



## NOAA FISHERIES

### Protected Resources

All sea turtles found in U.S. waters are protected under the Endangered Species Act. If you see an injured, entangled, or stranded sea turtle, immediately call NOAA Fisheries Marine Animal Reporting Hotline. If possible, take photographs and stand by for further instructions.

866-755-NOAA(6622)

#### Quick facts

- Loggerheads are the most common “hard-shelled” sea turtle in the Northeast.
- The leatherback is the largest sea turtle with a shell up to 72 inches long and a weight of 1500 pounds.
- Leatherback sea turtles feed on jellyfish as far north as Canada.
- Kemp’s ridleys are the smallest sea turtle with a shell up to 26 inches long and a weight of 110 pounds.
- The vast majority of Kemp’s ridley turtles nest on one beach in Mexico.

## Sea Turtles of the Northeast Region



Credit: Gatzke/NOAA

### Sea Turtles Present in NOAA Fisheries Northeast Region

Sea turtles are reptiles (cold-blooded, air-breathing animals) with bodies that are well adapted to the marine environment. They are found worldwide, typically nesting in tropical waters and feeding as far north as temperate waters, including off the coast of New England. There are seven species of sea turtles in the world. Five sea turtle species, green, hawksbill (rare visitor), Kemp’s ridley, leatherback, and loggerhead, are found in U.S. waters from Maine through Virginia. The waters in this region serve as important foraging and developmental areas for sea turtles when water temperatures are warm enough. As temperatures warm in the spring, sea turtles begin to migrate northward, arriving in Virginia waters as early as April/May and on the more northern foraging grounds in New England in June. This trend is reversed in the fall as water temperatures cool with most sea turtles leaving New England by November.

### What You Can Do to Help Sea Turtles

NOAA Fisheries and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service share jurisdiction for sea turtles. NOAA Fisheries has the lead responsibility in the marine environment, while USFWS has responsibility for sea turtles on land. Through management, conservation and recovery efforts, and public outreach and education, our sea turtle program strives to protect turtles. And you can help! There are a number of small actions you can take to help ensure sea turtles survive:

- If you see turtles and/or jellyfish at the surface, slow down and maintain a dedicated lookout.
- If you see an injured or entangled sea turtle, report it immediately to the NMFS hotline (see sidebar) or the USCG and, if possible, take photographs and stand by until you receive further instructions.

For additional ways to help sea turtles and for more detailed information on NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic Regional Office’s Sea Turtle Program in this region, please visit:

<http://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/Protected/seaturtles/>