

Science, Service, Stewardship



Southeast Fisheries Science Center

Marine Turtle Research Program

January 2009

**NOAA
FISHERIES
SERVICE**

Mission

- **ESA Section 2(b)**

The purposes of this Act are to provide a means whereby the ecosystems upon which endangered species and threatened species depend may be conserved, to provide a program for the conservation of such endangered species and threatened species, and to take such steps as may be appropriate to achieve the purposes of the treaties and conventions set forth in subsection (a) of this section.

- **NOAA Mission Goal**

Protect, restore, and manage the use of coastal and ocean resources through an ecosystem approach to management.

Research at the Southeast Fisheries Science Center

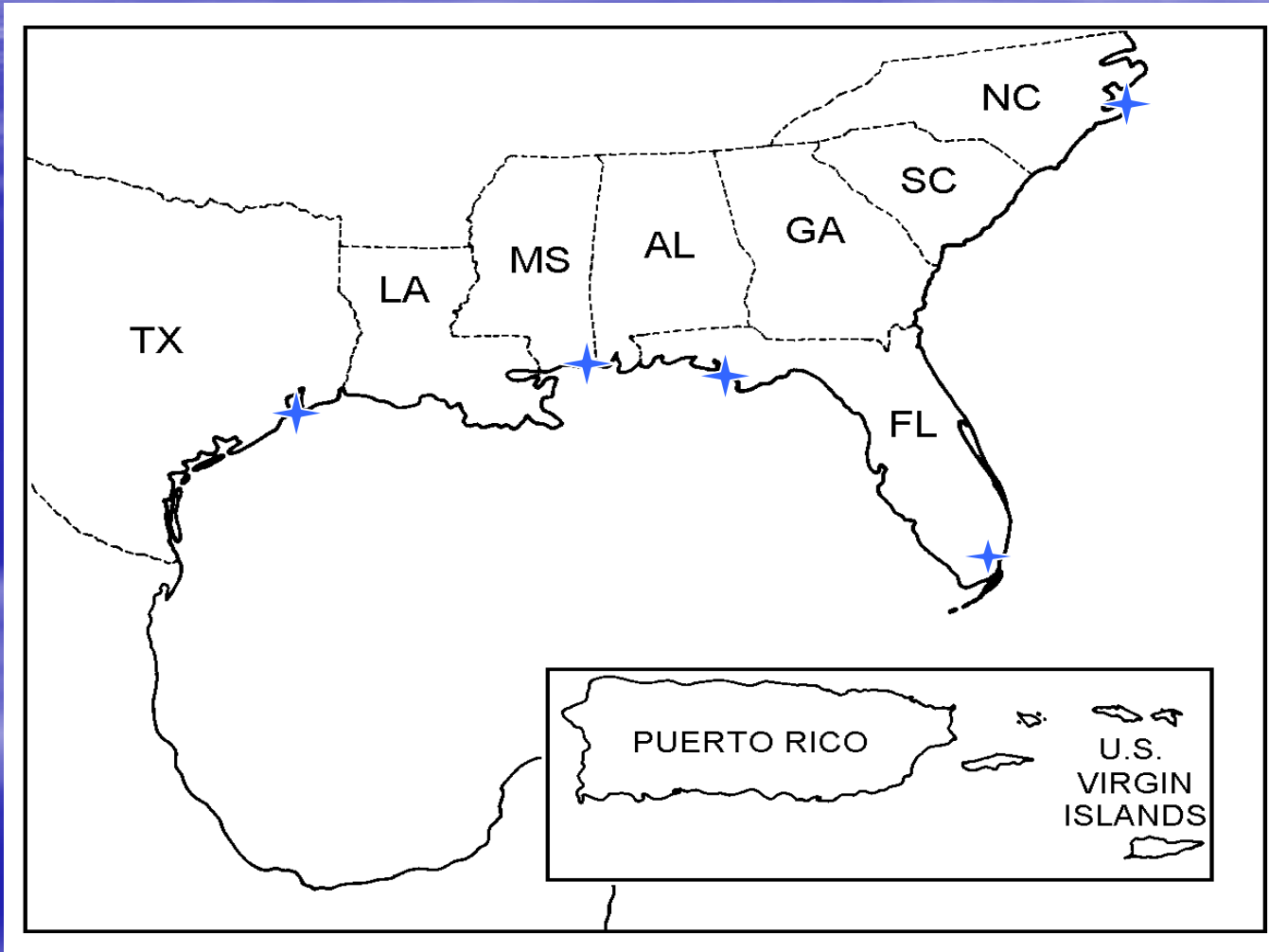
- **Stock ID**
 - Researching stock structure on foraging grounds
- **Abundance**
 - Conducting in-water studies to evaluate population trends and habitat requirements
- **Life History**
 - Investigating demographics (e.g., age-specific growth and survival rates, time at stage, age-to-maturity estimates, migrations)

Research at the Southeast Fisheries Science Center

- **Anthropogenic Impacts**
 - Assessing sea turtle mortality and strandings
 - (Researching bycatch reduction)
- **Assessments (Quality and Frequency)**
 - Stock assessment reports (e.g., TEWG)

Also, Permitting and Serving on Recovery Teams, BRTs, etc.

SEFSC Laboratories



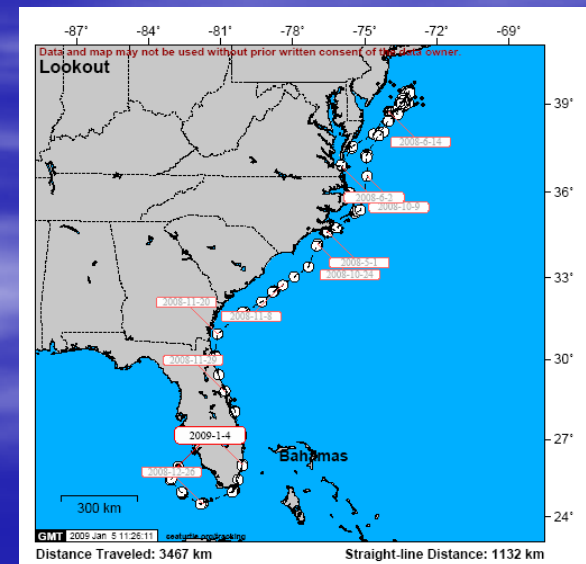
Staff for Directed Research, STSSN, Observer Program Support, Permitting, and Captive Rearing

- **Miami:** Lisa Belskis, Sheryan Epperly, Paul Richards, Chris Sasso, Lesley Stokes, Wendy Teas
- **Beaufort:** Larisa Avens, Joanne Braun-McNeill + 2 contractors
- **Galveston:** Ben Higgins, Cain Bustinza + 2 FTE vacancies + ≥ 2 contractors



Beaufort Laboratory

- National Sea Turtle Ageing Laboratory
- Demographic studies, including natal origins of foraging populations
- Index of abundance study
- Satellite telemetry
- Stable isotope analysis
- Epibionts
- Sea turtle sightings (iSTOR)
- Strandings response
- Health assessment studies*
- Aerial surveys*



* currently inactive

Galveston Laboratory

- Captive-rearing facility provides animals for experimental research and gear testing
- Public outreach tours of the sea turtle facility
- Strandings surveys of upper Texas coast
- Sea turtle nesting response
- Rehabilitation*
- Reef Fish, Shrimp Fishery, and Rig Removal Observer Programs

* currently inactive



Panama City Laboratory

- Field base for experimental gear research including annual TED certification trials
- Field base for a variety of projects using captive-reared turtles in the outdoor pens
- Strandings response
- Shark Bottom Longline and Shark Gillnet Observer Programs



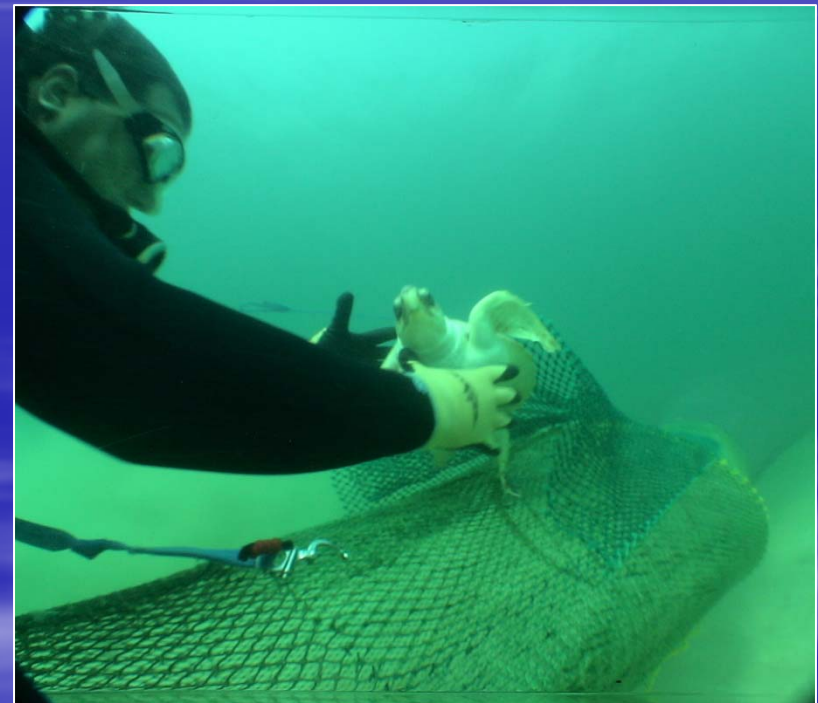
Miami Laboratory

- Sea Turtle Program Coordination
- Permits, including CITES clearance for Center
- Turtle Expert Working Groups, Recovery Teams, Biological Review Teams
- STSSN Coordination & Database
- Cooperative Marine Turtle Tagging Database
- Observer Program Support: training, equipment, Sea Turtle Life History Database
- Bycatch analysis; Natl. Bycatch Report support
- Bycatch reduction research
- Population modeling
- Satellite telemetry projects
- Coordinate genetics
- Rancho Nuevo support
- Mexus-Gulf
- International Sea Turtle Society support
- Public outreach
- SEFSC website
- Virginia Key Nesting Beach Survey
- Pelagic Longline Observer Program



Staff for Gear Research

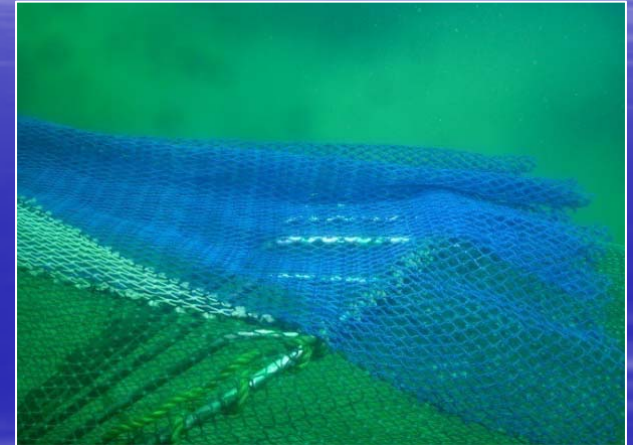
- **John Mitchell**
- Jim Barbour*
- Charles Bergmann, II*
- Kendall Falana*
- Jack Forrester*
- Dan Foster*
- **Jeff Gearhart**
- Dominy Hataway*
- Wayne Hoggard*
- Nick Hopkins*
- Drew Hopper*
- Lionel LaForce*
- Dale Stevens*
- Wendy Taylor*



* $\leq 50\%$ FTE

Pascagoula Laboratory

- Design and evaluate fishing gear modifications to reduce sea turtle bycatch and mortality
- Testing of candidate TED designs
- Evaluate careful release fishing gear removal tools for approval; conduct workshops
- MSRA/ESA domestic and international training (TEDs and longline)
- Enforcement assistance and training
- Mexus-Gulf



Atlantic Strategy and Bycatch Analysis

- Participate in NMFS Atlantic Sea Turtle Strategy Steering Committee (Miami) and Committee's Gear Working Group (Pascagoula), aimed at reducing bycatch
- SEFSC provides bycatch analyses for the pelagic longline, reef fish, shark bottom longline, and shark gillnet fisheries as mandated by Biological Opinions
- Examining effectiveness of management actions to mitigate sea turtle bycatch
- Exploring mechanistic and traditional demographic modeling approaches to evaluate effects of bycatch

SEFSC Sea Turtle Program Website

- <http://www.sefsc.noaa.gov/seaturtlepublications.jsp>

- [Staff and Administration](#)
- [Sea Turtle Stranding and Salvage Network \(STSSN\)](#)
- [Fisheries Observers](#)
- [Publications](#)
- [Atlantic Sea Turtle Strategy](#)
- [Turtle Expert Working Group](#)
- [Cooperative Marine Turtle Tagging Program \(CMTTP\)](#)
- [Sea Turtle Related Links](#)

Questions?

