



Rounds Notes is a monthly report from Sea Rogers Williams VMD, the views expressed are not necessarily that of the National Marine Life Center. Information in Rounds Notes should be considered confidential and used solely to benefit the health of aquatic animals everywhere.

October 23, 2008

Rounds Notes 2: 3-4 (2008)

Headlines News: Diamonds in the rough.

Our terrapin count has increased with the addition of 4 new patients at the center, Don Lewis delivered the Diamondback terrapin, *Malaclemys terrapin*, hatchlings yesterday and they received an entrance physical exam today. Kerry has established four separate environments and the terrapins will initially be housed individually and fed frozen brine shrimp.

Let's meet the new terrapins.

'Mr. Green Jeans'	MT 08-15	Green
'Blueberry'	MT 08-16	Blue
'Blackie'	MT 08-17	Black
'Brownie'	MT 08-18	Brown

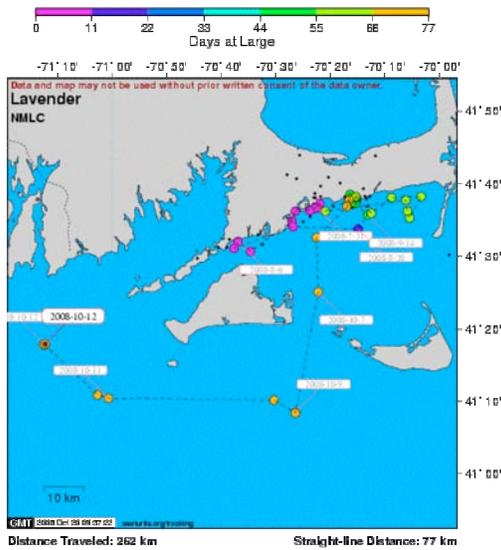


(top-botton, left to right)

All of the terrapins arrived in good condition, but in two (Blackie, and Brownie) their attachment to their yolk sac was still evident and their 'egg tooth', a projection at the tip of the upper ramphotheca, was still present, indicating their very young age. The plan for these animals is to over winter them at the center, as they hatched too late in the season to survive unassisted in the wild.

The species is threatened in the state and while these animals are not part of a specific head-start program the goal is similar. By weaning these turtles over to their natural diet of clams, crab bits, and the various mollusks, crustaceans, insects, worms and critters of the mud flats, and by providing them with an idea environment (safe and warm) they can grow quickly and be released in the spring with a much greater chance of success and survival in the wild instead of facing a harsh winter with no reserves to carry them through.





Vineyard in January. A finalized report on the death of this animal that was likely caused by being struck in the head by a boat propeller when the endangered turtle surfaced to breathe, is finally complete. Case studies with gross and histopathology, and supporting laboratory studies, in this case involving CT, can take a year to complete. I have worked closely with Drs. Innis and Hirokawa of the New England Aquarium on the gross necropsy of this animal, Dr. Ketten of WHOI with the CT analysis of the head, and Dr. Frasca and graduate student A. Nyaoke from the Connecticut Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory provided the histopathology. I took the lead on the gross necropsy and CT of the head and provided the parasite identifications.

Sea Turtles at Large

Lavender's tag has been quiet for a few days, at this point the tag was programmed to transmit less frequently to conserve battery life. While Lavender is safely south of the Cape, we hope to be getting confirmation that she is even further along in the near future.

Under the Microscope

The new research equipment has been put to use to document two parasites collected from a leatherback sea turtle that stranded on Martha's



Another Vineyard animal was the donor of parasites for examination at the center, as a first year Northern Gannet was rescued from the beach, evaluated at the Vineyard Veterinary Clinic, and flown to Cape Wildlife for rehabilitation. The bird had neurologic impairment, no obvious signs of external trauma, and was swarming with lice. Northern gannet are common sea birds in our area but are seldom presented as "stranded"

on the island. Fortunately, bird lice tend to be host species specific so I don't think I brought any home with me.

C. Rogers Williams VMD

Sea Rogers Williams VMD
Attending Veterinarian & Director of Science

[Kathy Zagzebski, Bridget Dunnigan, Brian Moore, JoAnne Nicholson, Julie Seligmann]

