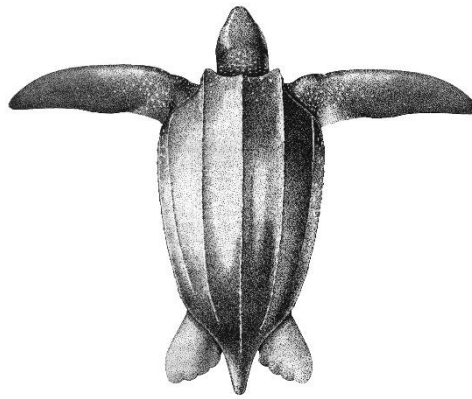


[www.strandings.com](http://www.strandings.com)

British Isles & Republic of Ireland Marine Turtle Strandings &  
Sightings  
Annual Report 2015

R.S.Penrose & L.R.Gander. May 2016



Marine Environmental Monitoring  
Penwalk  
Llechryd  
Cardigan  
Ceredigion  
West Wales  
SA43 2PS  
e-mail: [rodpenrose@strandings.demon.co.uk](mailto:rodpenrose@strandings.demon.co.uk)



## CONTENTS.

	Page
<b>1 SUMMARY</b>	4
<b>2 INTRODUCTION</b>	5
2.1 The UK Turtle Implementation Group.	5
<b>3 MATERIALS AND METHODS</b>	6
3.1 Live Animals.	7
3.2 Dead Animals.	7
<b>4 RESULTS</b>	8
4.1 Sightings.	11
4.2 Strandings.	12
<b>5 MATTERS ARISING</b>	17
5.1 Retrospective Reports.	18
<b>6 LIVE STRANDING EVENTS 2015</b>	18
6.1 Rehabilitation.	18
6.2 Repatriation.	21
<b>7 BYCATCH</b>	21
<b>8 SAMPLES &amp; POST-MORTEM EXAMINATIONS</b>	21
<b>9 DATA SHARING</b>	22
<b>10 UNUSUAL OCCURENCES</b>	22
<b>11 PUBLICITY</b>	22
<b>12 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	22
<b>13 APPENDICES</b>	22

<b>List of Figures.</b>		page
<b>Figure 1.</b>	Current Technical Co-ordination of the Cetacean Strandings Investigation Programme (CSIP).	5
<b>Figure 2.</b>	All species sightings & strandings 2005-2015.	9
<b>Figure 3.</b>	All species sightings & strandings 2013.	10
<b>Figure 4.</b>	All species sightings & strandings 2014.	10
<b>Figure 5.</b>	All species sightings & strandings 2015.	10
<b>Figure 6.</b>	Leatherback sightings 2015.	11
<b>Figure 7.</b>	Loggerhead sightings 2015.	11
<b>Figure 8.</b>	Unidentified sightings 2015.	12
<b>Figure 9.</b>	Green turtle strandings 2015.	12
<b>Figure 10.</b>	Kemp's ridley strandings 2015.	13
<b>Figure 11.</b>	Leatherback strandings 2015.	13
<b>Figure 12.</b>	Loggerhead strandings 2015.	14
<b>Figure 13.</b>	Unidentified strandings 2015.	14
<b>Figure 14.</b>	All leatherbacks by month.	15
<b>Figure 15.</b>	All leatherbacks average over 2005-2015.	15
<b>Figure 16.</b>	All loggerheads by month.	15
<b>Figure 17.</b>	All loggerheads average over 2005-2015.	15
<b>Figure 18.</b>	Leona's final satellite transmission 1st Sept. 2015.	21

#### **List of Plates.**

<b>Plate 1.</b>	Kemp's ridley <b>T2014/040.</b>	17
<b>Plate 2.</b>	Loggerhead turtle <b>T2015/027</b>	19
<b>Plate 3.</b>	Loggerhead turtle <b>T2015/033</b> on Caldy Island.	20
<b>Plate 4.</b>	Loggerhead turtle <b>T2015/035.</b>	20

#### **List of Tables.**

<b>Table 1.</b>	2015 Total number of reported marine turtles for British Isles & RoI (live & dead).	8
<b>Table 2.</b>	2015 Number of live marine turtles.	8
<b>Table 3.</b>	2015 Number of dead marine turtles.	8
<b>Table 4.</b>	Cumulative number of records.	16
<b>Table 5.</b>	Species Comparison.	16
<b>Table 6.</b>	'TURTLE' Database Species Totals (1748 - 2015).	17

## **1. SUMMARY**

A total of 46 marine turtles were reported to TURTLE during 2015:  
9 Kemp's ridley turtles, 15 loggerhead turtles, 18 leatherback turtles, 1 green turtle and 3 unidentified to species.

### **Live Stranded (10)**

7 loggerhead turtles and 3 Kemp's ridley turtles live stranded. 6 loggerhead turtles and 2 Kemp's ridley turtles were recovered for rehabilitation. 2 loggerhead turtles survived and should be released in 2016.

### **Live sightings (19)**

15 leatherback turtles and 2 loggerhead turtles.  
2 were unconfirmed to species and recorded as unidentified.

### **Dead stranded (16)**

2 leatherback turtles stranded dead: 1 in Eire; 1 in Wales.  
6 Kemp's ridley turtles stranded dead: 4 in England; 1 in Wales; 1 in Scotland.  
6 loggerhead turtles stranded dead: 3 in Eire; 2 in England; 1 in Wales.  
1 green turtle stranded dead in Wales.  
1 unidentified to species stranded dead in Eire.

### **Post Mortem and Samples**

3 loggerhead turtles have been examined post mortem so far at CSIP/ZSL, CSIP/Exeter Uni and CSIP/SMASS Inverness.

### **Data Sharing**

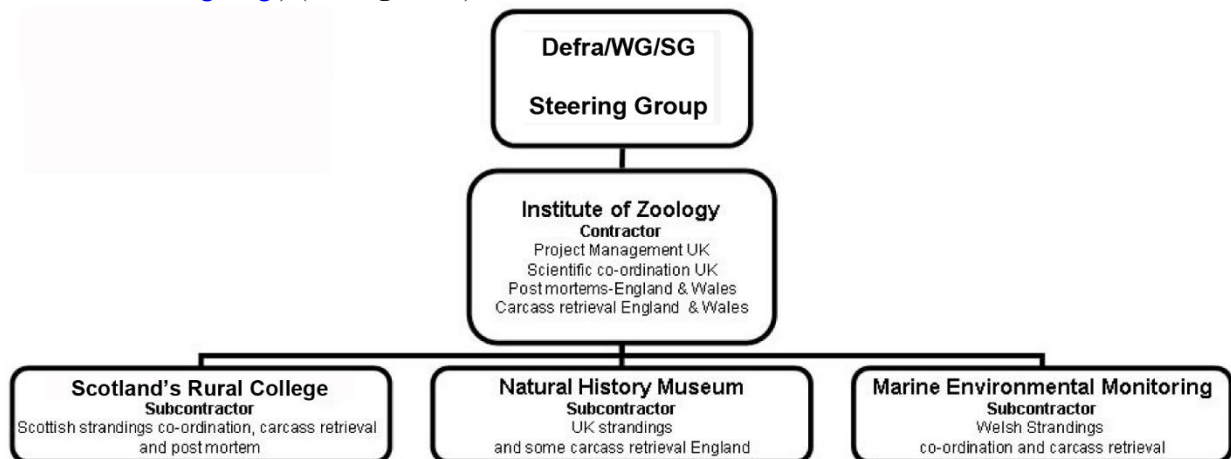
2014 TURTLE database has been uploaded to the NBN Gateway <http://www.nbn.org.uk>

### **TURTLE records totals**

The current total of 2719 is broken down thus:  
1322 Eire; 643 England; 395 Scotland; 259 Wales; 40 Northern Ireland; 32 Isle of Man; 15 Channel Islands; 13 Offshore.

## 2. INTRODUCTION

In 1990, the ‘Collaborative UK Marine Mammal Strandings Project’ was initiated and part-funded by the UK Department of the Environment (now Defra). The project involves detailed pathological and other investigations of stranded marine mammal carcasses (mostly cetacean) from UK waters. It forms part of the Department's international obligations towards conservation agreements, including the ‘Agreement on the conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic and North Seas’ (ASCOBANS). Detailed pathological investigations of stranded marine turtles were included in 2001 and the systematic recording and occasional examination of stranded basking sharks began in 2007. The project is now named the ‘Cetacean Strandings Investigation Programme’ (CSIP, [www.ukstrandings.org](http://www.ukstrandings.org)) (see **Figure 1.**).



**Figure 1.** *Current Technical Co-ordination of the Cetacean Strandings Investigation Programme (CSIP).*

### 2.1 The UK Turtle Implementation Group.

In 1999, English Nature, now Natural England, published the UK Marine Turtles Grouped Species Action Plan (SAP) on behalf of the UK Biodiversity Group. The SAP is part of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and aims to enhance marine turtle conservation in UK waters and in the UK Overseas Territories as well as raise awareness and knowledge of their occurrence, legal protection and measures to enhance conservation amongst marine users and the general public. The SAP was implemented by a group of organisations led by joint lead partners the Marine Conservation Society (MCS) and the Amphibian & Reptile Conservation Trust<sup>1</sup> (ARC). The contact agency is Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH). The Turtle Implementation Group (TIG) consists of the following organisations:-

- **Amphibian & Reptile Conservation Trust<sup>1</sup>** is an authority on reptile and amphibian issues and was the Lead Partners or joint Lead Partners for all five of the reptile and amphibian Action Plans within the UK BAP [www.arc-trust.org](http://www.arc-trust.org)  
Contact: *Tony Gent, 01202 391319*
- The **Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture (DEFA)** is the Isle of Man Government's department responsible for species protection and site designation under the Manx Wildlife Act 1990. The Department is also the key Isle of Man contact for strandings and sightings of sea turtles.  
Contact: *Dr Fiona Gell, 01624 685835* [www.gov.im/defa](http://www.gov.im/defa)
- **DOE (NI) Marine Division** is responsible for protecting the marine environment while maximising the sustainable use of its resources, now and for future generations.  
Contact: *Gary Burrows, 028 7082 3600.*
- **Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC)** is the public body that advises the UK Government and devolved administrations on UK-wide and international nature conservation.  
Contact: *Kelly Macleod, 01224 266584*

<sup>1</sup> Formally Herpetological Conservation Trust (HCT).

- **Marine Conservation Society (MCS)** is the UK charity dedicated to the protection of the marine environment and its wildlife. MCS was the joint Lead Partner of the Marine Turtles Grouped Species Action Plan and coordinates the TIG. [www.mcsuk.org](http://www.mcsuk.org)  
Contact: *Sue Ranger or Peter Richardson, 01989 566017*
- **Marine Environmental Monitoring (MEM)** is a member of the Defra “UK Cetacean Strandings Investigation Programme”, [www.strandings.com](http://www.strandings.com) [www.ukstrandings.org](http://www.ukstrandings.org) MEM also manages ‘TURTLE’ the British Isles & Republic of Ireland database holding both records of sightings and strandings of marine turtles dating back to 1748.  
Contact: *Rod Penrose, (Reporting telephone No. 01239 683033) [rodpenrose@strandings.demon.co.uk](mailto:rodpenrose@strandings.demon.co.uk)*
- **Marine Turtle Research Group** is based at the University of Exeter, Cornwall Campus and carries out fundamental and applied research on marine turtles in British waters, the Mediterranean, West Africa and throughout the UK Overseas Territories.  
Contacts: *Prof Brendan Godley & Dr Annette Broderick 01326 371 861.*
- **MEDASSET**, founded in 1988, is an international environmental NGO registered as a charity and private company in the UK and as a Non Profit Organisation in Greece, working for the conservation of sea turtles and their habitats throughout the Mediterranean, through scientific research, environmental education, political lobbying and awareness-raising.  
Contact: *Lily Venizelos, + 30 210 3613572 [medasset@medasset.org](mailto:medasset@medasset.org)*
- **National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS)**, part of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, provides the legislative and policy framework for the conservation of nature and biodiversity in the Republic of Ireland. It also oversees its implementation, based on good science, with particular emphasis on the protection of habitats and species, through the designation and conservation of sites under EU Directives and national legislation.  
Contact: *Dr Ferdia Marnell, +3531 8883290.*
- **Natural England (NE)** is the Government agency that champions the conservation of wildlife and natural features throughout England.  
Contact: *Paul Edgar, 0300 060 1324 [Paul.Edgar@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:Paul.Edgar@naturalengland.org.uk) or Katharine Woods, 0300 060 0638 [katharine.woods@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:katharine.woods@naturalengland.org.uk)*
- **Natural Resources Wales (NRW)** Formerly the Countryside Council for Wales, is the Government’s statutory advisor on sustaining natural beauty, wildlife and the opportunity for outdoor enjoyment in Wales and its inshore waters.  
Contact: *Tom Stringell, 03000 654912 [Tom.Stringell@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk](mailto:Tom.Stringell@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk) or Ceri Morris, 03000 654913 [Ceri.Morris@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk](mailto:Ceri.Morris@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk)*
- **Queen’s University Belfast:** Dr Jonathan Houghton works on the foraging ecology and migratory behaviour of marine turtles with a particular focus on the predator prey interactions of leatherback turtles and gelatinous zooplankton (jellyfish).  
Contact: *Dr Jonathan Houghton, 028 90972297 [j.houghton@qub.ac.uk](mailto:j.houghton@qub.ac.uk)*
- **Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH)** is a government body responsible to the Scottish Government and Scottish Parliament. SNH promotes the care, improvement, responsible enjoyment, understanding, appreciation and sustainable use of Scotland’s natural heritage. SNH is the contact government point for the Marine Turtles Grouped Species Action Plan.  
Contact: *Laura Clark, 01463 725237.*
- **The Wildlife Trusts** is a partnership of 47 Wildlife Trusts, across the UK, caring for more than 2,400 nature reserves. It campaigns for the protection of wildlife and invests in the future by helping people of all ages to gain a greater appreciation and understanding of nature. The Wildlife Trusts Basking Shark Project contributes at sea survey data, from the west coast of Britain on an annual basis.  
Contact: *Dr Nick Tregenza, 01736 711783.*
- **University College Cork** *Professor John Davenport* is Emeritus Professor of Zoology. He has worked on most species of sea turtles, but especially leatherbacks, since the early 1980s, conducting fundamental studies on their physiology and biomechanics. He is currently linked to turtle conservation in Bermuda, and conducts turtle research with colleagues in Nova Scotia, France and Hawaii.  
Contact: *Professor John Davenport, +44 (0)1392 926233 or Dr Tom Doyle +353 (0) 21 4703119.*

### **3. MATERIALS AND METHODS**

Contact details vary for different parts of the British Isles & Republic of Ireland and the Turtle Code (Appendix 2.) should be consulted for the relevant contacts.

In **England & Wales** a 24 hour answer phone **01239 683033**, is interrogated at regular intervals. A message requests callers to leave details of the stranding or sighting and location, along with their name and contact phone number, so they may be reached if confirmation of details are required. A dedicated email address to receive digital photographs has been created [info@strandings.demon.co.uk](mailto:info@strandings.demon.co.uk)

For **Scotland** all records should be reported to Scottish Natural Heritage on **01463 725237** with dead strandings being reported to the Scotland’s Rural College (SRUC) **01463 243030**. Live strandings and entanglements should be reported to the SSPCA on **03000 999 999**.

For **Northern Ireland** all records of live or dead turtles should be reported to the Portrush Coastal Zone Centre on **028 7082 3600**.

In the **Republic of Ireland** all records should be reported to Dr Tom Doyle on **353-(0)21-4703119** (work) and **353-(0)87 1354938** (mobile). Sightings & strandings can also be reported online in the Republic of Ireland at [www.turtle.ie](http://www.turtle.ie)

UK turtle sightings and strandings can also be reported using the UK Turtle Code online at [www.euroturtle.org/turtlecode](http://www.euroturtle.org/turtlecode)

On the **Isle of Man** all marine animal strandings should be reported to **DEFA** on **01624 685835** or directly to Dr Fiona Gell **07624 473753**.

The following criteria are applied: -

### **3.1 Live Animals**

---

#### **(Condition code 1)**<sup>2</sup>

In 1994 the Marine Animal Rescue Coalition (MARC) was formed. This consists of all the major animal welfare and conservation bodies involved with marine mammals/turtles in the UK. It has been agreed that in the case of a live-stranding the first point of call would be the RSPCA (England & Wales), SSPCA (Scotland) as they support a manned 24-hour emergency phone. The RSPCA/SSPCA would then contact the relevant organisations, Marine Environmental Monitoring etc. Contacts and advice can be found in the UK Turtle Code at [www.strandings.com/Turtlepage.html](http://www.strandings.com/Turtlepage.html)

### **3.2 Dead Animals**

---

#### **(Condition code 2a extremely fresh as if just died)**<sup>2</sup>

#### **(Condition code 2b slight decomposition)**<sup>2</sup>

#### **(Condition code 3 moderate decomposition)**<sup>2</sup>

Health and safety precautions are followed with the animal being handled only with gloved hands. Preferably it is then taken immediately for *post-mortem* examination, but due to funding cuts in 2006 freezing is now an option until transport becomes available.

#### **(Condition code 4 advanced decomposition)**<sup>2</sup>

#### **(Condition code 5 mummified carcass)**<sup>2</sup>

Species identified, basic measurements taken together with skin for DNA. Health and safety precautions being observed. Local Authorities then contacted for safe disposal of remains.

All live and dead marine turtles are allocated a "T0000/001" number. "T" designates the animal as a marine turtle, 0000 is the year and /001 is an individual number for each record of the same year. Records of all strandings & sightings in the British Isles & Republic of Ireland are kept by the Strandings Co-ordinator. Copies of *post-mortem* examination reports are sent from the Strandings Co-ordinator to the finder and others associated with the relevant stranding.

---

<sup>2</sup> Body conditions based on Kuiken, T. and Garcia Hartmann, M (1991) Proceedings of the European Cetacean Society workshop on cetacean pathology: dissection techniques and tissue sampling. ECS newsletter 17, Special issue: 39pp



#### 4. RESULTS

The following three tables include marine turtle 'sightings' and 'strandings' reported through 2015.

**Table 1.**

2015 Total number of reported marine turtles for the British Isles & RoI. (live & dead).													
Species	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	TOTAL
Green turtle ( <i>Chelonia mydas</i> )	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Hawksbill turtle ( <i>Eretmochelys imbricata</i> )	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kemp's ridley turtle ( <i>Lepidochelys kempii</i> )	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	9
Leatherback turtle ( <i>Dermochelys coriacea</i> )	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	7	4	3	1	0	18
Loggerhead turtle ( <i>Caretta caretta</i> )	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	11	15
Unidentified	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	3
<b>Total animals</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>46</b>

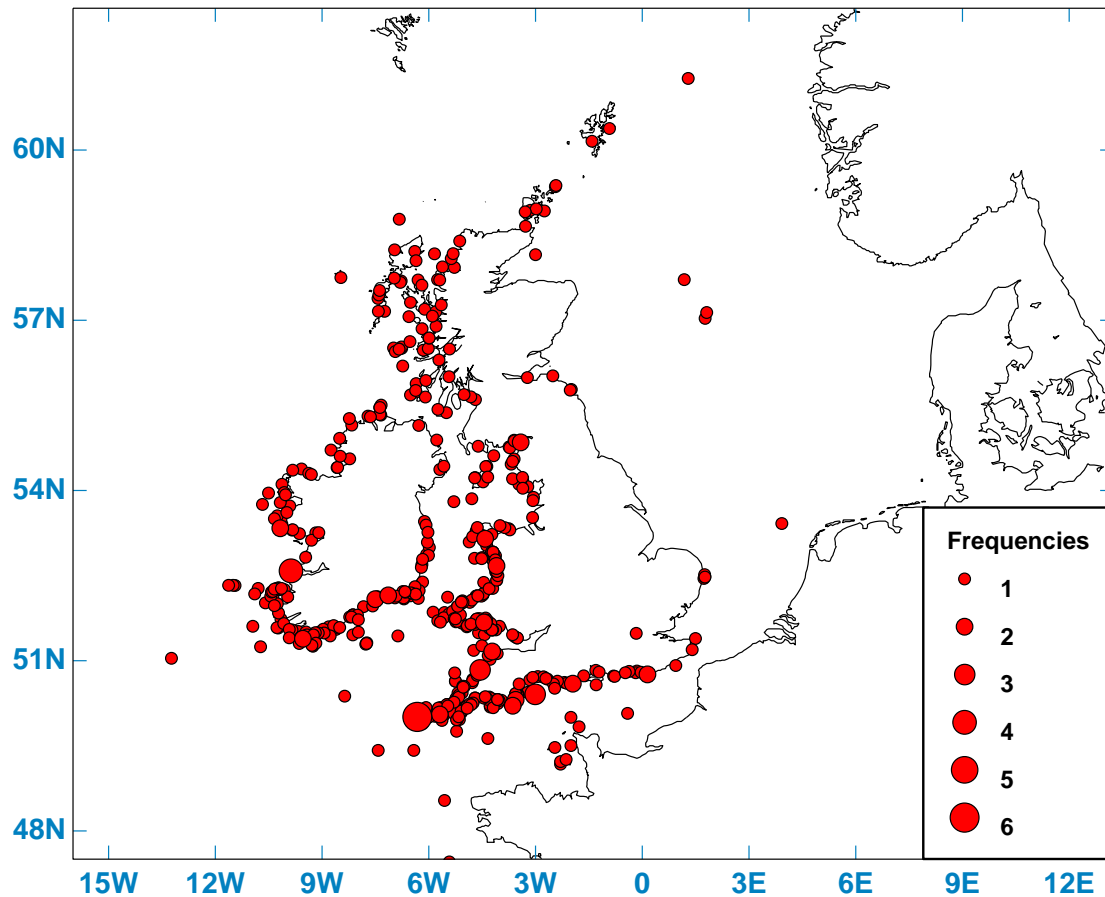
**Table 2.**

2015 Number of live marine turtles.													
Species	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	TOTAL
Green turtle ( <i>Chelonia mydas</i> )	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hawksbill turtle ( <i>Eretmochelys imbricata</i> )	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kemp's ridley turtle ( <i>Lepidochelys kempii</i> )	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3
Leatherback turtle ( <i>Dermochelys coriacea</i> )	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	7	4	2	0	0	15
Loggerhead turtle ( <i>Caretta caretta</i> )	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	6	9
Unidentified	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
<b>Total animals</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>29</b>

**Table 3.**

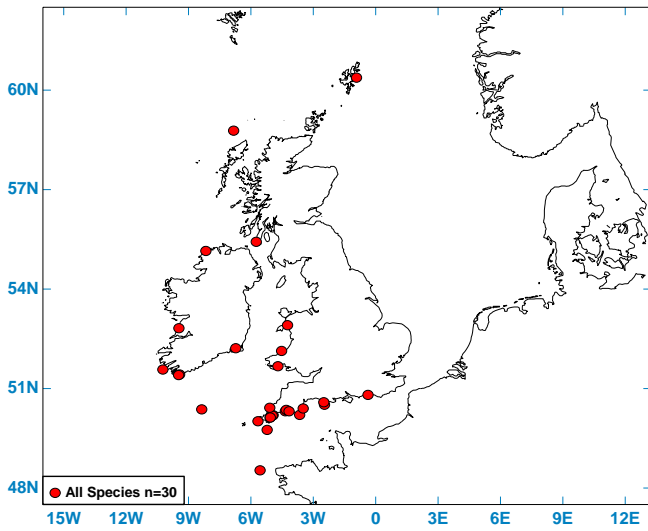
2015 Number of dead marine turtles.													
Species	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	TOTAL
Green turtle ( <i>Chelonia mydas</i> )	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Hawksbill turtle ( <i>Eretmochelys imbricata</i> )	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kemp's ridley turtle ( <i>Lepidochelys kempii</i> )	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	6
Leatherback turtle ( <i>Dermochelys coriacea</i> )	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	3
Loggerhead turtle ( <i>Caretta caretta</i> )	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	6
Unidentified	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
<b>Total animals</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>17</b>

The general geographical distribution of each species, strandings and sightings, are plotted on the following maps. Although the maps are generated directly from the data stored, they should be regarded as showing distribution of animals rather than giving absolute counts. While the co-ordinate system and the mapping software can theoretically differentiate between points as close as 1 metre apart, even with separations of 100 metres at the scale at which these maps are presented, some symbols may appear to overlap completely.

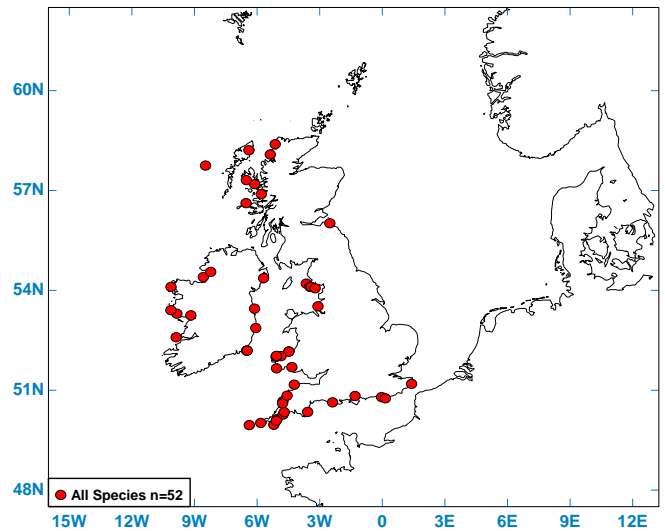


**Figure 2.** *All species sightings & strandings 2005-2015.*

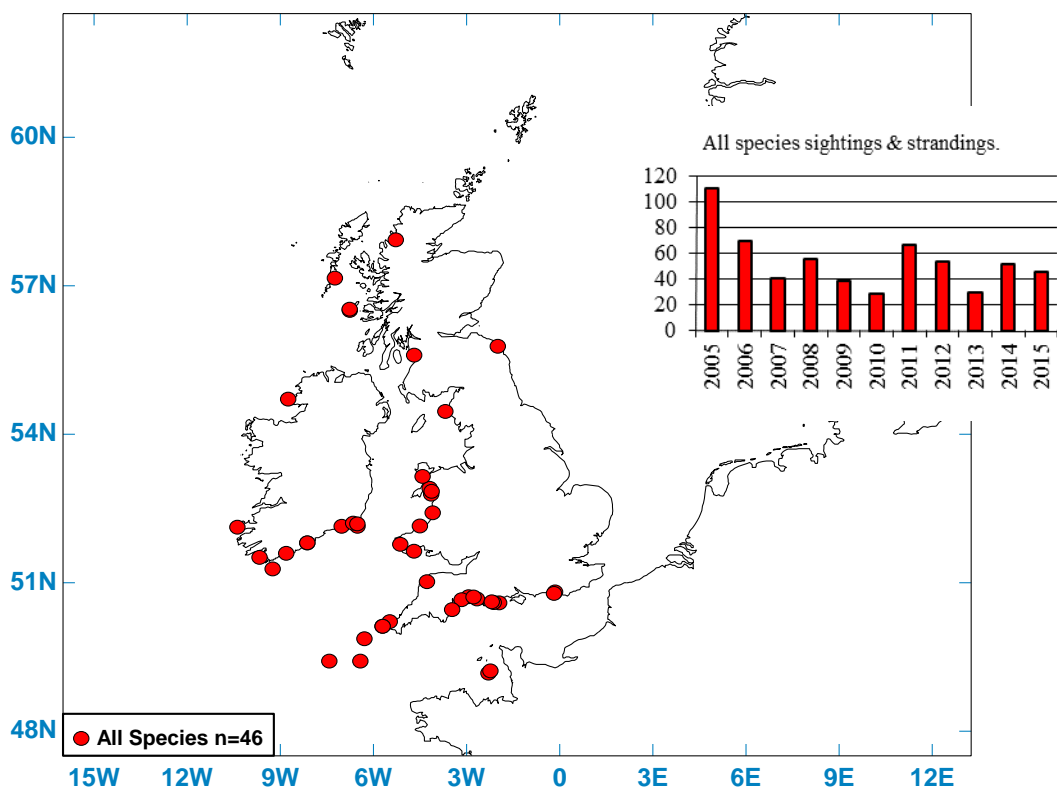
All species, sightings & strandings over the eleven year period 2005-2015 have been plotted in **Figure 2.**



**Figure 3.** All species sightings & strandings 2013.



**Figure 4.** All species sightings & strandings 2014.



**Figure 5.** All species sightings & strandings 2015.

## 4.1 Sightings.

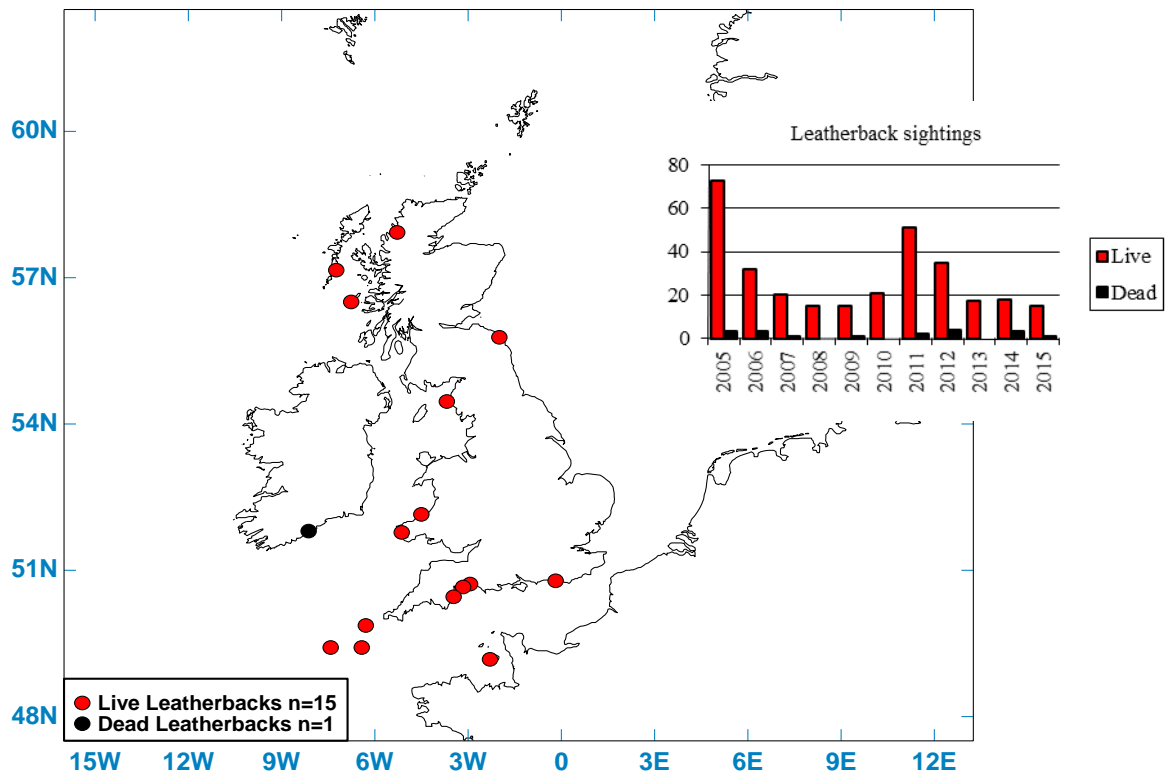


Figure 6. *Leatherback sightings 2015.*

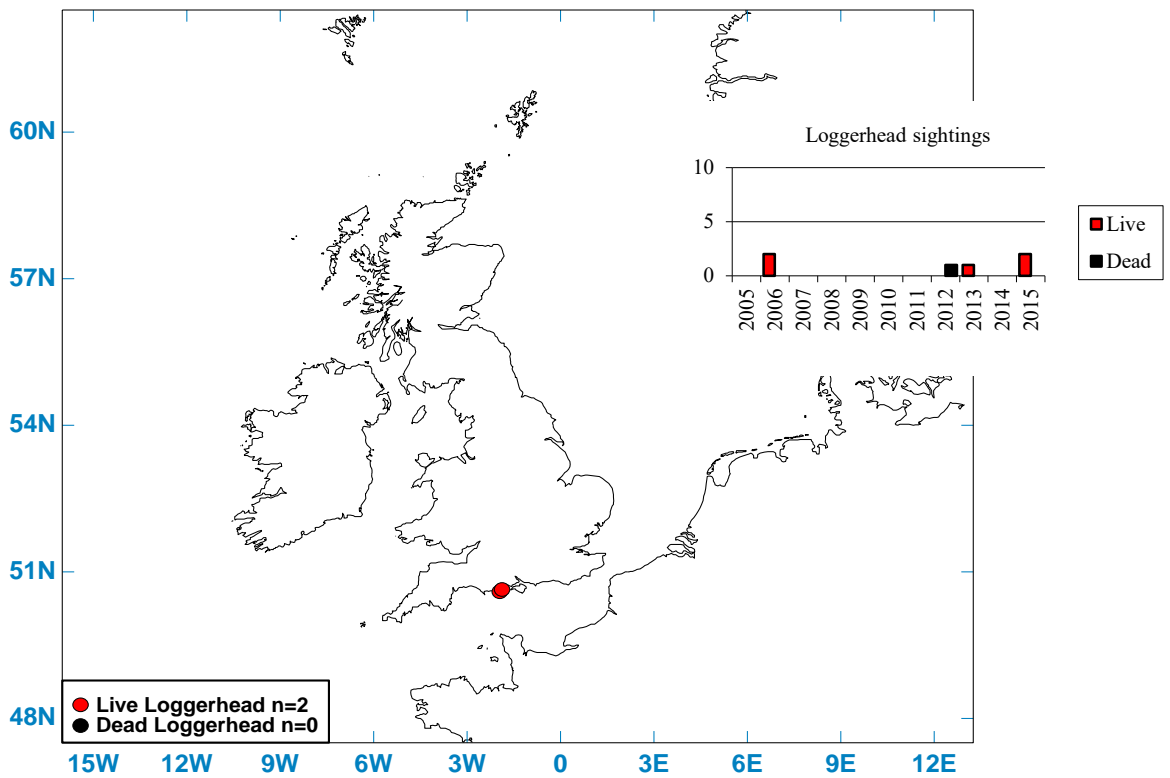


Figure 7. *Loggerhead sightings 2015.*

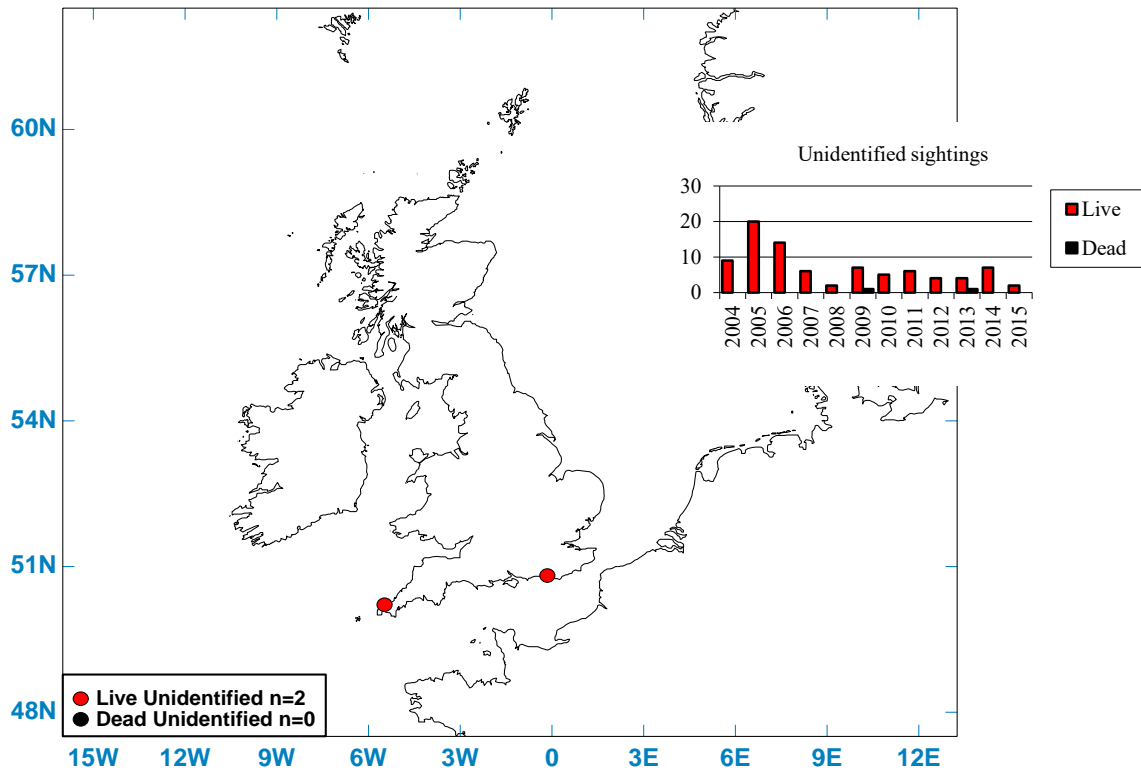


Figure 8. Unidentified sightings 2015.

#### 4.2 Strandings.

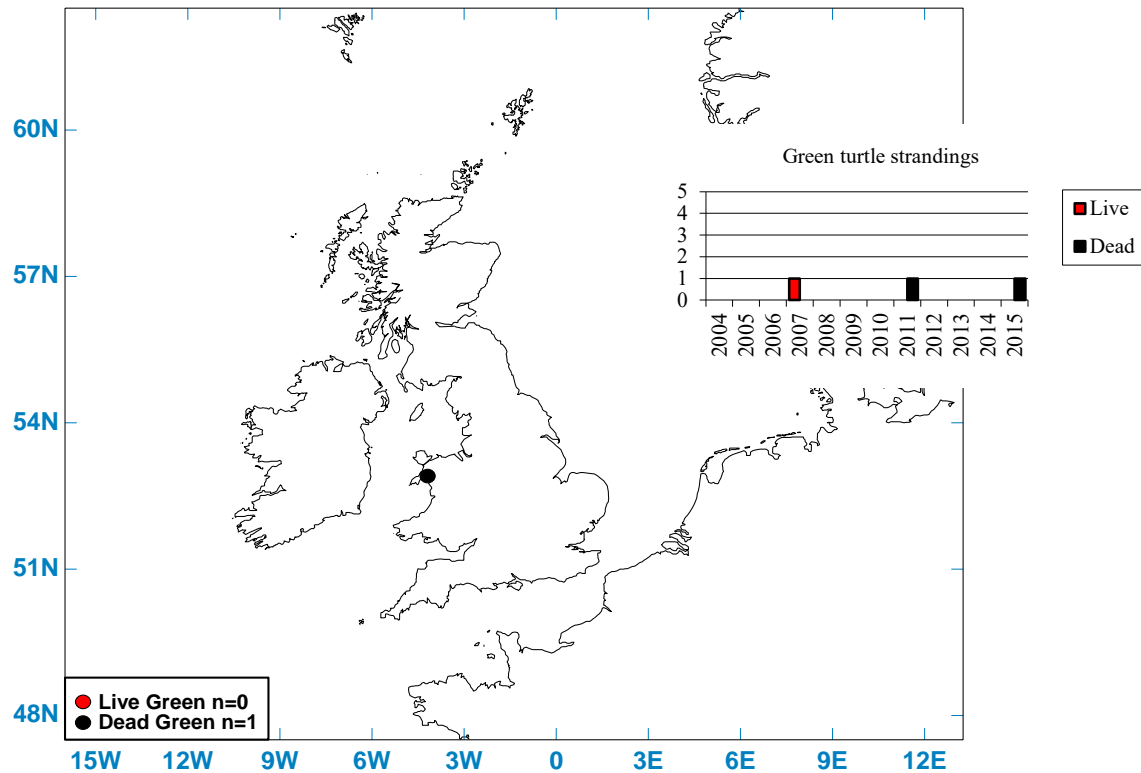
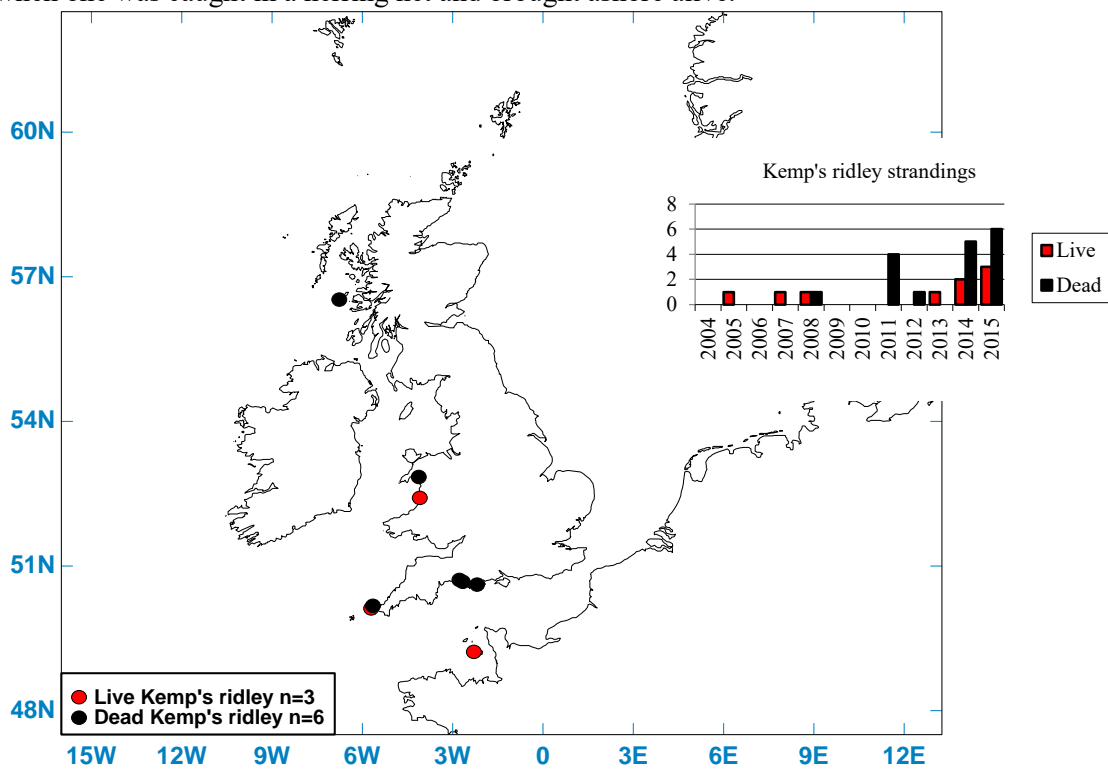
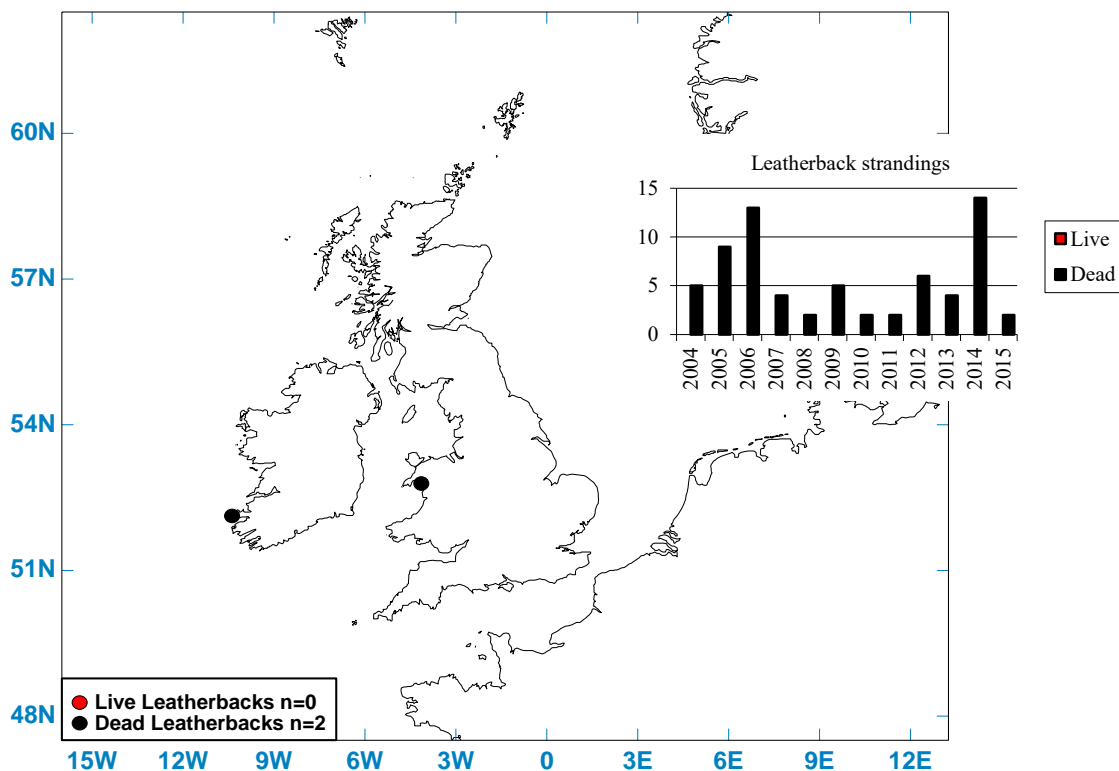


Figure 9. Green turtle strandings 2015.

No live or dead **hawksbill turtle** strandings were reported during 2014. There have been no records of hawksbill turtle strandings in the database. One sighting record exists off Cork Harbour in February 1983 when one was caught in a herring net and brought ashore alive.



**Figure 10.** *Kemp's ridley strandings 2015.*



**Figure 11.** *Leatherback strandings 2015.*

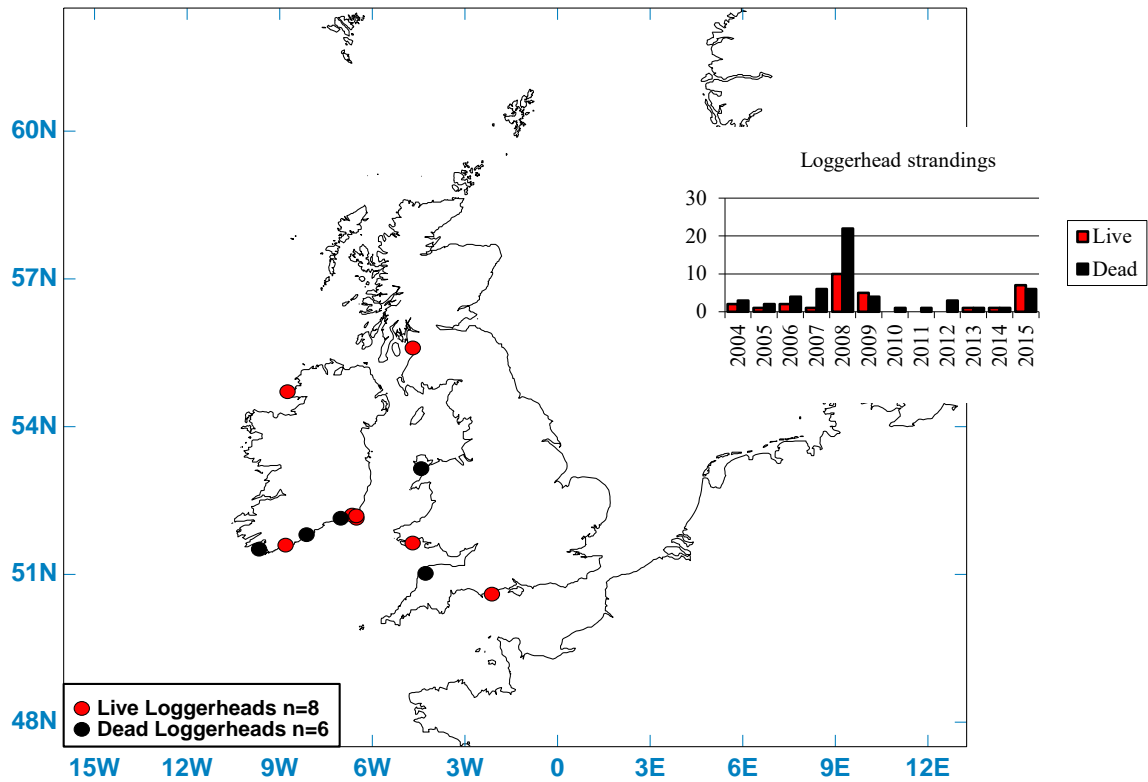


Figure 12. *Loggerhead strandings 2015.*

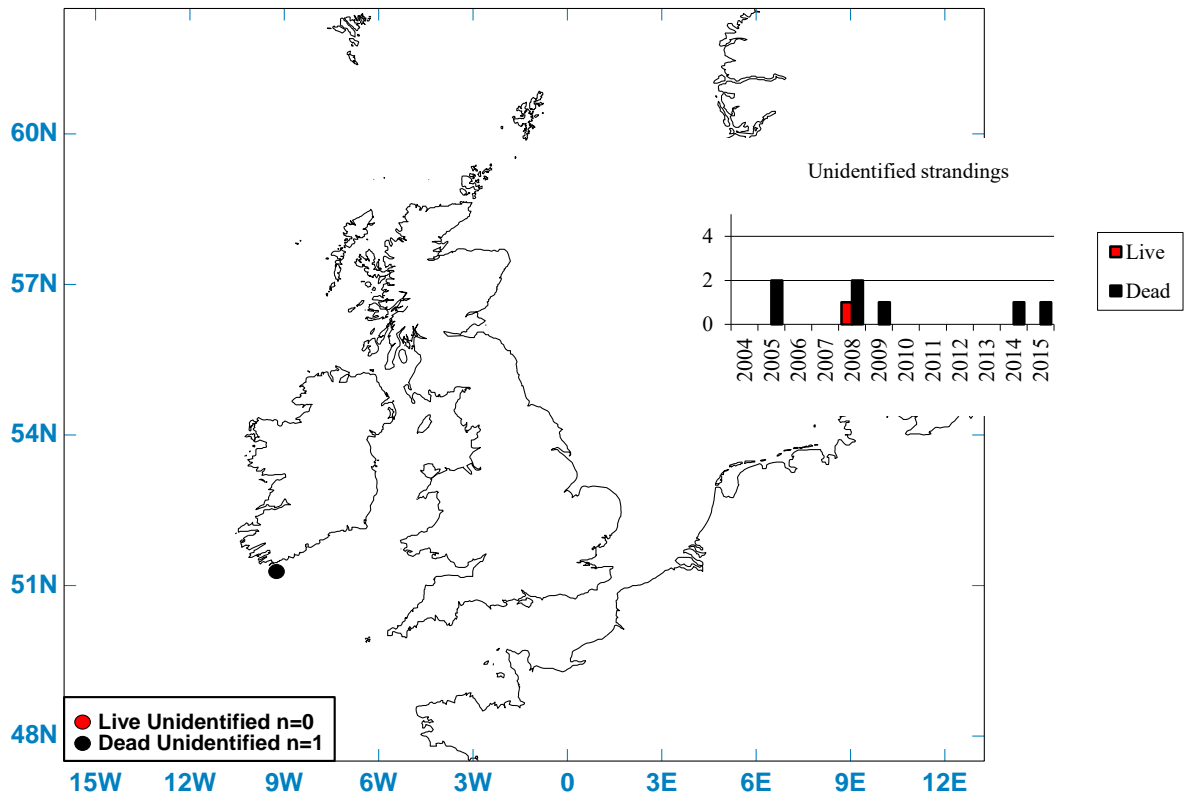
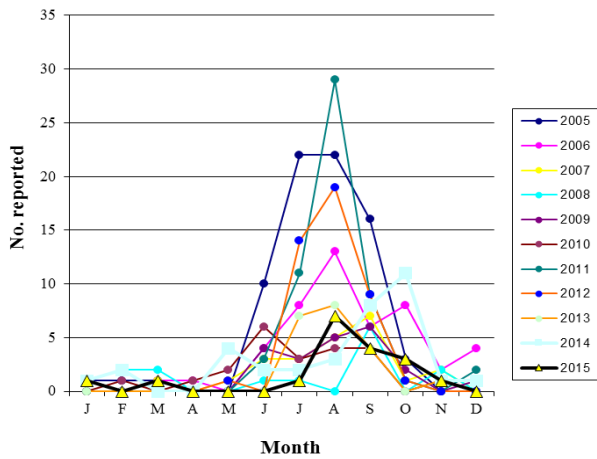


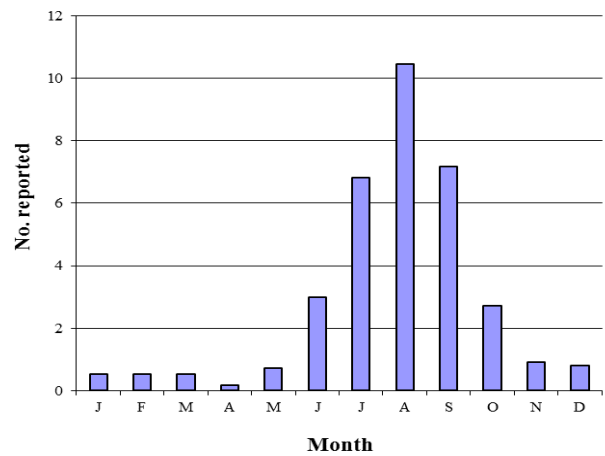
Figure 13. *Unidentified strandings 2015.*

All leatherback strandings and sightings, both dead and alive have been plotted by month for the period 2005 - 2015 (n=401) shown in **Figure 14**. The average figure was taken over 2005-2015 and plotted in **Figure 15**. The graph clearly shows the increase in numbers through the summer months and gives a good indication on when to expect leatherbacks around the British Isles & Republic of Ireland coast.

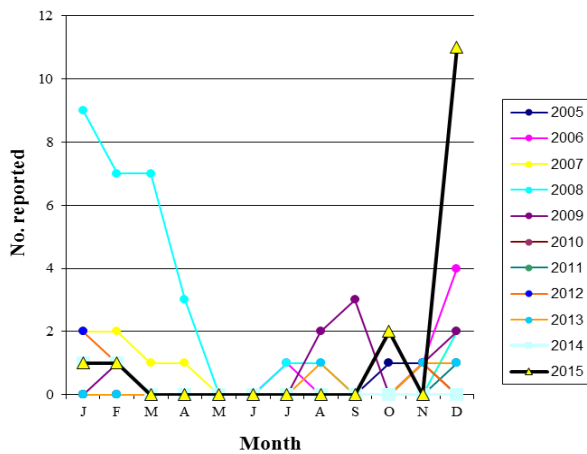
The records for the hard-shell species are more sporadic. Of the hard-shell species the most numerous recorded turtle over the 2005 - 2015 period is the loggerhead (n=84). The data for this species are plotted in **Figure 16** and **Figure 17**.



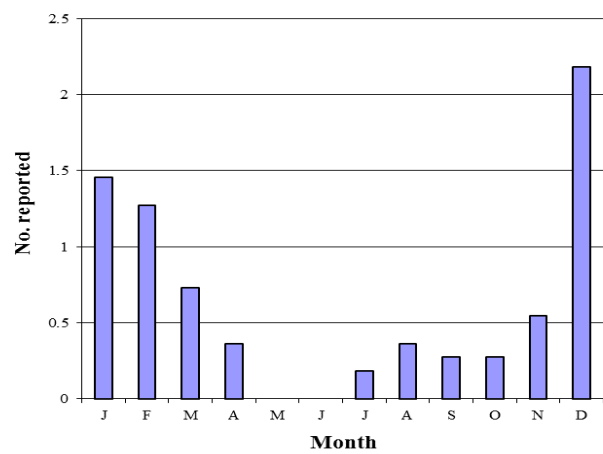
**Figure 14.** All leatherbacks by month.



**Figure 15.** All leatherbacks average over 2005-2015



**Figure 16.** All loggerheads by month.



**Figure 17.** All loggerheads average over 2005-2015.



**Table 4.**

<b>Cumulative number of records.</b>		
<b>Country</b>	<b>All Species</b>	
	<b>2015</b>	<b>1748 - 2015</b>
Rep. of Ireland	10	1322
England	21	643
Scotland	5	395
Wales	8	259
N. Ireland	0	40
Isle of Man	0	32
Channel Islands	2	15
Offshore	0	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>2719</b>

The ‘Offshore’ row in **Table 4.** includes records of turtles where it is difficult to attribute a county ie, animal far from shore or nearer to Europe than UK.

Countries are listed in **Table 4.** by descending order of total number of records shown in the year **1748 – 2015** column.

**Table 5.**

<b>Species Comparison.</b>												
<b>Country</b>	<i>1995 - 2005</i>											
	<b>2005 - 2015</b>											
	<b>GT</b>	<b>HB</b>	<b>KR</b>	<b>LBT</b>	<b>LOG</b>	<b>UNI</b>						
England	2	0	0	0	6	11	184	119	17	25	42	48
Scotland	2	1	0	0	2	5	108	48	23	15	12	9
Rep. of Ireland	0	1	0	0	0	2	246	137	19	26	21	16
Wales	0	1	0	0	2	8	80	78	2	17	11	10
Channel Islands	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	2	0	2	1
N. Ireland	0	0	0	0	0	0	15	4	0	0	2	1
Isle of Man	0	0	0	0	0	0	13	7	0	0	5	1
Offshore	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	6	0	1	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>651</b>	<b>401</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>87</b>

**GT** = Green turtle, **HB** = Hawksbill turtle, **KR** = Kemp’s ridley turtle, **LBT** = Leatherback turtle, **LOG** = Loggerhead turtle, **UNI** = Unidentified turtle.

**Table 6.**

<b>TURTLE Database Species Totals (1748 - 2015).</b>	
<b>Species</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Green turtle ( <i>Chelonia mydas</i> )	<b>11</b>
Hawksbill turtle ( <i>Eretmochelys imbricata</i> )	<b>1</b>
Kemp's ridley turtle ( <i>Lepidochelys kempii</i> )	<b>61</b>
Leatherback turtle ( <i>Dermochelys coriacea</i> )	<b>2024</b>
Loggerhead turtle ( <i>Caretta caretta</i> )	<b>238</b>
Unidentified	<b>384</b>
<b>Total animals</b>	<b>2719</b>

The total records held in TURTLE are 2734 (end of 2015). However, some records with inadequate year data have been excluded in this report and show as a discrepancy compared to previous years in some totals presented in Table 6.

A breakdown of records for each country is shown in **Table 4**. However, the eleven year comparison, 1995-2005 / 2005-2015 shown in **Table 5**, shows a marked decline in leatherback turtles recorded for the Republic of Ireland, the high numbers in 1995-2005 are a result of the concerted efforts of Gabriel King in investigating and collecting historical records around the Irish coast.

### **5. MATTERS ARISING.**

**T2014/040** was a Kemp's ridley turtle found stranded alive at Walney Island, Cumbria on 20th December 2014. The animal was recovered by a member of the public and taken to a local zoo where he was unfortunately turned away. Luckily, the Cumbria Co-ordinator for BDMLR remained on the case and arranged rehabilitation at Maryport Aquarium. The turtle improved and was doing well until unfortunately it unexpectedly died on the 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2015.

The turtle was examined post-mortem by the attending veterinarian and it is thought the animal died as a result of septicemia. Samples were taken and sent to ZSL for analysis where *Shewanella putrefaciens* was cultured in pure isolate from lung, liver and kidney swabs. This isolate might have been of pathological significance, but it is usually considered to be a post-mortem invader.



**Plate 1.** *Kemp's ridley T2014/040.*

Photo by: Vicki Temple.

## **5.1 Retrospective Reports.**

There were no retrospective reports received during 2015.

## **6. LIVE STRANDING EVENTS 2015.**

There were 10 live-strandings of marine turtles reported in 2015.

**T2015/002** Kemp's ridley turtle found stranded alive at La Pulente, St Ouens Bay, Jersey, Channel Islands on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2015.

**T2015/003** Loggerhead turtle found stranded alive at Glencolumcille beach, Donegal, Ireland on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2015.

**T2015/027** Loggerhead turtle found stranded alive at Irvine, north Ayrshire, Scotland on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2015.

**T2015/029** Kemp's ridley turtle found stranded alive at Cape Cornwall, Cornwall, England on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2015.

**T2015/031** Kemp's ridley turtle found stranded alive at Aberystwyth, Ceredigion, Wales on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2015.

**T2015/033** Loggerhead turtle found stranded alive at Caldey Island, Pembrokeshire, Wales on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2015.

**T2015/034** Loggerhead turtle found stranded alive at Tacumshin Lake, Wexford, Ireland on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2015.

**T2015/035** Loggerhead turtle found stranded alive at Kimmeridge, Dorset, England on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2015.

**T2015/045** Loggerhead turtle found stranded alive at near Clonakilty, Cork, Ireland on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2015.

**T2015/046** Loggerhead turtle found stranded alive at Ballyteigue Burrows, Wexford, Ireland on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2015.

### **6.1 Rehabilitation**

Of the ten live strandings listed above all but **T2015/029** and **T2015/033** were recovered for rehabilitation.

**T2015/029** was a retrospective report and the turtle was not recovered by the finder.

**T2015/033** stranded and died on Caldey Island, Pembrokeshire, and was unable to be recovered, see page 20.

**T2015/002** Kemp's ridley turtle found stranded alive at La Pulente, St Ouens Bay, Jersey, Channel Islands on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2015, was recovered to New Era Veterinary Practice by the JSPCA but soon died.

**T2015/003** Loggerhead turtle found stranded alive at Glencolumcille beach, Donegal, Ireland on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2015, was recovered to Exploris Aquarium, Portaferry, County Down but unfortunately died the next day.

**T2015/027** Loggerhead turtle found stranded alive at Irvine, north Ayrshire, Scotland on 5th December 2015, was recovered to the Oban Sea Life Centre where it unfortunately died. The turtle had acquired a huge mass of goose barnacles on the right side of its carapace indicating it must have been experiencing buoyancy difficulties for some time. The carcass was examined at SRUC/CSIP Inverness where the front right flipper was found to be malformed and much smaller than the left front flipper. The cause of death was given as ‘cold-stunned’.



**T2015/031** Kemp’s ridley turtle found stranded alive at Aberystwyth, Ceredigion, Wales on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2015 was collected by the Strandings Co-ordinator and a transport relay established with the help of Ellie West and Keith Hogben RSPCA. The animal was successfully delivered to Bristol Aquarium where it started its rehabilitation. After surviving for a week and giving all the indications it was doing well the turtle unexpectedly died. A post-mortem examination revealed bacterial pneumonia.

**Plate 2.**

*Loggerhead turtle T2015/027*

Photo by: Avril Keith.

**T2015/033** Loggerhead turtle found stranded alive at Caldey Island, Pembrokeshire, Wales on 18th December 2015, had the majority of both front flippers missing. It was thought the best course of action would be euthanasia but due to high winds and seas no access to the island to instigate this act was possible. The turtle died a few days later and was buried on the island so no post-mortem examination was able to be conducted. From images received both front flippers appeared clean cut and healed.

**T2015/034** Loggerhead turtle found stranded alive at Tacumshin Lake, Wexford, Ireland on 20th December 2015 was moribund but alive, it was taken to Dingle Aquarium but died the following day.

**T2015/035** Loggerhead turtle found stranded alive at Kimmeridge, Dorset, England on 22nd December 2015 was recovered by Steve Trehwella and taken to Weymouth Sea Life Centre where a veterinarian decision was taken to euthanize the animal due to the loss of both front flippers. The carcass was stored frozen at Weymouth for later collection and post-mortem examination within the CSIP.

This turtle showed similar injuries to T2015/033 that had stranded four days earlier in Pembrokeshire.



**Plate 3.** *Loggerhead turtle T2015/033 on Caldey Island.*



**Plate 4.** *Loggerhead turtle T2015/035.*

Photo by: Steve Trehwella.

**T2015/045** Loggerhead turtle found stranded alive at near Clonakilty, Cork, Ireland on 22nd December 2015 was taken to Dingle Aquarium where it is still alive and doing well. It is hoped the turtle will be released in the Canaries during 2016.

**T2015/046** Loggerhead turtle found stranded alive at Ballyteigue Burrows, Wexford, Ireland on 22nd December 2015 was taken to Galway Aquarium where it is still alive and doing well. It is hoped the turtle will be released in the Canaries during 2016.

## **6.2 Repatriation.**

No repatriation events took place in 2015 but as stated above it is hoped that T2015/045 and T2015/046 will be released in the Canaries during 2016.

The loggerhead turtle **T2013/024 (Leona)**, that stranded in Co Clare, R.o.I. 19<sup>th</sup> November 2013 and was released with a satellite tag from the Canaries on the 4<sup>th</sup> December 2014, continued to do well until it stopped transmitting on the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2015 presumably due to failure of the battery. Over this period she had covered nearly 10,000Km.

## **7. BYCATCH.**

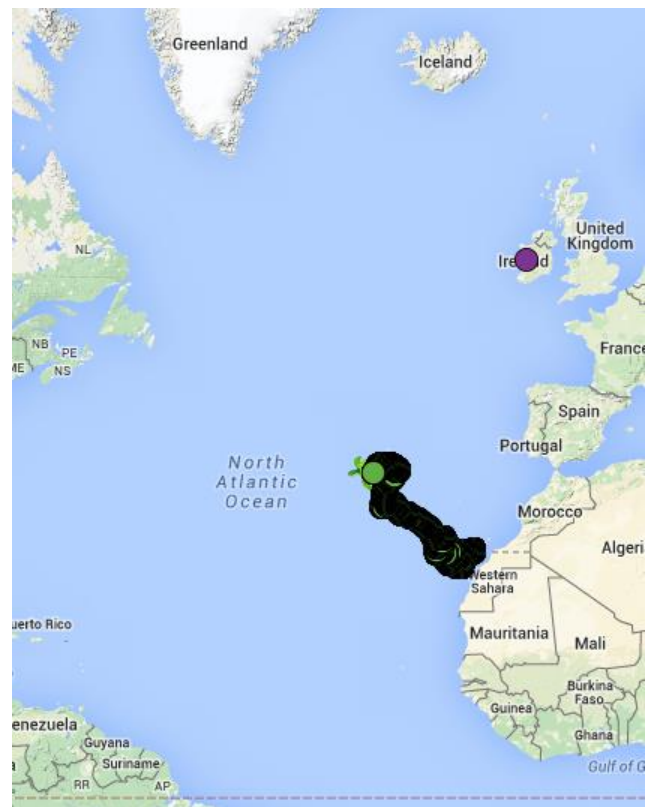
No turtles were reported as being by-caught during 2015.

## **8. SAMPLES & POST-MORTEM EXAMINATIONS.**

The normal procedure for the taking of samples is from fresh animals that have been taken for *post-mortem* examination within the CSIP or the Irish Strandings project.

**T2015/005** was a 30cm SOL (straight overall length) loggerhead turtle found dead at Abbotsham, Devon on the 6<sup>th</sup> February 2015. The carcass was recovered to the CSIP at ZSL London where it was examined by Rob Deaville. The cause of death was given as cold-stunned.

**T2015/027** was a 72cm SOL (straight overall length) loggerhead turtle found alive and burdened with a large mass of goose barnacles on its right side at Irvine, North Ayrshire, Scotland on the 5<sup>th</sup> December 2015. It was recovered to Oban Sea Life Centre where it unfortunately died that night. The carcass was examined at SRUC/CSIP Inverness where the front right flipper was found to be malformed and much smaller than the left front flipper. The cause of death was given as cold-stunned.



**Figure 18.** Leonas' final satellite transmission 1<sup>st</sup> Sept. 2015.

**T2015/040** was a 28.5cm SOL (straight overall length) loggerhead turtle found dead at Kennack Sands on the Lizard, Cornwall on the 27<sup>th</sup> December 2015. The carcass was recovered to the CSIP at Exeter University where it was examined by James Barnett. The cause of death was given as cold-stunned.

## **9. DATA SHARING.**

The TURTLE database was uploaded to the National Biodiversity Network (NBN) <http://www.nbn.org.uk/> to include the 2014 data.

## **10. UNUSUAL OCCURENCES.**

A cold stunning event took place along the eastern seaboard of the USA affecting large numbers of Kemp's ridley turtles through November-December 2014.

<http://www.nbcnews.com/nightly-news/mysterious-illness-sickening-sea-turtles-n272851>

It is possible the Kemp's ridleys stranding in the UK/RoI during the beginning of the year were Kemp's ridleys that never fully recovered and were swept across the Atlantic in strong currents.

## **11. PUBLICITY.**

The Strandings Web-site has been maintained to provide details of the CSIP. Although this is intended primarily for Wales, key contact details are given for England, Scotland and Ireland. The pages can be viewed at [www.strandings.com/](http://www.strandings.com/)

Annual reports and other turtle related publications are available at [www.strandings.com/](http://www.strandings.com/)

Posters and leaflets produced to increase awareness of the project have continued to be distributed.

Marine turtle records are posted on the National Biodiversity Network (NBN) Gateway and these can be accessed at <http://www.searchnbn.net/> The NBN is now the preferred outlet for the TURTLE database and the database on the strandings.com web-site is no longer maintained.

## **12. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.**

Marine Environmental Monitoring wishes to acknowledge the following;

Sarah Neill, Paul Sloan, Vicki Temple, Cornwall Wildlife Trust, Marine Conservation Society, Tom Doyle, David Waines, Rhodri Dafydd, Steve Trehwella, Kevin Williams, Ellie West, and Keith Hogben.

Natural England, National Parks & Wildlife Service and the Welsh Government for financial support towards the British Isles & Republic of Ireland TURTLE database.

## **13. APPENDICES.**

Appendix 1. 2015 TURTLE data.

Appendix 2. UK Turtle Code.

Appendix 3. Morphometrics.

RecordKey	SpeciesCode	Height	Stage	Alive/Dead	EndDate	Country	County	Location	Notes
T2015/002	KR	ST	ALIVE	11/01/2015	ISLANDS	JERSEY	La Pulente, St Ouens Bay.	Died.	
T2015/003	LOG	ST	ALIVE	24/01/2015	EIRE	DONEGAL	Glencolmille beach	Taken to Exploris Aquarium but died on 25th Jan	
T2015/004	LBT	ST	DEAD	6/01/2015	EIRE	KERRY	Ventry	no notes	
T2015/005	LOG	ST	DEAD	6/02/2015	ENGLAND	DEVON	Abbotsham	Taken fresh from beach and frozen by member of public. Collected by CSIP for post mortem.	
T2015/006	LBT	SEA	ALIVE	21/03/2015	ENGLAND	ND	Berwick on Tweed	Seen from 4 metres by snorkeller near sandbar in mouth of Tweed. C. 1.5 x 2m size.	
T2015/007	UNI	SEA	ALIVE	16/06/2015	ENGLAND	CORNWALL	Carbis Bay	Approx. 70 metres from observer	
T2015/008	LBT	SEA	ALIVE	16/07/2015	SCOTLAND	ARGYLL & BUTE	near Tiree, Scaranish. 300m off coast.	Seen from boat collecting plankton samples. Jellies noted.	
T2015/009	LBT	SEA	ALIVE	02/08/2015	ENGLAND	DORSET	Lyme Regis	Seen by mackerel fisherman eating barrel jellyfish. Photos taken. Reported in Mirror on line. And Dorset Post.	
T2015/010	UNI	SEA	ALIVE	28/08/2015	ENGLAND	SUSSEX	Brighton Harbour	Seen swimming in harbour, retrieved by a fisherman and released into deeper waters further out on advice of Brighton Aquarium. Hardshell 2ft long, ridged carapace 18ins. Thought to be loggerhead. No pics.	
T2015/011	LBT	SEA	ALIVE	29/08/2015	ENGLAND	DORSET	4 miles SE of Sidmouth	Seen at 25 metres from a boat. 6000m offshore. Travelling westerly.	
T2015/012	LBT	SEA	ALIVE	29/08/2015	WALES	PEMBROKESHIRE	1000m off Gold Trop Bay, north of Little Haven	Seen at 3 metres from boat	
T2015/013	LBT	SEA	ALIVE	31/08/2015	ENGLAND	DEVON	1500m off headland Hopes Nose, Torquay	Seen at 15 metres from boat. Swimming SE out to sea. Large approx 2 x 1 metre.	
T2015/014	LBT	SEA	ALIVE	08/09/2015	SCOTLAND	Highland	3km west of Priest Island, Ullapool	Seen at 100-150 metres from boat. Swimming west. Sank below surface as ferry approached.	
T2015/015	LBT	SEA	ALIVE	11/08/2015	ENGLAND	Cumbria	off St Bees Head	Surfaced and dived twice. See during EIA process for proposed Moorside development.	
T2015/016	LBT	SEA	ALIVE	13/09/2015	WALES	CEREDIGION	off Penbryn beach	Seen from beach 8-12m from shoreline. 2.5m long. A swimmer was in the water! Eventually moved north up coast.	
T2015/017	LBT	SEA	ALIVE	01/09/2015	SCOTLAND	Western Isles	Out of Loch Boisdale	Seen close by Uist Sea Tours boat. Length 2m.	
T2015/018	LBT	SEA	ALIVE	25/08/2015	ENGLAND	ISLES OF SCILLY	South of the Jones Bank	Seen by Celtic Voyager boat crew during UWTV survey. 1.8 m One of Two	
T2015/019	LBT	SEA	ALIVE	25/08/2015	ENGLAND	ISLES OF SCILLY	South of the Jones Bank	Seen by Celtic Voyager boat crew during UWTV survey. 2.3m One of two seen	
T2015/020	LBT	SEA	ALIVE	20/09/2015	ENGLAND	ISLES OF SCILLY	Southwest of Scilly Isles. 3300m offshore.	Seen from 3 metres from boat.	
T2015/021	LBT	SEA	ALIVE	20/10/2015	ENGLAND	SUSSEX	4 miles south of Hove	Seen from fishing boat at 4 metres. 4,500 metres off shore heading west eating jellies.	
T2015/022	LOG	SEA	ALIVE	18/10/2015	ENGLAND	DORSET	50-100m off Durleston Head	Seen by walkers with hig viz bins. Two loggerheads approx 3ft. See 023	
T2015/023	LOG	SEA	ALIVE	18/10/2015	ENGLAND	DORSET	50-100m off Durleston Head	Seen by walkers with hig viz bins. Two loggerheads approx 3ft. See 022	
T2015/024	LBT	SEA	DEAD	10/10/2015	EIRE	CORK	Harbour	Washed up. Very decomposed.	
T2015/025	LBT	SEA	ALIVE	08/10/2015	ISLANDS	JERSEY	10 miles off Corbierre	Videoed by a fisherman. Appeared on itv News online. Approx 6 ft.	
T2015/026	LBT	ST	DEAD	19/11/2015	WALES	Gwynedd	Dyffryn Ardudwy beach	Collected by Council then buried as decomposing. 5 x 3 ft	
T2015/027	LOG	ST	ALIVE	05/12/2015	SCOTLAND	North Ayrshire	Irvine	Collected and taken to Oban Sealife Centre. Many goose barnacles on its shell.....Died in rehab.	
T2015/028	GT	ST	DEAD	06/12/2015	WALES	Gwynedd	Black Rock Sands	Collected by Harbour Master. Passed to RSPCA Colwyn Bay and frozen awaiting collection by MEM/CSIP and PM.	
T2015/029	KR	ST	ALIVE	01/12/2015	ENGLAND	CORNWALL	Cape Cornwall	Left on beach.	
T2015/030	KR	ST	DEAD	06/12/2015	ENGLAND	CORNWALL	Cape Cornwall	Collected and taken to Nick Tregenza awaiting collection by CSIP.	
T2015/031	KR	ST	ALIVE	12/12/2015	WALES	CEREDIGION	Aberystwyth	Taken home and collected by MEM. Passed to RSPCA and relayed to Bristol Aquarium. Died in rehab.	
T2015/032	KR	ST	DEAD	18/12/2015	WALES	Gwynedd	Harlech	Collected and stored frozen by NRW Warden Rhodri Dafydd.	
T2015/033	LOG	ST	ALIVE	18/12/2015	WALES	PEMBROKESHIRE	Caldey Island	Live stranded, both front flippers missing (healed injuries) collected by finder but unable to transport to mainland due to stormy weather. Died 20th Dec and buried on island.	
T2015/034	LOG	ST	ALIVE	20/12/2015	EIRE	WEXFORD	Tacumshin Lake. Kilmore Quay	Moribund but alive....taken to Dingle Aquarium by Tom Doyle and Tony Murray. This turtle died the next day	
T2015/035	LOG	ST	ALIVE	22/12/2015	ENGLAND	DORSET	Kimbridge	Collected by Steve Trehella. Damaged alive. Taken to Weymouth Sealife Centre and euthanased.	
T2015/036	LOG	ST	DEAD	27/12/2015	WALES	ANGLESEY	Penrhos Beach Newborough	Dead with damage to eyes and neck. Last seen at 12.00pm.....went missing could not collect.	
T2015/037	KR	ST	DEAD	29/12/2015	ENGLAND	DORSET	Near West Bexington. Chesil Beach, Weymouth	Left on beach. Very rough weather collection not attempted. Nothing found next day by Steve Trehella.	
T2015/038	KR	ST	DEAD	31/12/2015	ENGLAND	DORSET	Pond field cove	Held frozen by Steve Trehella. Awaiting collection by CSIP	
T2015/039	KR	ST	DEAD	29/12/2015	ENGLAND	DORSET	West Bay	Poor condition and left on the beach.	
T2015/040	LOG	ST	DEAD	27/12/2015	ENGLAND	CORNWALL	Kennack Sands	Stored in fridge. PM'd by James Barnett.	
T2015/041	LOG	ST	DEAD	23/12/2015	EIRE	WATERFORD	Portally Cove, near Dunmore east		
T2015/042	LOG	ST	DEAD	18/12/2015	EIRE	CORK	Ballyrisode beach, near Crookhaven, west Cork	stored frozen for PM - awaiting collection by NUIG	
T2015/043	LOG	ST	DEAD	20/12/2015	EIRE	WATERFORD	beach 5 miles west of Ballycotton, Yougal	stored at Dingle Oceanworld Aquarium - awaiting collection by NUIG	
T2015/044	UNI	ST	DEAD	15/12/2015	EIRE	CORK	washed up on Long Strand	need to check wildlife Artist	
T2015/045	LOG	ST	ALIVE	22/12/2015	EIRE	CORK	near Clonakilly	alive at Dingle Oceanworld Aquarium - still alive and doing well 15th Feb 2016	
T2015/046	LOG	ST	ALIVE	22/12/2015	EIRE	WEXFORD	Ballyteigue Burrows, Kilmore Quay	alive at Aquarium Galway - Still alive and doing well as 15th Feb 2016	



As a sea user, you can help in the effort to protect endangered marine turtles by providing information about your encounters with these spectacular creatures in UK waters.

### MARINE TURTLES ARE LEGALLY PROTECTED

There is no offence if turtles are caught accidentally in fishing gear. Nor is it an offence to help turtles if entangled or stranded, or temporarily to hold dead turtles for later examination by experts.

### However, marine turtles are protected in Britain.

#### This means that:

- turtles may not be deliberately killed or caught
- live turtles may not be landed unless for the purpose of tending them or enabling their subsequent release
- dead turtles or shells obtained from turtles in UK waters may not be possessed unless the animal was lawfully acquired
- turtles and their derivatives may not be sold or offered for sale without UK government permission, unless they are antiques acquired before 1st June 1947 (with documented proof)
- turtles and their derivatives may not be imported or exported without UK government permission.

#### The following legislation pertains to marine turtles:

- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), in England and Wales.
- Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, in England and Wales.
- Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 as amended, in Scotland.
- Conservation (Natural Habitats etc.) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007.
- Control of Trade in Endangered Species (Enforcement) Regulations (1997) as amended, in the UK.
- Customs and Excise Management Act 1979.
- Isle of Man Wildlife Act 1990.

## PLEASE REPORT ALL TURTLE ENCOUNTERS

### ENGLAND/WALES

**ALL RECORDS**  
Rod Penrose, Marine  
Environmental Monitoring  
01239 683033 (24hrs)  
[www.strandings.com](http://www.strandings.com)

### LIVE STRANDINGS/ ENTANGLEMENTS

RSPCA 0300 1234999  
BDMLR 01825 765546

### ISLE OF MAN

Dr Fiona Gell  
DEFA - Isle of Man Government  
01624 685835 (main)  
Marine Operations Centre  
01624 686628 (24hrs)

### SCOTLAND

**ALL RECORDS**  
Laura Clark, Marine  
Monitoring Officer,  
Scottish Natural Heritage  
01463 725237

### DEAD STRANDINGS

Nick Davison  
Scotland's Rural  
College (SRUC),  
01463 243030/  
07979245893

**LIVE STRANDINGS/  
ENTANGLEMENTS**  
SSPCA 03000 999999

### NORTHERN IRELAND

**ALL RECORDS**  
The Coastal Zone Centre  
at Portrush (DOENI)  
028 7082 3600

### REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

**ALL RECORDS**  
Dr Thomas Doyle  
Coastal & Marine Research  
Centre, University College  
Cork  
00353 (0) 21 4703119 (Direct)  
00353 (0) 87 1354938 (24hrs)

Report online at: [www.euroturtle.org/turtlecode](http://www.euroturtle.org/turtlecode) & [www.mcsuk.org](http://www.mcsuk.org)

### RECORD THE FOLLOWING DETAILS

All information is valuable, but the following details are particularly useful:

- A description** of the turtle (alive or dead), identification of species (at least to leatherback/hard-shelled level) and overall straight length. Note any damage (e.g. cuts, scars) and **take photographs** when possible.
- Location** (longitude & latitude/ OS grid reference), **date** and **time** of sighting.
- Other observations**, such as turtle's behaviour, whether caught in fishing gear (including exact nature of entanglement, gear involved) etc.
- Presence of tags**. Many conservation projects place plastic or metal tags on turtles' flippers, which display identification numbers and a return address. Record any tag details if this can be done without causing disturbance to the turtle.

**Please report all dead turtles, even if they have to be discarded at sea. Records from diaries or logbooks, however old, are also of interest.**

## WHAT TO DO IF YOU FIND A SICK OR ENTANGLED TURTLE

Immediately report the turtle to the relevant contact. Marine turtles will drown if trapped underwater, but prompt action can save them. A turtle that is entangled or trapped is likely to be stressed. Large turtles deliver a serious bite and a blow from a flipper can be painful, so be careful. Due to possible health risks involved in handling turtles, always wear rubber gloves.

### TURTLES ENTANGLED AT SEA

Approach calmly and cautiously and ensure first of all that the turtle's head is above water so that it can breathe if it is alive.

**ALIVE: AVOID TOWING TURTLES TO SHORE. They should be disentangled and released at sea whenever possible.**

#### If alert & active

- Do not use a gaff to pull the turtle alongside and do not haul leatherbacks aboard.
- Avoid pulling hard on the turtle's flippers as they may dislocate or break.
- Carefully disentangle the turtle, making sure that as much net and line as possible has been removed before the animal is released.
- Make sure that the vessel is stopped and out of gear before carefully sliding the turtle back into the water.
- Ensure that the turtle is clear of the vessel before moving away.

**ONLY if disentanglement at sea is impossible should the turtle be brought ashore.**

Tow leatherbacks very slowly and make sure the animal's head is above water so that it can breathe. Release leatherbacks in shallow water, not on land. Other species should be retained and reported.

**If traumatised/inactive (no or slight movement, limbs flexible and limp, no decomposition)**

Severely traumatised hard-shelled turtles can be saved if they are small enough to fit on your boat.

- Wrap the turtle in a towel soaked in seawater. Do not cover the nostrils.
- Place the animal in a sheltered and secure place on its belly. To drain the lungs, raise the back end of the shell so the turtle is resting at approximately 30°. Keep it in this position until you return to shore.
- Leatherbacks should **not** be hauled aboard. If inactive, they can be towed to shore very slowly, ensuring they are able to breathe at all times.

**DEAD:** There may be serious health risks involved in handling dead turtles. Inexperienced individuals are advised not to touch them. Where possible, record the details listed above and, only if the specimen is fresh, bring it back to shore and place in cold storage. Always wear rubber gloves when handling turtles.

### TURTLES STRANDED ON LAND

#### Leatherback turtles

Leatherbacks found stranded on beaches are usually very weak, dead or dying, but might still be saved.

#### If apparently uninjured:

- Carefully drag the turtle back to the sea and release it (enlist the help of several people and pull the shell rather than the flippers).
- Do not drag the animal over rocks, as this will cause severe damage.
- If stranded on rocks, it may be better to wait for the incoming tide to provide some buoyancy before dragging the turtle back to sea.

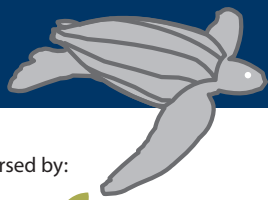
#### Other species (hard-shelled)

Loggerhead, Kemp's ridley, green and hawksbill turtles encountered on UK shores are usually cold stunned juveniles and should not be placed back in the sea.

- Wrap the turtle in a towel soaked in seawater, do not cover the nostrils
- Place the animal in a sheltered and secure place on its belly. If inactive, raise the back end of the shell so the turtle is resting at approximately 30° to drain the lungs. Report the turtle as soon as possible.

**Dead turtles** of all species are valuable for research and should be reported as soon as possible. Fresh specimens should be preserved in a cold store where possible. These animals will undergo a full post-mortem examination within the DEFRA-funded UK Cetacean Strandings Investigation Project (CSIP).

# Marine Turtles in the UK



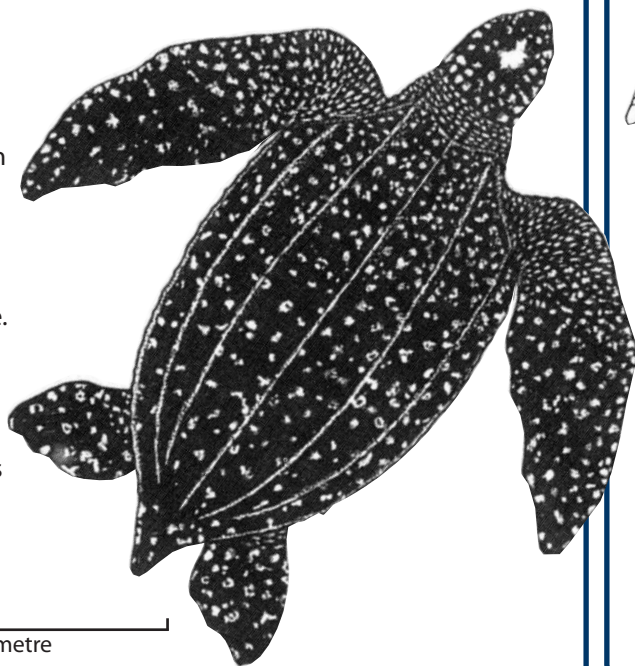
Endorsed by:



Of the world's seven marine turtle species, five have been recorded in UK waters. They are the leatherback, loggerhead, Kemp's ridley, green and hawksbill turtles. The leatherback, the largest marine turtle, is the species most frequently recorded in UK waters. Leatherbacks have a flexible, leathery shell and are unique among reptiles in that they are able to metabolically raise their body temperature above that of their immediate environment, allowing them to survive in colder waters. Each summer leatherbacks migrate to UK waters where they feed on jellyfish. The other four species have hard shells and are less frequently encountered in UK waters, where they usually occur as stray juveniles carried by currents from warmer seas.

## LEATHERBACK TURTLE

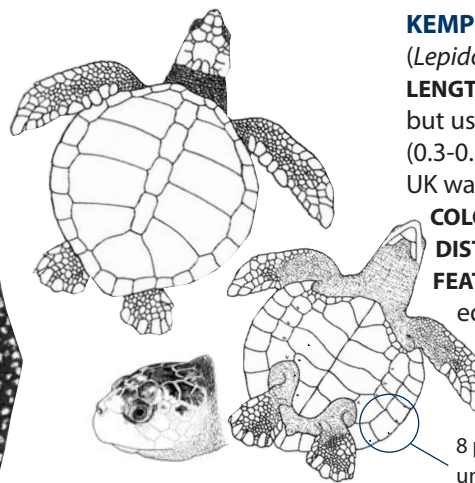
*(Dermochelys coriacea)*  
Most frequently recorded species in UK waters.  
**LENGTH:** up to 2.91 metres.  
**COLOUR:** black, spotted with white.  
**DISTINCTIVE FEATURES:** large, up to 916 kg, pronounced longitudinal ridges on shell, which tapers to a blunt spike.



SCALE 1 metre

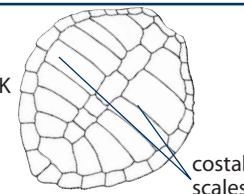
## KEMP'S RIDLEY TURTLE

*(Lepidochelys kempii)*  
**LENGTH:** up to 1 metre, but usually juveniles (0.3-0.5 metres) occur in UK waters.  
**COLOUR:** grey/olive.  
**DISTINCTIVE FEATURES:** shell width equal to or greater than shell length.



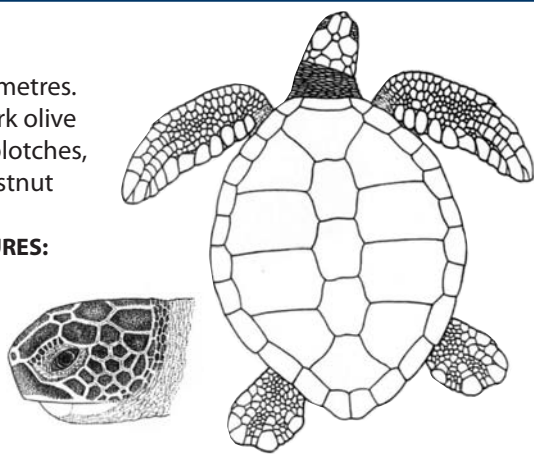
8 pores visible on underside (4 either side)

**NB:** The olive ridley turtle (*Lepidochelys olivacea*) occurs in the Atlantic, but has not been recorded in UK waters to date. Similar to Kemp's ridley with 8 pores on underside, but has 5-9 pairs of costal scales on shell.



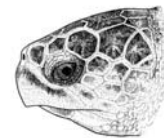
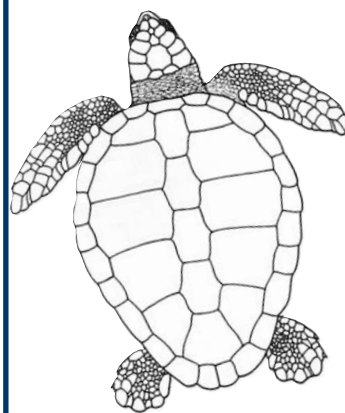
## GREEN TURTLE

*(Chelonia mydas)*  
**LENGTH:** up to 1.5 metres.  
**COLOUR:** adults dark olive or grey with dark blotches, juveniles have chestnut coloured shell.  
**DISTINCTIVE FEATURES:** smooth shell, rounded facial profile (not angular).



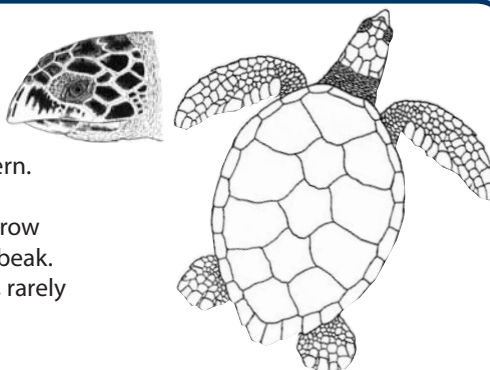
## LOGGERHEAD TURTLE

*(Caretta caretta)*  
**LENGTH:** adults up to 1.5 metres, but usually juveniles (0.3-0.5 metres) occur in UK waters.  
**COLOUR:** reddish brown.  
**DISTINCTIVE FEATURES:** large head, juveniles have small spikes along spine of shell.



## HAWKBILL TURTLE

*(Eretmochelys imbricata)*  
**LENGTH:** up to 1.2 metres.  
**COLOUR:** brown, amber and black tortoiseshell pattern.  
**DISTINCTIVE FEATURES:** shell scales overlapping, narrow tapered head with bird-like beak. Largely tropical distribution, rarely encountered in UK waters.



## MARINE TURTLES ARE THREATENED

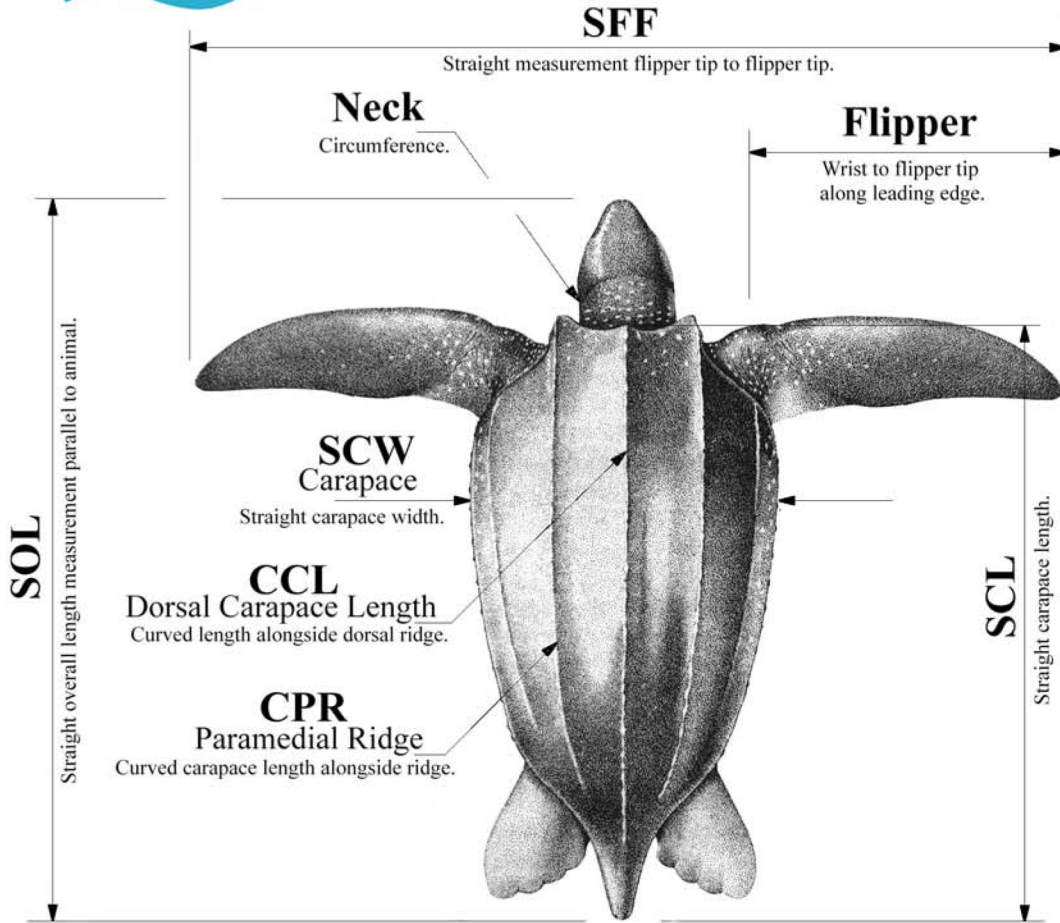
In UK waters threats include:

- **Accidental entanglement in fishing gear.** Although turtles can dive to great depths, they become stressed and drown when trapped underwater by fishing gear. Fishing gear discarded at sea may also entangle and kill turtles.
  - **Marine litter,** especially plastic, which turtles mistake for jellyfish. Once ingested, plastic can block a turtle's gut leading to starvation.
  - **Boat collisions.** Turtles often bask and must surface regularly to breathe, leaving them vulnerable to boat strike.
- PLEASE BE VIGILANT, AND DO NOT DISCARD FISHING GEAR OR LITTER AT SEA.**



Illustrations are taken, with permission, from: Eckert, K.L., K.A. Bjorndal, F.A. Abreu-Grobois, and M. Donnelly (Editors). 1999. *Research and Management Techniques for the Conservation of Sea Turtles*. IUCN/SSC Marine Turtle Specialist Group Publication No. 4.

THIS DOCUMENT WAS PRODUCED BY THE MARINE CONSERVATION SOCIETY (MCS) IN 2011 WITH SUPPORT FROM NATURAL ENGLAND AND SCOTTISH NATURAL HERITAGE AND IN COLLABORATION WITH THE TURTLE IMPLEMENTATION GROUP OF THE UK MARINE TURTLES GROUPED SPECIES ACTION PLAN.



### Other Measurements Required.

- COL** Curved Overall Length.
- CFF** Curved Flipper tip to Flipper tip over Animal.
- CCW** Curved Carapace Width.
- DMAX** Maximum Body Depth. (Straight).
- TTL** Total Tail Length from Plastron.
- PTL** From Centre of Cloacal Opening to end of Tail.
- WEIGHT** In Kilograms.
- SEX** If Known.

