



# News from...

## Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve

### Endangered Sea Turtles from Gulf Oil Spill Released in Rookery Bay Reserve

The Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve was recently the release site for more than 60 endangered sea turtles. The released turtles were juveniles, roughly two to three years of age and less than 30 cm in length. Most of the turtles had been recovered from the Northern Gulf coast following the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, and were cleaned and transported to rehabilitation facilities operated by the National Audubon Society, Sea World, Mote Marine Lab, and the Florida Aquarium. Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission worked in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to coordinate the release event at the reserve.

The Rookery Bay Reserve, comprising 110,000 acres of pristine mangrove forested wetlands and barrier islands, was chosen as the release site based on the results of previous research funded by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).



*Each turtle was removed from its plastic bin, tags recorded, and carefully placed into Rookery Bay Reserve waters.*



*Kemp's Ridley turtles eat mostly crabs and can weigh up to 100 pounds. Although they do not nest in Florida (nesting beaches are mostly in Mexico), juvenile turtles are commonly seen in shallow coastal waters around the Gulf.*

NOAA researchers had documented more than 250 Kemp's Ridley sea turtles in the Ten Thousand Islands, indicating that this area is an aggregation site for this species of sea turtle.

Five vessels carrying 42 Kemp's Ridelys, Rookery Bay Reserve and other agency personnel, staff from participating rehabilitation facilities, and local reporters, made the trip to the Ten Thousand Islands on Tuesday, August 31. On September 16, 28 Kemp's Ridley and one green sea turtle were also released in the same area.



*Green turtles eat sea grass and algae and as adults weigh about 300 pounds. They occasionally nest in this area.*

#### Rookery Bay Environmental Learning Center October Events

**October 6, 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.**

##### Lunch N Learn

This monthly lunchtime lecture series features an expert discussing an environmental topic. Lunch is provided by a local restaurant. Free for members, \$5 for non-members.

**October 29**

##### Spooky Science

Kids in costume accompanied by a paying adult receive free admission. Daily presentations and crafts will focus on a Halloween theme.

**Wednesdays, 9 - 11 am**

##### Guided Kayak Tours

Explore the estuary with a Rookery Bay naturalist. Cost \$40, \$35 members. Registration required.

Open: Monday - Friday, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Admission: \$5 adults, \$3 kids 6-12, under 6 FREE.

Daily programs offered at 11 a.m. & 2 p.m.

Rookery Bay, located in southwest Florida, is recognized as one of the few remaining pristine, mangrove-forested estuaries in the U.S. The Reserve is managed by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Office of Coastal and Aquatic Managed Areas, and as part of the National Estuarine Research Reserve System it serves as an outdoor classroom and laboratory for students and scientists from around the world.

(239) 417-6310 [www.rookerybay.org](http://www.rookerybay.org) 300 Tower Rd., Naples, FL 34113 (located off Collier Blvd. 1 mile south of U.S. 41/East Tamiami Trail)