

# SCSL Digital Collections

## Loggerheadlines July-December, 2006

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# LOGGERHEADLINES

## ANOTHER AU REVOIR

The South Carolina Marine Turtle Conservation Program says goodbye to Joan Seithel on December 31st after seven years of service. Joan has provided this office with infallible administrative support for both the sea turtle and coastal bird programs. Joan's extensive knowledge of Excel, organizational skills and attention to detail has kept our office and the immense amount of data that comes through it in tip-top shape. Joan will be greatly missed especially while planning our annual spring workshop. She will be retiring to her home on Wadmalaw Island. Thank you Joan for your dedication and support of our endangered species program.



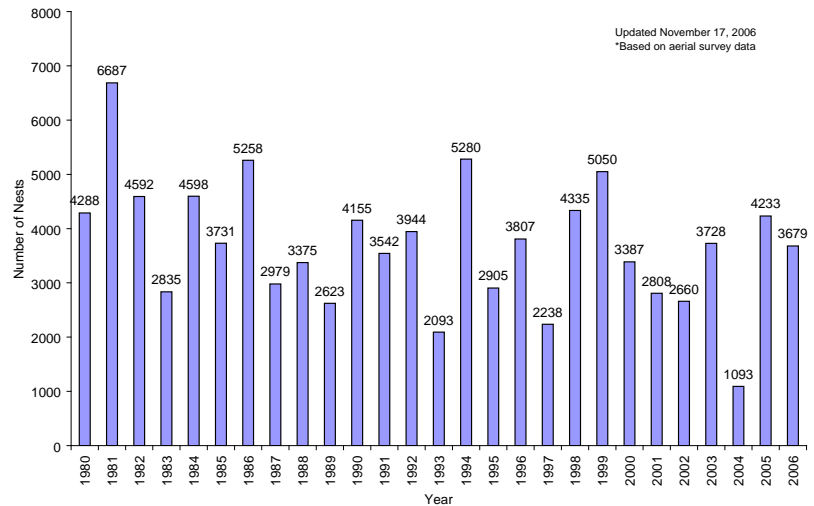
Projects	2005	2006
Myrtle Beach S. P.	3	0
Huntington Beach S. P.	5	14
S.C.U.T.E.	62	80
South Island	122	102
Cape Island	826	1,027
Lighthouse Island	232	195
Dewees Island	9	21
Sullivans/Isle of Palms	56	15
Folly Beach	37	51
Kiawah Island	154	201
Seabrook Island	51	64
Botany Bay Isl & Plan	219	214
Edingsville Beach	73	90
Edisto Beach S. P.	94	71
Edisto Beach	88	50
Harbor Island	39	28
Hunting Island	90	62
Fripp Island	40	31
Pritchards Island	71	66
Hilton Head Island	163	186
Daufuskie	N/D	~25
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,434</b>	<b>2,568</b>



## NESTING AND STRANDING SUMMARY

South Carolina's 2006 sea turtle nesting numbers turned out to be quite similar to 2005. Some projects had greater nest numbers while other beaches were down from last year. The table to the left shows nesting numbers for 2005 and 2006. Strandings in 2006 (n = 90) were slightly lower than 2005 (n = 110) and much lower than previous years. There were no strandings reported during January through March, October or December. A total of 69 loggerheads, one green, 17 Kemp's ridleys and 3 unidentified have stranded. Post-mortems were performed on 10 loggerheads and two Kemp's ridley.

South Carolina Loggerhead Nesting Population Index: 1980 - 2006\*



## NETWORK NEWS

**Beach Vitex:** Please report any possible locations by submitting a report form online. It is important that the plant not be removed until it has positively been identified. Visit: <http://www.beachvitex.org/>

**Dewees Island:** Dewees had a banner year in 2006 with 21 nests which is the highest number since records began! ~ Jonathan Lutz

**SCUTE:** The 55 miles of coastline from the North Carolina border to North Inlet in Georgetown had 94 nests this year - an increase of 24 in 2005. ~ Jeff McClary - taken from The State newspaper.

**ISTS:** The International Symposium on Sea Turtle Biology and Conservation (February 22 - 28, 2007) will be in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, with Michael Coyne creator of sea-turtle.org as the President of the International Sea Turtle Society (ISTS). We hope that many of you will participate in this upcoming symposium. Please visit: [www.seaturtle.org](http://www.seaturtle.org) for specific details. Photography below by Lee Wilson.

### REGIONAL UPDATE

#### North Carolina - Matthew Godfrey:

The sea turtle nesting season in North Carolina produced 758 loggerhead and six green sea turtle nests, both slightly above average. We had 275 strandings statewide - down from the 400+ average. Satellite transmitters were attached to post-nesting female loggerhead turtles from Bald Head Island. Daily updates of the turtle locations: [www.seaturtle.org/tracking/?project\\_id=158](http://www.seaturtle.org/tracking/?project_id=158).



**Georgia - Mark Dodd:** We had 1399 loggerhead nests in 2006. In other news, sea turtle stranding totals remain below average with approximately 130 strandings this year. In September, there was a stranding event in south Georgia and northeast Florida. Twenty-eight loggerheads stranded both dead and alive in Georgia over a five-week period. Some stranded alive and were taken to rehab facilities in Florida and South Carolina. On a positive note, the Georgia Sea Turtle Center on Jekyll Island is under way. We are excited about the support and outreach this new facility will provide to the state of Georgia. For more information, please visit: <http://www.georgiaseaturtles.org>.

**Florida - Allen Foley:** The number of dead or debilitated sea turtles (i.e. sea turtle strandings) documented in Florida during 2006 was the second highest since 1980, when the Sea Turtle Stranding and Salvage Network began documenting sea turtle strandings in Florida. The total for 2006 is 1757, surpassed only by the total number of strandings documented during 2003 (1844).

The two most notable sea turtle mortality events in Florida

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 B. Griffin ~ Coordinator

Charlotte P. Hope ~ Wildlife Biologist

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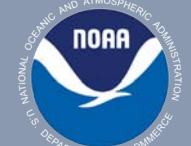
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Equal Opportunity Agency

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.



during 2006 were a loggerhead die-off in northeast Florida and continuing high mortality of several sea turtle species associated with red tide in southwest Florida. We saw an unusually high number of loggerhead strandings in northeast Florida during September and October. There were 107 loggerhead strandings in Nassau, Duval, and St. Johns Counties during this time. The previous ten-year average number of sea turtle strandings found in those three counties during September and October was 16. Seventeen of these loggerhead strandings were live, debilitated turtles. All but two of these turtles subsequently died at rehabilitation facilities. Many of the turtles that were recovered during this event were necropsied. However, whatever killed these turtles was not apparent from gross or microscopic examinations of the organs and tissues. There were no substantial bacterial, fungal, or viral infections detected. A biotoxin is the primary suspect in this mortality event and samples taken from the turtles are being tested for various biotoxins.

**Florida - Nesting Update:** According to a recently released report by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission, loggerhead nesting has been in steep decline (22%) since 1989. Since 1998, there has been a 40% decrease. Florida accounts for 90% of the loggerhead nesting in the U.S.

**National Wildlife Refuges:** The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's recently released a management plan for 128 wildlife refuges in the Southeast that calls for eliminating 90 of 748 staff positions during the

next three years. Sixty other staffers were eliminated during the past two years. This is of concern for loggerheads in Georgia, North and South Carolina. Cape Island in the Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge is the highest density nesting beach for the northern subpopulation of loggerhead turtles. Cape and Lighthouse Islands (~ 8 miles) had 1222 nests this year, while Georgia and North Carolina statewide had 1399 and 758 nests, respectively. Your help is needed to protect the Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge as well as others across the country. Assistance with contacting your Congress men and women can be found here: [www.cccturtle.org/pressroom](http://www.cccturtle.org/pressroom).

Sea Turtle Strandings in South Carolina 1980 - 2006													
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL
1980	0	0	0	28	34	86	286	103	40	17	0	0	594
1981	0	0	0	32	11	17	152	65	37	7	0	0	321
1982	0	0	2	36	30	55	84	34	11	9	0	0	261
1983	0	0	0	6	26	40	66	22	9	1	1	0	171
1984	1	0	0	15	14	30	55	10	3	0	0	0	128
1985	0	0	0	16	2	19	42	14	6	2	0	0	101
1986	0	0	0	2	5	51	75	26	9	9	7	1	185
1987	0	0	0	0	29	142	52	15	24	5	0	0	267
1988	0	0	0	2	15	2	44	26	10	4	3	0	106
1989	1	0	0	1	12	31	19	15	11	2	4	0	96
1990	1	0	0	8	7	19	18	8	24	21	11	0	117
1991	0	0	0	11	23	14	10	8	7	3	5	0	81
1992	1	0	0	7	39	16	19	7	7	9	3	1	109
1993	1	0	1	2	9	36	13	12	22	4	1	0	101
1994	0	0	0	7	7	17	24	16	11	3	1	0	86
1995	0	0	0	9	26	36	32	17	5	5	5	1	136
1996	0	0	0	4	38	53	34	19	20	8	6	1	183
1997	1	0	3	7	33	24	36	18	12	12	0	1	147
1998	0	0	1	13	33	59	35	15	19	14	2	2	193
1999	1	1	1	7	25	29	30	21	5	5	5	0	130
2000	0	0	0	8	22	49	28	17	6	2	4	0	136
2001	0	1	1	4	21	29	40	15	7	0	1	2	121
2002	0	0	1	17	27	26	20	7	6	7	1	2	114
2003	2	0	0	6	44	32	25	30	8	5	7	1	160
2004	0	0	0	20	39	39	19	12	5	6	8	2	150
2005	0	0	0	3	24	37	17	13	7	0	8	1	110
2006	0	0	0	10	20	24	26	6	3	0	1	0	90

**EDUCATION AND RESOURCES**

There is a new sea turtle educational book titled *Sea Turtles of the Atlantic And Gulf Coasts of the United States (A Wormsloe Foundation Nature Book)* by Carol Ruckdeschel and Bob Shoop. Local sea turtle consultant for Botany Island, Meg Hoyle, was the photography editor for this UGA Press publication.

Visit [www.starrynightlights.com](http://www.starrynightlights.com) for light pollution mitigation strategies.

Free Turtle Shields: Send a self-addressed, stamped business size (#10) envelope to (up to five per envelope): Free Turtle Shields 407 Glenwood Drive, Georgetown, KY 40324.



Photography of loggerhead hatchling by Barbara Bergwerf.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE SEA TURTLE OFFICE

### Upcoming Events

February 22-28, 2007: 27th Annual International Sea Turtle Symposium - Myrtle Beach, SC.

February 24, 2007 1:30 - 5:30 PM: Special Carolinas Session at the ISTS

For more information, visit: [www.seaturtle.org](http://www.seaturtle.org).

### New South Carolina CTurtle List Serve

We have decided to try out a new list serve for the SC sea turtle community to enhance communication and collaboration among our volunteers, staff, academia and organizations. If you would like to join this list serve, please send an email to [coastbio@dnr.sc.gov](mailto:coastbio@dnr.sc.gov).

### Loggerheadlines Has a New Look

Thanks for reading this issue of Loggerheadlines. We have a new format and would appreciate any feedback. Over time this new format will improve with your help! We have also decided to scale down Loggerheadlines to a semi-annual newsletter. Thank you again for your support.

### 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!

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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!

