



# Sea Turtle Strandings in the Northern Gulf of Mexico

Brian A Stacy, DVM, PhD, DACVP

Veterinary Medical Officer

NOAA/NMFS/Office of Protected Resources

Email: [Brian.Stacy@noaa.gov](mailto:Brian.Stacy@noaa.gov)



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# Kemp's ridley

*(Lepidochelys kempii)*

- ESA Status: Endangered
- Appearance: Gray, roundish shell; whitish underside
- Adult size: 2-2.5 feet; ~100 lbs
- Diet: Crustaceans, other invertebrates\*
- Range: Gulf of Mexico; NW Atlantic; nests almost entirely in Gulf of Mexico



Photo: National Park Service



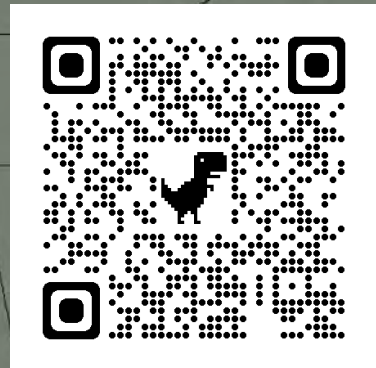
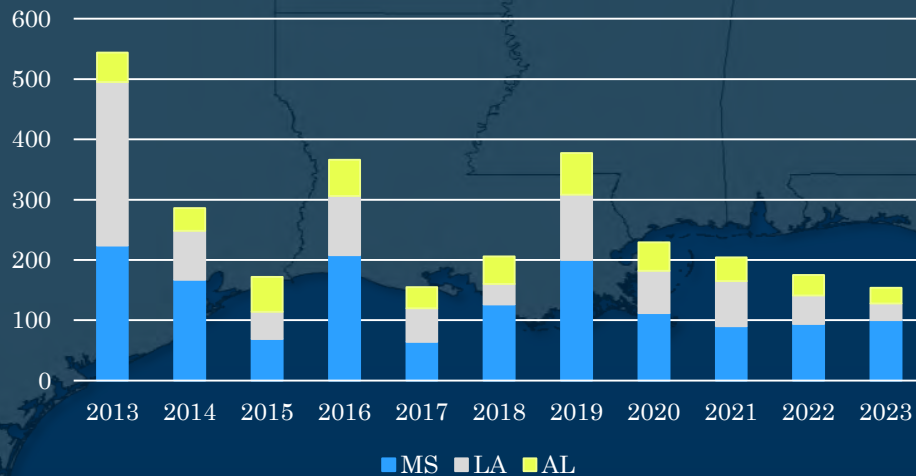
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# Sea Turtle Strandings in the Northern Gulf of Mexico

## Key observations

- ~250 per year

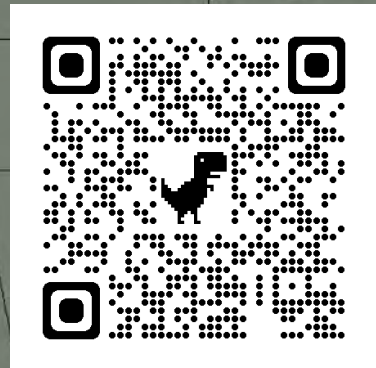
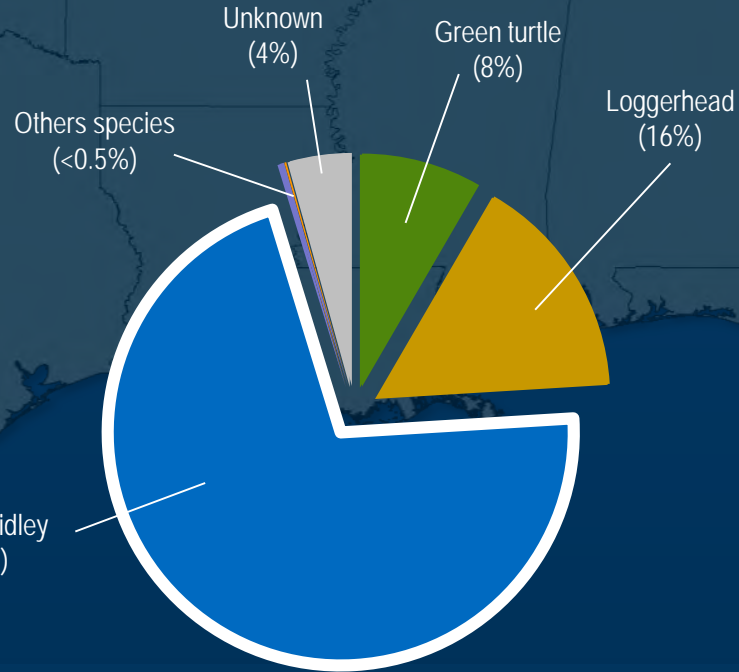
Number of Sea Turtle Strandings by Year



## Sea Turtle Strandings in the Northern Gulf of Mexico

### Key observations

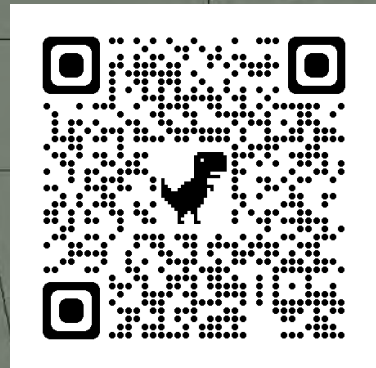
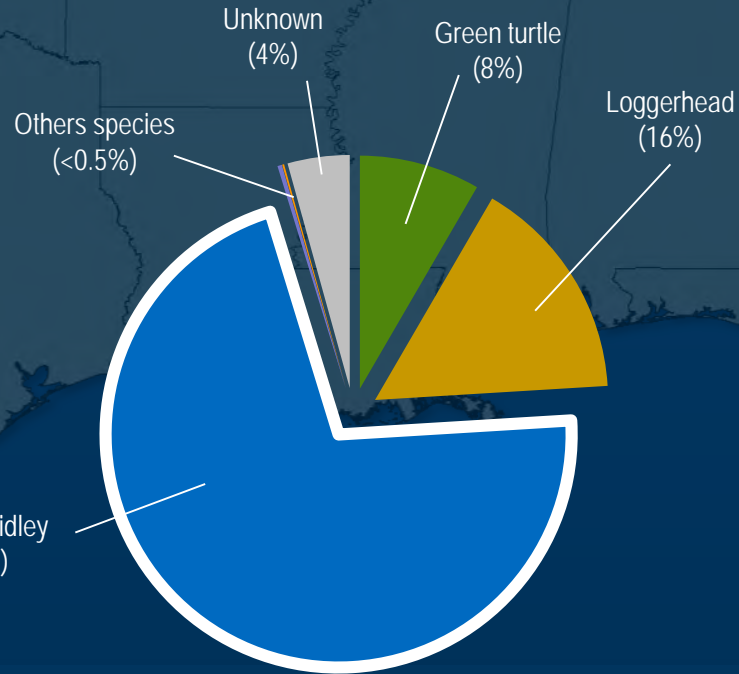
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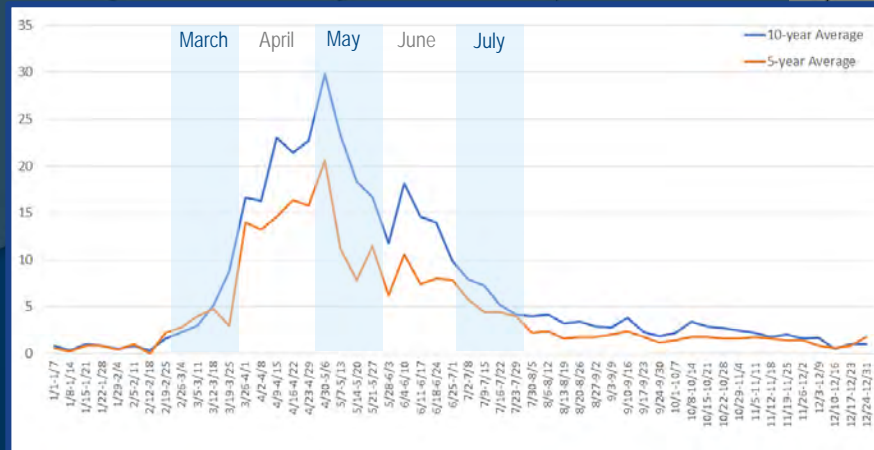
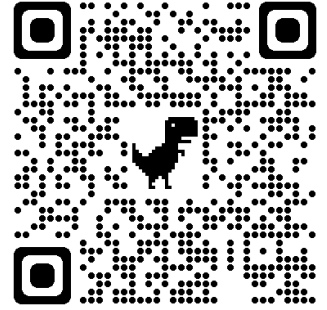
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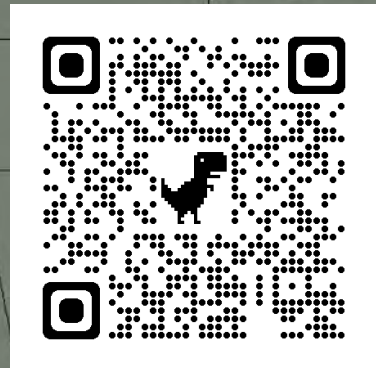
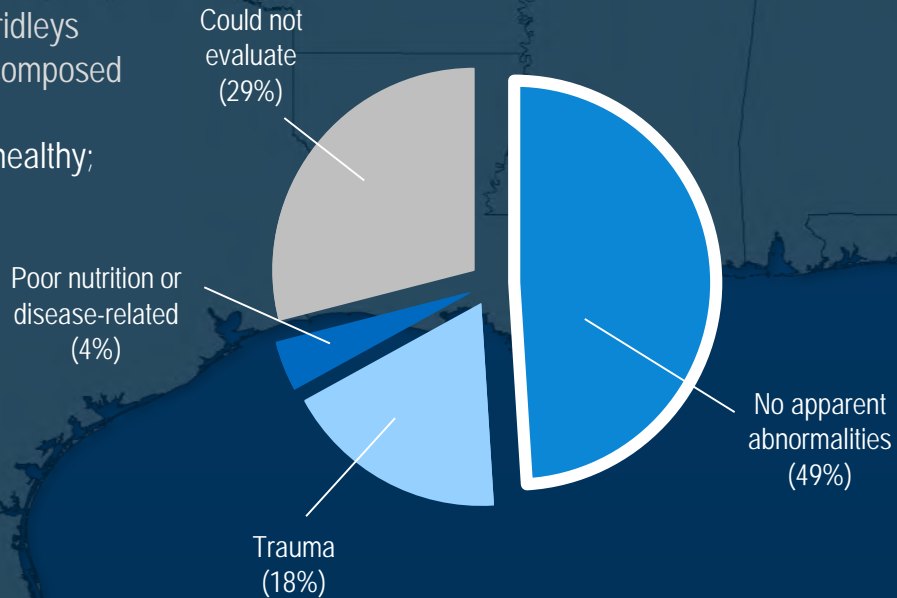
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- Most found dead/decomposed
- Seasonal



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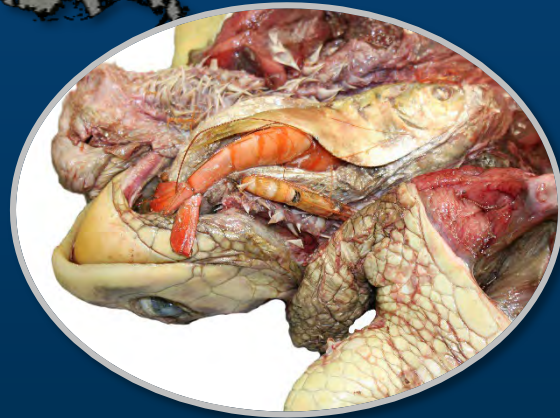
### Key observations

- ~250 per year
- Majority are Kemp's ridleys
- Most found dead/decomposed
- Seasonal
- About half apparent healthy; died suddenly



## Frequent findings

- Good nutritional condition
- No injuries/evidence of disease
- Indications of foraging
- Sediment aspiration/drowning





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- ✓ Rule out non-direct anthropogenic causes (biotoxins, disease)
- ✓ Attempt to identify source locations
- ✓ Fisheries characterization / observation
- ✓ Fisheries outreach

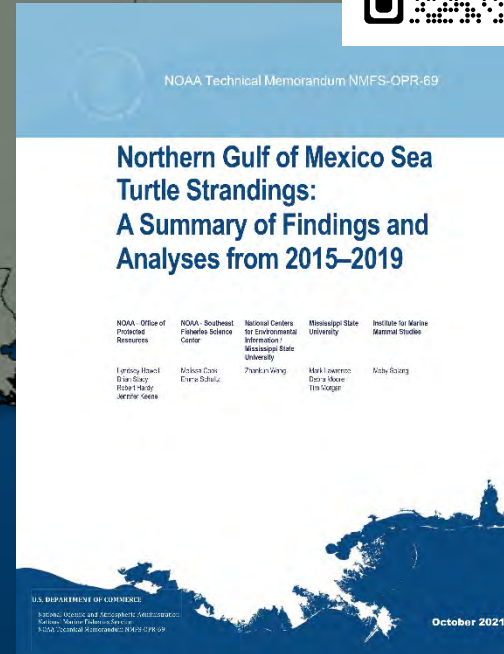
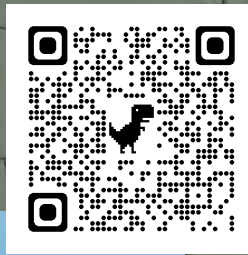


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## Key findings / summary

- Strandings 50% lower than previous 5 yrs; concurrent decline in incidental captures
- Characteristics of strandings largely unchanged
- Seasonality of strandings substantially influenced by environmental conditions/drift
- Multiple field projects ongoing



# Questions?

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