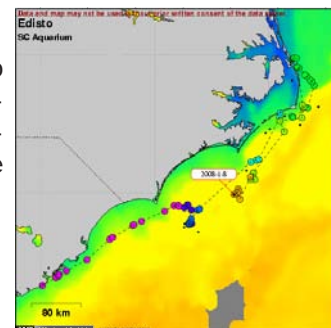


## SCDNR Marine Turtle Conservation Program

# LOGGERHEADLINES

## SC AQUARIUM AND SCDNR TRACK TWO ADULT MALE LOGGERHEADS

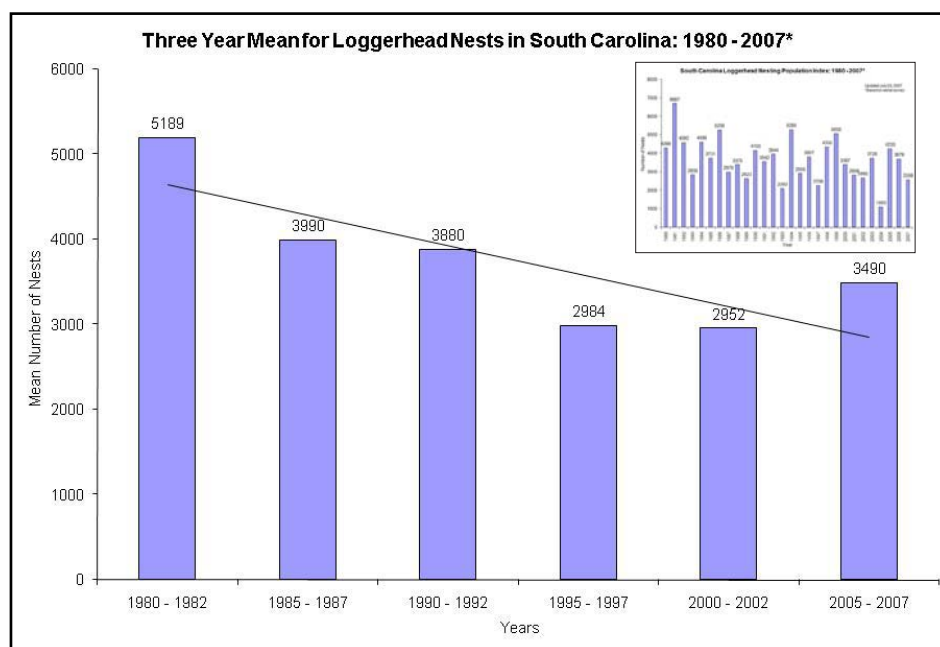
The South Carolina Aquarium and SCDNR attached satellite transmitters to two adult males released into the Atlantic this past fall. Both males were being treated for crab pot buoy line entanglement. These were the first adult male loggerheads to be tracked via satellite off the coast of South Carolina. To follow these animals in their marine environment, please visit: [http://www.sea-turtle.org/tracking/?project\\_id=215&dyn=1199465421](http://www.sea-turtle.org/tracking/?project_id=215&dyn=1199465421).



## NEST, STRANDING, POST-MORTEM AND RESCUE SUMMARY

South Carolina's 2007 sea turtle nesting numbers were lower than 2005 and 2006. This year was a low year after two medium to high years (see graph inset). The mean of the past three years of aerial survey data hints at a possible increase. However, the overall trend still shows a ~3% annual decline.

Projects	2006	2007
Walties Island	N/D	17
Myrtle Beach S. P.	0	2
Huntington Beach S. P.	14	5
S.C.U.T.E.	80	68
South Island	102	83
Cape Island	1027	531
Lighthouse Island	195	178
Bull Island	N/D	116
Deweese Island	21	7
Sullivans/Isle of Palms	15	26
Folly Beach	51	20
Kiawah Island	201	85
Seabrook Island	64	16
Botany Bay Isl & Plan	214	112
Edingsville Beach	90	57
Edisto Beach S. P.	71	66
Edisto Beach	50	66
Harbor Island	28	18
Hunting Island	62	64
Fripp Island	31	14
Pritchards Island	66	26
St. Phillips	N/D	7
Hilton Head Island	186	112
Daufuskie Island	~25	19
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,568</b>	<b>1,715</b>



Strandings for 2007 ( $n = 92$ ) was one greater than 2006 ( $n = 91$ ), but much lower than previous years. Of these 92, 17 turtles stranded alive (seven were released, three are undergoing care at the SC Aquarium and 7 died shortly after stranding). There was 1 stranding reported during January through March, 7 in April, 20 in May, 24 in June, 16 in July, 14 in August and 10 September through December. A total of 63 loggerheads, 8 green, 19 Kemp's ridleys, 1 leatherback and 1 unidentified have stranded. By county, Horry = 13, Georgetown = 13, Charleston = 42, Beaufort = 17, Colleton = 7 and Jasper = 0. Twenty-four post-mortem exams were performed. Fourteen indicated an acute death (6 of these interacted with watercraft), 9 indicated chronic mortality and 1 could not be rated.

**NETWORK NEWS**

**South Carolina Aquarium Sea Turtle Rescue Program**

**Kelly Thorvalson:** It was a busy year in the aquarium's Turtle Hospital! The first turtles admitted were Cape Romain and Edisto, both adult male loggerheads who were injured by crab trap rope entanglements in May. One of Cape Romain's front flippers had to be amputated because of this entanglement. Weighing 280 pounds and 325 pounds at release, these are the first two adult males to be



were all caught by recreational fishermen and three of the four had to have surgery to remove the hooks. Three loggerheads were admitted in August, two juveniles and one adult female with various illnesses and injuries. The final patient of 2007 is a juvenile loggerhead admitted in October after being struck by a boat. As can be seen in this photo, this turtle's injuries are healing well. This was the first patient to be admitted by Dr. Shane Boylan, the Aquarium's new full time veterinarian. This is a great step forward for the Aquarium and the Sea Turtle Rescue Program. After nine sea turtle releases this season, there are still three patients in the hospital and you can visit them by joining one of the tours held Wednesdays and Fridays at 1pm. The

cost after aquarium admission is \$10 for adults and \$5 for those under 12. Visit the Turtle Hospital online to check on the patients or to see the migrations of four rehabilitated sea turtles at <http://www.scaquarium.org/seaturtle/rescue.aspx>. Photos above by Barbara Bergwerf.



Sally Murphy, former coordinator of the DNR marine turtle program, was presented with the SC Aquarium's inaugural Environmental Stewardship Achievement Award on May 12, 2007 at a black tie gala held at the aquarium. She was hired by the DNR in 1973 and headed up the sea turtle program from 1976 until her retirement in 2006. Quoting the gala program,



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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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.

This program is funded in part with grants from NOAA Fisheries and the US Fish and Wildlife Service under Section 6 of the Endangered Species Act. Data presented in Loggerheadlines is not to be used in any publication, product, or commercial application without prior written consent of the data owner. If consent is given, the data provider must be cited appropriately after approval of use is obtained.



"Through her leadership in sea turtle recovery teams and her work and dedication to wildlife preservation she has saved countless animals and enlightened the public about this important issue." Other recipients included author Pat Conroy, (Legacy Award) and the Post and Courier newspaper (Leadership Award). We regret this omission in the previous issue.

### REGIONAL UPDATE

**North Carolina - Matthew Godfrey:** During the 2007 sea turtle nesting season, 567 nests (542 loggerheads, 10 leatherbacks and 15 green turtle nests) were observed on North Carolina beaches. Total number of strandings in 2007 was 340. The Karen Beasley Sea Turtle Rescue and Rehabilitation Center received 34 patients in 2007! Please visit their web site to find out more about their patients:

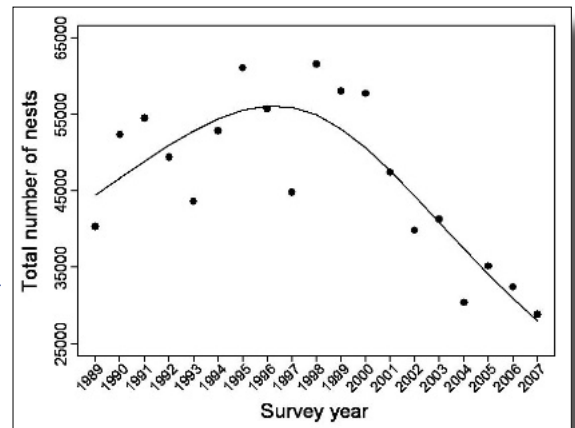
<http://www.seaturtlehospital.org>.

**Georgia - Mark Dodd:** Overall, it was a below average nesting year (n = 688 nests) for loggerheads in Georgia (18-year average= 1,023 nests). I have heard from other state coordinators that loggerhead nesting was below average on most beaches in the western Atlantic. The 2007 island nest totals do not change the overall trends we have seen in the long time series data (35 years, significant decline) or the comprehensive shorter time series (19 years, no trend). In summary, 2007 was a below average nesting year, and 2007 nest totals have not changed our interpretation of the status of Georgia's loggerhead population. In other sea turtle nesting news, two green turtle nests (Jekyll, Cumberland) were located in 2007. We had a total of 104 strandings this year. The new Georgia Sea Turtle Center admitted 15 turtles in 2007! Please visit their web site to find out more about their patients:



<http://www.georgiaseaturtlecenter.org>.

**Florida - Blair Witherington:** An updated analysis of Florida's long-term loggerhead sea turtle nesting data, carried out as part of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's Index Nesting Beach Survey, reveals a continuing decline in loggerhead nest numbers around the state. Nest counts have decreased nearly 50 percent from 1998 to 2007. In contrast, nest counts for green turtles and leatherbacks are increasing. A record number of nests of these two species were recorded during the 2007 season. For more information visit: [http://research.myfwc.com/features/view\\_article.asp?id=27537](http://research.myfwc.com/features/view_article.asp?id=27537).



### EDUCATION AND RESOURCES

**Sea Turtle Five-Year Status Reviews:** The five-year status reviews for the loggerhead, green, Kemp's ridley, hawksbill, leatherback and olive ridley sea turtles are now available at the following web address: <http://www.fws.gov/northflorida/seaturtles/seaturtle-info.htm>.



**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. The new Beach Vitex video is now available at: <http://www.beachvitex.org/>.

**SEATURTLE.ORG:** Do not forget about our wonderful resource [seaturtle.org](http://www.seaturtle.org). This web site has become the online source for all sea turtle news, events, jobs, current research and information. The Marine Turtle Newsletter can be accessed through this site as well. Show your support for this great resource by visiting the site or donating today: <http://www.seaturtle.org>.

seaturtle.org

## ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE SEA TURTLE OFFICE

### Upcoming Events

January 21-28, 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](http://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](mailto:coastbio@dnr.sc.gov).

### New Online Stranding Database

Michael Coyne with [seaturtle.org](http://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](http://www.seaturtle.org/strand).

### Loggerheadlines Available Online

Loggerheadlines can be read online at [www.dnr.sc.gov/seaturtle/](http://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](http://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!

