New Year, New Turtles

We spend a lot of time talking about cold-stunned sea turtles every winter, as we usually have many cold-stunned patients from New England. This year is no exception.

Read on to learn about our new set of patients, and pick up some fun resources for classroom activities. This month is all about ...

Cold Stunning!

What is Cold Stunning?
Our go-to resources for introducing this chilly topic

Sea turtles are incredibly adapted for a life in the ocean, but as they are cold-blooded reptiles, they are easily susceptible to low temperatures. Sea turtles manage this threat by migrating to warmer locations when temperatures begin to drop, but sometimes illness or injury may prevent them from migrating. Other times, especially in Cape Cod, sea turtles will get confused or trapped by the layout of the coast and cannot escape in time. When temperatures start to drop below 50 degrees Fahrenheit, cold stunning can set in.
We teach a program called "Frozen Not Forgotten" every winter. Check out our educator guide to teach your students about cold stunning.

Additionally, we play the movie Saving Sea Turtles, Preventing Extinction throughout winter in our Learning Center. If you have time to show your students a film, we highly recommend this one about the critically endangered Kemp's ridley sea turtles and their struggles with cold stunning. It even features the Georgia Sea Turtle Center! Visit the movie website to learn more and view the trailer.

https://www.savingseaturtlesmovie.com/

Hot or Cold-Stunned
Can you place the turtles in a safe location?
Please refer to the "Frozen Not Forgotten" guide above for the necessary background information for this activity. The game is similar to Pin the Tail on the Donkey, but instead, your students will place their turtles in the ocean and decide whether that turtle is at risk of becoming cold stunned.

The materials needed are minimal. One of our educators drew this map of Cape Cod, but you could trace one as well. Just ensure it is large enough to place several turtles. We placed the map on a magnet board and made Styrofoam turtles with magnets on the back.

You can adjust this game depending on the size and safety of the space in which you play. We allow each student to place 2-4 turtles on the board while being blindfolded and spinning three times beforehand. Help from the educator is needed, of course, to walk in the right direction.

Once the turtles are placed, ask the student if the turtle will end up cold stunned where they are located or if the turtle will be able to migrate south to warmer waters. If a turtle is outside of the hook of Cape Cod or beneath it, it should be able to migrate. Any turtle
within the hook of Cape Cod is at risk of becoming cold stunned as it is harder to find their way out. If a turtle is placed anywhere on land, then you can tell the students that it has already washed ashore from being cold stunned.

---

**Sea Turtle Camp**

*Registration is open for summer!*

The learning doesn't end with summer break, and the fun keeps going! Sea Turtle Camp will run throughout June and July, with four weeks available for 1st - 4th graders and two weeks available for 5th - 7th graders. Spots are limited each week, so be sure to sign up ASAP.

To read more and register your child, visit our [website.](#)

---

**Patient Highlight - Cold-Stunned Sea Turtles**

*A yearly occurrence at the GSTC, but each winter is a new adventure!*

November 25, 2019

Fifteen cold stuns arrived at the Brunswick airport. All of the turtles were juvenile Kemp's Ridleys, with the exception of one juvenile loggerhead.

Loggerheads and Kemp's Ridleys love to munch on crustaceans, which are abundant in the New England area, so they travel north in the warmer months to reach this feeding ground.

As temperatures drop in late fall, these turtles attempt to migrate south and often get stuck in the hooked shape of Cape Cod. This is when cold stunning sets in, and each winter many sea turtles begin to wash up on shore. Volunteers walk the beaches to retrieve as many as possible, and they are taken in by the New England Aquarium. Due to the overwhelming number of cold stuns each year, we help by taking in roughly 15 of these sea turtles every winter.

**Getting Cheesy**

We assign a naming theme to our cold-stunned sea turtles each year. This year's theme is cheese!

Cold-stunned sea turtles tend to rehabilitate pretty quickly, and we anticipate many of them will be ready to go to their ocean home by
spring. However, some are suffering from secondary issues such as pneumonia and various lesions and abrasions which may need to be treated a little longer.

You can follow the progress of our newest cold-stunned sea turtles on our social media, and hopefully we will have releases to announce once the weather warms up again.

If you would like to bring your students on a field trip to the GSTC right from your classroom, there's still time to sign up for Virtual Field Trips and get a glimpse of these cold stuns!

See you in March!

Stay warm this season, and we will be back with more resources and stories in the spring!

In the meantime, we invite you and your students to follow the weekly happenings at the Georgia Sea Turtle Center through the educational posts on our social media.

As always, if you would like to experience a field trip at our center, you can get started by sending us an email at gstcreervations@jekyllisland.com

Thanks again for your continued support.

Sincerely,

The Georgia Sea Turtle Center

*Education Department and Sea Turtle Patients*