



LOGGERHEADLINES

Sea Turtle News
from
South Carolina

August-September 1998

GREETINGS

Strandings

Strandings have continued to wash ashore during the end of the summer and beginning of the fall. There were 15 strandings in August and 18 in September. Three of these strandings were Kemps Ridleys, all of which washed ashore on Harbor Island.

The eggs from July's green sea turtle stranding did not develop. When they were removed from the female they were covered in her blood and had traveled from Myrtle Beach to Donnelley WMA before being reburied at Folly Beach. Not ideal conditions for nest relocation! But it was worth the try, and we appreciate the attention given to the nest by the Folly Beach Sea Turtle Patrol.

Nesting

As you may have read in the *Charleston Post and Courier Newspaper*, South Carolina had three other green sea turtle nests this year. The first was laid on July 17th on the Isle of Palms. It was identified as a green turtle nest when it hatched and the beach patrol saw the hatchlings. The other two nests were laid in Garden City on August 28th and September 29th, with 27 and 108

eggs, respectively. One of the nests laid in Garden City has already been deemed infertile. We're still waiting to see if the second nest will be successful. We applaud the SCUTE turtle team for identifying these unusual nests and appreciate the close eye they've kept on them.

Green sea turtles dig a very large body pit, sometimes over a foot deep. Their body pits are often described as looking like a bomb crater.

The hatchlings are countershaded with a white plastron and black carapace. There is also white lining around the edge of the flippers. (Countershading is a predator avoidance technique found in some turtles, fish and mammals. Since the animal is lighted from above, a light or white underside helps them be less visible when viewed from underneath. A dark upper surface helps them avoid detection by predators looking down on them.)

Research

We reported earlier this year that satellite transmitters were placed on five nesting females at Cape Island. Two of the turtles moved north along the East Coast. One stopped around the North

Carolina-Virginia line and the other was last heard from off New Jersey. Three moved south into Florida and are offshore at Flagler Beach, Amelia Island, and Vero Beach. The information from this study will help us better understand the loggerhead's migration routes, habitat use, and what threats they may encounter as adults during the non-nesting season. Location data is sent to our email each morning.

This project is being featured on the SC DNR homepage, at www.dnr.state.sc.us. Our project also can be found on the Caribbean Conservation Corporation's homepage at www.cccturtle.org. Other tracking studies can be found here as well. The CCC homepage also has a wealth of information on sea turtles. Another web site you might be interested in is: members.aol.com/saveturtle/websites.htm.

Most nesting projects have completed hatching inventories. We'll be looking forward to receiving each project's report on the season. Please remember to answer all of the questions included in the report outline. In addition to these questions, please fill out the year end nesting data form. (Both the outline and nesting data form were handed out at the spring workshop, and are also included in this mailing to nesting project leders). Remember, we are trying to standardize the data reported along the coast so it can be put in a more meaningful context. Thank you for helping us.

This is the last *Loggerheadlines* for this year, so at this time we send thanks to each and every volunteer. The work that you do is invaluable.

Sally Murphy, State Coordinator

Charlotte Hope, Meg Hoyle and Joan Drews



Equal opportunity agency