

Sea Turtle Rehab Receives Rare Turtle

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2-3 minutes

Recently, a Kemp's ridley (the smallest and rarest sea turtle in the world) was admitted to Gumbo Limbo's Sea Turtle Rehabilitation Facility. The young turtle washed up on a beach in Melbourne, FL, where it was found by concerned beachgoers. The turtle was rushed to Gumbo Limbo by volunteers with Sea Turtle Preservation Society, a non-profit sea turtle conservation organization in Melbourne.

Upon arrival, the turtle was immediately administered IV fluids, antibiotics, and medications to stabilize heart rate. Though still alive, the turtle was extremely lethargic with pronounced bones and little to no muscle and fat. It is likely that the turtle had not eaten in several months. After four hours of continuous critical care and monitoring, the turtle slowly passed. Unfortunately, when a sea turtle is so extremely weak and emaciated, their chance of survival is very poor and they usually pass within a few hours of arrival.

The following day a necropsy was performed by medical staff. It was concluded that the turtle sustained a blunt force strike, likely boat or personal watercraft hull, to the front right shell. Half of the left front flipper was missing and partially healed, and the turtle's left rear flipper had a laceration that resembled entanglement (from fishing line) and was severely infected. In addition, carapace scars indicated an attempted shark bite to the top of the shell. It is unknown which of these ailments contributed to the animal's death or if they were secondary occurrences after the turtle was already sick. Though rehab staff was very disappointed that the turtle did not survive, they took comfort in the fact that they did everything they could to save the young sea turtle.