

# SEA TURTLE HANDLING AND TRANSFER INSTRUCTIONS for DREDGING OPERATIONS

*IF YOU ENCOUNTER AN INJURED OR UNRESPONSE SEA TURTLE,*  
please immediately call the National Marine Fisheries Greater Atlantic Region Hotline:  
866-755-NOAA (6622)

Any sea turtle taken incidentally during dredging must be handled with care to prevent injury, observed for activity, and transferred to a local rehabilitation facility according to local rehabilitation plan and the following procedures:

- 1) A sea turtle that is dead (that is if muscles are still and/or flesh has begun to rot), must be photographed, measured, and preserved (refrigerate or freeze) until disposal procedures are discussed with us.
- 2) A sea turtle that is actively moving should not be released back into the water.
- 3) If a sea turtle is alive but unresponsive, you must attempt resuscitation as described in Step 5.
- 4) Arrange for transfer of live turtle to local rehabilitation facility and prepare turtle as described in Step 6.
- 5) Resuscitation Steps:
  - Place the turtle top shell up and elevate its hindquarters at least 6" (of 15-30°).
  - Keep the turtle shaded and moist.
  - Periodically rock the turtle gently side to side by holding the outer edge of the shell and lifting one side about 3" then alternate sides.
- 6) Transfer Steps:
  - Injured turtles should be moved to a primary care facility as soon as possible.
  - Turtles should be moved in a plastron down position.
  - Do not transport turtle in water, but keep moist with a damp towel.
  - Any attempt to move the turtle should be done by holding both sides of the carapace; do not lift the turtle by the flippers.