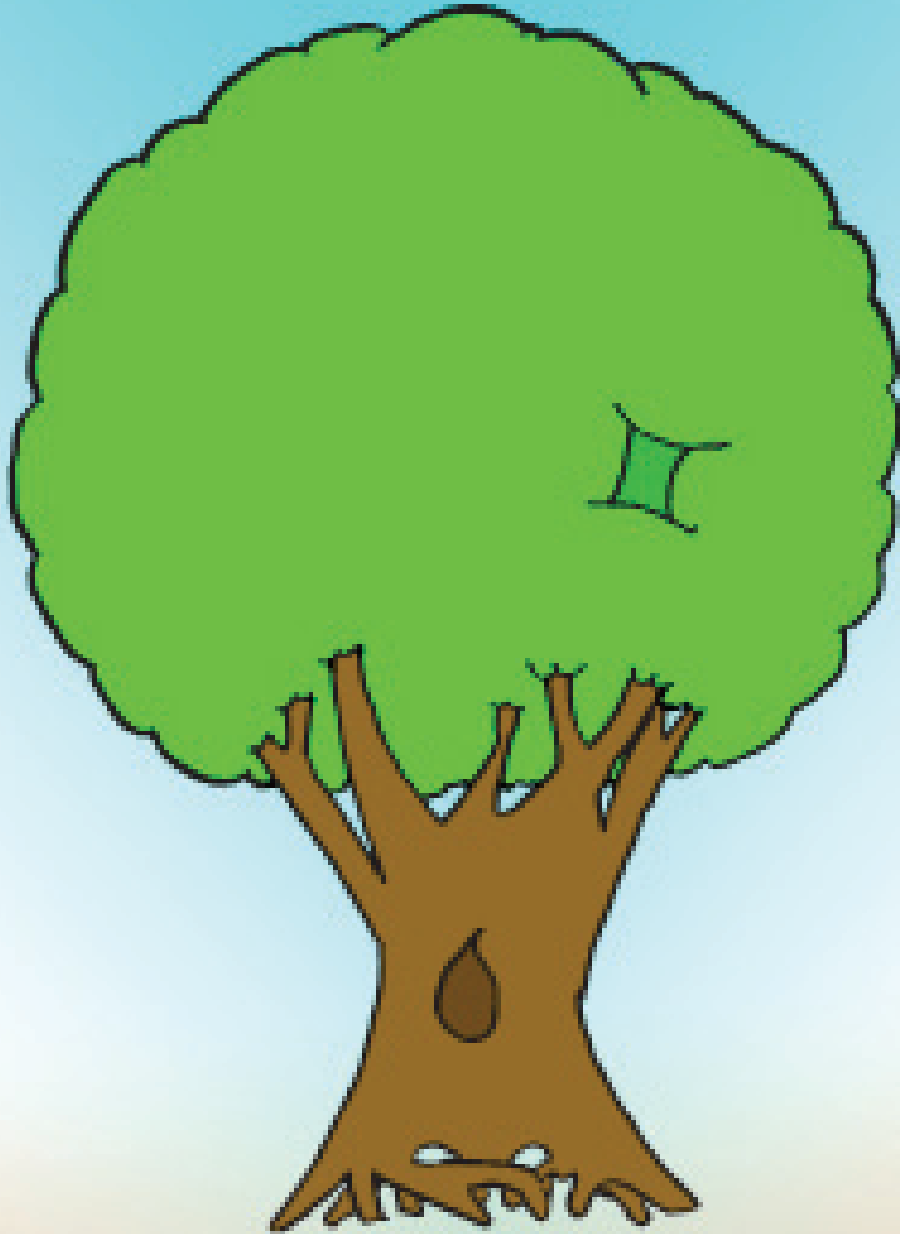


Uel Ma Bekai

The Sea Turtle and the Palau Megapode



Where do I Make My Nest?

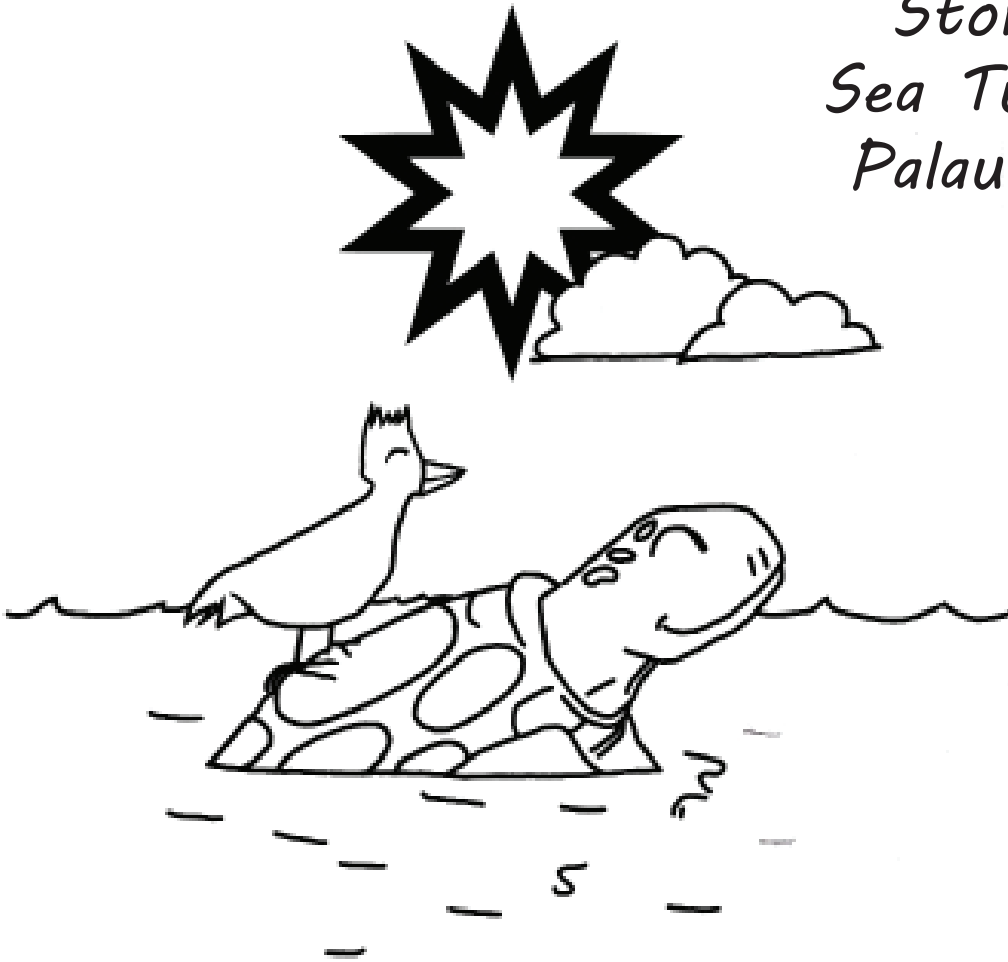
Acknowledgements

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Story of the Sea Turtle & the Palau Megapode



In Ngerchelong State, there is a story about the turtle and the megapode. Once there was a woman whose children were a turtle and a megapode. Every day, the two sisters would make a great mess. The turtle would dig holes and the megapode would build big mounds in the yard. When these siblings overheard their mother complaining about their bad luck giving birth to animals instead of humans, they were sad and devised a plan.

The turtle and the megapode decided that they should leave home, and they should find their place in this world. Early the next morning they went down to the beach and as they sat there, the megapode wondered how they would travel out to the sea.

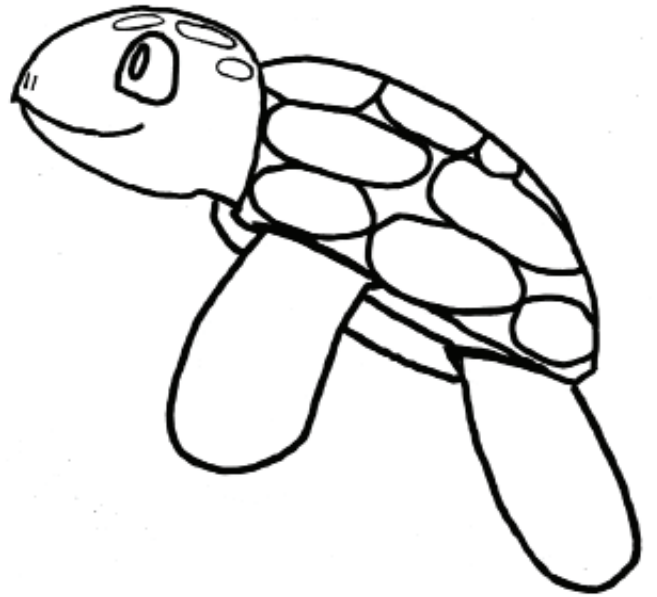
The turtle said to his sibling, "Don't worry, hop on my back and I will do the swimming."

So they travelled to where they found an island where the megapode decided to settle down. The turtle said she would continue further out to sea.

Before they parted ways, the megapode said to the turtle, "Make sure that when it is time for you to have your children, put them up on the sand where they have a greater chance of surviving and I will be able to assist them."

And to this day, that is the behavior of the megapode - it makes its nest in the sand close to turtle nests, where it brings leaves down to the shore for turtle hatchlings to take cover under. Thus wherever there are turtle nests, you can find a megapode nest nearby.

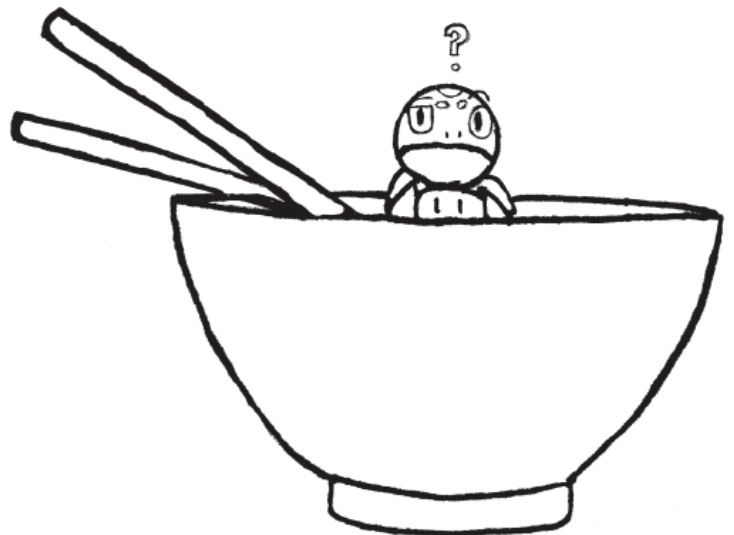
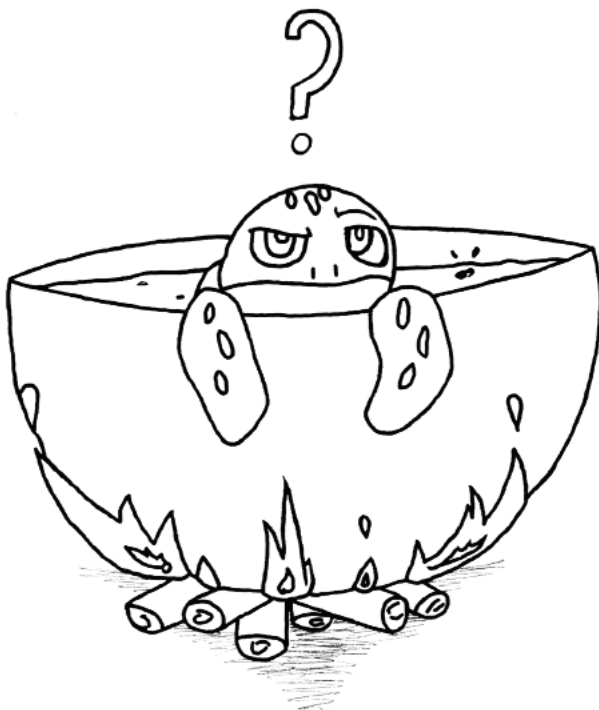
Turtles in Palau



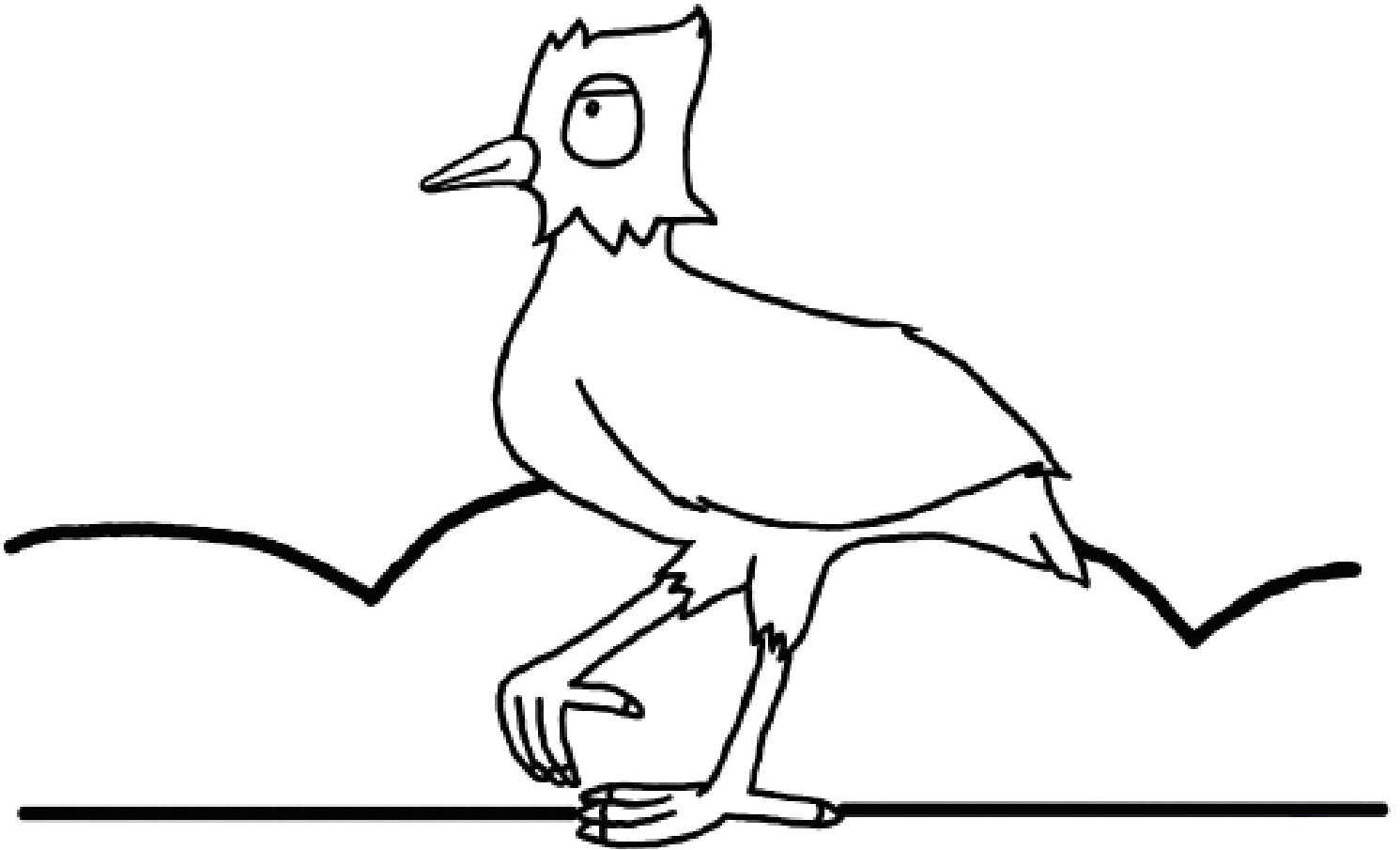
The most common turtles found in Palau are the green turtle and the hawksbill turtle.

Turtles have been a traditional food for Palauans, but recent declines in population have called for a moratorium on taking hawksbill turtles.

Hawksbill turtle shells have been traditionally used for customary plates (“toluk”) and adornments for first childbirth ceremonies.

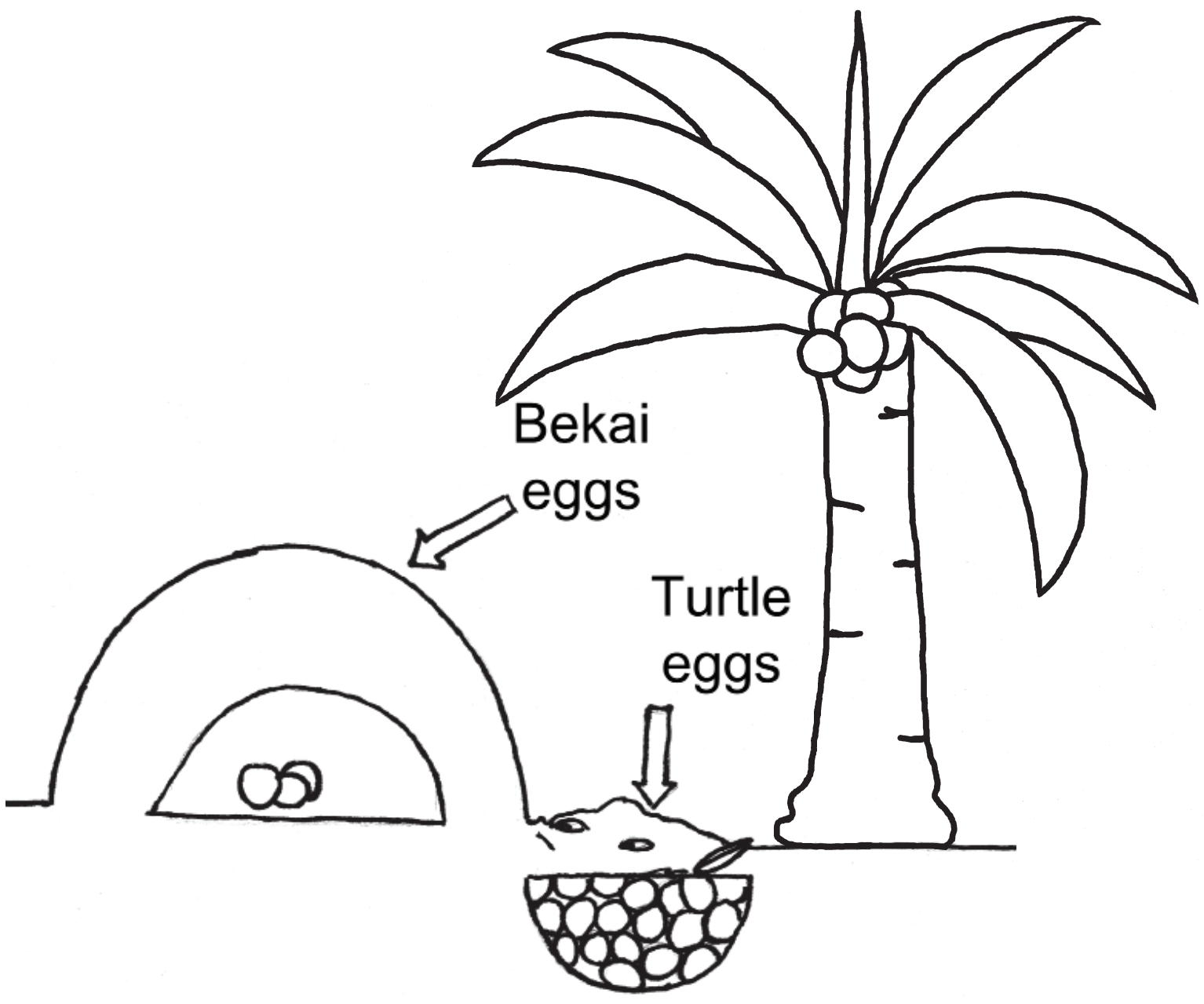


The Unique Palau Megapode



Palau Megapode - Megapodius laperouse senex "BEKAI" - An endangered species. They are found in small populations in Palau, especially the forested islands of northern Peleliu and Ngerchelong, which provide habitats for landbirds as well as shorebirds. The endangered Palau Megapode is a landbird which has several active nesting mounds ("Ongiong") on the islands. The megapodes share their forest habitat with shorebirds that roost in the treetops. The BEKAI are always nesting close to where their sisters, the turtles, nest.

Turtles live their lives at sea, but always return to the place where they were born to nest. Their sister, the bekai, always makes her nest next to the turtle's nest.



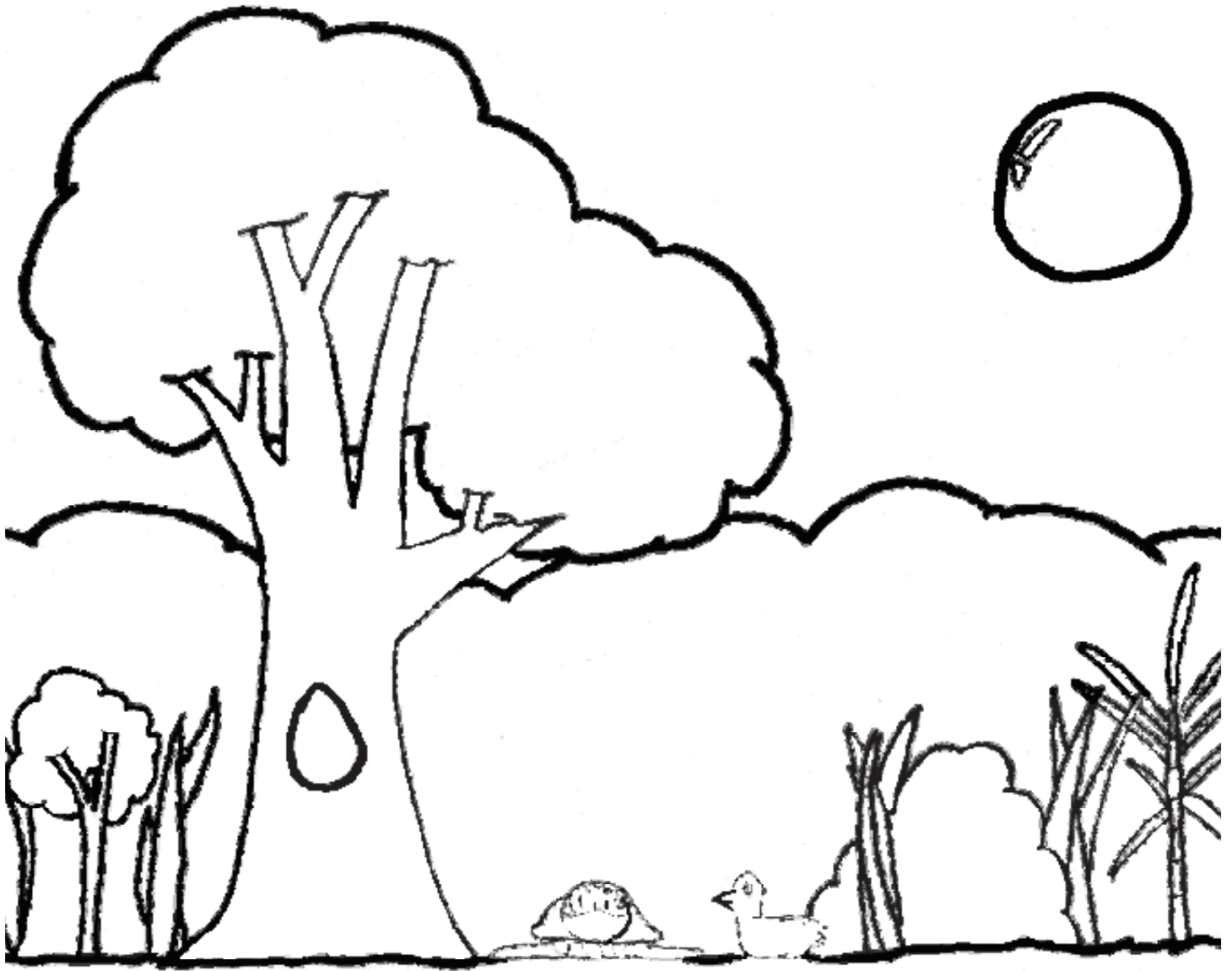
On the evening of the full moon, the turtle came from the sea to lay her eggs, but was confused and frightened by the flip-flops, soda cans, water bottles, straws and foam pieces that littered the beach.



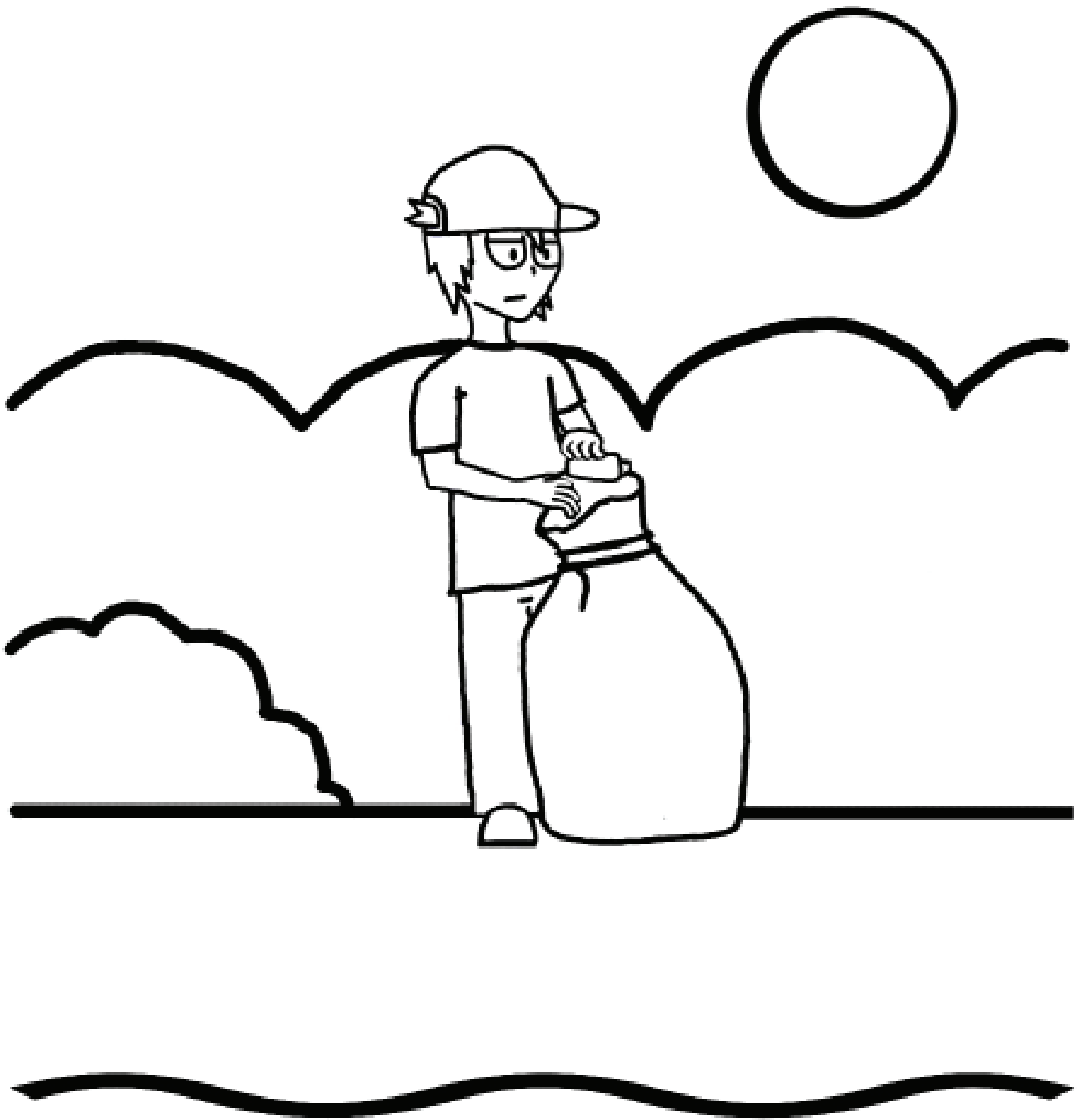
The megapode met the turtle on the beach and asked each other “Where did all of these things come from?”

She was also frightened, and soon they both became entangled in marine debris.

So they sat on the soft sand under the bright full moon and talked about the days when their island's beach was beautifully clean and free of trash.



When the moon set, the turtle and the megapode fell asleep under the btaches tree.



Sometime later, they woke up to the sound of young children who walked along the beach collecting the trash.

One of the children, a young girl, walked up to the turtle and megapode to say hello.



*“My name is Reng,” the young girl told them.
“You are the Uel and the Bekai. We are here to help you by taking the trash so you can make a good nest for your eggs.”*

“That’s true,” the turtle told her. “With all of this trash, my eggs will not incubate properly.”



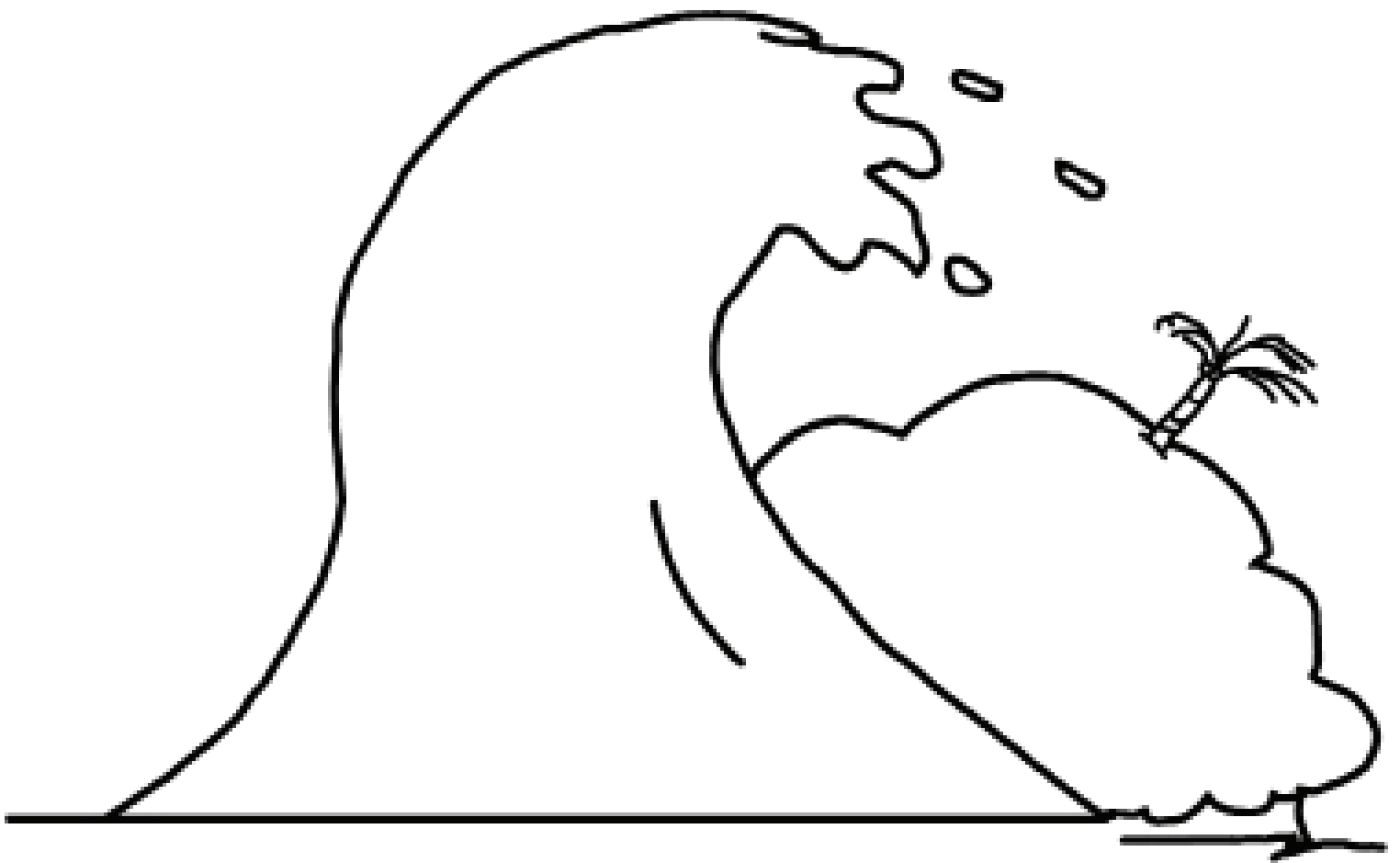
“The plastics and other trash will let the heat escape from the nest and I think so many of my eggs will not hatch.”

Then the bekai spoke. "Thank you, but where does all of this trash come from?"

"From us," Reng told her with tears. "We use these mostly to hold our food, then we throw these onto the land."

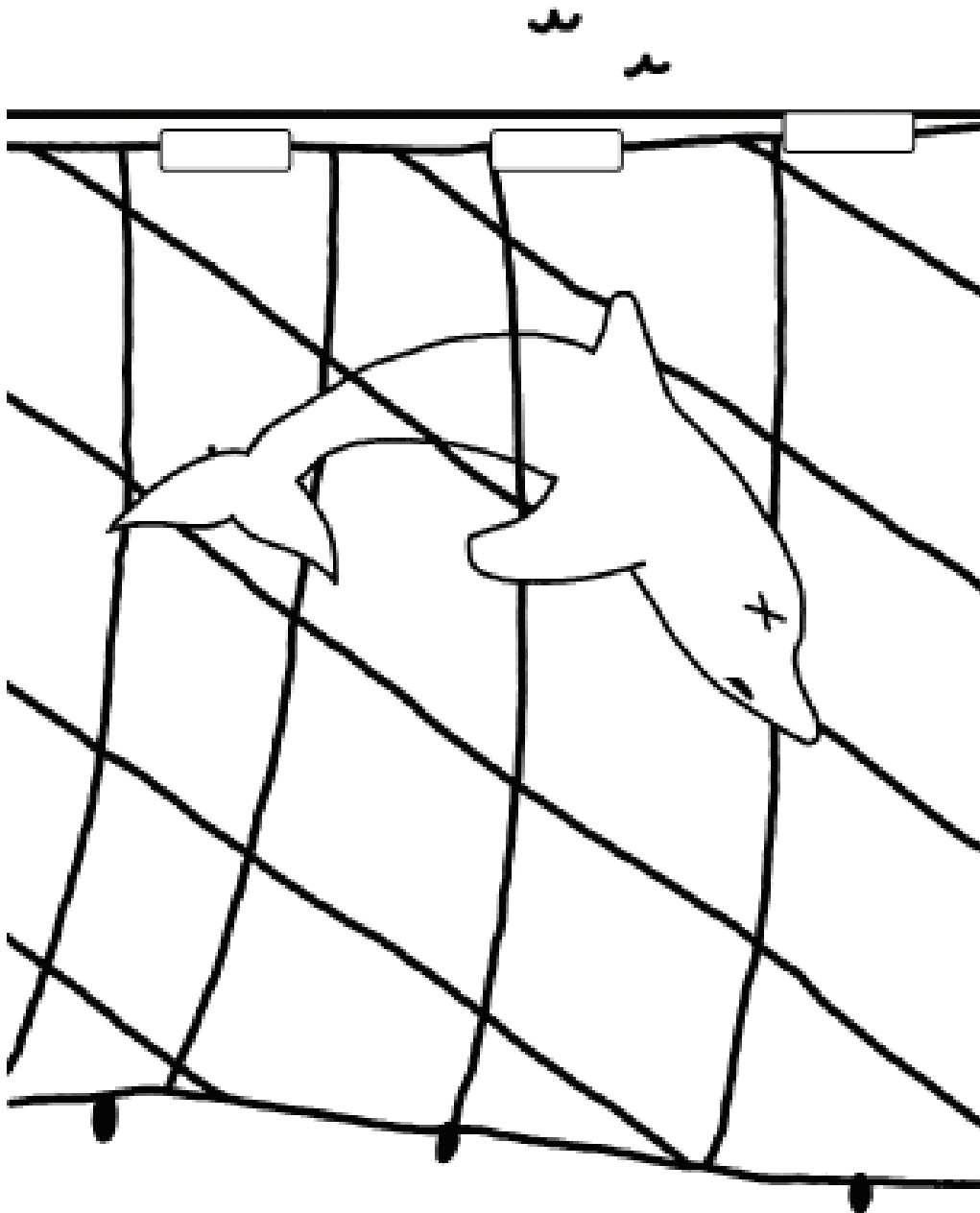


“When the rains come, these trash wash into the ocean. When there is a strong wind or typhoon, or the waves are big, the trash is washed into the middle of the oceans. It’s called Marine Debris.”



“All the marine debris floating in the ocean travels with the wind and current, making huge garbage patches in the ocean’s gyres.”

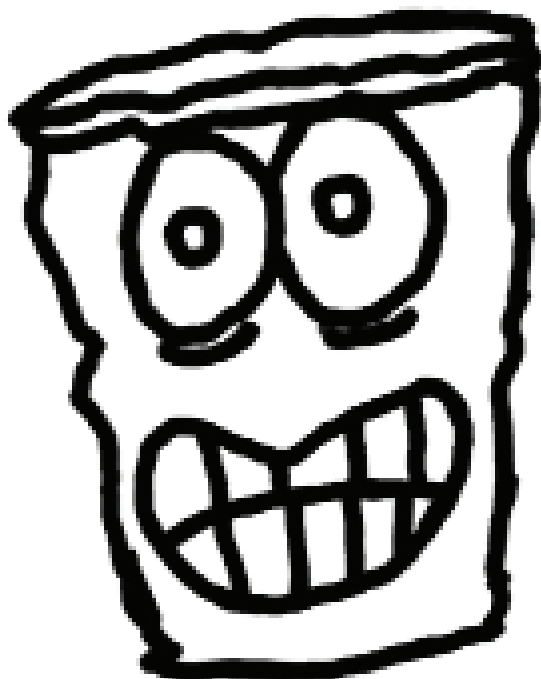
Sometimes fishermen lose their nets and these float at sea, trapping and killing marine life. They are called ghost nets.”



“Many birds and animals mistake the Marine Debris for food and the plastic fills their stomachs.”

“Some washes up on islands far, far away, like this island. Marine Debris can be tiny microplastics or huge floating docks. It hurts animals and eventually, it will hurt people.”

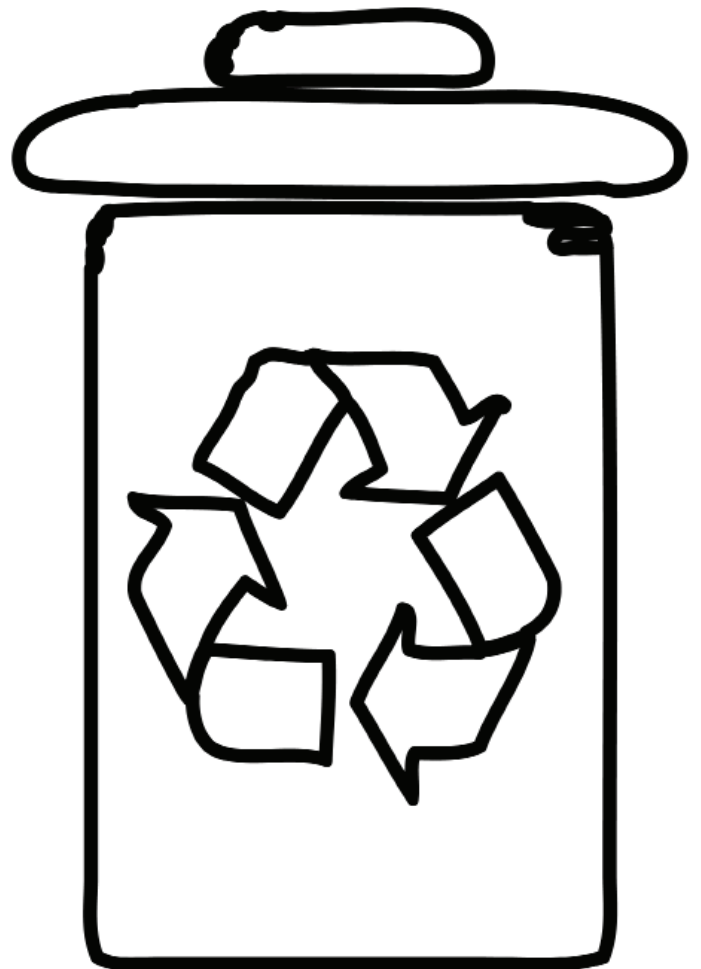
*“Thank you Reng for trying to help. Will all of this trash disappear now?”
Asked the turtle.*



*“I wish, but all the people in the world need to help, and I’ll tell you how,”
Reng replied.*

REDUCE REUSE RECYCLE

“First, we Reduce, Reuse and Recycle plastics and other materials. In my home, I have a container just for recycling plastics, glass and metals.”

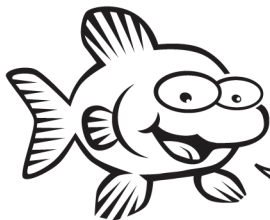


“Second, we keep cleaning beaches like this one and count what we collect, then report to local and international government agencies who are comparing data and looking for solutions.”



“Third, we make sure marine life is safe and we help them when we can.”

How Can I Help?



Beach or coastal cleanups can be found in many communities. During these cleanups, kids and adults work together to collect the trash that has entered their waterways. Cleanups make the environment a cleaner, safer place for people and animals.

Unscramble the words below to reveal how you can help!

I F D N

T U O

F I

E H R T E

S I

A

L T A C S O A

L A P U C E N

N I

O Y R U

T C I M Y O M N U

Answer:

FIND OUT IF THERE IS A COASTAL CLEANUP
IN YOUR COMMUNITY.

TONS OF TRASH!



Litter is generated by many sources, from boats and oil rigs on the water to picnickers, fishermen, and beachgoers along the shore. Hidden below is a list of objects that have been discarded into our oceans. See if you can find them all!

N	B	A	B	I	H	O	S	E	A	T	M	R	G
E	G	U	T	A	C	A	N	C	E	W	E	L	L
K	L	R	C	R	L	A	R	N	R	N	O	U	A
T	O	A	P	K	C	L	G	D	I	A	K	M	S
R	V	D	O	A	E	N	O	A	H	W	T	B	S
A	E	I	D	W	I	T	T	O	A	A	M	E	B
S	H	O	E	H	D	N	G	R	N	L	T	R	O
H	S	W	S	B	O	T	T	L	E	C	A	P	T
B	K	I	P	C	T	S	J	B	U	R	G	Y	T
A	F	U	T	D	I	A	P	E	R	D	O	L	L
G	C	I	G	A	R	E	T	T	E	U	T	P	E
W	A	N	X	O	E	U	O	H	B	A	S	N	E
B	F	I	S	H	I	N	G	L	I	N	E	H	M

These hidden words are found horizontally, vertically and diagonally.

- | | | | | |
|----------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|-----------|
| BAIT CONTAINER | CRATE | FISHING NET | LUMBER | SHOE |
| BALLOON | CUP | GLASS BOTTLE | PAINT BRUSH | SODA CAN |
| BUCKET | DIAPER | GLOVE | RADIO | STRAW |
| BUOY | DOLL | HARD HAT | ROPE | TIRE |
| CIGARETTE | FISHING LINE | HOSE | RUG | TRASH BAG |



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