



FOR RELEASE: June 1996

Abundance and Distribution of Sea Turtles off North Carolina

OCS Study MMS 95-0024

A new study report, *Abundance and Distribution of Sea Turtles off North Carolina*, which investigated distribution, relative abundance, and movements of sea turtles in the Cape Hatteras area off North Carolina, has been released by the Minerals Management Service (MMS).

Study methodology included analysis of existing data and field work (methodical aerial overflight surveys and satellite tracking). This work defined the migration patterns, habitat usage, diving behavior, and approximate numbers of juvenile and adult turtles. This information is required to assess the possible effects of oil and gas exploration in the area, and is useful to academic institutions, State and Federal marine agencies, and organizations interested in the conservation of protected species.

The area chosen for detailed aerial overflights ranged from 34o55' to 35o55' N. latitude. Seasonal movements of satellite-tracked loggerhead and Kemp's ridley turtles are shown from Chesapeake Bay southward to Florida. The study area is a major migratory pathway for leatherback, loggerhead, and Kemp's ridley turtles, the latter two of which may take up residency in estuaries as juveniles. All species migrate hundreds of miles in response to seasonal temperature changes.

The principal investigators participating in the study, J.A. Keinath, J.A. Musick, and D.E. Bernard, conducted the work under a contract awarded to the Virginia Institute of Marine Science of the College of William and Mary.

For more information about the MMS Environmental Studies Program, contact the Environmental Studies Section (MS 5430), 1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard, New Orleans, Louisiana 70123-2394, telephone (504) 736-2897, or visit our Internet website, <http://www.mms.gov/omm/gomr/>.

Copies of this report can be obtained from the Minerals Management Service, Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, at a charge of \$7.00 by referencing OCS Study MMS 95-0024. This report will also be available from the National Technical Information Service in the near future. These addresses are provided below. Copies are also available for inspection at selected Federal Depository Libraries.

Minerals Management Service
Gulf of Mexico OCS Region
Public Information Office (MS 5034)
1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard
New Orleans, Louisiana 70123-2394
Telephone requests may be placed at
(504) 736-2519, 1-800-200-GULF, or
FAX: (504) 736-2620

U.S. Department of Commerce
National Technical Information Service
5285 Port Royal Road
Springfield, Virginia 22161
(703) 487-4650 or FAX: (703) 321-8547
Rush Orders: 1-800-336-4700

[Return to Technical Announcements](#)

Topic Index	Site Search	What's New	Guest Book	MMS Sites
Products/Free Data	Fast Facts	Send E-Mail	Upcoming Events	Homepage

*This page is maintained by Dawn Buras.
Last update: 06/18/96.*