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MA 05.16
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 30, 2005

Two Sea Turtles Released off Martha's Vineyard

Marine biologists from the New England Aquarium and the NOAA Fisheries Service Woods Hole Science Aquarium (WHSA) released two sea turtles today on Long Point Wildlife Refuge Beach on the south side of Martha's Vineyard. The turtles – one green sea turtle and one Kemp's ridley – were outfitted with both identification and satellite tags. Both have been in rehabilitation since stranding last fall and winter.

"We put them on the beach, everyone backed up, and we let them decide when to go," Woods Hole science aquarium veterinarian Dr. Bridget Dunnigan said. "In 60 seconds, the green turtle was in the water, and Kemp's ridley followed in less than two minutes."

A small crowd of turtle biologists and volunteers on the beach watched the turtles swim off to the south and disappear.

"It's great to have them back in the wild where we hope they will someday be part of the reproducing population," Dunnigan said. Researchers plan to post the location of satellite signals received from the turtles' transmitters at <http://www.seaturtle.org/tracking>.

The green turtle, nicknamed "Quiddick," stranded on Chappaquiddick Island. The Kemp's ridley, nicknamed "Kiwi," stranded on a beach in Dennis. Today's release was headed by Connie Merigo, supervisor of the NEA's marine animal rescue and rehabilitation effort, and Bridget Dunnigan of the WHSA. Both animals were given critical care and hospitalization at the NEA, then transferred to the WHSA for care until they were sufficiently recovered for release.

For more information on today's release, visit the WHSA website:
<http://aquarium.nefsc.noaa.gov/>

Information about sea turtles is available online at the NOAA Fisheries Service website:
<http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/species/turtles/>

NOAA Fisheries Service is dedicated to protecting and preserving our nation's living marine resources and their habitats through scientific research, management and enforcement. NOAA Fisheries Service provides effective stewardship of these resources for the benefit of the nation, supporting coastal communities that depend upon them, and helping to provide safe and healthy seafood to consumers and recreational opportunities for the American public.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, an agency of the U.S. Commerce Department, is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources. Through the emerging Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), NOAA is working with its federal partners and nearly 60 countries to develop a global monitoring network that is as integrated as the planet it observes.

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