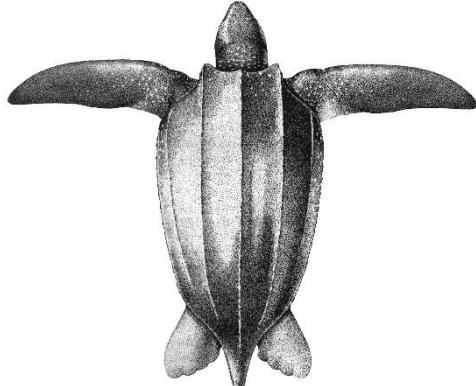


Marine Environmental Monitoring

www.ukturtles.online
www.strandings.com

British & Irish Marine Turtle Strandings & Sightings Annual Report 2025

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An Roinn Tithíochta,
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreachta
Department of Housing,
Local Government and Heritage



Ariennir yn Rhannol gan
Lywodraeth Cymru
Part Funded by
Welsh Government

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1. SUMMARY

A total of 61 live and dead marine turtles were reported to TURTLE during 2025. Five Kemp's ridley turtles; 20 leatherback turtles, 34 loggerhead turtles and 2 Unidentified turtles.

Live sightings

Nineteen turtles were sighted alive at sea; 12 leatherbacks, 5 loggerheads and 1 Unidentified turtle.

Dead sightings

Two dead sightings of leatherback turtles were reported in 2025, (both entangled in fishing gear).

Live stranded

There were 14 live stranded turtles reported in 2025; These were 13 loggerhead turtles; 8 in Ireland, 5 in Scotland with 1 Kemp's ridley turtle in Scotland.

Dead strandings

A total of 26 turtles were reported stranded dead.

Six leatherback turtles stranded dead; Two in England, 3 in Ireland and 1 in Wales.

Four Kemp's ridley turtles stranded dead; One in England and 3 in Ireland.

Sixteen loggerhead turtles stranded dead; Five in England, 4 in Ireland, 1 in Northern Ireland and 6 in Scotland.

Post-mortem examinations

One loggerhead turtle was recovered for *post-mortem* examination, stored frozen for SMASS.

Rehabilitation

Of the 15 live-strandings in 2025, 11 turtles survived in rehabilitation.

Repatriation

Five loggerhead turtles were released from Dingle Aquarium, Ireland with the kind assistance of the Irish Navy.

TURTLE record totals

The current total of 3060 since 1748 is broken down thus:

1401 Ireland; 766 England; 456 Scotland; 317 Wales; 42 Northern Ireland; 37 Isle of Man; 21 Channel Islands; 20 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) (see Figure 1).

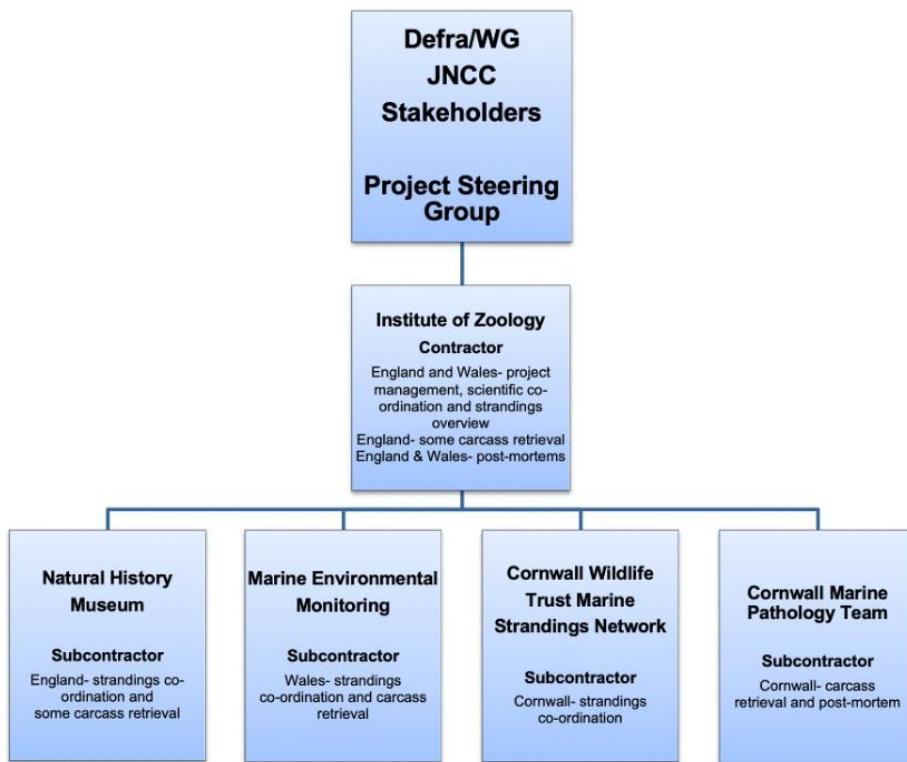


Figure 1. Current technical co-ordination of the Cetacean Strandings Investigation Programme (CSIP).

2.1 The UK Turtle Implementation Group.

Historically, 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 was part of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and aimed 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 Trust¹ (ARC). The contact agency was Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH). The Turtle Implementation Group (TIG) now only communicate electronically and contribute to the project as a steering panel. TIG consists of the following organisations:-

¹ Formally Herpetological Conservation Trust (HCT).

- **Amphibian & Reptile Conservation Trust (ARC)** is an authority on reptile and amphibian conservation issues and is an active participant in Governmental and third sector nature conservation programmes across the UK www.arc-trust.org
Contacts: *Jim Foster* jim.foster@arc-trust.org *Dr Karen Haysom*, karen.haysom@arc-trust.org and *Tony Gent* tony.gent@arc-trust.org 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 Peter Duncan*, 01624 685884 or 07624 300525 (mob), peter.duncan@gov.im
Manx Wildlife Trust also record strandings on behalf of DEFA.
Contact: *Dr Lara Howe* on 01624 844432. lara@mwt.im
- The **Department of Agriculture, Environment, and Rural Affairs (DAERA) Marine & Fisheries Division** is responsible for protecting the marine environment while maximising the sustainable use of its resources, now and for future generations.
Contact: *Dr Liz Pothanikat*, 028 905 69421. Liz.Pothanikat@daera-ni.gov.uk
- **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: *Nikki Taylor*, 01733 866902
- **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
Contact: *Greg Wannell*, 01989 566017
- **Marine Environmental Monitoring (MEM)** is a member of the Defra "UK Cetacean Strandings Investigation Programme", www.strandings.com www.ukstrandings.org MEM also manages 'TURTLE' the British Isles & Irish database holding both records of sightings and strandings of marine turtles dating back to 1748.
Contact: *Rod Penrose*, rodpenrose@strandings.com or *Mat Westfield* mat.westfield@strandings.com (Reporting telephone No. 01239 683033.)
- **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 & Prof Annette Broderick* 01326 371 861 B.J.Godley@exeter.ac.uk
- **MEDASSET**, founded in 1988, is an international environmental NGO registered as a Non Profit Organisation 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
- **National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS)**, part of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, 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 Ferdia.marnell@npws.gov.ie
- **Natural England (NE)** is the Government agency that champions the conservation of wildlife and natural features throughout England.
Contact: *Tim Bernhard*, 07775 026622 tim.bernhard@naturalengland.org.uk
- **Natural Resources Wales (NRW)** is the largest Welsh Government Sponsored Body. Formed in April 2013, it took over the functions of the Countryside Council for Wales, Forestry Commission Wales and the Environment Agency in Wales, as well as certain Welsh Government functions. Its purpose is to pursue sustainable management of natural resources. This means looking after air, land, water, wildlife, plants and soil to improve Wales' well-being, and provide a better future for everyone.
Contact: *Dr Tom Stringell*, 03000 653000 tom.stringell@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk
- **NatureScot** is Scotland's nature agency providing advice to Scottish Government. NatureScot promotes the care, improvement, responsible enjoyment, understanding, appreciation and sustainable use of Scotland's natural heritage.
Contact: *Marine Monitoring Team*, MPA@nature.scot 01463 725 018
- **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
- **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.

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.com
Live strandings and entanglements should be reported to the RSPCA on **0300 1234 999** and/or British Divers Marine Life Rescue (BDMLR) **01825 765546**.

For **Scotland** all records should be reported to the Scottish Marine Animal Strandings Scheme (SMASS) **07979 245893** reports@strandings.org Live strandings and entanglements should be reported to the SSPCA on **03000 999 999** and/or British Divers Marine Life Rescue (BDMLR) **01825 765546**.

For **Northern Ireland** all records of live or dead turtles should be reported to DAERA Marine and Fisheries Division on **028 905 69421** or [Marine Conservation Team | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs](#)

UK and Irish turtle sightings and strandings can also be reported using the UK & RoI Turtle Code online at <http://www.euroturtle.org/turtlecode/default.htm> or www.ukturtles.online

In **Ireland** all records should be reported to Stephanie Levesque, Irish Whale and Dolphin Group IWDG, **(065) 905 1763**. Sightings & strandings can also be reported online in Ireland via the National Biodiversity Data Centre's turtle sightings page: <https://records.biodiversityireland.ie/record/sea-turtles>

On the **Isle of Man** all marine animal strandings should be reported to DEFA (Fisheries) on **01624 685835/685884** or directly to Dr Peter Duncan **07624 300525**, or Dr Lara Howe **07624 450879**.

The following criteria are applied: -

3.1 Live Animals

(Condition code 1)²

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 or British Divers Marine Life Rescue (BDMLR) would then contact the relevant organisations, Marine Environmental Monitoring etc.

Contacts and advice can be found in the UK Turtle Code (Appendix 2.).

3.2 Dead Animals

(Condition code 2a extremely fresh as if just died)²

(Condition code 2b slight decomposition)²

(Condition code 3 moderate decomposition)²

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)²

(Condition code 5 mummified carcass)²

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.

² 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 2025.

Table 1.

2025 Total number of reported marine turtles for the UK & Ireland. (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	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>)	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	5
Leatherback turtle (<i>Dermochelys coriacea</i>)	0	0	0	0	1	4	2	4	3	2	1	3	20
Loggerhead turtle (<i>Caretta caretta</i>)	1	3	1	0	1	2	5	2	4	1	4	10	34
Olive ridley turtle (<i>Lepidochelys olivacea</i>)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Unidentified	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Total animals	3	4	1	0	3	7	7	6	7	4	6	13	61

Table 2.

2025 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>)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Leatherback turtle (<i>Dermochelys coriacea</i>)	0	0	0	0	1	4	1	3	2	1	0	0	12
Loggerhead turtle (<i>Caretta caretta</i>)	0	1	0	0	0	1	4	2	3	1	2	4	18
Olive ridley turtle (<i>Lepidochelys olivacea</i>)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Unidentified	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Total animals	0	1	0	0	2	6	5	5	5	3	2	4	33

Table 3.

2025 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	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>)	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	4
Leatherback turtle (<i>Dermochelys coriacea</i>)	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	3	8
Loggerhead turtle (<i>Caretta caretta</i>)	1	2	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	2	6	16
Olive ridley turtle (<i>Lepidochelys olivacea</i>)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Unidentified	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total animals	3	3	1	0	1	1	2	1	2	1	4	9	28

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.

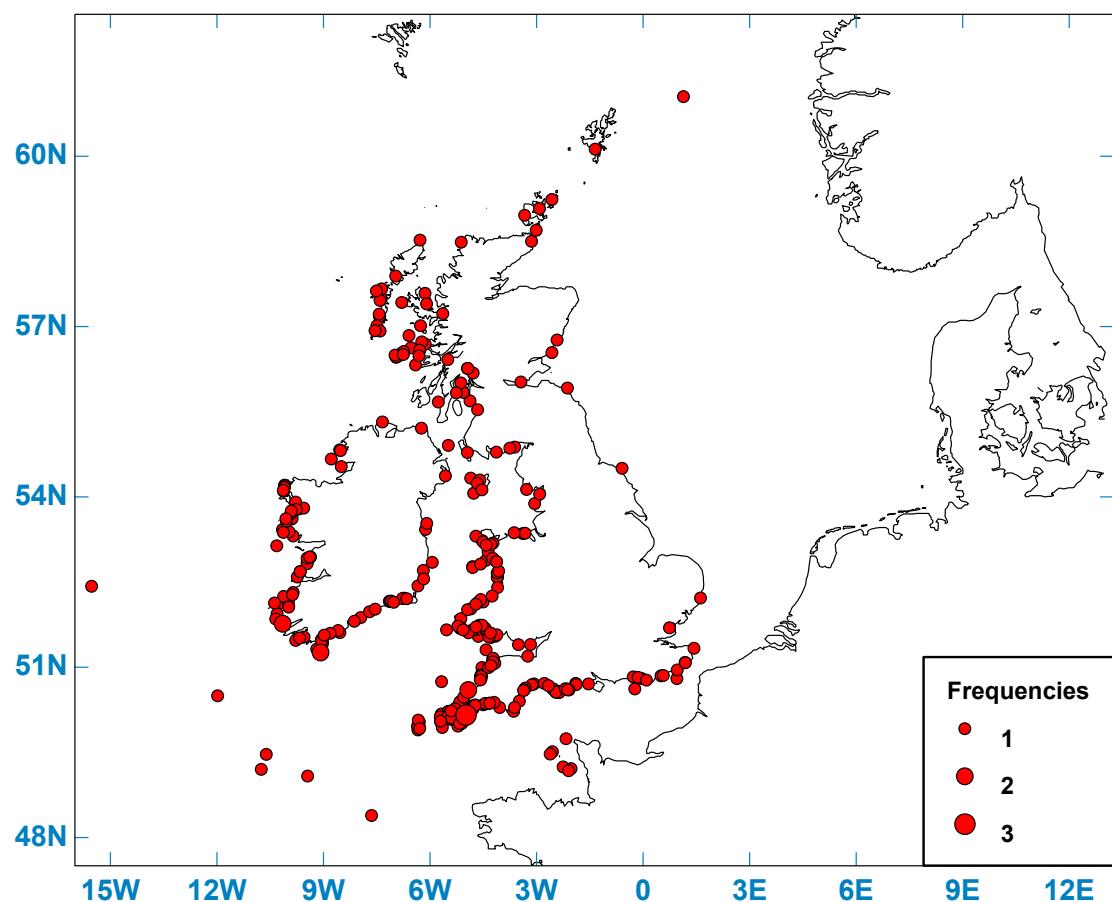


Figure 2. All species sightings & strandings 2015-2025 live and dead.

All species, sightings & strandings, live and dead over the eleven-year period 2015-2025 have been plotted in **Figure 2**.

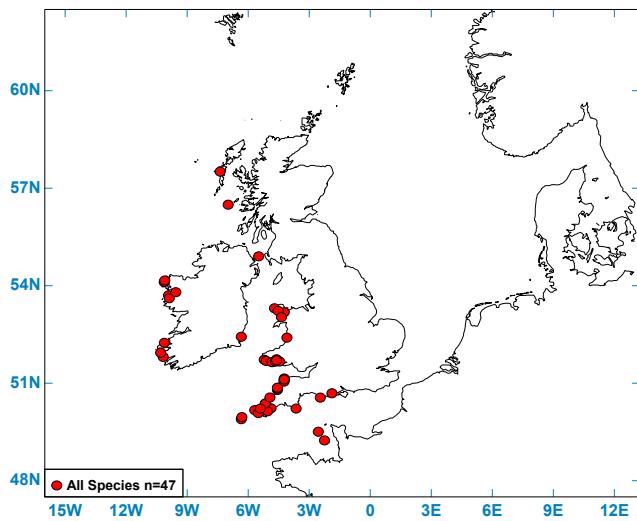


Figure 3. All species sightings & strandings 2023.

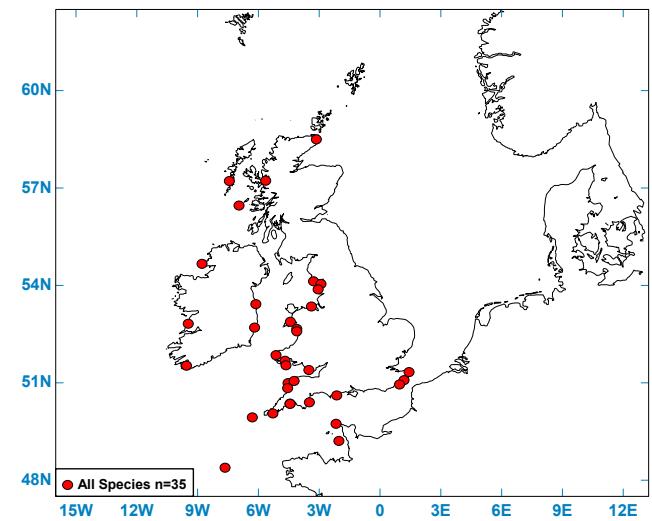


Figure 4. All species sightings & strandings 2024.

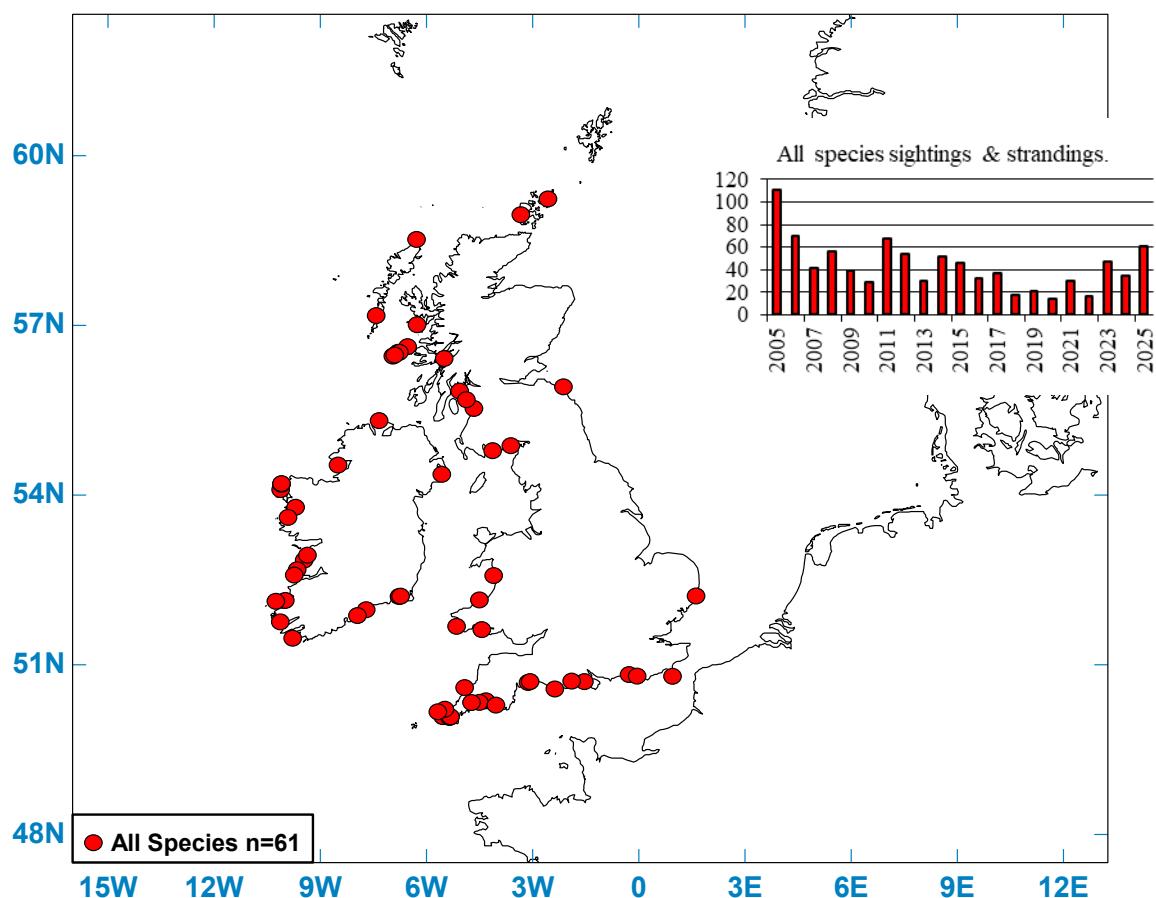


Figure 5. All species sightings & strandings 2025.

4.1 Sightings.

No live or dead Kemp's ridley sightings were reported during 2025. However, sightings of a live Kemp's ridley turtle has been recorded in recent years as shown in **Figure 6**.

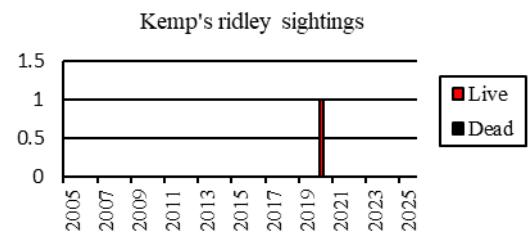


Figure 6. *Kemp's ridley sightings 2025.*

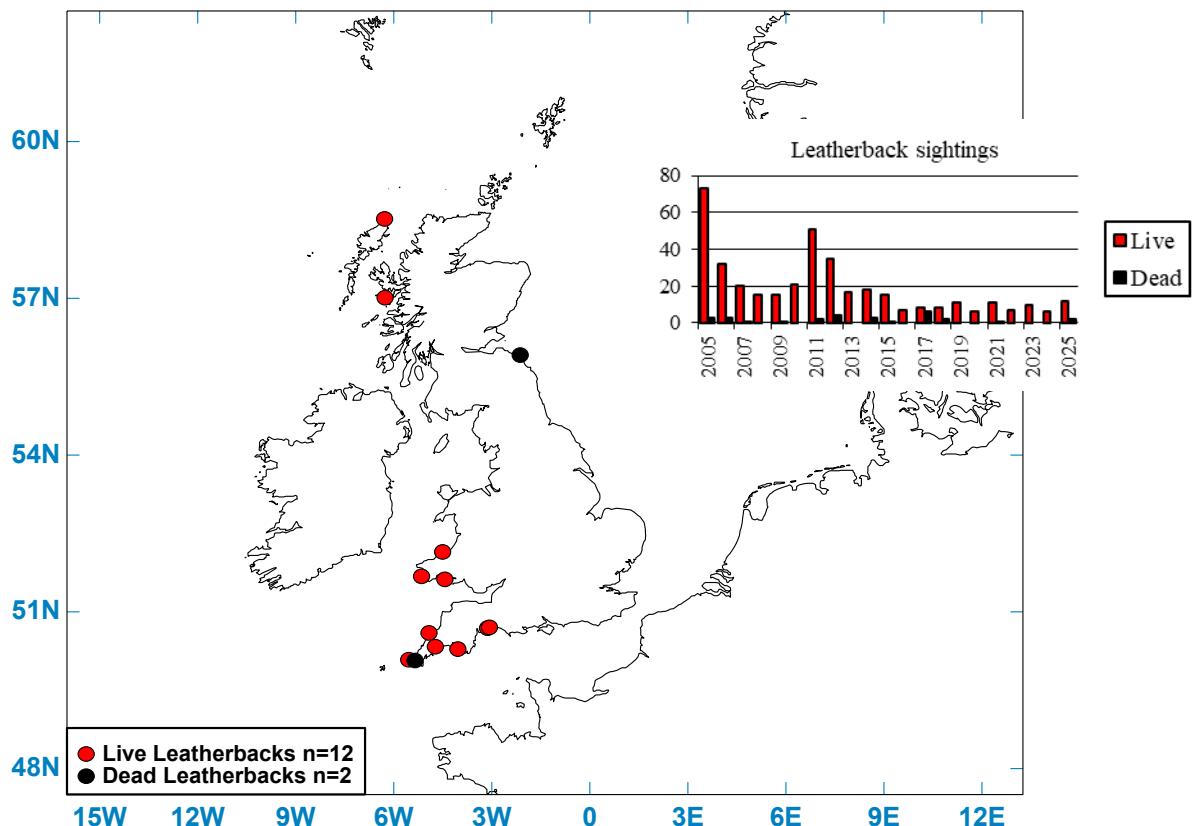


Figure 7.

Leatherback sightings 2025.

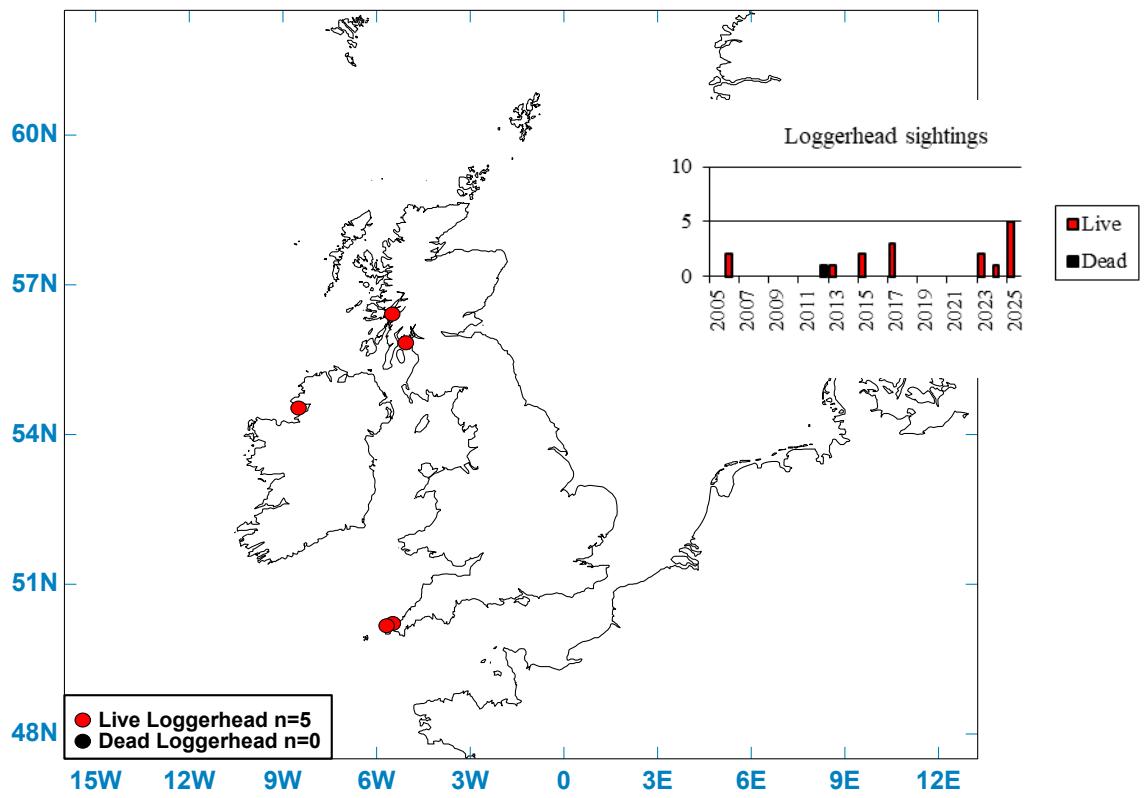


Figure 8. *Loggerhead sightings 2025.*

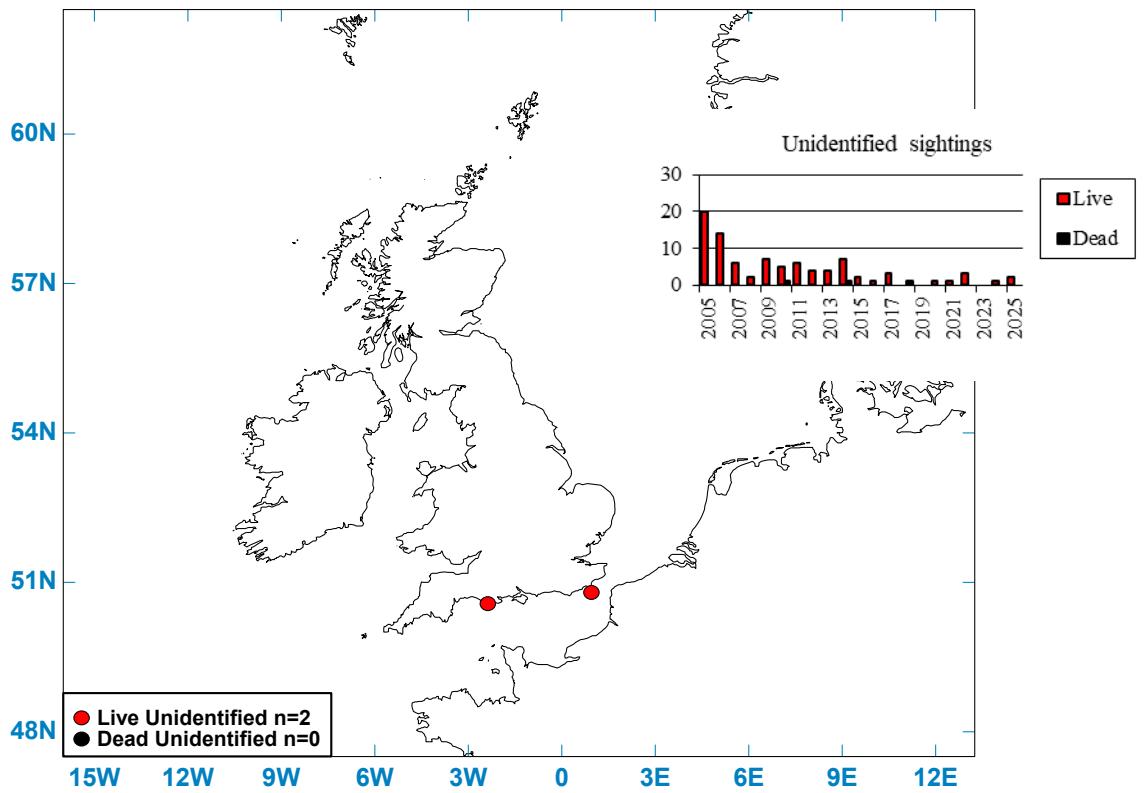


Figure 9. *Unidentified sightings 2025.*

4.2 Strandings.

No live or dead green turtle strandings were reported during 2025. However, strandings of both live and dead green turtles have been recorded in recent years.

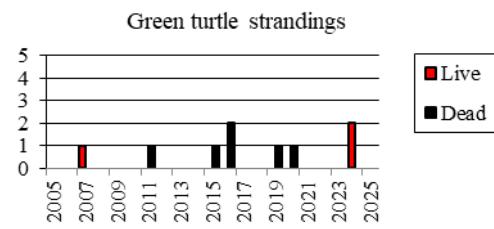


Figure 10. Green turtle strandings 2025.

No live or dead hawksbill turtle strandings were reported during 2025. 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.

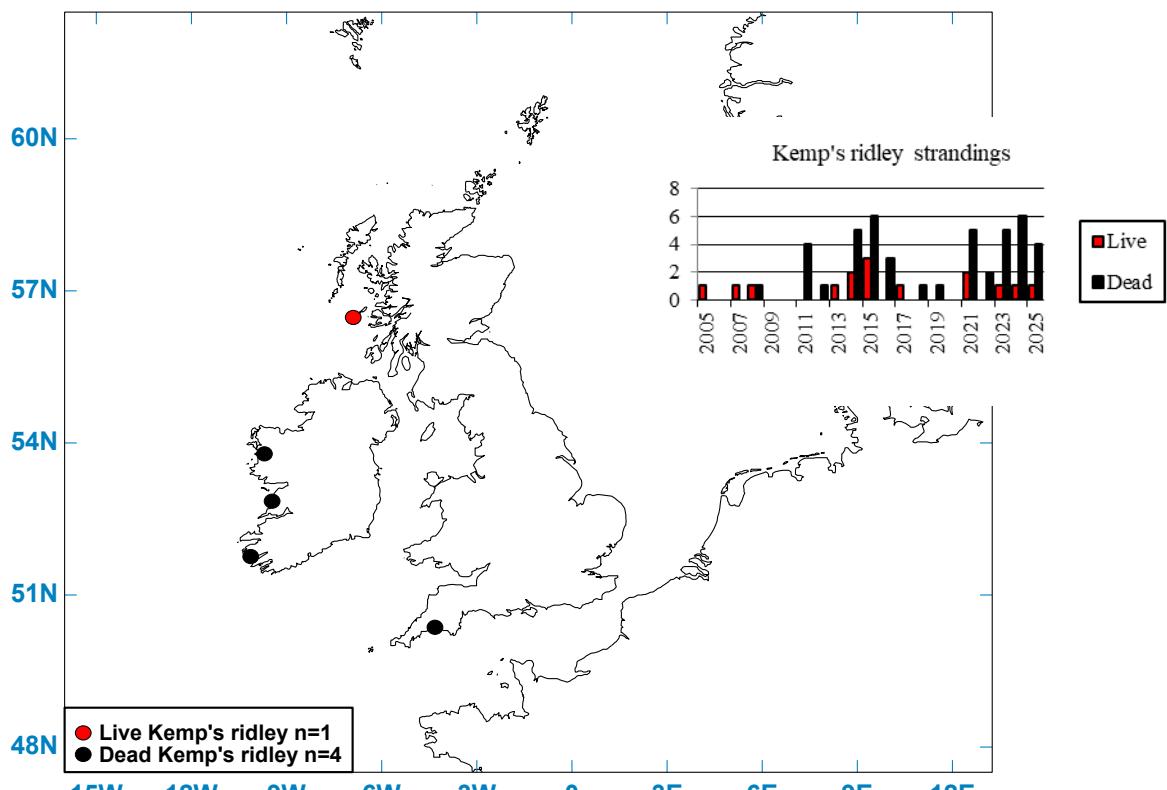


Figure 11. Kemp's ridley strandings 2025.

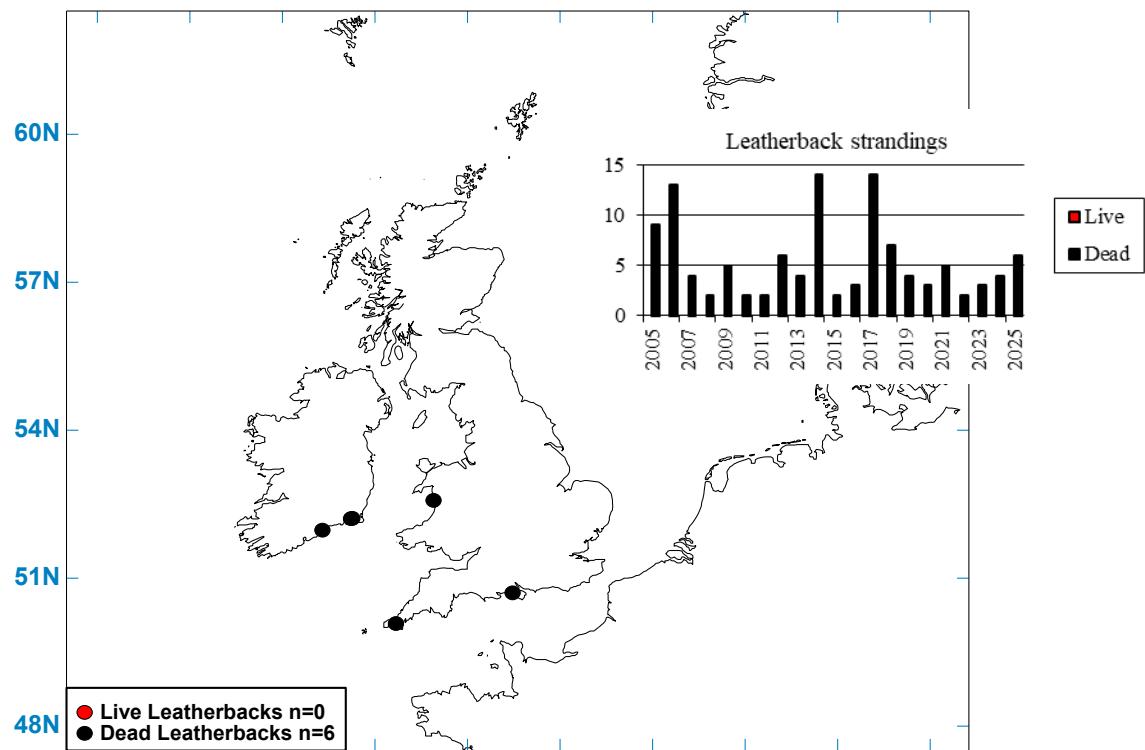


Figure 12.

Leatherback strandings 2025.

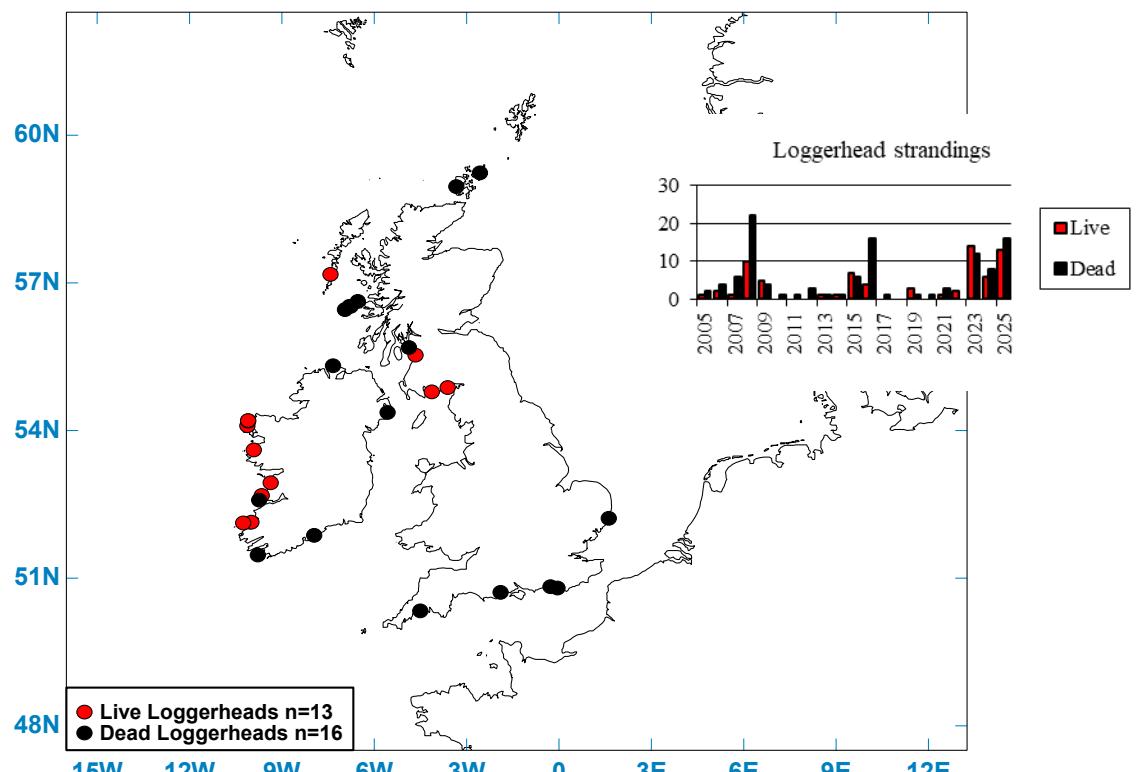


Figure 13.

Loggerhead strandings 2025.

No live or dead olive ridley turtle strandings were reported during 2025. However, a live stranding of an olive ridley turtle was recorded in recent years as shown in **Figure 14**.

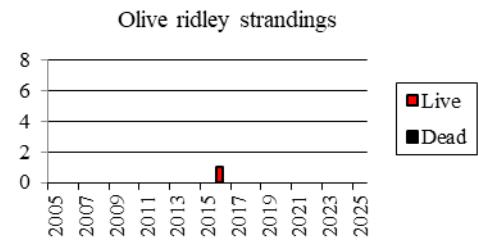


Figure 14. Olive ridley strandings 2025.

No live or dead unidentified turtle strandings were reported during 2025. However, strandings of unidentified turtles have been recorded in recent years as shown in **Figure 15**.

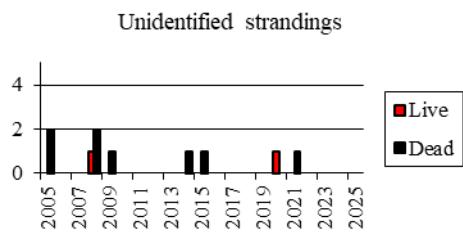


Figure 15. Unidentified strandings 2025.

All leatherback strandings and sightings, both dead and alive have been plotted by month for the period 2015 - 2025 (n=182) shown in **Figure 16**. The average figure was taken over 2015-2025 and plotted in **Figure 17**. 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 & Irish coast. The records for the hard-shell species are more sporadic. Of the hard-shell species the most numerous recorded turtle over the 2015 - 2025 period is the loggerhead (n=124). The data for this species are plotted in **Figure 18** and **Figure 19**.

As numbers of Kemp's ridley turtle strandings appear to be increasing, presumably by the recovery of the species by guarding of existing nests in Mexico and translocation of nests to additional beaches in the US, Gulf of Mexico, graphs **Figure 20** and **Figure 21** showing dead and alive strandings and sightings over the period 2015– 2025 (n=44) have been included.

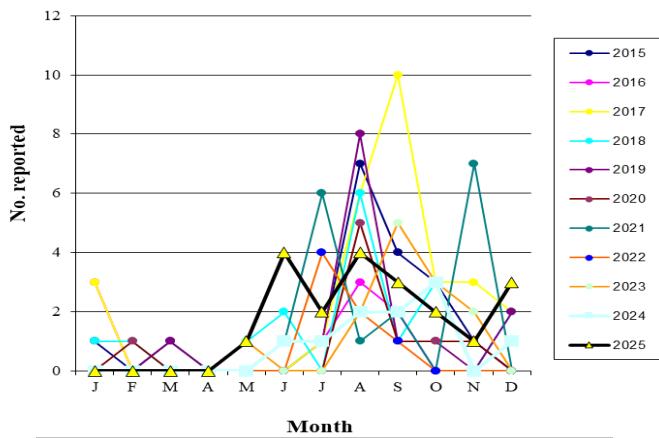


Figure 16. All leatherbacks by month.

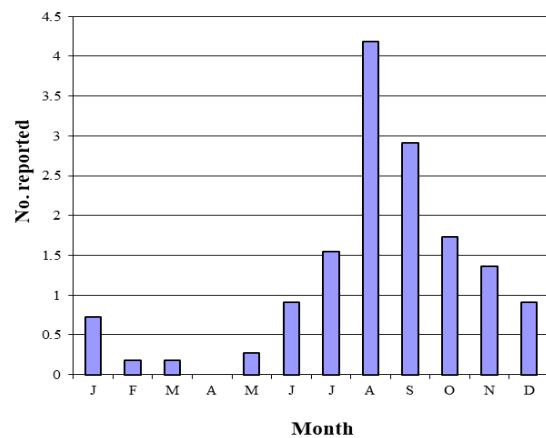


Figure 17. All leatherbacks average over 2015-2025

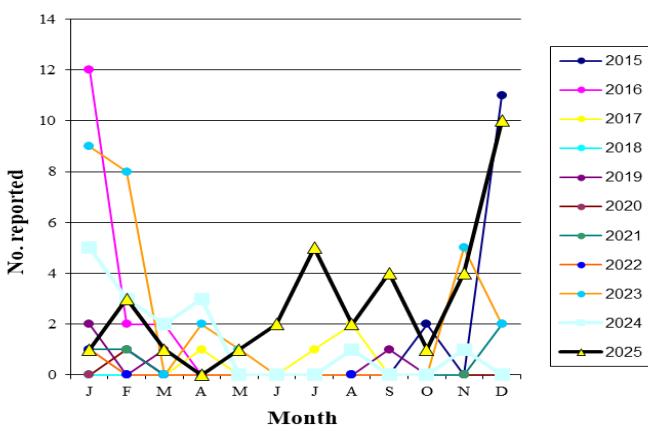


Figure 18. All loggerheads by month.

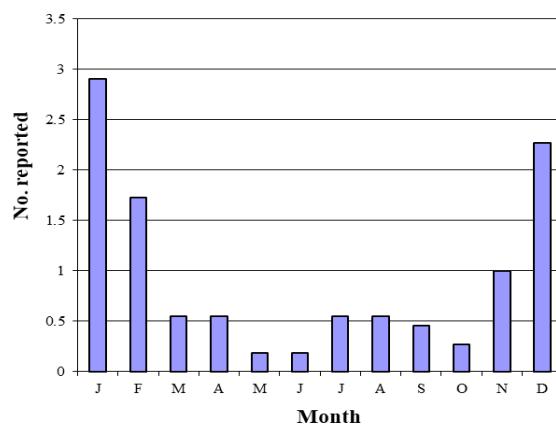


Figure 19. All loggerheads average over 2015-2025.

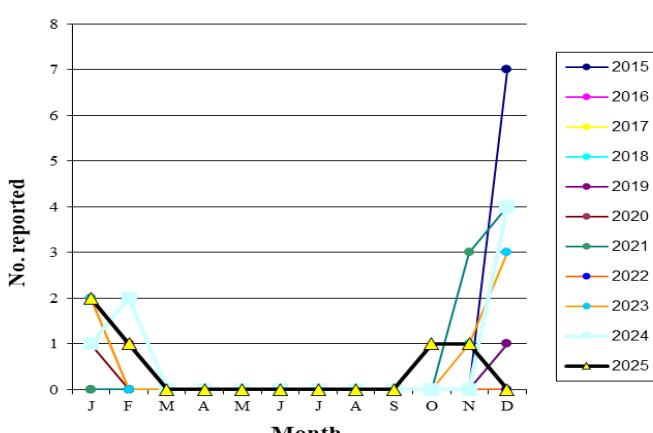


Figure 20. All Kemp's ridleys by month.

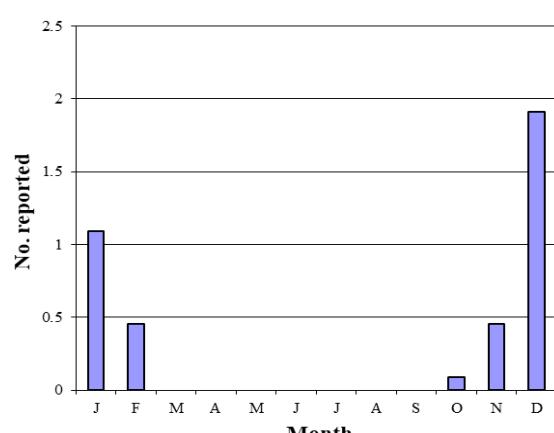


Figure 21. All Kemp's ridleys average 2015-2025.

Table 4.

Cumulative number of records in the TURTLE database.		
Country	All Species	
	2025	1748 - 2025
Rep. of Ireland	19	1401
England	20	766
Scotland	17	456
Wales	4	317
N. Ireland	1	42
Isle of Man	0	37
Channel Islands	0	21
Offshore	0	20
Total	61	3060

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 – 2025** column.

Table 5.

Species comparison from all TURTLE database records														
Country	2005 - 2015													
	2015 - 2025													
	GT	HB	KR	LBT	LOG	OR	UNI	GT	HB	KR	LBT	LOG	OR	UNI
England	0	0	0	12	16	119	66	26	45	0	0	48	17	
Scotland	1	1	0	0	5	9	50	31	15	22	0	0	9	0
Rep. of Ireland	1	2	0	0	2	6	141	44	26	34	0	0	16	1
Wales	1	4	0	0	8	12	78	34	17	14	0	1	10	1
Channel Islands	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	2	0	5	0	0	1	0
N. Ireland	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	1	0	1	0	0	1	0
Isle of Man	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	2	0	3	0	0	1	0
Offshore	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	2	1	0	0	0	1	0
Total	3	7	0	0	28	44	407	182	85	124	0	1	87	19

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

Table 6.

TURTLE Database Species Totals (1748 - 2025).	
Species	TOTAL
Green turtle (<i>Chelonia mydas</i>)	17
Hawksbill turtle (<i>Eretmochelys imbricata</i>)	1
Kemp's ridley turtle (<i>Lepidochelys kempii</i>)	96
Leatherback turtle (<i>Dermochelys coriacea</i>)	2197
Loggerhead turtle (<i>Caretta caretta</i>)	347
Olive ridley turtle (<i>Lepidochelys olivacea</i>)	1
Unidentified	401
Total animals	3060

The total records held in TURTLE are 3060 (end of 2025). However, some historical records with inadequate year data have been excluded in this report and from being uploaded to the NBN Atlas.

A breakdown of records for each country is shown in **Table 4**. However, the eleven-year comparison, 2005-2015 / 2015-2025 shown in **Table 5**, shows a marked decline in leatherback turtles recorded for most countries, this decline of leatherback turtles is likely to be a reflection of reduced effort. The increase in Kemp's ridley turtles is likely to be the result of successful management of the breeding beach in Mexico where eggs have been introduced to additional sites and the nests have been afforded greater protection.

5. MATTERS ARISING.

5.1 Retrospective Reports.

No retrospective reports were received during 2025.

6. LIVE STRANDING EVENTS 2025.

Fourteen turtles were reported as live-stranding in 2025, with one found at sea, these consisted of 14 loggerheads (over double from last year) and one Kemp's ridley turtle, these are listed below;

T2025/06 was a loggerhead turtle found alive, stranded cold-stunned at Fálmór, Blacksod, Co Mayo, Ireland on the 28th February. The turtle was recovered to Galway Atlantaquaria and later moved to Dingle Aquarium. Released by the Irish Navy 22/09/2025.

T2025/09 was a loggerhead turtle found alive, stranded cold-stunned at Inch beach, Co Kerry, Ireland on the 16th June. The turtle was recovered to Dingle Aquarium and released by the Irish Navy 22/09/2025.

T2025/16 was a loggerhead turtle found alive, stranded cold-stunned at Lahinch, Co Clare. Ireland on the 5th of July. The turtle was recovered to Dingle Aquarium and released by the Irish Navy 22/09/2025.

T2025/17 was a loggerhead turtle found alive, stranded cold-stunned at Drum, Co Mayo, Ireland on the 6th of July. The turtle was recovered to Dingle Aquarium and released by the Irish Navy 22/09/2025.

T2025/18 was a loggerhead turtle found alive, stranded cold-stunned at Lettergeesh beach, Co Galway, Ireland on the 8th July. The turtle was recovered to Dingle Aquarium and released.

T2025/19 was a loggerhead turtle found alive, stranded cold-stunned at Kilkee, Co Clare, Ireland on the 11th July. The turtle unfortunately died the same evening.

T2025/20 was a loggerhead turtle found alive, at sea, with a front flipper missing and suffering the effects of cold-stunning. The turtle was found off Oban, Argyll and Bute, Scotland on the 12th of August. The turtle was recovered to Loch Lomond Sea Life Centre and later moved to Scarborough SLC where it is still held.

T2025/27 was a loggerhead turtle found alive, stranded cold-stunned at Askernish beach, South Uist, Outer Hebrides, Scotland on the 12th September. A later search by members of BDMLR failed to locate it.

T2025/31 was a loggerhead turtle found alive, stranded cold-stunned at Port Beag, Isle of Tiree, Argyll and Bute, Scotland on the 27th September. The turtle was recovered to Loch Lomond Sea Life Centre and later moved to Weymouth SLC via Blackpool SLC where it is still held.

T2025/34 was a loggerhead turtle found alive, stranded cold-stunned at Troon, Ayrshire, Scotland on the 9th October. The turtle was recovered to Loch Lomond Sea Life Centre and later moved to Brighton SLC where it is still held.

T2025/35 was a Kemp's ridley turtle found alive, stranded cold-stunned at Sorobaith bay, Tiree, Argyll and Bute, Scotland on the 19th October. The turtle was recovered to Loch Lomond Sea Life Centre and later moved to Brighton SLC where it is still held.

T2025/40 was a loggerhead turtle found alive, stranded cold-stunned at Bellmullet, Co Mayo, Ireland on the 28th November. The turtle was recovered to Dingle Aquarium where it is still held.

T2025/44 was a loggerhead turtle found alive, stranded cold-stunned at Brighouse Bay, Dumfries and Galloway, Scotland on the 9th December. The turtle was recovered to the SSPCA facility National Wildlife Rescue Centre, once stabilised the turtle was moved to Hunstanton Sea Life Centre via Loch Lomond SLC where it is still held.

T2025/45 was a loggerhead turtle found alive, stranded cold-stunned at Southerness, Dumfries and Galloway, Scotland on the 11th December. The turtle was recovered to the SSPCA facility National Wildlife Rescue Centre where it unfortunately died.

T2025/46 was a loggerhead turtle found alive, stranded cold-stunned at Bean Ban beach, Dingle, Co Kerry, Ireland on the 11th December. Unfortunately, the turtle was found to be dead on arrival at Dingle Aquarium.

6.1 Rehabilitation

Of the fifteen 2025 live turtles, eleven turtles, survived in rehabilitation.

T2025/06, T2025/09, T2025/16, T2025/17 and T2025/18 were all released into warmer waters by the Irish Navy.

T2025/20, T2025/31, T2025/34, T2025/35, T2025/40 and T2025/44 are still in rehabilitation awaiting release.

Kemp's ridley turtle **T2023/37** is still being held at Anglesey Sea Zoo.

6.2 Repatriation (update)



Plate 1. T2023/11 being released by HMS Medway near the Azores.

Picture credit: Royal Navy

Following the successful release of the 6 loggerhead turtles by the Royal Navy near the Azores in September 2024, we were disappointed to hear, through a PIT tag return, that **T2023/11** named 'Gordon' was later found dead at Galicia, northern Spain some six weeks later.

A subsequent *post-mortem* examination by the Galician Strandings Network CEMMA, found 'no significant findings' and the weight of the turtle had remained close to its release weight, 14kg at *post-mortem* examination, and 14.295kg at release. Although there is no conclusive evidence to support

this, the cause of death was thought highly likely to be 'bycatch'. This turtle had originally stranded, cold-stunned in Bude, Cornwall in February 2023, recovered by BDMLR and brought back to good health by Blue Reef Aquarium, Newquay, Cornwall.



Plate 2. T2024/06 being released.

Picture credit: Anthony Devlin/SEA LIFE

T2024/06 was a loggerhead turtle originally released, tagged with a satellite tag, from La Rochelle Aquarium, France in August 2023. The tag ceased to function in the Irish Sea and the turtle was later found stranded, alive, cold-stunned at Barrow in Furness, Cumbria and was recovered to Blackpool Sea Life Centre. After the animal was stabilised it was later moved on to Scarborough Sea Life Centre where arrangements were made for its release. In September 2024 the turtle was flown to the Azores and returned to the sea on the 15th September 2024. We are extremely grateful to Sea Life for funding this repatriation.



Plate 3. T2023/31 being released by Sea Life staff at the Azores.

Picture credit: Joao Pedreda

The loggerhead turtle **T2023/31** named Barnacle Bill (due to the mass of goose barnacles attached to its shell) that stranded on Guernsey 6th November 2023 was undergoing the same problem with repatriation following Brexit. Arrangements were made to move the turtle from the care of the GSPCA on Guernsey to the UK mainland where it may be easier to repatriate the turtle.

We are extremely grateful to Brighton Sea Life Centre who provided their facilities in holding the turtle **T2023/31** in the UK.

Loggerhead turtle **T2024/27** that was recovered to Blackpool Sea Life Centre was also fit enough to join Barnacle Bill on this release. Both turtles were released in the Azores courtesy of Sea Life.

Although the Royal Navy had come to our rescue with assistance in releasing the six loggerhead turtles in 2024 that were detained in the UK due to new funding and paperwork issues as a result of Brexit, Sea Life preferred not to take advantage of this avenue as they had concerns over the duration of confinement onboard the vessel in small containers. As Sea Life is a commercial enterprise they were able to fully fund the considerable amount for their releases via Portugal to the Azores. 2025 has

seen all live UK turtles pass into the Sea Life organisations for rehabilitation so we are hoping that these turtles will be able to follow the same process.

However, looking to the future, we are hoping the Royal Navy will still be able to assist with turtles that pass through aiding aquariums that are not able to fund Official Vet fees and transport release costs.



Plate 4. The Irish Navy taking delivery of the loggerhead turtles.

Picture credit: Dingle Oceanworld/Irish Navy.

All 5 loggerhead turtles held by Dingle Oceanworld were released into Spanish waters with the kind assistance of the Irish Navy on the 22nd September 2025.

We are extremely grateful to both the Royal Navy and the Irish Navy for assistance with these repatriations.

7. BYCATCH.

Two reports were received of entangled leatherback turtles in 2025, these are listed below.

T2025/25 was a dead leatherback turtle reported off Porthleven, Cornwall entangled in pot-rope. The carcass was disentangled from the rope by fishermen. It is possible the leatherback turtle **T2025/26** found stranded at Porthleven 6 days later was the same animal.

T2025/38 was a dead leatherback turtle reported off St Abbs Head, Berwickshire, Scotland entangled in fishing gear. The fishing gear was not specified but local knowledge suggest it to be pot-rope.

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, SMASS, Cornwall Marine Pathology Team or the Irish Strandings project.

A duplicate skin archive held for genetics by Marine Environmental Monitoring was handed over to Associate Professor Ylenia Chiari, Nottingham University, for a collaborative genetic study with other archives held in northern Europe and elsewhere, to establish where these turtles are coming from and hopefully identify their natal sites. Although there is a very good chance our vagrant turtles are originating from the east coast of the US/Caribbean and possibly Cape Verde, turtles off the coast of Portugal have been identified as originating from the Mediterranean. Information gained from this study may help inform the rationale for future release locations.

One turtle was recovered to the project in 2025 in a suitable condition to undergo a full *post-mortem* examination. This was loggerhead **T2025/49** which is currently being held frozen for SMASS.

T2025/45 was a loggerhead turtle found alive, stranded cold-stunned at Southerness, Dumfries and Galloway, Scotland on the 11th December. The turtle was recovered to the Scottish Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals SSPCA at their National Wildlife Rescue Centre. Unfortunately, the turtle failed to respond to treatment.

On examination by SSPCA, the stomach contained moderate amount of plastic material (what appears to be crisp packet and other thin plastic material), mixed with plant matter.

Cause of death was given as: Cold stunned.

9. DATA SHARING.

The National Biodiversity Network (NBN) Gateway permanently closed on 31st March 2017 superseded by the NBN Atlas which went live on 1st April 2017. The TURTLE database has now been transferred to this platform having been updated to the new validation process required for the NBN Atlas.

10. UNUSUAL OCCURRENCES.

Sea surface temperatures (SST) in the Atlantic Ocean during 2025 remained at near-record high levels, ranking as the 3rd warmest for the first half of the year (behind 2023 and 2024).

Total recorded turtle sightings and stranding records were higher than last year for the UK & Ireland (35 in 2024, 61 in 2025). Reported numbers of leatherback turtles had doubled from the previous year to 20, but loggerhead turtles had increased from 15 in 2024 to 34 in 2025 with the proportion of loggerheads found alive increasing from 7 in 2024 to 18 in 2025.

Blue Reef Aquarium in Newquay, Cornwall, who normally field the majority of live stranded loggerhead turtles in the south-west of England, were given well-earned respite as 2025 saw a shift in distribution of live loggerheads to the west coast of Ireland and north to the Scottish mainland and Islands.

Loch Lomond Sea Life Centre stepped up to stabilise the majority of the live strandings in Scotland but due to lack of sea water they were unable to hold the turtles for any duration therefore animals were transported south to other aquaria in the Sea Life chain. We are also grateful to SSPCA for assistance with two additional loggerheads in Scotland.

In Ireland, one loggerhead was received by Galway Atlantaquaria which was later transported south to Dingle Oceanworld who dealt with all of the live 2025 stranded loggerheads.

Mainland Europe again saw numbers of hard-shell turtles strand on their coastline with one loggerhead being found alive as far north as Norway. (Mainland European Data courtesy of Mark de Boer pers comm. 21/01/2026).

The Netherlands: 5, all dead

Germany: 1, alive

Denmark: 6, dead

Norway: 1, alive

Sweden: 2, dead

11. PUBLICITY.

A dedicated web-site to bring all turtle related information concerning turtles in the UK & Ireland together with online reporting forms for both sightings and strandings has been constructed at

www.ukturtles.online

The Strandings Web-site has been maintained to provide details of MEM and the CSIP. Key contact details are given for England, Scotland and Ireland. The pages can be viewed at www.strandings.com/ Annual reports and other turtle related publications are available at <https://strandings.com/annual-reports/>

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

12. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

Marine Environmental Monitoring wishes to acknowledge the following;

Many thanks to Dr Tom Doyle at University College Cork, who is standing down from the Turtle Implementation Group (TIG) and as the main turtle contact for the Republic of Ireland on the UK & Irish Turtle Code. The Turtle Code contact for the Republic of Ireland will now be Stephanie Levesque, Irish Whale and Dolphin Group (IWDG). Many thanks again to Tom for gathering data and investigating stranded turtles in Ireland for many years.

Stephanie Levesque IWDG, University of Exeter's Cornwall campus, Julia Cable and Dan Jarvis British Divers Marine Life Rescue BDMLR, Nick Davison SMASS, Blackpool, Brighton, Hunstanton, Loch Lomond, Scarborough and Weymouth Sea Life Centres, Maria Fowley Dingle Oceanworld, Rita Gately Galway Atlantaquaria Doug Herdson, Lin Gander, Mark de Boer, Dave Wall NBDC, Xabier Pin Vázquez CEMMA, Harrison Watler, Liam Reid Scottish SPCA, the Royal Navy and the Irish Navy.

Natural England; NatureScot; National Parks & Wildlife Service and the Welsh Government for financial support towards the British & Irish TURTLE database.

13. APPENDICES.

- Appendix 1. 2025 TURTLE data.
- Appendix 2. UK Turtle Code.
- Appendix 3. Morphometrics.



Appendix 1.

RecordKey	SpeciesCode	CaughtStrat	AliveDead	EndDate	Country	County	Location	Notes
T2025/01	KR	ST	DEAD	04/01/2025	EIRE	MAYO	Lecanvey	
T2025/02	KR	ST	DEAD	14/01/2025	EIRE	CLARE	Spanish point, Quilty.	Collected for Tom Doyle by Stephanie Levesque IWDG
T2025/03	LOG	ST	DEAD	19/01/2025	SCOTLAND	ARGYLL & BUTE	Balephull Bay, Tiree.	Measurements taken and skin sample promised.
T2025/04	KR	ST	DEAD	23/02/2025	ENGLAND	CORNWALL	Hoodny Cove, Portwrinkle	Reported with photographs but a subsequent search failed to find it. High tides at the time. Possibly taken by tide, trophy hunter or scavengers.
T2025/05	LOG	ST	DEAD	18/02/2025	SCOTLAND	INNER HEBRIDE	Isle of Coll	Retro report.
T2025/06	LOG	ST	ALIVE	28/02/2025	EIRE	MAYO	Fálmór, Blacksod	Turtle held at Galway Atlantaquaria under the care of Veterinarian Rita Gately. Turtle named Columbus. Released by the Irish Navy.22/09/2025.
T2025/07	LOG	ST	DEAD	01/03/2025	ENGLAND	CORNWALL	Talland Bay	Retro report. Carcass moved to deep pool by the finder.
T2025/08	UNI	SEA	ALIVE	31/05/2025	ENGLAND	DORSET	3 miles East South East from Weymouth harbour entrance	Originally reported as a 300mm-400mm dia. Leatherback turtle sighted from sailing boat. Report changed to possible Olive ridley when contacted and ID material was offered. Recorded as Unidentified.
T2025/09	LOG	ST	ALIVE	16/06/2025	EIRE	KERRY	Inch beach	Recovered by Maria at Dingle Aquarium. Released by the Irish Navy.22/09/2025.
T2025/10	LBT	SEA	ALIVE	18/06/2025	ENGLAND	DEVON	Branscombe	As the sea is so calm at the moment its easy to spot anything on the water so I'm guessing the multiple reports are for a single animal rather than several. Reported feeding on jellyfish.
T2025/11	LBT	SEA	ALIVE	19/06/2025	ENGLAND	DEVON	Seaton	Reported at Seaton in the evening and still there at 7am on the 19th. Possibly T2025/10 as it was reported moving east.
T2025/12	UNI	SEA	ALIVE	29/06/2025	ENGLAND	SUSSEX	Off Rye	Observed from a boat with good video. Possibly juv. KR.
T2025/13	LBT	SEA	ALIVE	03/07/2025	ENGLAND	CORNWALL	Mousehole	Observed from the Old Coastguard, Mousehole.
T2025/14	LBT	SEA	ALIVE	27/08/2025	ENGLAND	CORNWALL	off Rumps Point south of Mousl, Padstow	Saw 2 turtles from cliffs south of the Mousl. Unsure of species but guessed leatherback. Both were swimming along the shoreline in the lee of the strong winds today. Estimate size 2-3 feet, but difficult to relate from a distance.
T2025/15	LBT	SEA	ALIVE	27/08/2025	ENGLAND	CORNWALL	off Rumps Point south of Mousl, Padstow	Saw 2 turtles from cliffs south of the Mousl. Unsure of species but guessed leatherback. Both were swimming along the shoreline in the lee of the strong winds today. Estimate size 2-3 feet, but difficult to relate from a distance.
T2025/16	LOG	ST	ALIVE	05/07/2025	EIRE	CLARE	Lahinch	Recovered to Dingle Aquarium, doing well. Released by the Irish Navy.22/09/2025.
T2025/17	LOG	ST	ALIVE	06/07/2025	EIRE	MAYO	Drum	Recovered to Dingle Aquarium, doing well. Released by the Irish Navy.22/09/2025.
T2025/18	LOG	ST	ALIVE	08/07/2025	EIRE	GALWAY	Lettergeesh beach	Recovered to Dingle Aquarium, doing well.
T2025/19	LOG	ST	ALIVE	11/07/2025	EIRE	CLARE	Kilkee	Delivered to local veterinarian, died that night.
T2025/20	LOG	SEA	ALIVE	12/08/2025	SCOTLAND	ARGYLL & BUTE	Recovered at sea off Oban by fisherman.	Recovered to slipway and transported to Loch Lomond Sea Life. Moved to Sea Life Scarborough.
T2025/21	LBT	SEA	ALIVE	13/08/2025	ENGLAND	DEVON	Off Stoke Point	Sighted 5metres from boat 600metres from shore.
T2025/22	LBT	SEA	ALIVE	24/08/2025	SCOTLAND	OUTER HEBRIDE	Sighted off Lewis	Sighted West of the Butt of Lewis Lighthouse. Seen through telescopes (30x wide angle lens) Four observers, all experienced sea-watchers.
T2025/23	LBT	SEA	ALIVE	24/08/2025	WALES	CARMARTHEN	Carmarthen Bay	"Appeared to be in a healthy condition, eating a barrel jellyfish. Unsure exact distance turtle was out from bay but here are the rough coordinates: 51.62126° N, 4.43172° W"
T2025/24	LBT	SEA	ALIVE	05/09/2025	WALES	PEMBROKESHIRE	In Milford Haven.	"It butterflied up out the water about 4 times".
T2025/25	LBT	SEA	DEAD	28/08/2025	ENGLAND	CORNWALL	Off Porthleven.	1.5 miles straight out from Porthleven. Dead carcass disentangled from pot rope by fisherman. Presumed same carcass made landfall 3rd Sept at Porthleven.
T2025/26	LBT	ST	DEAD	03/09/2025	ENGLAND	CORNWALL	Porthleven	Headless carcass on beach. Highly likely T2025/25.
T2025/27	LOG	ST	ALIVE	12/09/2025	SCOTLAND	OUTER HEBRIDE	Askernish beach, South Uist	Juvenile loggerhead not found by later search by BDMLR.
T2025/28	LOG	SEA	ALIVE	14/09/2025	SCOTLAND	ARGYLL & BUTE	Near the Ferry Port on the Isle of Bute.	Spotted swimming behind the Victorian Toilets at the Ferry Port Isle of Bute, clear photograph shows it to be a loggerhead.
T2025/29	LBT	SEA	ALIVE	19/09/2025	SCOTLAND	INNER HEBRIDE	Loch Scresort, Isle of Rum.	Saw it off ferry slipway Loch Scresort, Isle of Rum with head out of the water then it dived and saw the carapace as it went under. Did not see it again but it was floating in place for up to 45 secs.
T2025/30	LOG	ST	DEAD	21/09/2025	SCOTLAND	ARGYLL & BUTE	Gott Beach, Isle of Tiree (NM 04995 47205), c.30cm length.	Volunteer sent to find it for examination with SMASS.
T2025/31	LOG	ST	ALIVE	27/09/2025	SCOTLAND	ARGYLL & BUTE	Port Beag, Isle of Tiree.	Recovered by BDMLR and released to Loch Lomond Sea Life for rehab, ETA late Sunday afternoon. Moved to Sea Life Blackpool. To be moved to Sea Life Weymouth early November.
T2025/32	LBT	SEA	ALIVE	06/10/2025	WALES	CEREDIGION	Off Penbry beach	Sighted 200 metres from shore.
T2025/33	LBT	ST	DEAD	08/10/2025	WALES	CEREDIGION	Twyn beach	Advanced decomposition.
T2025/34	LOG	ST	ALIVE	09/10/2025	SCOTLAND	AYRSHIRE	Troon	To be released to Sea Life Loch Lomond. Moved to Brighton 16/10/2025.
T2025/35	KR	ST	ALIVE	19/10/2025	SCOTLAND	ARGYLL & BUTE	Sorobaidh bay, Tiree.	To be released to Sea Life Loch Lomond. To be moved to Brighton 30/10/2025.
T2025/36	LOG	SEA	ALIVE	02/11/2025	ENGLAND	CORNWALL	St Ives	Seen close inshore, photographed.
T2025/37	LOG	ST	DEAD	12/11/2025	SCOTLAND	NORTH AYRSHIRE	Seamill beach.	Carcass found in nearby field used as a beach car park. Due to the damage to the carcass it is presumed it was taken there by a dog/fox?
T2025/38	LBT	SEA	DEAD	27/11/2025	SCOTLAND	BERWICKSHIRE	StAblbs head	Photograph shows carcass being hauled in rope, so presumed this was a pot fishery. Waiting on confirmation.
T2025/39	LOG	ST	DEAD	25/11/2025	NORTHERN IRELAND	DOWN	Strangford Lough	Carcass presumed taken by the tide when the finder returned the next day to take further photo's.
T2025/40	LOG	ST	ALIVE	28/11/2025	EIRE	MAYO	Bellmullet	
T2025/41	LOG	SEA	ALIVE	07/12/2025	ENGLAND	CORNWALL	400 metres off Pendene point.	Viewed by bird watcher through binoculars 400 metres from Pendene point.
T2025/42	LOG	ST	DEAD	10/12/2025	ENGLAND	SUSSEX	Shoreham-by-Sea	Deemed unsuitable for post-mortem examination.
T2025/43	LBT	ST	DEAD	11/12/2025	ENGLAND	ISLE OF WIGHT	Fort Victoria	Partial remains (decomposition) of a leatherback turtle.
T2025/44	LOG	ST	ALIVE	09/12/2025	SCOTLAND	DUMFRIES & GALT	Brighouse Bay	One of 2 loggerheads delivered to Scottish SSPCA National Wildlife Rescue Centre in central Scotland . Moved to Sea Life Loch Lomond.
T2025/45	LOG	ST	ALIVE	11/12/2025	SCOTLAND	DUMFRIES & GALT	Southerness	Two of 2 loggerheads delivered to Scottish SSPCA National Wildlife Rescue Centre in central Scotland . Died, SMASS informed. Pm'd by SSPCA.
T2025/46	LOG	ST	ALIVE	11/12/2025	EIRE	KERRY	Bean Ban beach, Dingle	Found to be dead on arrival at stranding location by Maria Foley, Dingle Aquarium.
T2025/47	LOG	ST	DEAD	13/12/2025	ENGLAND	SUSSEX	Saldean	Presumed to be dead, carcass left by finder. Mass of goose barnacles attached.
T2025/48	LOG	ST	DEAD	20/12/2025	ENGLAND	DORSET	Bournemouth	Presumed to be dead, carcass left by finder.
T2025/49	LOG	ST	DEAD	18/12/2025	SCOTLAND	ORKNEY	Sandy	Held frozen, hopefully delivered to SMASS for examination in the New Year.
T2025/50	LOG	ST	DEAD	24/12/2025	SCOTLAND	ORKNEY	Warbeth, Stromness.	Carapace to be held on the Island UHI.
T2025/51	LOG	ST	DEAD	29/12/2025	ENGLAND	SUFFOLK	Sizewell	Animal thought to be dead by finder and left on the tide line.
T2025/52	LBT	ST	DEAD	31/07/2025	EIRE	WEXFORD	Bannow	Retro report via Tom Doyle / IWDG
T2025/53	LOG	SEA	ALIVE	12/08/2025	EIRE	DONEGAL	Donegal Bay	Retro report via Tom Doyle, observed from Kiwigirl Mullaghmore boat charter. This animal was seen swimming alive in Donegal bay. It had some lepas barnacles on its hind flippers.
T2025/54	KR	ST	DEAD	26/11/2025	EIRE	KERRY	Derrynane	
T2025/55	LBT	ST	DEAD	15/12/2025	EIRE	WATERFORD	Glencorin Beach	Retro report via Tom Doyle, remains of decomposed carapace only.
T2025/56	LBT	SEA	ALIVE	17/05/2025	ENGLAND	CORNWALL	Charlston on the 17th, Polkerris on the 19th. Plotted between the two.	Retro report from CWT. Charlston on the 17th, Polkerris on the 19th. Plotted between the two.
T2025/57	LOG	ST	DEAD	21/02/2025	EIRE	CORK	Ballycrenane	Retro report from National Biodiversity Data Centre
T2025/58	LBT	ST	DEAD	12/12/2025	EIRE	WEXFORD	Wellington Bridge	Retro report from National Biodiversity Data Centre
T2025/59	LOG	ST	DEAD	25/05/2025	EIRE	CORK	Barley Cove	Retro report from IWDG
T2025/60	LOG	ST	DEAD	09/07/2025	EIRE	DONEGAL	Five finger strand.	Retro report from IWDG
T2025/61	LOG	ST	DEAD	26/06/2025	EIRE	CLARE	Rhinevilla	Retro report from IWDG



The United Kingdom & Irish Turtle Code

Advice for sea users on how to deal with marine turtle encounters

v 3.2 2026

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.

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 dry towel or blanket. 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.

PLEASE REPORT ALL TURTLE ENCOUNTERS

ENGLAND/WALES & SCOTLAND

ALL RECORDS

Rod Penrose or Mat
Westfield, Marine
Environmental Monitoring.
01239 683033 (24hrs)
info@strandings.com

LIVE STRANDINGS/ENTANGLEMENTS

RSPCA 0300 1234999
BDMLR 01825 765546

ISLE OF MAN

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

SCOTLAND

DEAD STRANDINGS
Nick Davison, Scottish
Marine Animal Strandings
Scheme (SMASS)
07979 245893
reports@strandings.org
LIVE STRANDINGS/ENTANGLEMENTS
SSPCA 03000 999999

NORTHERN IRELAND

ALL RECORDS
DAERA Marine Wildlife
Team.
Marine.Wildlife@daera-ni.gov.uk

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

ALL RECORDS
Stephanie Levesque
Irish Whale & Dolphin
Group IWDG.
(065) 905 1763
Strandings@iwdg.ie

Report online at: www.euroturtle.org/turtlecode & 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.

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 dry towel, 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 & Ireland

<http://www.ukturtles.online>

v 3.1

Endorsed by:



Of the world's seven marine turtle species, six have been recorded in UK waters. They are the leatherback, loggerhead, Kemp's ridley, olive 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 five 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*)

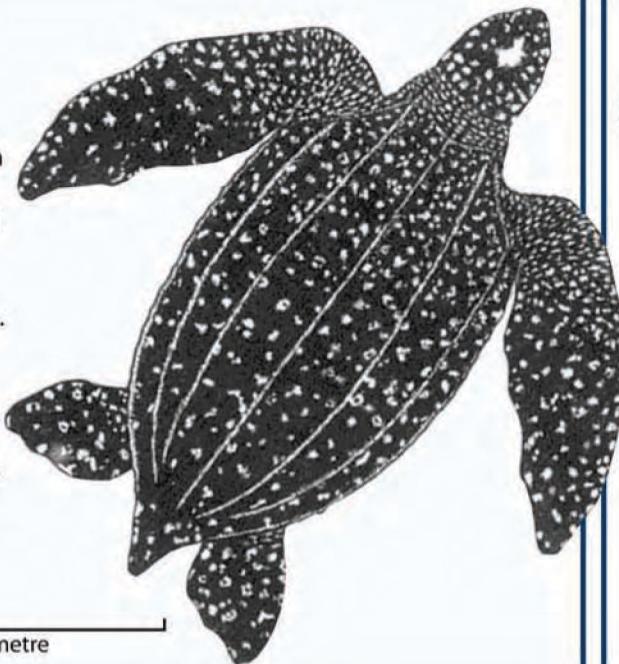
Most frequently recorded species in UK waters.

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

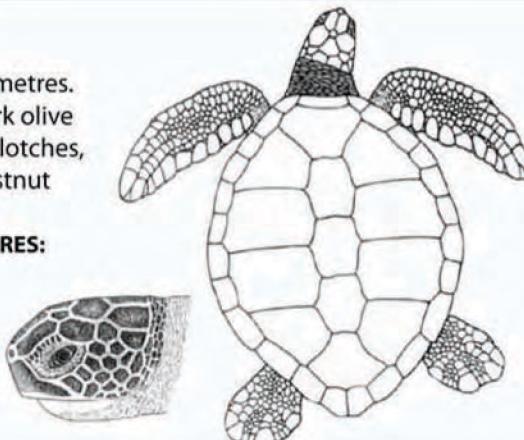
GREEN TURTLE

(*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).



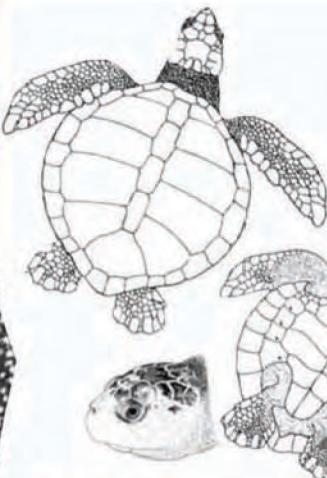
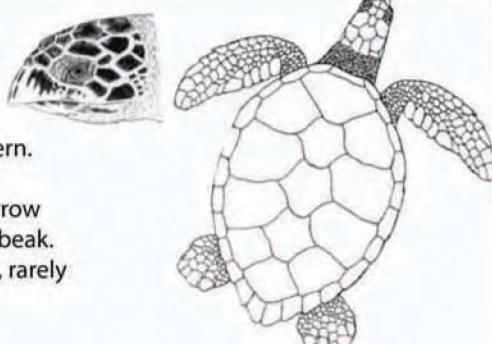
HAWSBILL TURTLE

(*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.



KEMP'S RIDLEY TURTLE

(*Lepidochelys kempii*)

LENGTH: up to 1 metre, but usually juveniles (0.3-0.5 metres) occur in UK waters.

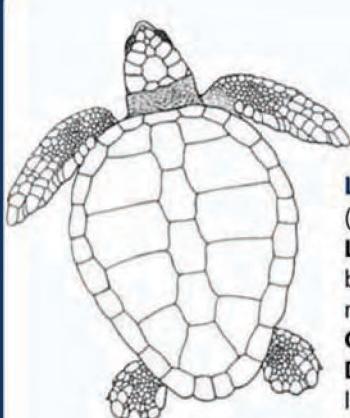
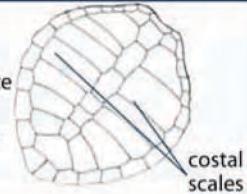
COLOUR: grey/olive.

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 been recorded only once 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.



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.



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.



Queen's University Belfast



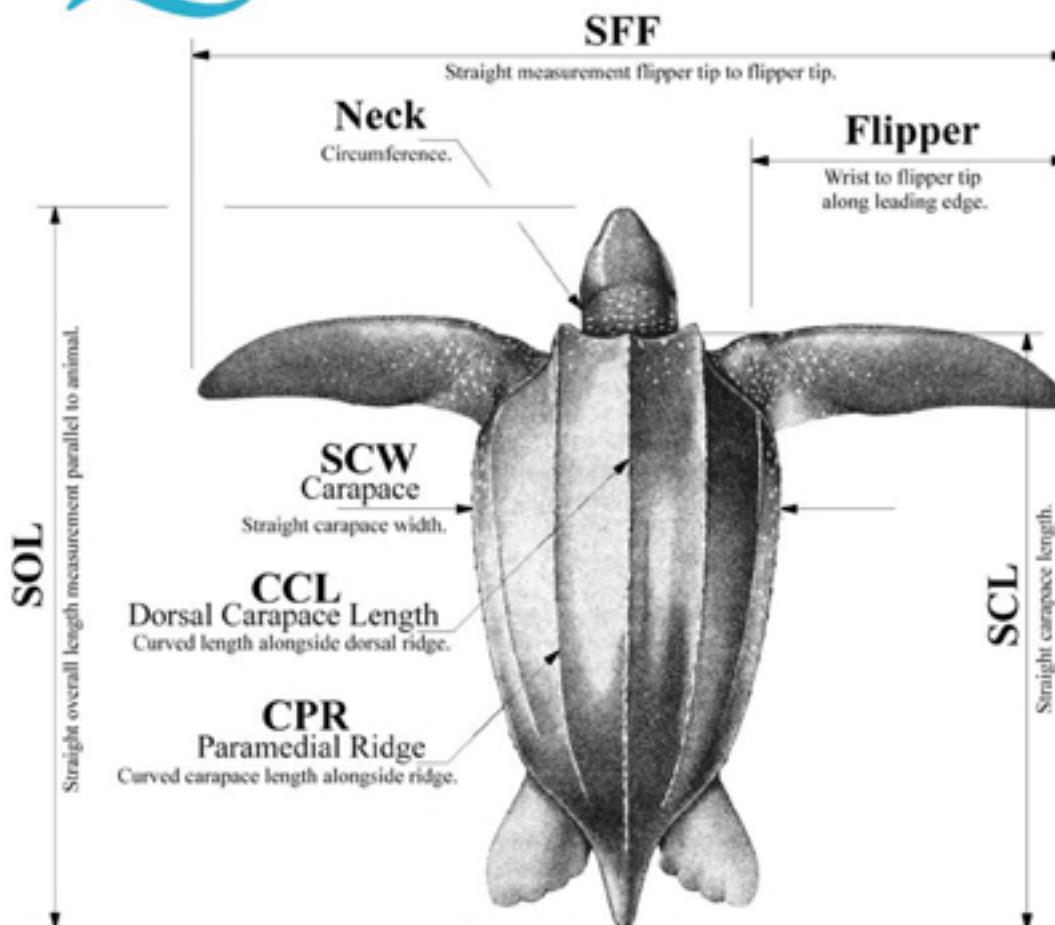
An Roinn Tithiochta,
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreachtála
Department of Housing,
Local Government and Heritage



Arienni yn Rhannol gan
Lywodraeth Cymru
Part Funded by
Welsh Government



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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.

