

Hundreds of Sea Turtles Rescued as Artic Blast Engulfs South Texas

Sea Turtle Inc., the only sea turtle rehabilitation center in South Texas, activates a search and rescue mission.



Sea Turtle Inc. staff struggle to find room for hundreds of rescued cold-stunned patients

Photo credit: Sea Turtle Inc.

For immediate release: January 17, 2024

South Padre Island, TX: Sea Turtle Inc. staff and volunteers race to save over 800 cold-stunned sea turtles as water temperatures remain dangerously low for the third consecutive day. Cold Stun events happen when the water gets too cold for sea turtles to maintain their body temperature and as a result, they become paralyzed. If they aren't rescued in time, sea turtles will drown from being unable to lift their head to draw breath. Though the impending temperatures saw the organization prepare for a cold stun event, the volume of rescued sea turtles quickly exceeded expectations by late Tuesday evening.

“We have spent quite a bit of time preparing for this event, as we are currently working in a temporary hospital, while we try to wrap up construction of our new facility,” says Wendy Knight, Chief Executive Officer. “This puts us in a bit of hardship as we quickly reached more than 850 cold stun turtles and had to start quickly looking for an overflow partner. The UTRGV Coastal Studies Lab and Dr. David Hicks generously came to our aid to allow us to start taking overflow patients to their facility as this cold stun continues to unfold.”

With just 19 staff members, Sea Turtle Inc. relies heavily on the support of volunteers during mass cold stun events to help with foot patrols, vehicle transport, and water rescues. Those wanting to help who aren't local to the area can donate to the organization directly, or purchase emergency items from their Amazon wishlist.

“Sea Turtle Inc, at its foundation, is a volunteer organization. And in events like this, we are reminded of that legacy as hundreds of boat captains and foot patrol volunteers come to our aid,” says Wendy. “We are even more moved by the influx of support worldwide that comes through our social media and website as donors help fund this critical work.”

The cold front is expected to end later this week, but staff are gearing up for long days to get these sea turtles in a stable condition and safely released back into the Gulf of Mexico. Stay tuned for details on a public sea turtle release on South Padre Island, Texas.

Follow Sea Turtle Inc. on Facebook: facebook.com/seaturtleconservation

Visit the Sea Turtle Inc. website for more information: <https://seaturtleinc.org/cold-stun/>

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