

10 Critically Endangered “Reindeer” Sea Turtles to be Released on Florida’s East Coast

‘Cold-stunned’ Kemp’s ridley sea turtles rescued from New England and rehabilitated at Clearwater Marine Aquarium

Clearwater, FL (Jan. 15, 2018) – 10 of the 12 critically endangered Kemp’s ridley sea turtles transported to Clearwater Marine Aquarium (CMA) last month will be released on the East Coast of Florida tomorrow. The sea turtles, named after Santa and his reindeer, will be released on Tues., Jan. 16 at Canaveral National Seashore at approximately 10 a.m. Media advised to arrive by 9:30 a.m.

The sea turtles, all juvenile, were severely affected by the cold-water temperatures in New England, experiencing what is called a ‘cold-stun.’ On Dec. 8, 2017 the New England Aquarium facility transported 46 cold-stunned sea turtles by private jet to Tampa, FL to be rehabilitated at four facilities. Clearwater Marine Aquarium received 12 of the turtles, and Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission has cleared 10 of them to be released. The other two sea turtles will continue rehabilitation at Clearwater Marine Aquarium with the goal of being released soon.

Thousands of sea turtles have been rescued along the coast of the Gulf of Mexico due to cold water in the past month. As cold-blooded reptiles, sea turtles assume the temperature of their surroundings. When the turtles are exposed to frigid water temperatures (around 50 degrees Fahrenheit) over several days, their circulatory systems can slow to the point where they become cold-stunned. A cold-stun turtle is unable to swim or function properly.

“The CMA team worked hard to rehabilitate these critically endangered turtles so they could return to the wild,” says David Yates, CEO of Clearwater Marine Aquarium. *“We continue to work around the clock to rehabilitate all of the turtles at CMA that have been affected by the cold-water temperatures.”*

This release is not open to the public, please do not publicize release location prior to release. Media are invited to attend the release on Tues., Jan. 16, at 10 a.m. Suggested 9:30 a.m. arrival. No drones permitted.

Additional media information:

- Where: Canaveral National Seashore | 611 South Atlantic Ave, New Smyrna Beach, 32169
- [Click here](#) to download video of the rescued Kemp’s Ridley sea turtles. Video of release available upon request.
- For further information, contact Julia Anderson at janderson@cmaquarium.org or 727.686.3499

About Clearwater Marine Aquarium:

Clearwater Marine Aquarium (CMA) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit working marine rescue center dedicated to inspiring the human spirit through leadership in education, research, rescue, rehabilitation and release. CMA is home to rescued dolphins, sea turtles, river otters, stingrays, nurse sharks and more. Winter the dolphin’s story of survival, after an injury that caused her to lose her tail, has impacted millions of people around the world. A major motion picture, *Dolphin Tale*, highlighted her life story in 2011. The sequel, *Dolphin Tale 2*, was released in September 2014 and features the incredible story of Hope, a young resident dolphin of CMA. The mission and potential to change people’s lives differentiates Clearwater Marine Aquarium from any other aquarium in the world.

WE BELIEVE in preserving our environment while inspiring the human spirit through leadership in the rescue, rehabilitation, and release of marine life, environmental education, research and conservation.