

A Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle Strands in Gulfport, MS

On Thursday, July 3, 2008, IMMS Stranding Coordinator, Tim Hoffland, received a phone call from a Gulfport Marine Patrol official regarding an injured sea turtle found in Gulfport Harbor. The animal was sighted by a local fisherman who reported that it was swimming with fishing line protruding from its mouth. The sea turtle, identified as a female Kemp's ridley, had a large fishing hook embedded in her esophagus. IMMS stranding team members examined the sea turtle, and Dr. Connie Chevis, the staff veterinarian, attempted to remove the fishing hook on-site. It was determined that the hook was deeply embedded and required special equipment for removal. The sea turtle was brought back to the IMMS rehabilitation facility where the hook was successfully removed. The Kemp's ridley was given antibiotics to prevent infection, and was kept under observation at IMMS through the



weekend. She was tagged with a microchip and released



on
Monday
July
7,
2008
, in
Gulf
port

Harbor.

The Kemp's ridley sea turtle is the smallest and most endangered species of the 5 species of sea turtles found in the Gulf of Mexico. Adults usually measure about 2 feet in carapace length and weigh 100 pounds on average. Kemp's ridley sea turtles are known for their unique nesting habits. Similar to the Olive ridley sea turtle, the Kemp's ridley nests primarily on a particular beach near Rancho Nuevo, Mexico, although Padre Island, Texas recorded 127 nests in 2007. To learn more about the Kemp's ridley or other species of sea turtles found in the Gulf of Mexico, please visit the NOAA Fisheries Office of Protected Resources website at www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/.