

All Things Sea Turtle

Article submitted by Valerie Rohrig

“Cold stunned” sea turtles refers to how sea turtles react when their bodies are exposed to water temperatures of about 50 degrees or lower. Their heart rate drops and circulation is impaired causing the turtles to become lethargic. Problems that occur can range from shock, frostbite or death. Cold stunned sea turtles were an issue for our Sea Turtle Patrol Team AND the entire coast of North Carolina this winter. With temperatures fluctuating (sometimes WILDLY) we had a lot of injured sea turtles wash onto beaches in our area. At the time of this writing, EISTP had already rescued 3 live cold stunned turtles in our area.

One particularly cold stunned sea turtle washed up on the Emerald Isle beach on December 30, 2019. The poor turtle was very underweight and had many barnacles already attached to it's carapace. Part time residents Tom, Patsy and Chris Fry found the sick turtle and called it into the Emerald Isle Sea Turtle Patrol. Nest Response Team (NRT) members met the family on the beach, where the family had continued to watch over the turtle until help could arrive. The NRT's filled out a report on the sea turtle, then transported it to the Center for Marine Sciences and Technology (CMAST) in Morehead City. Upon arrival, the sea turtle was treated and stabilized by the wonderful staff there. After treatment and overnight observation, the NRT's retrieved the turtle the next morning and transported it to the Karen Beasley Sea Turtle Rescue and Rehabilitation Center in Surf City. The loving staff and volunteers there began caring for the turtle, which they named “CMAST”. By mid January, CMAST was eating, swimming and getting stronger! Once the rehabilitation is complete, CMAST will be released back into the ocean! Updates on CMAST's progress will be given when possible. In addition to CMAST, EI volunteers have delivered 7 cold stunned turtles to the Karen Beasley Sea Turtle Rescue and Rehabilitation Center for other teams.

Speaking of updates and the Karen Beasley Sea Turtle Rescue and Rehabilitation Center, information was given last year on another sea turtle from Emerald Isle. “Minnick” was rescued back on 4/15/19. The reporting NRT's noted the turtle had a laceration under it's mouth, and some damage to it's carapace. Additionally, Minnick's carapace had barnacles and moss on it. While dropping off cold stuns in mid January Minnick was checked on. The folks at the Rehabilitation Center have worked hard to rehabilitate the turtle and we're happy to report that Minnick is progressing well.

As always, you can keep up with all things sea turtle by visiting our website at: eiseaturtlepatrol.org. There you will find Photos/Videos, FAQs, Contact info, Event updates and a Kids Korner with activities and information for kids of all ages. You can also find a link to join our Facebook page.

Upcoming events for the Emerald Isle Sea Turtle Patrol in March: March 14 Catch up with us at the Annual St. Patrick's Day Festival in Emerald Isle. We'll have booth there with lots of information. As a fund raiser for our organization, we will also be selling raffle tickets for some great prizes. Stop by our booth and buy your chances to win prizes you're interested in!

March 21

Sea Turtle Patrol Orientation for new Volunteers. 10:00 am- 1:00pm at the Rec. Center in Emerald Isle. Returning members are also encouraged to attend as well!! For more information please visit our website.

We are already looking forward to another exciting year!