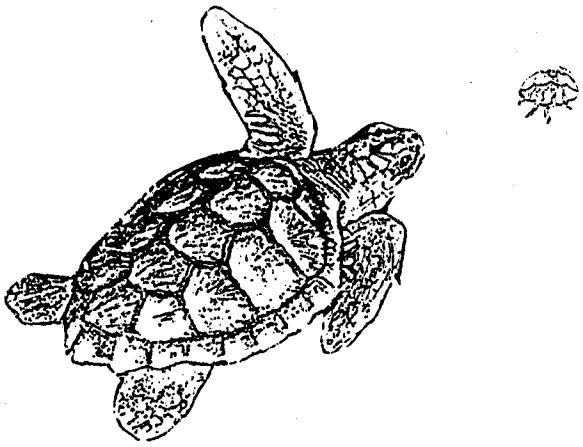
LOGGERHEADLINES



Sea Turtle News from South Carolina

August - November, 2001

***Greetings*!**

To everyone in this, our last issue of *Loggerheadlines* for the 2001 season. It has been a season with some good news, but more bad news.

Strandings

The total number of strandings for 2001 was 12.5 % below last year and the lowest since 1994. That's the good news. Unfortunately, it was also a season with high numbers of dead adults. Except for July, the numbers are very similar to last year. This is only the second year in the last two decades that there were no strandings in October. There were 86 loggerheads, five green turtles, 20 Kemp's ridley, one leatherback and seven unidentified for a total of 119 for the season.

Rehabilitation

A comatose, juvenile Kemp's ridley was caught in a shrimper's try net. It was resuscitated by the captain and brought to the DNR veterinarian, Dr. Al Segars. He examined the turtle, gave it fluids and held it over night. It appeared to be lively, but just as a caution, Dr. Segars wanted it observed over the weekend. We transported it to the Animal Holding Facility of the South Carolina Aquarium. On Friday it was swimming vigorously and trying to get out of the tank. By Sunday, it was dead. Necropsy determined that the intestine had "telescoped" back upon itself. This condition is known as intussusception and is brought about by severe stress.

The loggerhead, "Kiawah", that stranded in May is still at the Sea Turtle Hospital at Topsail Island, NC. The latest news from them is: "Kiawah has responded to the great attention given over the summer, thanks in part to the wonderful care given by the summer interns. She has become a strong and feisty sea turtle, able to leap across the tank in a single bound for the treat of fresh crab.
You can monitor its progress at:
http://www.seaturtlehospital.org/kiawah.html.

Necropsy Summary

Post–mortems were performed on six loggerhead turtles in August and September. There were five males and one female. The female stranded alive at Surfside Beach with extensive shark bites and was taken to ARC Animal Hospital and euthanized. The turtle was emaciated, had an empty GI tract, a heavy barnacle load and was thus logged in as chronic mortality despite the shark attack. One male was too badly decomposed to assess. Two other males appeared in good health with abundant body fat, while another male had an empty GI tract and heavy barnacle load. The final male contained no food, but looked to be in excellent health otherwise.

Two males that stranded in the Myrtle Beach area of the coast contained ark shells as almost the sole food item. Bill Anderson, in the Marine Resources Division, identified them as blood ark. Blood arks are usually found in shallow water, near shore and in inlets and estuaries. Arks are gregarious, usually found in high densities when you do locate them,

similar to other bivalves. There is no fishery for this species in South Carolina.

Nesting News

A few more nests were laid since the last update. Here are the nesting totals as sent in by each of the nest protection projects with a comparison to last season's nesting totals. Only six of the 21 beaches experienced an increase over last year. The overall decline for all beaches reporting was 20%.

Nesting Activity Update

Through August 31, 2001

Thru 7/31	2001	*2000*	Diff.
Myrtle Beach S. P.	0	*4*	-100%
Huntington Beach S. P.	7	*14*	-50%
S.C.U.T.E.	45	*75*	-40%
South Island	94	*116*	-19%
Cape Island	536	*615*	-13%
Lighthouse Island	125	*221*	-43%
Dewees Island	5	*1*	400%
Sullivans/Isle of Palms	23	*36*	-36%
Folly Beach	48	*51*	-6%
Kiawah Island	156	*205*	-24%
Seabrook Island	16	*14*	14%
Botany Bay Isl & Plan	130	*179*	-27%
Edingsville Beach	36	*33*	9%
Edisto Beach S. P.	44	*54*	-19%
Edisto Beach	67	*50*	34%
Harbor Island	34	*52*	-35%
Hunting Island	43	*32*	34%
Fripp Island	43	*37*	16%
Pritchards Island	65	*106*	-39%
St. Phillips Island	12	*14*	-14%
Hilton Head Island	110	*129*	-15%
TOTAL	1639	*2038*	-20%

Nests Lost to Storm Tides:

During mid September, the coastal areas experienced another spring tide flooding event in association with tropical storm Gabrielle. This event was more severe than the one in July, but at least more of the nests had hatched. More nests were inundated and destroyed by storm-driven tides. Moving from north to south, the following beaches experienced damage to or loss of nests from both storms.

Summer Storms 2001			
Beach	**Nests Lost 7/21**	**Nests Lost 9/15**	**Total Lost**
Myrtle Beach S.P.			0
Huntington Beach S.P.		1	1
S.C.U.T.E.			0
South Island	15	7	22
Cape/Lighthouse			0
Dewees Island	5		5
Isle of Palms/Sullivans	1		1
Folly Beach			0
Kiawah Island	19	7	26
Seabrook Island			0
Botany Island	5		5
Botany Plantation			0
Edingsville Beach			0
Edisto Beach S. P.	2		2
Edisto Beach	2	1	3
Harbor Island	9	3	12
Hunting Island S. P.			0
Fripp Island		5	5
Pritchards Island	15	3	18
St. Phillips Island	3		3
Hilton Head Island	24	15	39
Totals	100	42	142

Regional News

The state coordinators for North Carolina and Georgia responded that there is not much going on to report. That's some more good news.

Research

Our University of Charleston intern, DuBose Griffin, has completed a preliminary analysis of the five loggerheads that were tracked by satellite telemetry in 1998. DuBose has used GIS and remote sensing applications to

characterize internesting habitat, migratory corridors and swimming speeds and the size, depth and temperature regimes of resident foraging areas. We have submitted two abstracts to the symposium Program Committee and hope they are accepted. If so, we will be spending the next several months putting together both an oral presentation and a poster for the 22nd Annual Sea Turtle Symposium in Miami next April.

Notes from the Field

Pritchards Island

One positive highlight of our summer was the four "shadowing" students that worked with the project this season. Three high school students and one middle school student from Beaufort County worked twice a week to help staff with beach patrols, nest protection, data entry and other research projects that were conducted on the island. The students, Dylan Murphy (a 3-year veteran), Jill Eidson, Christina Soberal and Lyndsay Walker, learned conservation and data management techniques while gaining valuable scientific field skills. The students were treated to a special day when Bo VonHarten (Island Manager for Pritchards) was shrimp trawling in his small outboard boat and live captured a juvenile Kemp's ridley sea turtle. The students were able to observe the turtle before its safe release back into the ocean. --*Amber VonHarten*

South Island

The green turtle nest that was laid on July 7 had a hatch success of 91.27%---*Emily Nicar*

Folly Beach

Marty Morganello, a member of the Folly Beach Turtle Team and also facilities manager at the SC Aquarium, was injured in an unusual accident when an automobile jumped the curb and pinned him against a building. He has undergone two surgeries to repair crushing injuries to his arm and leg, but is now recovering at home. We all wish him well.

Announcements & Events

On August 6th, invitation letters, jointly signed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service, were sent to seven individuals requesting their participation on a new Atlantic Loggerhead Sea Turtle Recovery Team. The team is charged with revising the existing Recovery Plan, which was approved On December 26, 1991. Since that time, significant research has been accomplished and important conservation and recovery activities have been undertaken. As a result, we have a greater knowledge of the species and its status. These advances in our understanding of the loggerhead make a revision to the Recovery Plan necessary.

Recovery team members are:

Alan Bolten, Archie Carr Center for Sea Turtle Research, University of Florida,
Larry Crowder, Duke University,
Mark Dodd, Georgia DNR,
Sandy MacPherson, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service,
Jack Musick, Virginia Institute of Marine Science, College of William & Mary,
Barbara Schroeder, National Marine Fisheries Service, and
Blair Witherington, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

22nd Annual Symposium on Sea Turtle Biology and Conservation

You are invited to attend the 22nd Annual Symposium on Sea Turtle Biology and Conservation. The Symposium will be held at the Wyndham Miami-Biscayne Bay Hotel from 4-7 April 2002. There will be oral and poster presentations as well as workshops, the auction and awards banquet. The symposium brings together sea turtle scientists and conservations from all over the world. If you'd like to "hob knob" with them in Miami, it will be worth the trip!! For more information, the web site is <http://www.seaturtle.org>

South Carolina Aquarium

The 200-pound male loggerhead turtle is now residing in a new home in the Great Ocean Tank. After a much-publicized "Name the Turtle" contest, the name chosen was "Caretta". He seems to be doing well in his new home, including biting the divers at feeding time. The turtle's début was part of a two-month celebration entitled ***Revel on the River: Entirely Turtles***, which included new temporary turtle exhibits and educational programming highlighting these popular animals. --- Angel *Passailaigue, SCA*

Thanks to all of you on the Sea Turtle Stranding and Salvage Network (STSSN) and who work on the Sea Turtle Nest Protection Projects for a great job this year under some trying times. We thank you for all your efforts and wish everyone a happy holiday season and a restful winter. See you next spring.

Sally Murphy, *State Coordinator*
Charlotte Hope, *Biologist*
DuBose Griffin, *Intern, Sea Turtle Desk*
Joan Seithel, *Technical Assistant*

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