



NORTH CAROLINA AQUARIUM AT PINE KNOLL SHORES
1 Roosevelt Blvd., Pine Knoll Shores, NC 28512 • (252) 247-4003 • Fax: (252) 247-0663
www.ncaquariums.com

Release: Immediate
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Beach Sea Turtle Release

PINE KNOLL SHORES, N.C. – Cameras were at the ready as onlookers, volunteers and staff from the North Carolina Aquarium at Pine Knoll Shores Aquarium watched as seven rehabilitated sea turtles were released at the Eastern Regional Beach Access in Emerald Isle, Monday. The six green and one Kemp’s ridley sea turtles were cold-stunned during the unusually drastic temperature drop late March.

“It is very rare for us to have cold-stunned sea turtles so late in the season,” explained Michele Lamping, an aquarist and sea turtle specialist. “Normally we receive them in December and January.”

This late cold-stunning event, coupled with current warm water temperatures made it possible for a rare Emerald Isle beach release.

Sea turtles are cold blooded, which means their body temperature is determined by their surroundings. When a turtle senses the changing temperature, normally it heads for warmer waters. However, if they do not leave or if the temperature drops quickly they become lethargic and unable to swim or fend for themselves.

The sudden drop in water temperatures in March led to a few cold-stunned sea turtles needing rescue and rehabilitation.



DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES
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Once the turtles were healthy again and had a final veterinary check they were ready to be released. Normally they are taken offshore to warmer waters, as close to 60 degrees as possible. Because it was so late in the season and the water temperatures at the beach were 78 degrees, the turtle received a beach release instead.

If there is a turtle in the water or on the beach after cold weather that is not moving or is sluggish, then it might be cold stunned and should not be touched or moved, but rather call the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission.

The effort to rescue and rehabilitate sea turtles is led by the Commission, which collaborates with a number of federal, state and private organizations in the effort.

The North Carolina Aquariums and Jennette's Pier work with many agencies across the east coast, such as the Network for Endangered Sea Turtles, North Carolina State University Center for Marine Sciences and Technology and College of Veterinary Medicine, Cape Lookout National Seashore, Cape Hatteras National Seashore, Hatteras Island Wildlife Rehabilitation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service and the Karen Beasley Sea Turtle Rescue and Rehabilitation Center.

There is also a network of hundreds of volunteers who walk the beach daily to ensure the safety and success of the sea turtle populations.

If there are concerns about a turtle, please contact the Commission's North Carolina Sea Turtle Project at 252-728-1828 or N.E.S.T. at 252-441-8622. For more information, visit www.ncaquariums.com/pine-knoll-shores-special-events or call 252-247-4003.



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Photo: The North Carolina Aquarium at Pine Knoll Shores released seven rehabilitated sea turtles, including six green sea turtles and one Kemp's ridley, at the Eastern Regional Beach Access in Emerald Isle Monday.

The North Carolina Aquarium at Pine Knoll Shores is five miles west of Atlantic Beach at 1 Roosevelt Blvd., Pine Knoll Shores, NC 28512. The Aquarium is open 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. daily. For more information, see www.ncaquariums.com/pine-knoll-shores or call 252-247-4003.

About the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources

The N.C. Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (NCDNCR) is the state agency with a vision to be the leader in using the state's natural and cultural resources to build the social, cultural, educational and economic future of North Carolina. NCDNCR's mission is to improve the quality of life in our state by creating opportunities to experience excellence in the arts, history, libraries and nature in North Carolina by stimulating learning, inspiring creativity, preserving the state's history, conserving the state's natural heritage, encouraging recreation and cultural tourism, and promoting economic development.

NCDNCR includes 27 historic sites, seven history museums, two art museums, two science museums, three aquariums and Jennette's Pier, 39 state parks and recreation areas, the N.C. Zoo, the nation's first state-supported Symphony Orchestra, the State Library, the State Archives, the N.C. Arts Council, State Preservation Office and the Office of State Archaeology, along with the Division of Land and Water Stewardship. For more information, please call (919) 807-7300 or visit www.ncdcr.gov.

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