



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Note: Photos Available

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MAKING A SPLASHING EXIT

Two sea turtles to be released on Folly Beach, S.C.

Charleston, S.C. — August 25, 2010 — As the summer nesting season draws to an end, two patients of the South Carolina Aquarium Sea Turtle Rescue Program have been cleared for release by the Aquarium's veterinarian Dr. Shane Boylan, and are ready to return to the ocean. Scheduled for Saturday, August 28, 2010 at 4 p.m. at the Folly Beach County Park, folks will not want to miss seeing the 53th and 54th rehabilitated turtles make a splashing return to the sea.

Arriving at different times and with different afflictions, the two patients ready for release are the famous Maine 'transplant' Santos, a loggerhead sea turtle and a Kemp's ridley named 'Surfer.' The release will take place at the Folly Beach County Park in partnership with the Charleston County Park and Recreation Commission and the S.C. Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR). Onlookers should not miss this opportunity to see the South Carolina state reptile, the loggerhead sea turtle, and a critically endangered sea turtle species, Kemp's ridley, return to the wild. The Folly Beach County Park's parking lot opens at 10:00 a.m. and parking fees will apply. Sea turtle releases often draw large crowds so it is strongly advised to plan for heavy traffic onto Folly Beach and especially out to the County Park. Carpool if possible, as parking may be limited.

About the 53th rehabilitated sea turtle, Santos:

The 100-pound loggerhead, Santos, was cold-stunned off the New England coast in the winter of '08 and treated for a year at the Marine Animal Rehabilitation Center at the University of New England. In November of '09, the turtle was transported to the South Carolina Aquarium to finish healing, catching a ride in a small Piper Twin Comanche with private pilot, Ronnie Santos from Mount Pleasant, S.C. We are grateful for Ronnie and the East Cooper Pilot's Association for this wonderful support! See Santos' blog with photos at http://seaturtlehospital.blogspot.com/2009_11_01_archive.html.

About the 54th rehabilitated sea turtle, Surfer:

The juvenile Kemp's ridley, Surfer, was caught on hook and line just 4 months ago by a surf fisherman on Hilton Head Island, S.C. Kemp's ridleys are commonly found in near shore waters in the summertime and are prone to getting caught by recreational fishermen. Surfer underwent surgery to remove the hook that was deeply embedded in his esophagus. A hook that is left in the esophagus of a

turtle in the wild can be problematic, possibly resulting in death and we congratulate all fishermen who turn these “hooked” endangered species over to the SCDNR. See Surfer’s blog with photos at <http://seaturtlehospital.blogspot.com/2010/04/1st-live-sc-stranding-admitted-into-sea.html>.

The public can see these two patients at the Aquarium before the extraordinary Saturday release by participating in one of the Sea Turtle Hospital behind-the-scenes tours on Friday or Saturday at 11:30 a.m. or 1 p.m. With eight other patients in the Aquarium’s Sea Turtle Hospital, the tour offers a touching educational experience and an opportunity to come face to face with these ancient creatures. Details on each patient can be found on the Aquarium’s website at scaquarium.org. Regular behind-the-scenes tours are scheduled weekly at 11:30 a.m. and 1 p.m. on Monday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

Thanks to our partners: SCDNR Marine Turtle Conservation Program (<http://dnr.sc.gov/seaturtle/>) and Charleston County Park and Recreation Commission (<http://www.ccprc.com/>).

For all media inquiries, please contact Elizabeth Bender at (843) 579-8699 or ebender@scaquarium.org.

About the South Carolina Aquarium Sea Turtle Rescue Program

In partnership with the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR), the South Carolina Aquarium Sea Turtle Rescue Program works to rescue, rehabilitate and release sea turtles that strand along the Southeastern coast. Located at the Aquarium, the Sea Turtle Hospital admits 10 to 20 sea turtles each year. Many of these animals are in critical condition and some are too sick to save.

According to SCDNR, over the last 10 years, the average number of sea turtle strandings on South Carolina beaches each year is 133. Of these, roughly 10% are alive and successfully transported to the Sea Turtle Hospital. To date the South Carolina Aquarium has successfully rehabilitated and released 52 sea turtles, will release 2 this weekend and is currently treating 8 patients. The average cost for a patient’s treatment is \$34 a day with the average length of stay reaching nine months.

About the South Carolina Aquarium:

The South Carolina Aquarium, Charleston’s most-visited attraction, features thousands of amazing aquatic animals from river otters to sharks to loggerhead turtles in more than 60 exhibits representing the rich biodiversity of South Carolina from the mountains to the sea. Dedicated to promoting education and conservation, the Aquarium also presents fabulous views of Charleston harbor and interactive exhibits and programs for visitors of all ages.

The South Carolina Aquarium, a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization and is open daily from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. (last ticket sold at 5 p.m.) The Aquarium is closed Thanksgiving Day, half day Dec. 24 (open 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.) and Dec. 25. Admission prices are: Toddlers (1 and under) free; Youth (2-11) \$10.95; Adults (12-61) \$17.95; Seniors (62+) \$16.95. The Value Pass (Aquarium plus the 4-D Theater experience) is free for Toddlers, \$15.95 for Children, \$22.95 for Adults, and \$21.95 for Seniors. The 4-D Theater experience only is \$6.95 for Children, Adults and Seniors, and \$2.95 for Members and Member Guests. Military, college and group discounts are available. For more information call 843-720-1990 or visit scaquarium.org. Memberships are available by calling 843-577-FISH (3474).

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