

Sea Turtle Protocol West Coast Region *November 2019*

Authorization to Respond: Jurisdiction of sea turtles is shared between NOAA Fisheries and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Members of the West Coast Marine Mammal Stranding Network are advised that take authorizations for marine mammals contained in their NOAA Fisheries Stranding Agreements do not extend to sea turtles due to their endangered species status (50 CFR 17.21, 50 CFR 222.309 & 50 CFR 223.206). Please coordinate your response with your NOAA Regional Stranding Coordinator.

NOAA Fisheries Regional Stranding Coordinator – California	Justin Viezbicke Justin.Viezbicke@noaa.gov Based in Long Beach, CA	562-980-3230 Office 562-506-4315 Cell
NOAA Fisheries Assistant Regional Stranding Coordinator – California	Justin Greenman Justin.Greenman@noaa.gov Based in Long Beach, CA	562-980-3264 Office 707-496-7230 Cell
NOAA Fisheries Regional Stranding Coordinator – Oregon and Washington	Kristin Wilkinson Kristin.Wilkinson@noaa.gov Based in Seattle, WA	206-526-4747 Office 206-550-6208 Cell

Sea Turtle Data Forms and Photos: Please fill out the U.S. West Coast Stranding Report for each case you respond to. The Definition of Terms includes a Species Identification Key and information about how to fill out the form. Please email a copy of the completed form with photos to your NOAA Regional Stranding Coordinator (contact information above) within 24 hours of the stranding.

Requesting sea turtle parts for educational or scientific use: Parts authorizations for scientific or educational use must be submitted in writing to the USFWS Sea Turtle coordinator.

USFWS Sea Turtle Coordinator - California	Daniel Marquez Daniel_Marquez@fws.gov Based in Carlsbad, CA	760-431-9440 x225
USFWS Sea Turtle Coordinator - Washington	Deanna Lynch Deanna_Lynch@fws.gov Based in Lacey, WA	360-951-2560
USFWS Sea Turtle Coordinator – Oregon	Michele Merola Zwartjes Michele_Zwartjes@fws.gov Based in Portland, OR	503-804-2087 Cell 503—231-6980 Office
USFWS Sea Turtle Response Contact - Primary	Mike Szumski Based in Newport	541-867-4550 Office 503-705-5747 Cell
USFWS Sea Turtle Response Contact - Secondary	Anne Walker Based in Newport	541-867-4550 Office

Responding to Sea Turtle Stranding Events:

1. When you receive a phone call about a stranded sea turtle:
 - a. Record the time and the date of the call, ask for the reporting party's name, phone number, species identification (or description, size, length, weight, etc.), status (alive, dead, injured, etc.) and the exact location including the nearest beach access point. Ask if they have taken any photos and if they can email or text them to you for your review before responding.
 - b. If you are unsure of the species of the turtle utilize the Definition of Terms which includes a Species Identification Key.
 - c. If you plan to respond please coordinate your activities with your NOAA Regional Stranding Coordinator. The NOAA Regional Stranding Coordinator will inform the USFWS Sea Turtle Coordinator in your area. Please keep in mind you need agency authorization to take stranded ESA listed sea turtles according to section 50 CFR 17.21 for endangered sea turtles (hawksbills, leatherbacks, loggerheads, and olive ridleys) and section 223.206(b) for threatened sea turtles (proposed listing for eastern Pacific green turtles).
2. Responding to a case.
 - a. Once you have coordinated with your NOAA Regional Stranding Coordinator, arrive at the site and confirm the circumstances of the stranding.
 - i. Identify the species, condition, and location of the animal.
 1. If the turtle is identified as a leatherback, please notify all of the Regional Stranding Coordinators as soon as possible.
 - ii. Determine if the animal is alive by using the Live Sea Turtle Stranding Response Guidelines which are included in the Stranding Handbook.
 - iii. If you think the animal is alive...
 1. Contact a rehabilitation facility to see if space is available for the animal. If rehabilitation space is secured please notify your Regional Stranding Coordinator, your Regional Stranding Coordinator will notify USFWS.

Facility & Type of Care	Point of Contact	Phone Number	Capacity
Seattle Aquarium – Seattle, WA	Shawn Larsen s.larson@seattleaquarium.org	206-386-4359 Office	November- January
Long-term Rehabilitation	Dr. Caitlin Hadfield c.hadfield@seattleaquarium.org	206-618-3762 c	5 th - able to accept on a case by case basis for stabilization and short-term care.
USFWS Recovery Permit in place, expires 12/20/2023		206-693-6135 Office	After January 5 th - likely unable to bring in recently

			stranded sea turtles.
Oregon Coast Aquarium – Newport, OR	Jim Burke james.burke@aquarium.org	541-867-3474 x5423	Zero capacity November 2019 through June 1, 2020.
Triage and Short-term Holding		541-961-4838 c	
Designated Agent authorization	Evonne Mochon-Collura Evonne.Mochon-Collura@aquarium.org	541-867-3474 x5302	
	Sage Butts Sage.Butts@aquarium.org	541-961-3647 c	
The Marine Mammal Center, Sausalito, CA	Dr. Shawn Johnson johnsons@tmmc.org	415-289-7343 o 415-480-9664 c	Triage capacity of 10 for emergency stabilization
Triage and Short-term Holding	Dr. Cara Field fieldc@tmmc.org	415-289-7343 o 415-754-4055	
			Short-term holding capacity of 3
Monterey Aquarium -- Monterey, CA	Dr. Mike Murray mmurray@mbayaq.org	831-644-7507 o 831-238-6924 c	Easily accommodate 3-4 turtles
Triage, Short-term, and Long-term		Emergency # with 24 hour availability: 831-648-4840	Emergency situation: 10-12 depending on size
Aquarium of the Pacific – Long Beach, CA	Dr. Lance Adams, Veterinarian LAdams@lbaop.org	562-951-1716 Office 562-833-8711 Cell	Can perform necropsies and collect samples
Triage, Short-term, and Long-term	Perry Hampton, VP of Husbandry phampton@lbaop.org	562-951-1717 Office 562-951-8712 Cell	Triage
	Sandy Trautwein, Curator of Fish and Invertebrates strautwein@lbaop.org	562-951-1715 Office 562-833-9471 Cell	Short-Term: 0-8 depending on size, species, sex, and pool requirements
			Long-Term: 0-3

Sea World San Diego – San Diego, CA	Mike Price mike.price@seaworld.com	619-225-3228 Office 209-986-2089 Cell	8-10 capacity in isolation.
Long-term Care	Eric Otjen Eric.Otjen@seaworld.com	619-954-8185 Cell	Emergency capacity upwards of 20 animals, loose isolation ability in this scenario.

2. U.S Fish and Wildlife Service sea turtle rehabilitation permitted facilities follow the FWS' Standard Permit Conditions for the Care and Maintenance of Captive Sea Turtles (attached as in the appendix:
http://www.fws.gov/northflorida/SeaTurtles/Captive_Forms/20130213_revised%20standard_permit_conditions_for_captive_sea_turtles.pdf
3. Once the facility is confirmed, arrange for transportation of the animal to the facility. Please notify your Regional Stranding Coordinator once a transport plan is in place.
 - a. DO NOT place the animal in water or attempt to warm the animal during transport!
 - b. *Refer to the Guidelines for Live Sea Turtle Stranding Response developed by Dr. Heather Harris. These guidelines are included in the Stranding Handbook.*
 - c. Complete the U.S. West Coast Stranding form by recording all relevant data. The data form is an appendix to this protocol, please provide the completed form with 24 hours of the stranding to your Regional Stranding Coordinator.
 - d. Once the turtle has been medically cleared, timing and location of the release must be coordinated with FWS and NOAA Fisheries.
- iv. If the animal is dead...
 1. Record relevant data points on the U.S. West Coast Stranding Form (e.g. location of stranding, species, measurements, description, etc.)
 2. If possible, conduct a field necropsy or collect the carcass for later examination.
 - a. Please reference and use the Sea Turtle Stranding and Salvage Network – Gross Necropsy Report and follow the NOAA West Coast Region Hard-shelled Sea Turtle Necropsy Protocol for sampling guidelines. These documents are available in the Stranding Handbook. At a minimum, all biological data should be recorded and two skin or muscle samples should be taken. Samples can be

stored in a saturated salt solution, DMSO, or ETOH. The sample should be taken from an area of the animal that has not been exposed to the sun for an extended period of time. If a necropsy is conducted, guidance will be given on what samples and information needs to be collected during the necropsy as this varies by species. Please take external photos of the carcass (dorsal, ventral, cranial, and lateral) to verify species and body condition, and document any external or internal lesions.

- i. The Southwest Fisheries Science Center can be contacted for a biopsy kit to collect skin and muscle samples. They can also provide more information on what samples should be collected if a necropsy is performed. The primary point of contact is Erin LaCasella , 858-546-5696, Erin.LaCasella@noaa.gov and Dr. Heather Harris, Wildlife Veterinarian, 415-517-5514, Heather.Harris@noaa.gov
 - ii. Fresh leatherback carcasses should be reported to Erin LaCasella , 858-546-5696, Erin.LaCasella@noaa.gov and Dr. Heather Harris, Wildlife Veterinarian, 415-517-5514, Heather.Harris@noaa.gov as soon as possible. There is a separate NOAA West Coast Region Leatherback Necropsy Protocol that should be used.
 3. Carcass Disposal: Please coordinate disposal with your Regional Stranding Coordinator. Contact information is listed on the first page of this protocol.
 4. A copy of the U.S. West Coast Turtle Stranding Report and photos of the animal should be submitted to USFWS and NOAA Fisheries (contact information above) within 5 days of collection. (50 CFR 17.21, 50 CFR 222.309 & 50 CFR 223.206)
3. Determine your course of action.
- i. Live sea turtles need to be picked up as soon as possible. Hard-shelled sea turtles that strand in northern California, Oregon, and Washington are usually “cold stunned”, which is a process that causes sea turtles to become immobile due to the decrease in body temperature (usually below 12°C (54°F)) making it impossible for them to escape the cold water and migrate to warmer water. **A cold stunned sea turtle may appear to be dead, but may be alive!**
 - ii. Dead Sea turtles should be collected if possible. **All 7 species of marine turtles are listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA)**; 6 of those species may be found in US waters and fall under the jurisdiction of the NOAA Fisheries and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. For more information on sea turtles please visit: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/species/turtles/>

- iii. If the stranding is not in your response area contact NOAA Fisheries using the contact information on page one and we will make arrangements for a response.