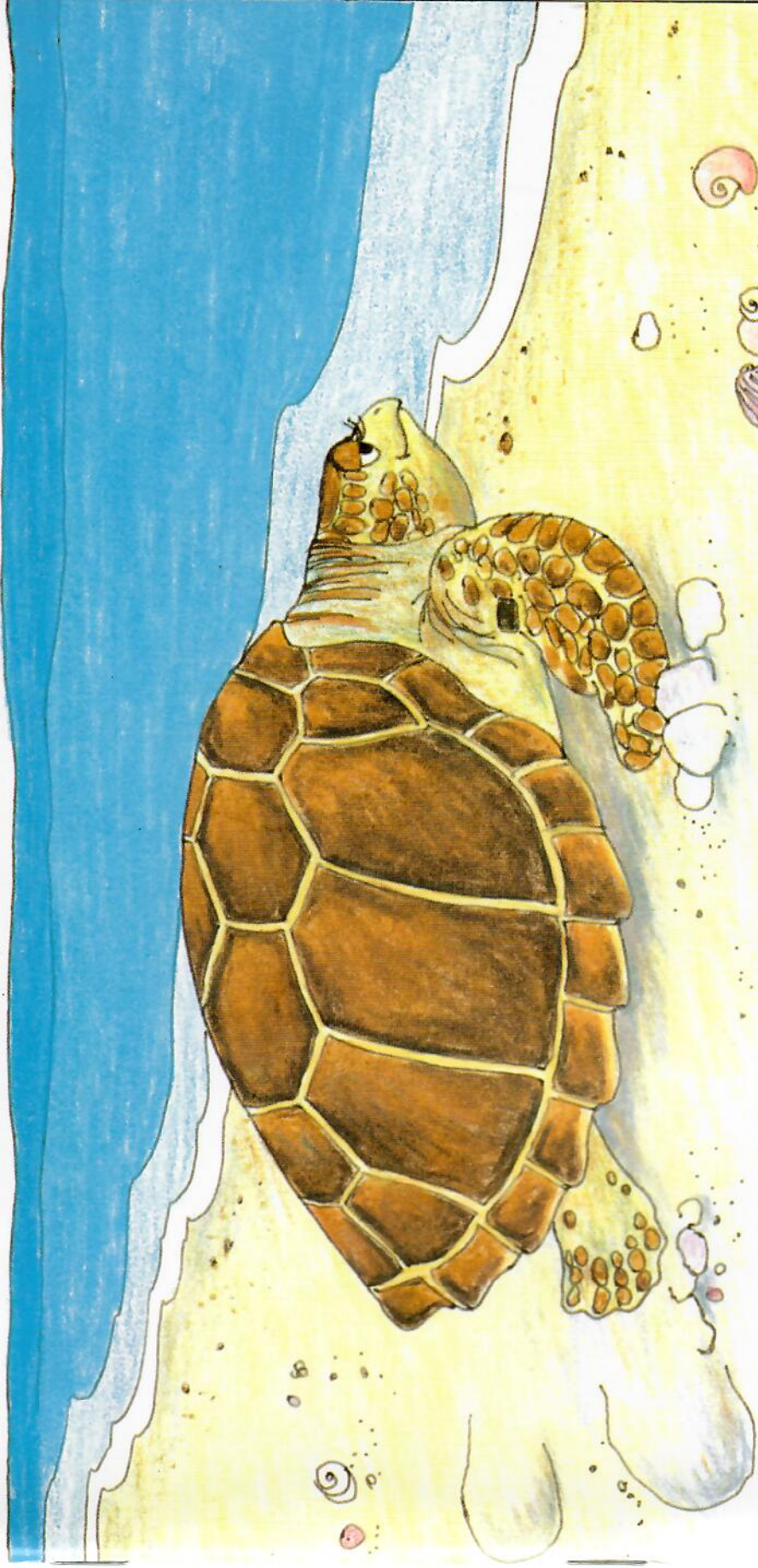


TAMMY TURTLE

A Tale of Saving Sea Turtles



Suzanne Tate

Illustrated by James Melvin

Tammy Turtle is a loggerhead sea turtle (*Caretta caretta*). Loggerheads are among the six species of Atlantic sea turtles. All six are classified as endangered or threatened.

A mature loggerhead turtle produces two to four nests of 75 to 150 eggs each in a nesting season occurring every 2-3 years. Adult sea turtles have almost no natural enemies. However, young sea turtles fall prey to many things. Fewer than 1 in 100 turtle hatchlings survive to reach adulthood. In the United States, loss of nesting habitat and predation of eggs are among the major threats to the species.

In **Tammy Turtle**, plastic litter is the symbol for humans' negative effects on turtles. Litter was chosen because children can relate to litter and can do something about it. HELPFUL HUMANS are purposely represented as employees and volunteers for conservation agencies. Since all sea turtles are protected by the Endangered Species Act, only "official" humans may work with them.

Many sea turtle programs would not survive without the dedicated efforts of volunteers. These volunteers work long hours without pay, day and night, in all kinds of weather, to help sea turtles survive.

Located in Dare County, North Carolina, Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge lies in the northern part of the nesting range for loggerhead sea turtles. **Tammy Turtle** was published in cooperation with the Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society, the non-profit support group for Alligator River and Pea Island National Wildlife Refuges in North Carolina.



P.O. Box 1808 Manteo, NC 27954

TAMMY TURTLE

TAMMY TURTLE

A Tale of Survival for a Tattered Animal

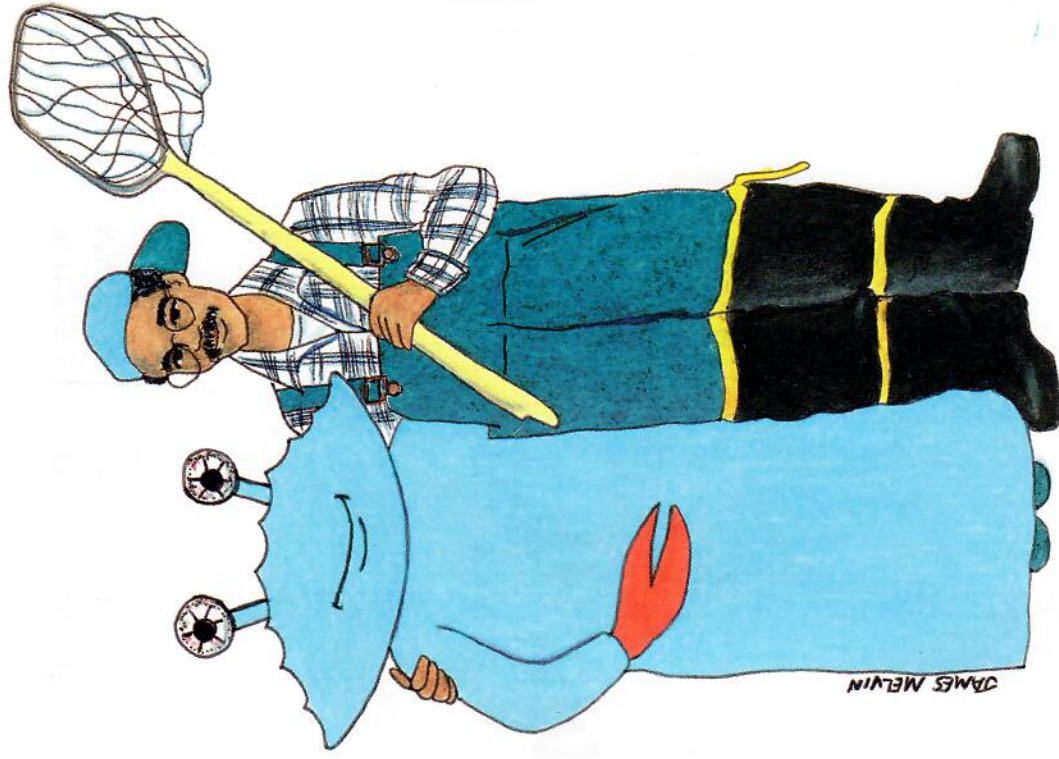
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HAPPY READING!

This book is especially for:

Suzanne Tate,
Author—
brings fun and
facts to us in her
Nature Series.

James Melvin,
Illustrator—
brings joyous life
to Suzanne Tate's
characters.



Suzanne and James in costume

TAMMY TURTLE

A Tale of Saving Sea Turtles

Suzanne Tate

Illustrated by James Melvin



Nags Head Art

To Conservation Volunteers

Everywhere

1993

NATIONAL AWARD WINNER

Tammy Turtle was an award winner in the
National Federation of Press Women's 1993
Communications Contest.

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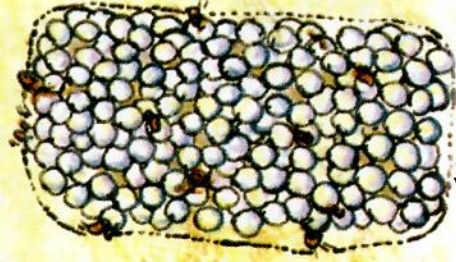
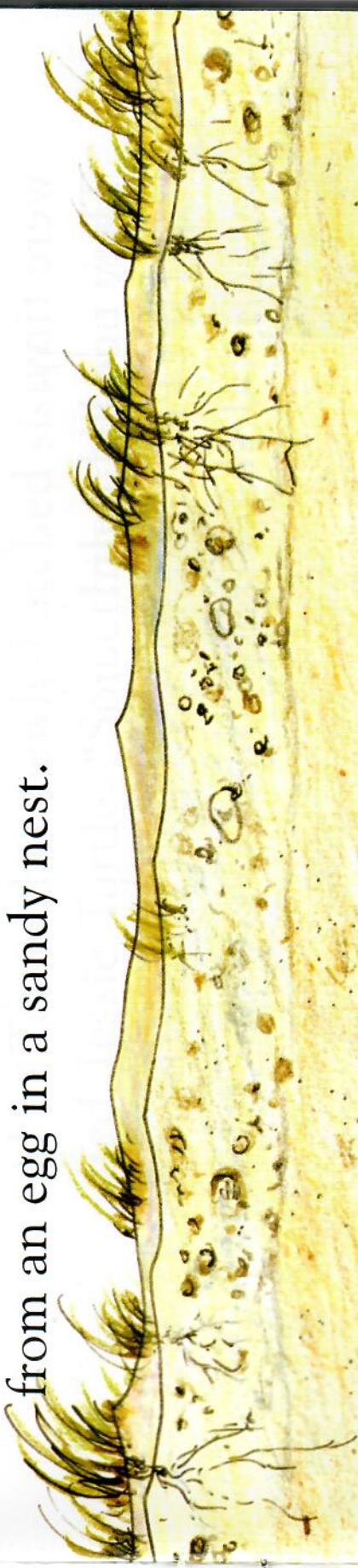
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One dark night, Tammy Turtle hatched
from an egg in a sandy nest.



She had 100 brothers and sisters!
They hatched that night, too.

Tammy and the other turtle hatchlings were tiny. They needed help! But HELPFUL HUMANS had found the eggs 55 days earlier and checked on them everyday.

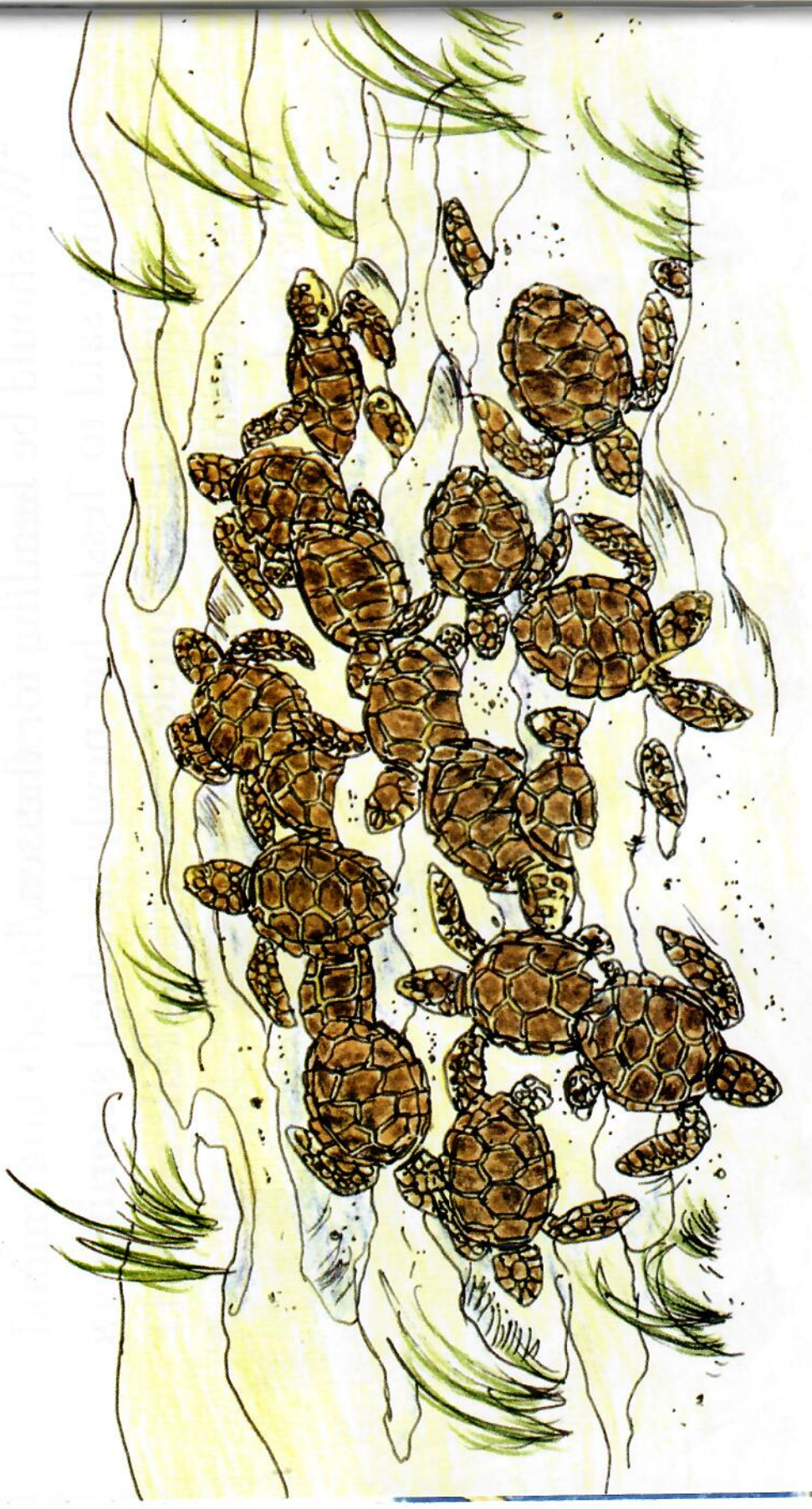


They were there to watch over the little loggerheads as they hatched.

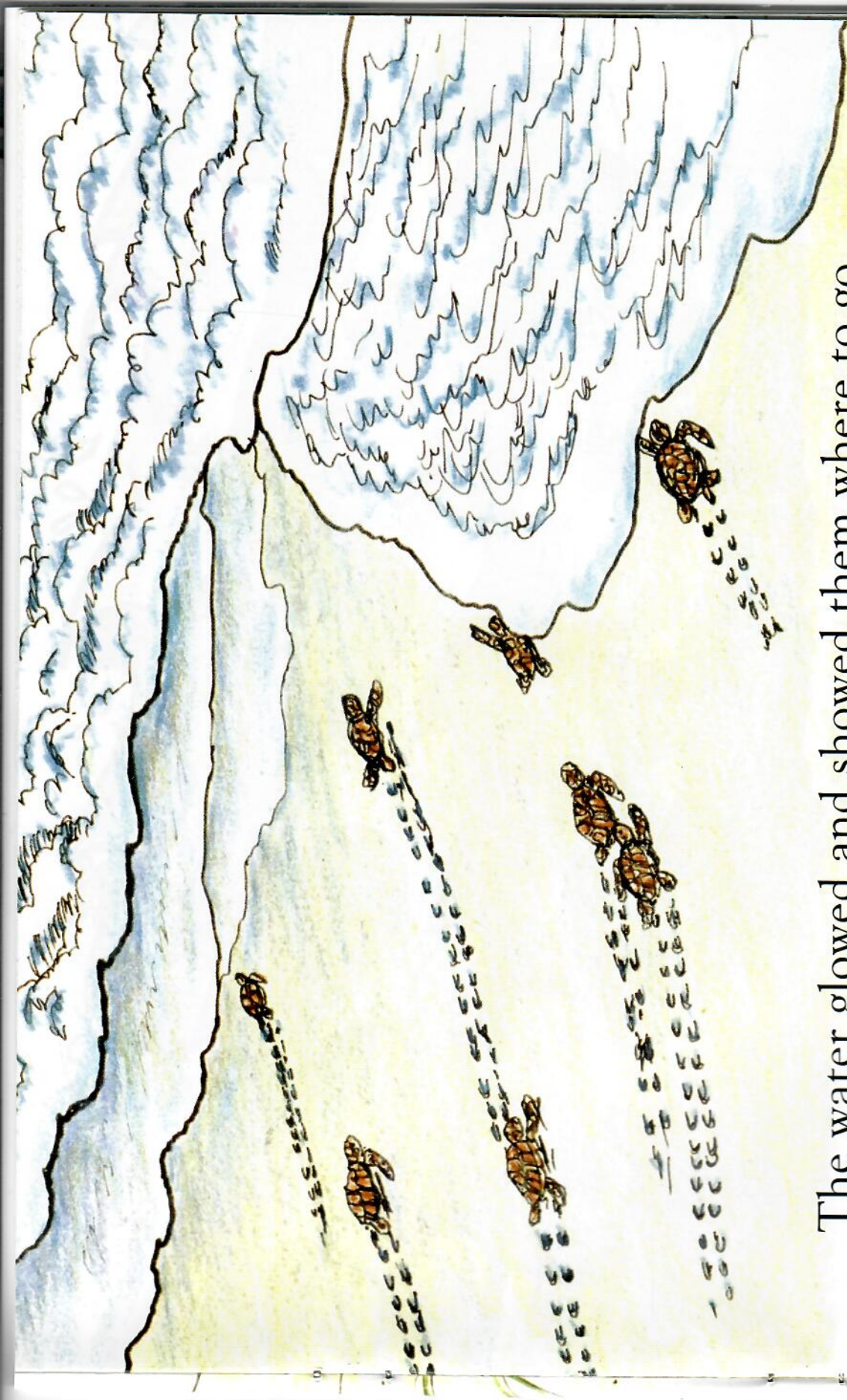
“We should be heading for the sea,”
Tammy said to Tessie, her newly-hatched sister.
“Yes,” replied Tessie Turtle. “Something tells me that
hungry animals are
all around us!”



But the baby turtles didn't need to worry!
The HELPFUL HUMANS guarded them.
They kept them safe from raccoons and ghost crabs.



Suddenly, the nest began to boil!
It boiled over with dozens of tiny turtles
as they sprang into action.



The water glowed and showed them where to go. Tammy and Tessie and their brothers and sisters hurried toward it.

“Here we go!” cried Tammy as they all slid into the sea.



Waves washed over the turtles
and turned them upside down.
The sea was a wild place!
Hungry animals were there, too.

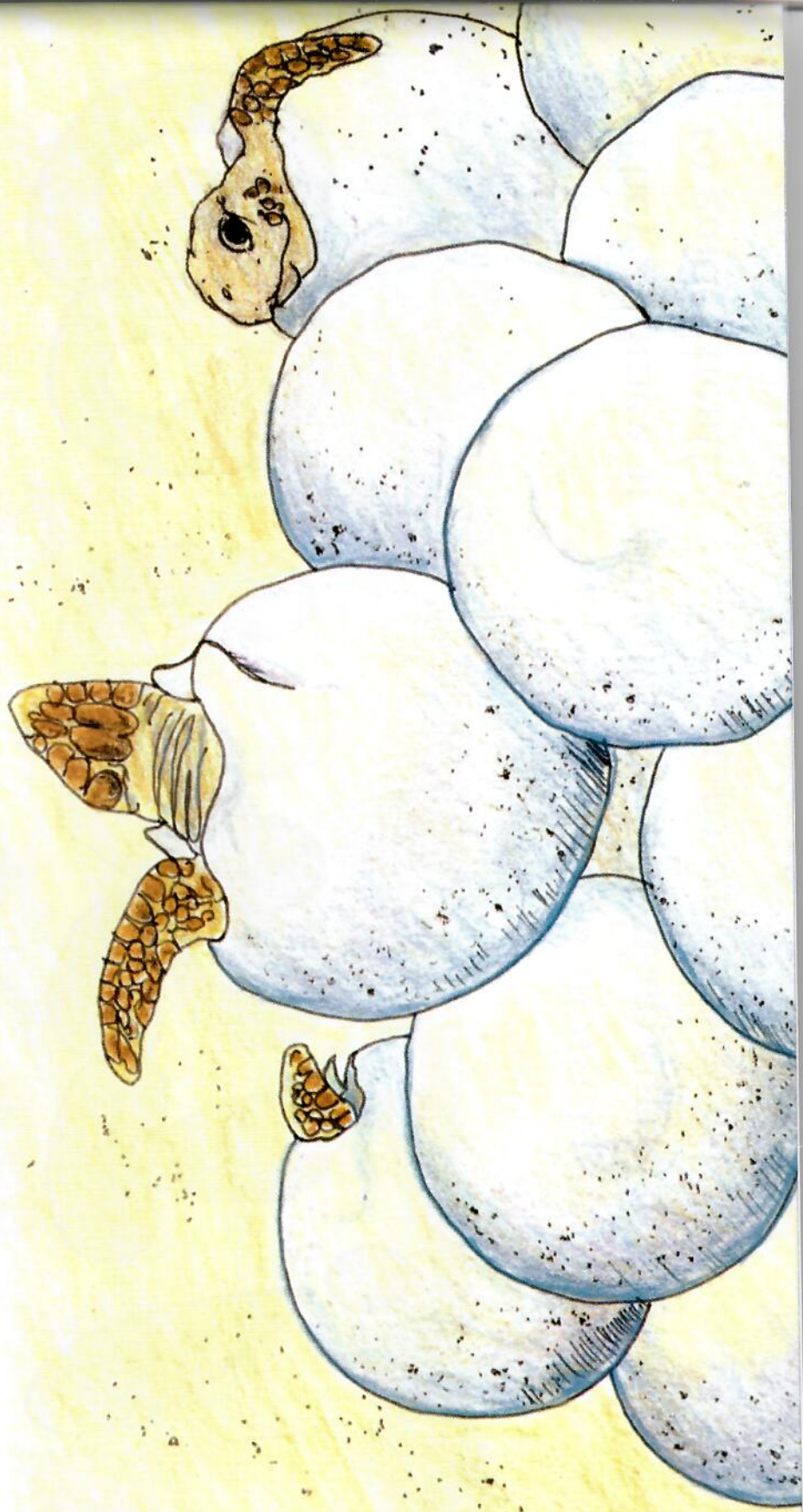
But every tiny turtle knew that it
should head for deeper water and...

GO FAST!

They all knew it without any grown-up turtle
to guide them!

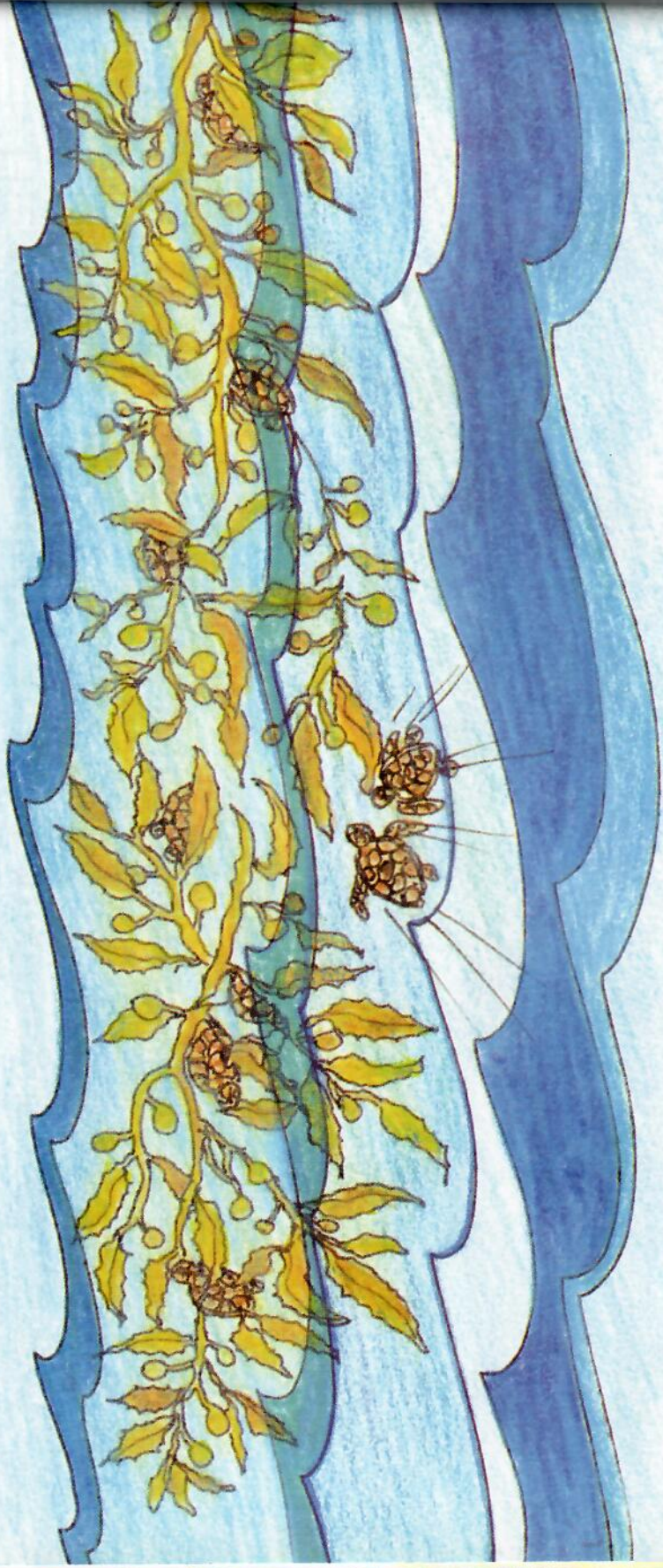
Nature had given them a source of energy
to escape their enemies.

For earlier, each tiny turtle
had absorbed yolk from its egg.
It gave them enough food to last three to five days.



The tiny turtles didn't stop for anything.
They swam as fast as they could
until they came to the Gulf Stream.



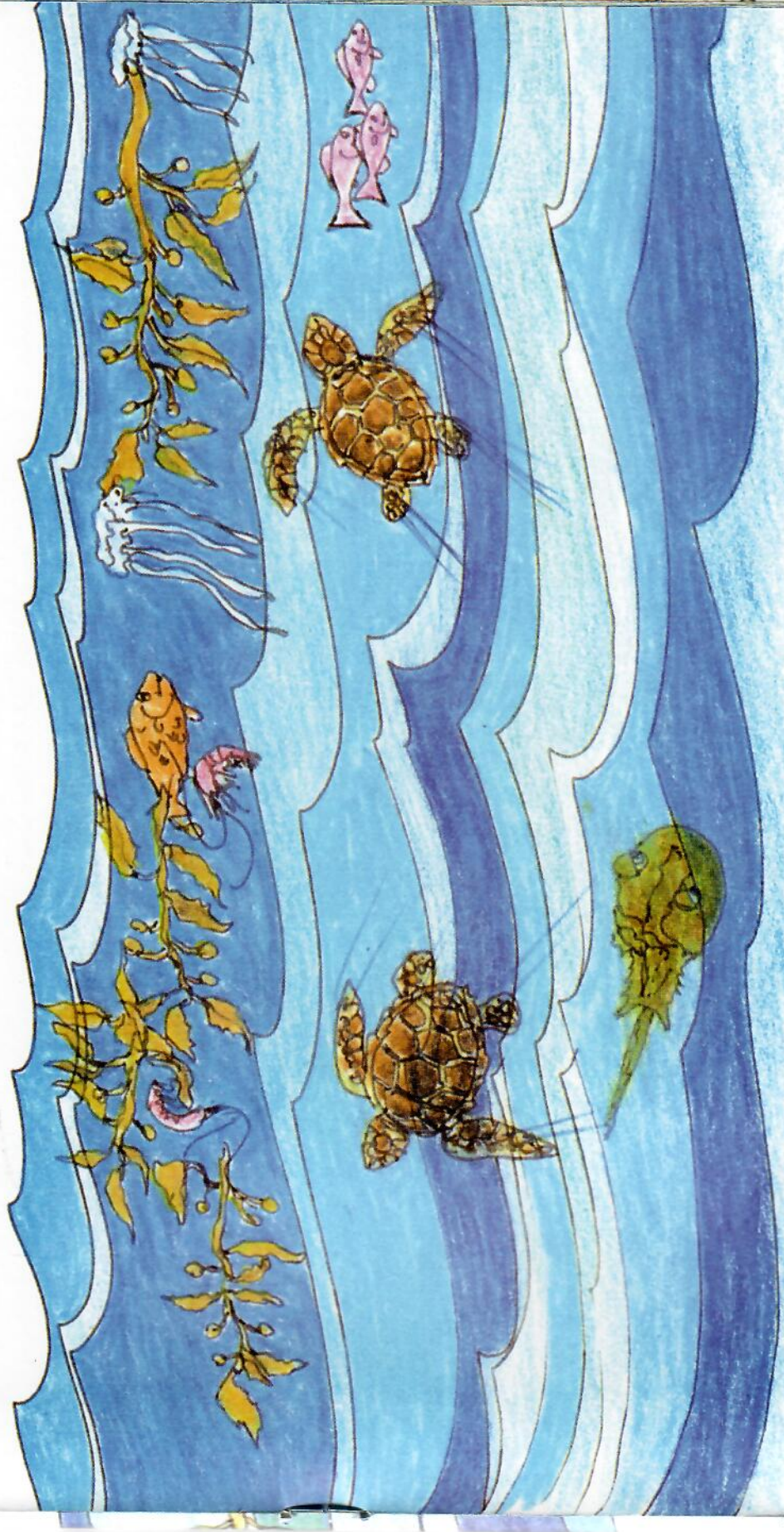


The water was warm in the Gulf Stream
and full of sea life.

A plant called sargassum weed floated in it.

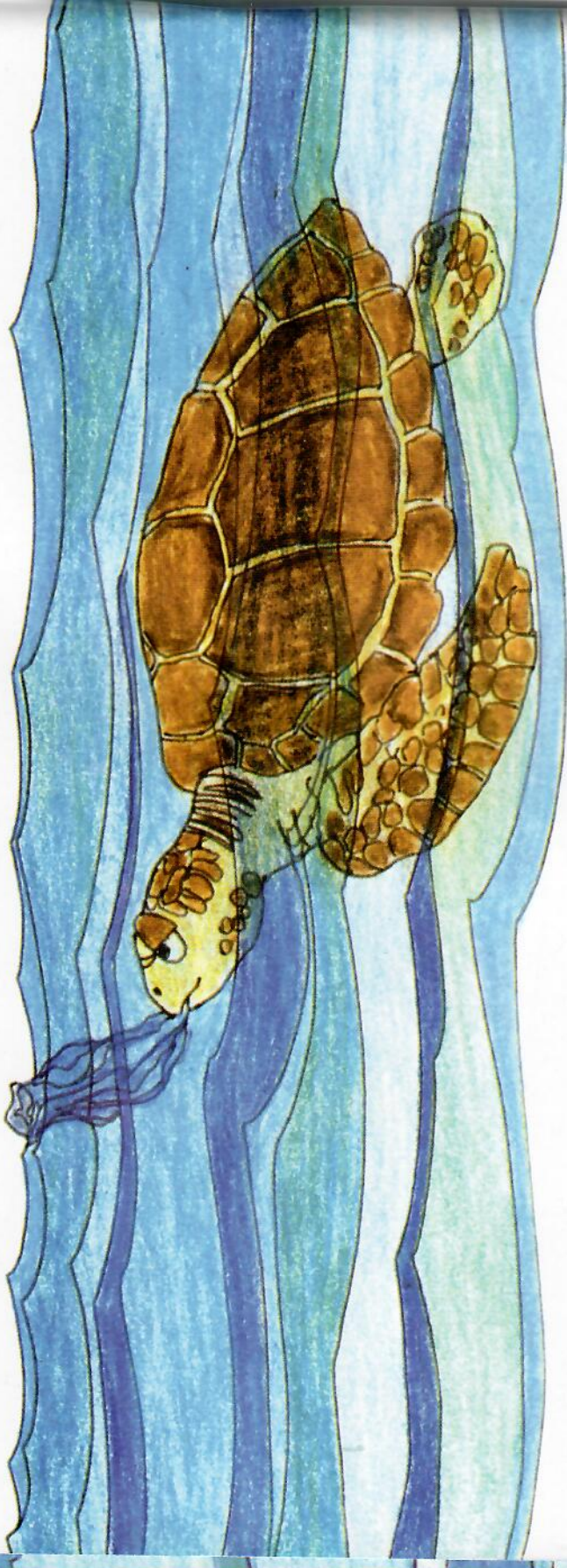
“Oh, we can hide in this seaweed,” said Tammy.

“And look for good things to eat,” added Tessie.



The little turtles did find plenty of food
in the Gulf Stream.

Later, they drifted apart and each one
swam and ate and grew larger.



Several years went by, and Tammy Turtle became big and strong.

One day, Tammy was looking for food.

She saw one of her favorite foods — jellyfish.

“Oh, I will gulp that down at once,” thought Tammy.

And she grabbed it with her big beak.



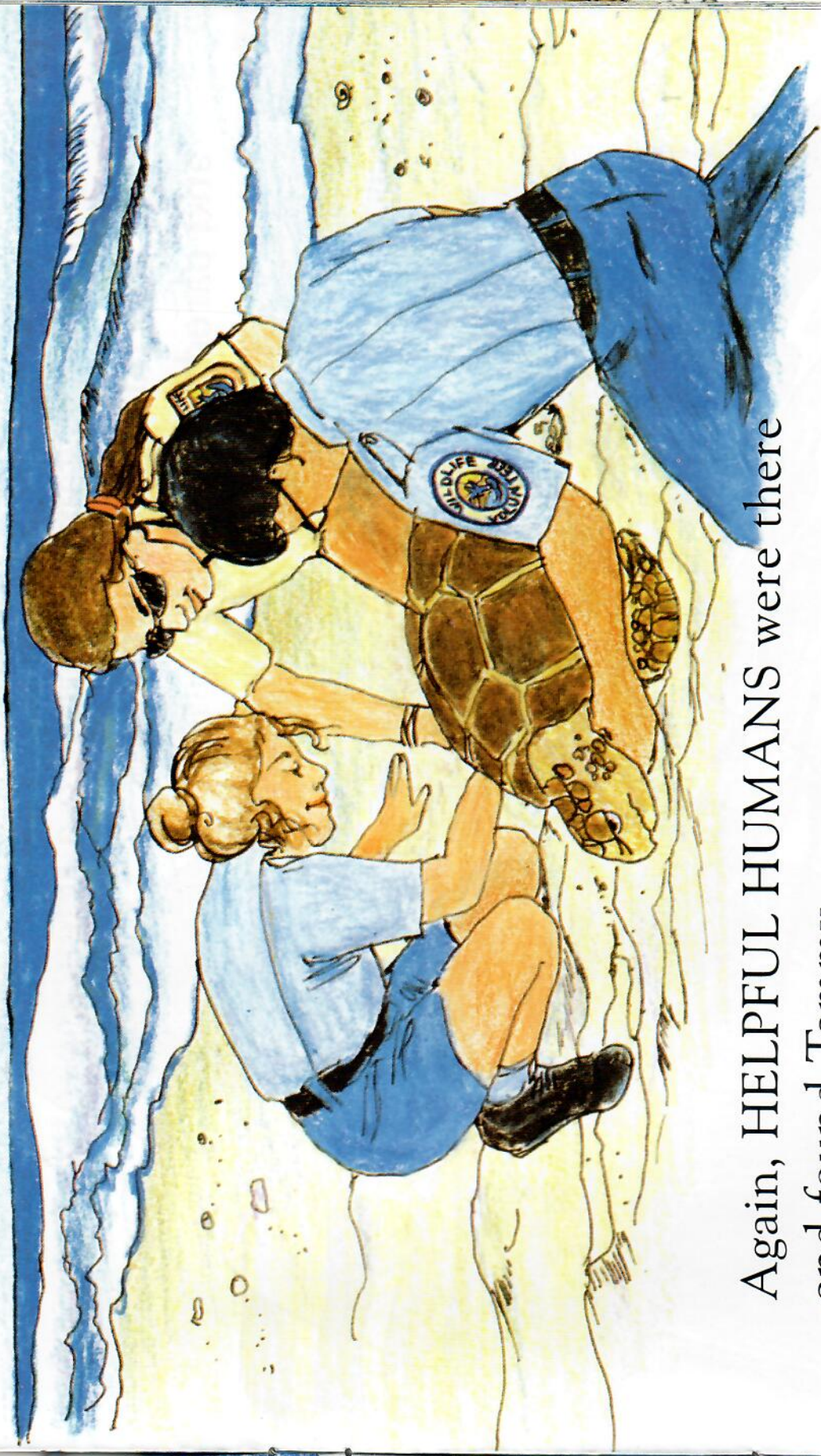
But it wasn't a jellyfish!

It was a plastic bag left by careless HUMANS.

Tammy Turtle felt sick after eating it.



She could not even swim well!!
Waves tossed the tired turtle
and washed her ashore.

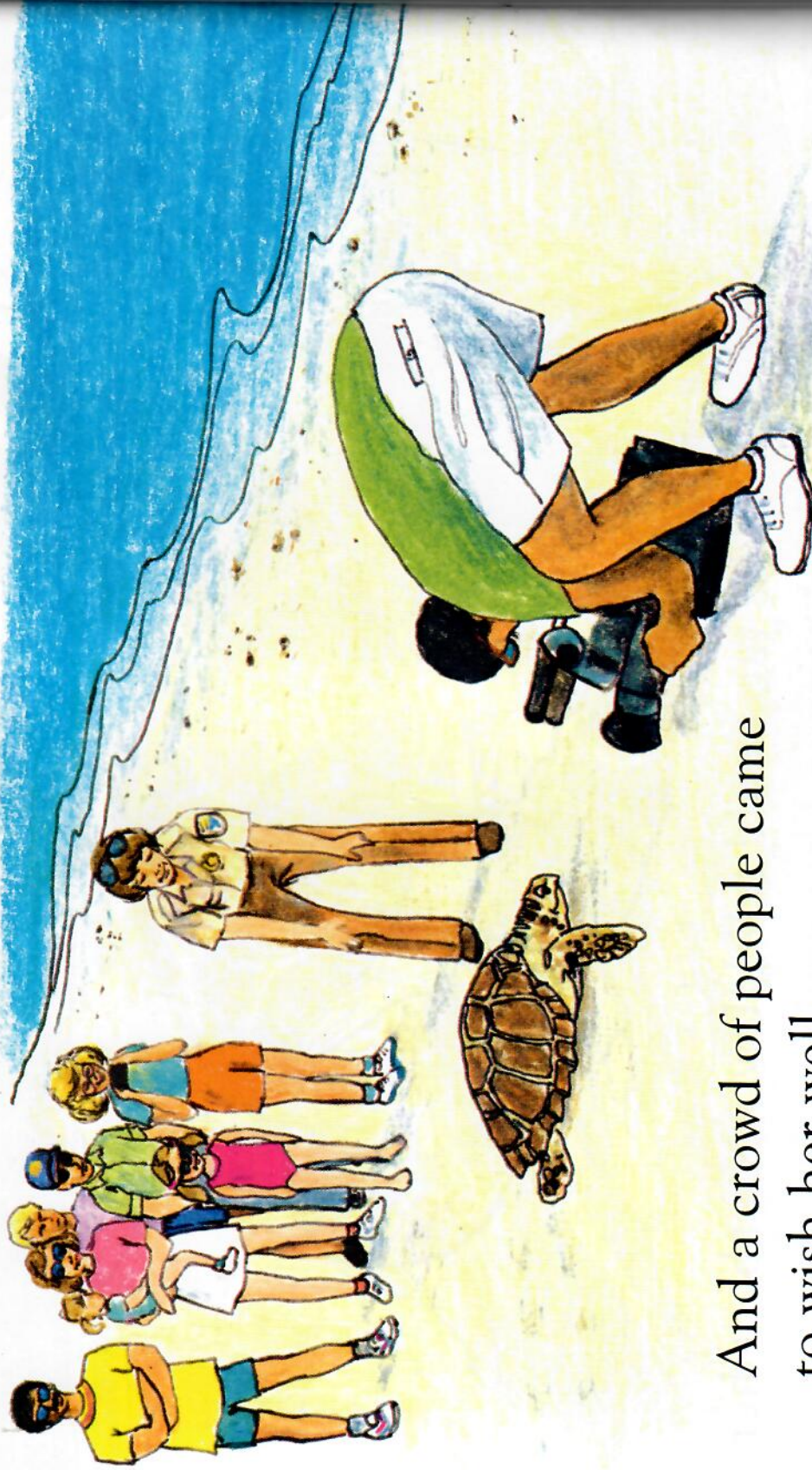


Again, HELPFUL HUMANS were there and found Tammy. “Maybe we can save this sea turtle!” they said. “We will take her to a place where she can rest and get well.”

So they took Tammy Turtle to a science center.
She was put into a large tank
and cared for everyday.



Then, they took Tammy to the beach.
A man came with his camera —
he put Tammy Turtle on TV!



And a crowd of people came
to wish her well.



Tammy thought, "HUMANS really do care about me.
But it's time to say goodbye."
And she crawled into the sea.

Time passed, and Tammy became
a fully grown mother turtle.



One dark night, she crawled ashore.
She came up on the beach to lay her eggs
in a sandy nest.

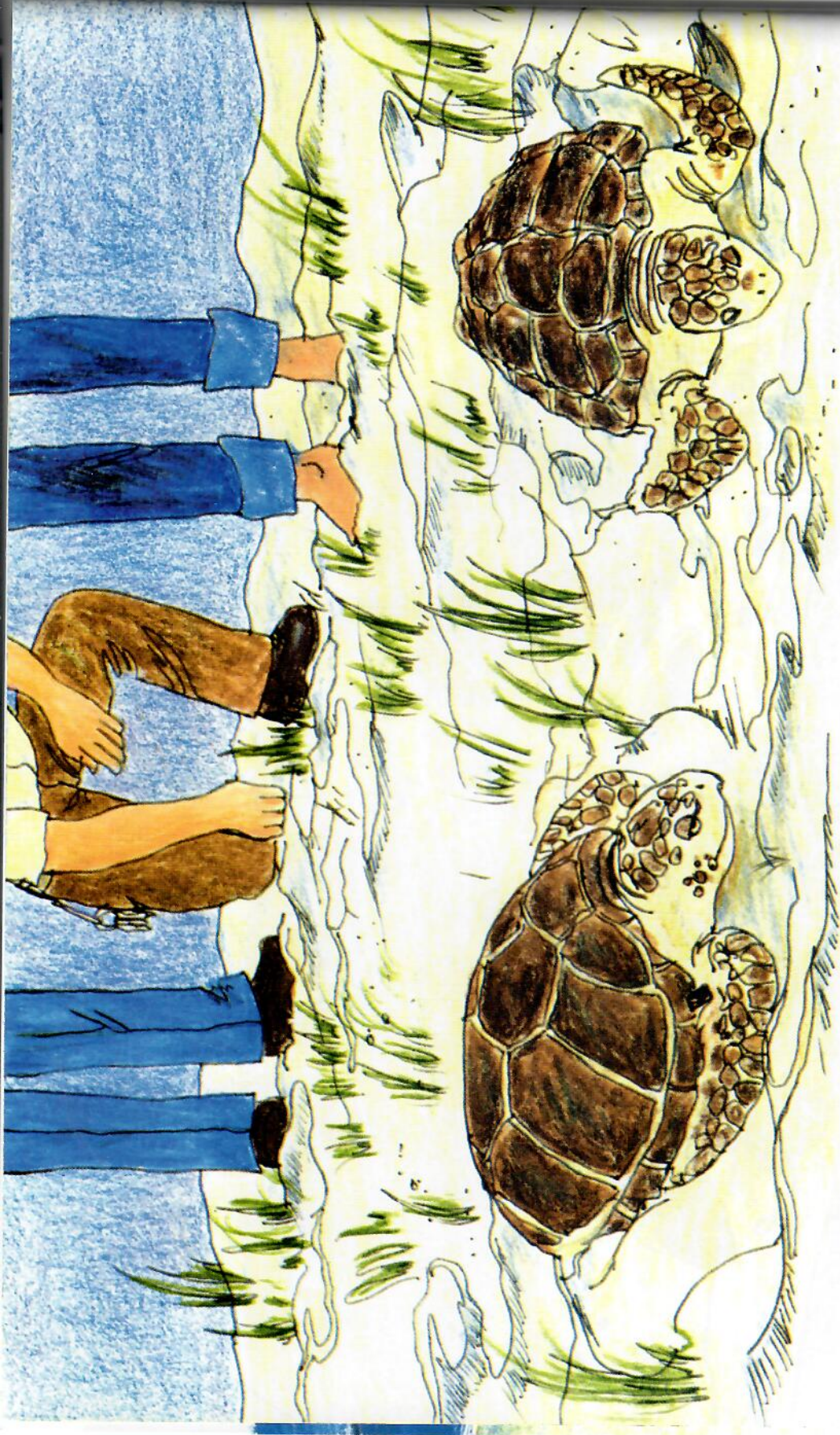
Soon, another turtle slowly
dragged herself out of the water.



“Tessie! Is that you?” cried Tammy.

“I’ve come to lay my eggs too,” answered Tessie.

It was most amazing! Tammy and Tessie had come back
near the beach of their birth to lay their eggs.



HELPFUL HUMANS came again to the beach
and quietly watched the mother turtles.
The big loggerheads dug deep nests in the sand
with their back flippers.



Tammy and Tessie acted as if they were in a daze.
They didn't notice the HUMANS at all.
The turtles quietly laid their eggs, and then —
using their flippers — covered the eggs with sand.



When Tammy and Tessie were finished,
they slowly crawled to the water.

They never looked back at their nests
and swam away in the sea —
just like their mother had done years before!

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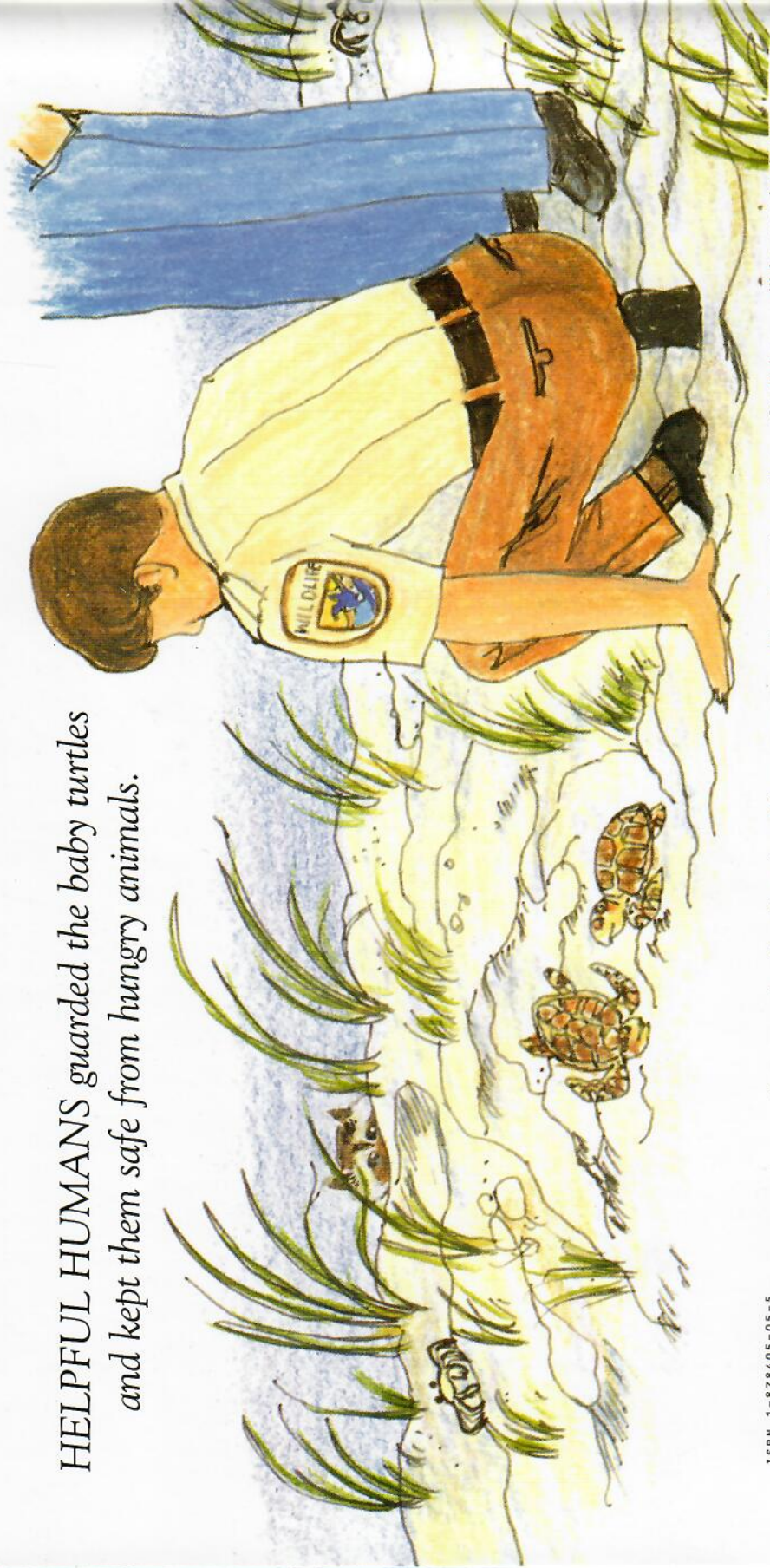
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*HELPFUL HUMANS guarded the baby turtles
and kept them safe from hungry animals.*



The most effective tool for conservation is education. Children will learn to love and appreciate sea turtles by getting to know Tammy. As adults, they'll remember that sea turtles need our help.

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