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## Marine Turtle Newsletter

### **Brood Stock of Captive-Reared Kemp's Ridley to be Listed in International Species Inventory System**

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Plans are currently under consideration to expand the potential brood stock of captive-reared Kemp's ridley sea turtles, *Lepidochelys kempi* (Caillouet 1984; Fontaine & Caillouet 1985). Table 1 summarizes the numbers of survivors out of 210 Kemp's ridleys reared at the NMFS laboratory in Galveston, Texas USA, then transferred to other facilities to be held in captivity for extended head-starting and/or potential breeding (see Wood 1982; Wood & Wood 1984; Pritchard & Frazer 1984).

Some of these organizations and a number of others have indicated an interest in receiving Kemp's ridleys of the 1984 year-class, of which not more than 50 will be distributed. These 50 turtles were selected from among 100 that were the subjects of an intensive morphometric study by Dr. Andre Landry, Texas A&M University Mitchell Campus, Galveston, Texas. The 50 will have been tagged with "living tags" on the left costal scute 5, with internal, binary-coded, magnetic metal tags and with monel flipper tags, and will also have been flipper-printed by the time they are distributed in the summer of 1985. Wild-caught Kemp's ridleys also are being maintained in captivity by several organizations in undetermined numbers.

For captive brood stocks of Kemp's ridley and other sea turtles, an adequate number of each sex and a continuous inventory are required to assure proper controls on genetic variability and viability of offspring through selective breeding (see Soulé & Wilcox 1980). Accordingly, captive brood stocks of sea turtles should be listed in the International Species Inventory System (ISIS), maintained by the Minnesota Zoological Garden, Apple Valley, Minnesota USA. This computer-based information system is used by more than 190 zoos, primate centers, and related facilities throughout the world (ISIS 1984).

**Table 1:** Present locations of Kemp's ridleys reared at the NMFS Galveston Laboratory prior to transferral to other facilities.

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Year-Class</b>	<b>Numbers of captive-reared Kemp's ridleys</b>
Sea-Arama Marineworld	1978	8
Galveston, TX		
Cayman Turtle Farm (i983) Ltd.	1979	34*
Grand Cayman Island, EWI		
Miami Seaquarium	1978	7

Miami, FL	1979	1
Key West Municipal Aquarium	1982	5
Key West, FL		
Theater of the Sea	1982	5**
Islamorada, FL		
Clearwater Marine Science Center	1982	5
Clearwater, FL		
Gulfarium	1982	4
Fort Walton Beach, FL		
Marine Life Park, Inc.	1982	5
Gulfport, MS		
		<b>Total 74</b>
* The Farm also has 4 Kemp's ridleys of the 1980 year-class, reared at the Farm from hatchlings received from Mexico.		
** Transferred from Turtle Kraals, Key West, FL, 16 April 1985.		

Correspondence with ISIS's Program Director, Nathan Flesness, elicited his response in February 1985 by letter that ISIS will list the NMFS Galveston Laboratory among the world's captive animal facilities. Full participation in the ISIS program requires the maintenance of records on birth, death, loan transactions, and other variables for individual animals (ISIS 1984). For facilities in the USA, an initial registration fee of \$100 is charged. An annual fee of \$1.40 per animal alive on 31 December of each year is charged to maintain the ISIS records; the minimum total of annual fees is \$100.

According to Flesness's letter, the ISIS program will begin covering reptiles in the Fall of 1985, though it has been restricted to mammals and birds in the past. Participation by marine aquaria and sea turtle farms in ISIS would assure a certain standard of record-keeping and would give additional worldwide attention to captive sea turtle breeding programs. Steps are being taken to assure that captive-reared Kemp's ridley sea turtles held in captivity for breeding (see Fig. 1) will be inventoried by ISIS.



**Figure 1.** Captive-reared Kemp's ridleys mating at Cayman Turtle Farm in 1984 attended by green turtles. (Photo by Charles W. Caillouet, Jr. -- see Wood & Wood 1984 for further information).

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