



Rounds Notes is a weekly 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.

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Rounds Notes 1: 1-2 (2008)

Headlines News: They're back !



Head-start Northern Red-bellied Cooters (*Pseudemys rubriventris*) are once again being held at the NMLC as part of a state-wide program to increase the numbers of this federally threatened and state endangered population of turtles native to southeast Massachusetts. All six of the little turtles received their entrance physical exams and are doing well. Kerry has an institutional husbandry protocol packet for the species that identifies the state holding requirements and our specific husbandry procedures. The NMLC is one of many partner organizations across the state that has hosts the little turtles for several months while they grow in a protected environment. The turtles will be released in the spring. This is our second group of six head-start animals at the National Marine Life Center.

Head-Start Programs

The most dangerous time for turtles is when they are hatchlings and thus very small, these turtles are susceptible to environmental hazards and many predators. In species without significant maternal care the numbers of viable adults can be bolstered by improving first year survival with collection of the eggs or hatchling, and raising them in captivity. Simply, these turtles are given a good head-start by be taken from the wild, allowed to grow in a protective and ideal environment, and then released back to the wild at a much larger size and with a much greater chance of survival.

"Because in the wild, survival is a matter or life or death" – anonymous nature program from PBS

Meet our Cooters (top-bottom, right to left) [#'s 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260]





Safety Seals (health and safety tips around the center)
Turtles and Salmonellosis

The CDC cautions all people (particularly children and people who may have compromise of their immune system) that turtles can carry *Salmonella*, a zoonotic bacterial disease that can be transmitted from turtles to humans. The most common symptom of *Salmonella* infection is diarrhea, but fever, headaches, nausea and vomiting can also occur. While often self-limiting, infections can be serious or even fatal. Turtles that carry *Samonella* may be healthy, and are commonly asymptomatic carriers that can only be identified by special tests that involving culturing cloacal swabs or feces from the turtles. People can be exposed to the bacteria directly from the turtles, the tanks and equipment, tank-water, or spread amongst each other, so it is imperative that we all practice excellent hygiene with turtles in the building.



Healthy tips:

- 1) Wash hands before and after handling turtles, wear gloves when handling turtles



- 2) Do not touch your face, other people, or other surfaces until after you have washed your hands when working with the turtles
- 3) Never wash turtle equipment in the same sink as dishes.
- 4) Always assume turtles are contaminated (known as the cute but contaminated doctrine)



- 5) See tip number 1, Wash your hands thoroughly and often



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