

LOGGERHEADLINES

MARINE TURTLE PROGRAM WELCOMES NEW STAFF

The South Carolina Marine Turtle Conservation Program is excited to announce the addition of two new staff members to our team. Erin Bundo and Kelly Sloan both joined us in May and provide administrative and field support, respectively. As we move through the 2007 sea turtle season, I hope you get a chance to work with both Erin and Kelly. Additionally, Tom Murphy and John Coker are with us again this year. Each year they provide research and equipment support for our program. Please take a moment and visit our new staff page on our web site: <http://www.dnr.sc.gov/seaturtle/>.

NEST, STRANDING, POST-MORTEM AND REHAB SUMMARY

South Carolina's 2007 sea turtle nesting numbers have gotten off to a slow start (see table to the right). Stranding numbers through June (n = 52) were similar to 2006 (n = 51) and much lower than previous years. Of these 52, 4 turtles stranded alive but died shortly after. There was one stranding reported during January through March, seven in April, 20 in May and 22 in June. A total of 36 loggerheads, two green, 11 Kemp's ridleys, one leatherback and two unidentified have stranded. By county, Horry = 10, Georgetown = 4, Charleston = 19, Beaufort = 14, Colleton = 5 and Jasper = 0. Eight post-mortem exams were performed. Two exams indicated debilitated turtle syndrome and two indicated a boat strike.



A PIT tag was found in a stranded loggerhead off of Edingsville Beach on June 27 in a healthy adult female with shelled eggs inside of her. (CCL max = 102 cm, CCL min = 100 cm, CCW = 94 cm) This turtle was originally PIT and flipper tagged on Wassaw Island, GA on June 13, 2003 (CCL min = 98 cm, CCW = 88 cm) by the Caretta Research Project (<http://members.aol.com/WassawCRP/index.html>).



Two adult male loggerheads, both dragging crab pot buoys, were admitted to the sea turtle hospital this May. Cape, who was rescued on May 16 by the Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge turtle crew, was the first confirmed male patient at

the South Carolina aquarium, followed by Edisto on May 28. Cape had severe injuries to his front left flipper, and despite weeks of efforts by aquarium staff to save the limb it was necessary to amputate the flipper on June 20. The surgery was successful and Cape is expected to recover and adapt well to life in the wild without the flipper. Edisto was admitted with lacerations to his left rear flipper after being rescued by the Town of Edisto Fire Department, and is already on the road to recovery. The flipper is slowly healing and Edisto has started eating blue crabs and squid regularly. To follow their progress please visit the SC Aquarium Sea Turtle Rescue Program web site: <http://www.scaquarium.org/seaturtle/rescue.aspx>.

Projects	2006	2007
Waities Island	N/D	10
Myrtle Beach S. P.	0	1
Huntington Beach S. P.	7	2
S.C.U.T.E.	39	27
South Island	66	32
Cape Island	564	174
Lighthouse Island	122	61
Bull Island	N/D	50
Dewees Island	14	3
Sullivans/Isle of Palms	9	11
Folly Beach	28	15
Kiawah Island	115	39
Seabrook Island	27	2
Botany Bay Isl & Plan	126	59
Edingsville Beach	44	35
Edisto Beach S. P.	39	33
Edisto Beach	24	33
Harbor Island	13	7
Hunting Island	38	34
Fripp Island	19	10
Pritchards Island	44	16
St. Phillips	N/D	4
Hilton Head Island	114	54
Daufuskie Island	N/D	7
TOTAL	1294	719

Data is through June 30 for each year

NETWORK NEWS

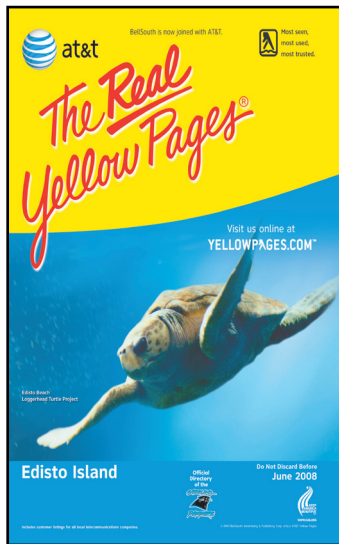
Carolina's Beach Vitex Task Force:

Please report any possible locations by submitting a report form online. It is important that the plant not be removed until it has been positively identified. Photo shows woody root penetrating a sea turtle nest. The new Beach Vitex video is now available at: <http://www.beachvitex.org/>



Waities Island: As a new group joining SCDNR's Marine Turtle Monitoring program in '07, we have had an exciting start to the season. We have wonderful, ongoing participation from all 60 of our volunteers who are enjoying themselves immensely. The season started with a stranded, unfortunately dead, loggerhead. So far, the turtles have been very smart in choosing their nesting locations with only one having to be relocated. To compensate for depredation by foxes, one of our volunteers, Steve Demusz, has kindly made over a dozen 3x3 ft metal cages. Our volunteers have even put together their own blog site which can be viewed at <http://witurtles.blogspot.com>. ~ Stephanie Miller for Karen Fuss

Town of Edisto: We are excited that our program will be on the cover of new AT&T phone book, now being distributed at Edisto Beach. The loggerhead turtle photo is one provided to us by the SC Aquarium, and the phone book will be distributed in every home at the beach. We feel it will go a long way toward public education of loggerhead turtle nesting areas. There is a small write-up inside the cover which briefly describes our mission. ~ Jamie Gaabo



Kiawah Island: Joe Pezzulo from Kiawah reported "One of the nests we relocated had paper-thin shells. It was extremely difficult to remove them from the original site. Some were thin to the point one could see inside. We were able to remove 93 eggs and relocate them. The bottom of the original nest looked like a bowl of cracked eggs." Dr. David Owens comments, "In my experience this is rare. There are two possibilities I can think of. Since it takes about 10-12 days for a female to properly calcify her eggs, she may have been rushed and nested too early. Since we have no idea how a turtle knows if the eggs are properly calcified (is it a behavioral clock, an endocrine change etc?), she may have a problem in these areas. Or, she may have some form of "endocrine disruption" occurring. You will recall the old DDT story where the DDT (a classic endocrine disruptor) mimics estrogen and causes the females to stop producing calcium too early and the eggs break easily after being laid."

Folly Beach: Beach nourishment and the sea turtle nesting season

The South Carolina Marine Turtle Conservation Program began in 1977 with beach management research. The program further developed in the early eighties with formation of the nest protection and stranding volunteer networks along the coast of South Carolina. Today, the program encompasses research, management, monitoring and education within the local, regional and international communities. We are indebted to the continued passion, dedication and effort of our volunteers and staff.

Program Staff

- DuBose Griffin ~ Coordinator
- Charlotte Hope ~ Wildlife Biologist
- Erin Bundo ~ Admin Program Support
- Kelly Sloan ~ Field Technician
- Thomas Murphy ~ Research Support
- John Coker ~ Research/Equipment

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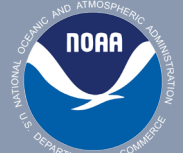
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The South Carolina Department of Natural Resources prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, gender, national origin, disability, religion or age. Direct all inquiries to the Office of Human Resources, PO Box 167, Columbia, SC 29202.

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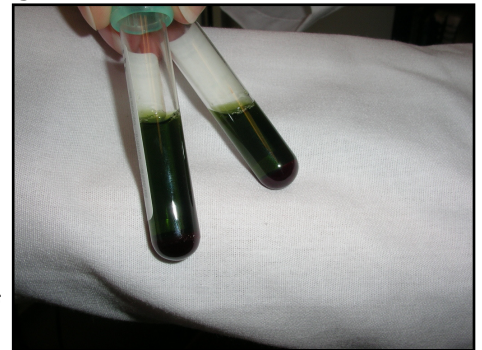
DNR

coincided again on Folly Beach as a US Army Corps of Engineers project began to pump sand on 2.2 miles of Folly's northeastern beachfront. Michelle Pate, Kristen Mazzarella, Courtney Arthur and Rebecca Rockholt were hired to safeguard all sea turtle activity in the nourishment area both day and night. As of June 29th, four nests (470 eggs) have been relocated out of the construction area and two nesting loggerheads that crossed over the 3 foot high discharge pipeline had to be assisted in their return to the ocean. Folly Beach Turtle Watch volunteers are indebted to Michelle, Kristen, Courtney and Rebecca for their expert watchfulness, care and communication during this stressful process. The City of Folly Beach honored Carole Bennett for her 11 years of service and dedication as "The Turtle Woman of Folly Beach." ~ Judi Beahn

Isle of Palms: The Isle of Palms Turtle Team has had a challenging season so far because of the erosion and the sand bags in Wild Dunes. As you may know, the bags have washed up and down the coast. As of June 28th, we've had two nests laid at the 18th fairway of the Links Golf Course and two further south in Wild Dunes. One golf course nest was inundated by a high tide at the base of the scarp a few minutes before we arrived. We relocated the eggs and hope they will hatch. The second was also moved away from the area. There have been nine false crawls in that section. ~ Mary Pringle

REGIONAL UPDATE

North Carolina - Matthew Godfrey: It has been a slow start to nesting this season. As of the last week in June, we have 156 loggerhead nests and more than 10 leatherback crawls (it was not possible to verify nest or no nest for all leatherback crawls). Four green nests have also been observed in NC to date. We have had 90 strandings through June. We had the most interesting live stranded turtle - her skin and blood were green. She died a few days later at the rehab center. As suspected, she had massive liver issues, including some big gall stones and bile duct blockage.

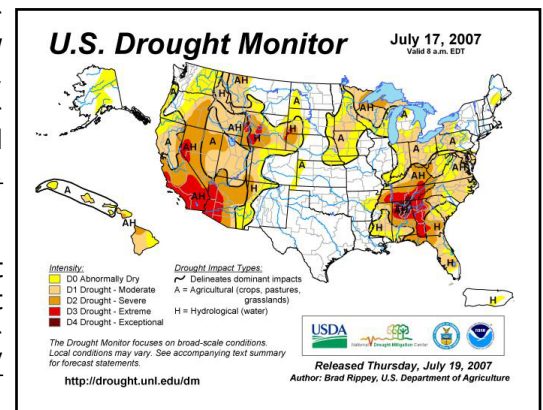


Georgia - Mark Dodd: The statewide loggerhead nest total remained low in June. Overall, we are slightly over half the average number of nests for this point in the season with 374 nests. Based on current nesting levels we predict approximately 600 nests in Georgia this year. On a positive note, strandings remain low. Only 50 dead sea turtles have been found on Georgia beaches so far this year. As recently as 2002, we had documented over 200 stranded turtles at this point in the season.

EDUCATION AND RESOURCES

Tides: During the month of June, the coast of South Carolina experienced high tides that exceeded predicted levels. Tides are the alternating rise and fall of sea level with respect to land, as influenced by the gravitational attraction of the moon and sun. Other factors influence tides: coastline configuration, local water depth, seafloor topography, winds, and weather alter the arrival times of tides, their range, and the interval between high and low water. Predicted tidal heights are those expected under average weather conditions. When weather conditions differ from what is considered average, corresponding differences between predicted levels and those actually observed will occur. Generally, prolonged onshore winds (wind towards the land) or a low barometric pressure can produce higher sea levels than predicted, while offshore winds (wind away from the land) and high barometric pressure can result in lower sea levels than predicted. Predicted tides for South Carolina can be found here: <http://tidesandcurrents.noaa.gov/tides07/>

Drought Monitor: Nest incubation duration can be affected by nest temperature and relative humidity (moisture). Monitoring drought conditions may help in understanding variation in incubation duration within and among seasons. For more information visit <http://drought.unl.edu/dm>.



ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE SEA TURTLE OFFICE

Upcoming Events

January 19-26, 2008: 28th Annual International Sea Turtle Symposium in Loreto, Baja California Sur, Mexico. The theme for the ISTS 28 is Native Oceans. For more information, visit: www.seaturtle.org.

South Carolina CTurtle List Serve

If you would like to join this list serve, please send an email to coastbio@dnr.sc.gov.

New Online Stranding Database

Michael Coyne with seaturtle.org has been gracious enough to assist our program with the move to an online stranding database. You can view summary data on strandings in South and North Carolina by visiting www.seaturtle.org/strand.

Loggerheadlines Available Online

Loggerheadlines can be read online at www.dnr.sc.gov/seaturtle/. Please let us know if you would like to use this resource and prefer not to get a hard copy in the mail. We're always looking for ways to save paper and trees!

Georgia Sea Turtle Center is Now Open

The Georgia Sea Turtle Center on Jekyll Island is now open to the public. Find out more at www.georgiaseaturtles.org



This newsletter is printed on recycled paper.

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SCDNR Needs Your Support! Citizens of South Carolina can support DNR through the purchase of the endangered species license plate and Check Off for Wildlife. The Endangered Wildlife Fund is the foundation of support for threatened and endangered wildlife in South Carolina. Look for line 26 on the long form (SC1040) or line 13 on the short form (SC1040A) of the South Carolina Department of Revenue Individual Tax Return form, then complete and submit Form I-330. Help us keep wildlife in your life!

