

**ENDANGERED SPECIES OBSERVER PROGRAM**

**Corpus Christi, TX - Galveston District**

**INCIDENT REPORT OF SEA TURTLE TAKE BY DREDGING ACTIVITY**

Date 09 / 14 / 95 Time(24hr) 0105

Species of Turtle Taken Kemp's ridley (Lepidochelys kemp)

Dredging Site (channel, port, etc.) Port Aransas entrance channel

Location of Take: Latitude 27-49'50" N Longitude 97-02'52" W

Vessel Name and Company Dredge Wheeler USACE New Orleans District

Type of Dredging Activity Hopper, maintenance project

Load # 01 Times: Start 0005 End 0040 Dump 0058

Sampling Method (overflow, inflow, etc.) 100% inflow screened

Samples Recovered From Supporting frame of the centerwell draghead

Condition of Screening Good

Draghead Deflector? Yes  No

Condition of Deflector Good

Weather Conditions Cloudy, Winds SE 10 knots, Seas 2-3 Tide Flood

Water Temperature: Surface 30 c Column 30 c  or F (circle one)

Condition of Specimen(s) Sampled Uninjured, the turtle was not sucked in to the draghead. The turtle was caught in the supporting beam structure for the center draghead pipe. See diagram for details.

**Measurements--**

Give estimate of entire carapace dimensions, as well as fragments sampled (in metric when possible, indicate if not):

Head Width \_\_\_\_\_

Plastron Length \_\_\_\_\_ Width \_\_\_\_\_

Carapace S. L. Length 14" estimated S.L. Width 12" estimated

Carapace O.C. Length \_\_\_\_\_ O.C. Width \_\_\_\_\_

Turtle Tagged? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Tag # \_\_\_\_\_ Tag Date \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

Comments This appears to be a freak accident that the turtle was caught in this supporting beam. After the digging cycle the center draghead is brought up out of the water. The turtle must have been swimming in the area and got caught in this structure as the draghead pipe was being brought up. The pipe was lowered and the turtle swam away.

Observer's Name Craig Crumbley, Eric Westerman

**Dredge Wheeler  
accidental  
uninjured  
sea turtle  
take 09-14-95**

**Port Aransas  
Texas**

Turtle was temporarily caught in the support beam structure as the drag was being brought up to go to the dump

The pipe had to be lowered so the turtle could swim over the wall and into the water

← Centerwell area

Deck of dredge



Starboard side

Towards bow of dredge

Water

Turtle

Cradle holders for the pipe that divide these areas into three sections

Dredge pipe

Support beam structure with bottom and wall approximately three feet high

Open water



Deck of dredge

Approx 20' drop to water when dredge is loaded



Port side

Dredge pipe

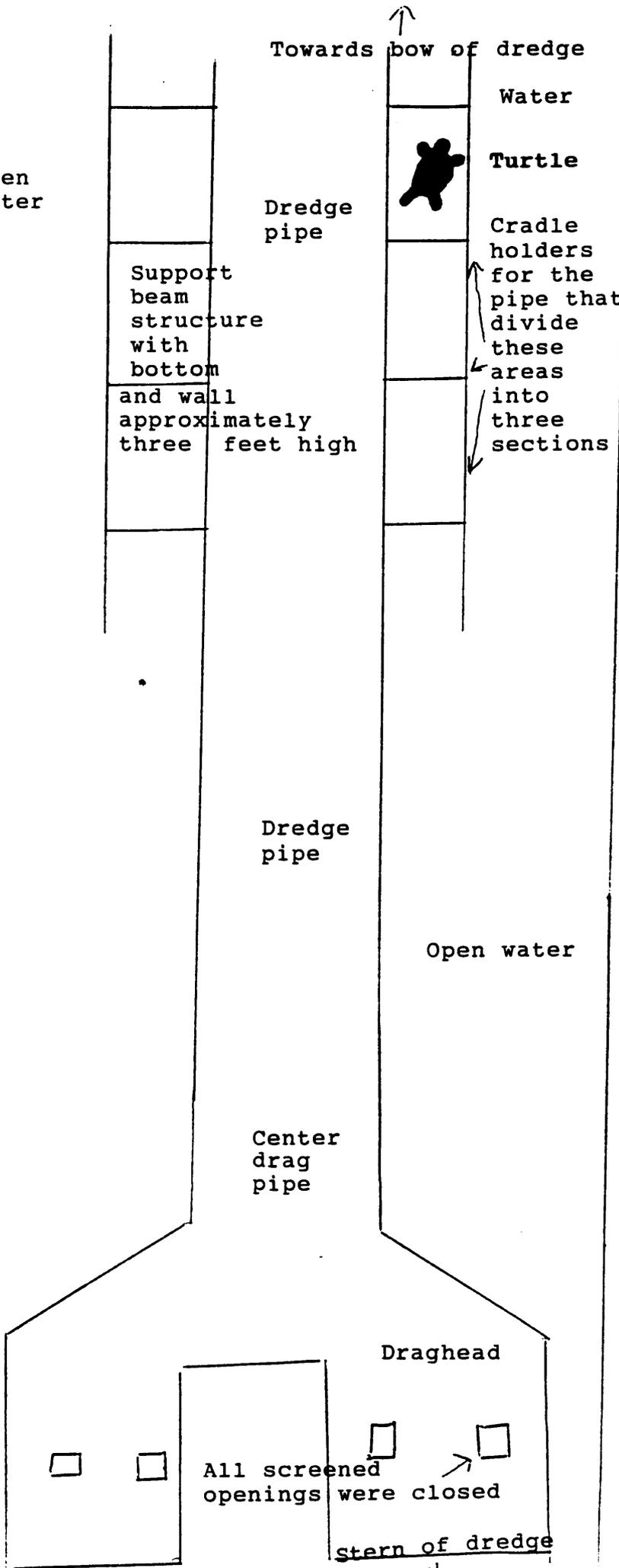
Open water

Center drag pipe

Draghead

All screened openings were closed

stern of dredge



**ENDANGERED SPECIES OBSERVER PROGRAM**

Dredge **WHEELER** - Corpus Christi, TX

USACE, Galveston District

9114195

Are there incidents involving endangered or protected species? Yes  No

LOAD # 1 Times: Start 0005 End 0040 Dump 0058

Location(lat/long) 38100, 55100 Tide Flood

Weather Cloudy, Winds SE @ 10 knots, Seas 2-3' H<sub>2</sub>O Surf. Temp \_\_\_\_\_  
Below Mid-Depth \_\_\_\_\_

Port Draghead N/A Deflector: \_\_\_\_\_

Center Draghead 0 Deflector: 0

Stbd Draghead N/A Deflector: \_\_\_\_\_

Port Forward Discharge Screening Clay

Port Aft Discharge Screening Clay

Stbd Forward Discharge Screening Clay

Stbd Aft Discharge Screening Clay

Comments: While picking up center drag arm, a Kemp's Ridley was temporarily caught between dredge pipe and supporting structure. The drag was lower a couple of feet below the surface which allowed the turtle to swim out from between the two. It did not show any signs of damaged carapace or flipper. Turtle was approx - 12-14" over carapace length.

Bridge Watch Summary

Species	# of Animals	Time	Location & Comments
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Observer(s) On Duty: Craig Crumley

**ENDANGERED SPECIES OBSERVER PROGRAM**

Dredge *WHEELER* - Corpus Christi, TX

USACE, Galveston District

**WEEKLY SUMMARY**

Dates: 09 / 07 / 95 - 09 / 18 / 95 Loads: 105

Range of H<sub>2</sub>O Temperature: Surface 30-31 c Below Mid-Depth 30-31 c

Area(s) Worked: Stations 29+00-38+00-30+00-55+00-32+00-6+30-100+00-150+00-210+00  
54+00

Are there incidents involving endangered or protected species? Yes X No     

Comments: There were two incidents this week involving sea turtles.  
On the 14th a Kemp's ridley was temporarily trapped in the center  
drag pipe support beam structure. This happened as the dragarm was  
being brought up as the dredge was heading to the disposal site.  
The dragarm was lowered a couple of feet and the turtle swam away  
unharmed. On the 16th a juvenile loggerhead was sampled in the  
starboard aft and fore inflow cages. The turtle was found in several  
pieces. The parts were documented and photographed. The loggerhead  
was sampled in a cleanup area outside the jetties, material in this  
area is mud and silt. The mates have turned off the pumps on a regular  
basis when the drags are lift. While digging in this cleanup area  
instructions have been to keep the drags on the bottom. Although  
they are ridges on the bottom surface in this area.

This was the first time for the dredge to be equipped with  
turtle cages and TEDs. The captain and crew were cooperative  
throughout the project and kept up with all the specifications.  
Observers were able to preform their job in a good and safe environment  
The only delays to the project is when the dredge was picking up  
large amounts of clay, this took observers more time to clean than  
it would take to get back to the cut. The already planned new top  
screens for the fore cages is a good idea. A new hatch system would  
also be a good improvement.

**Bridge Watch Summary**

Species	# of Sightings	# of Animals	Comments
<u>Tt</u>	<u>    </u>	<u>96</u>	<u>Bottlenose dolphins</u>
<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>
<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>
<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>
<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>

Eric Westerman, Craig Crumbley

Observers On Duty:



Date: 09 / 14 / 95

Additional Comments: The water in this area was turbulent. Not being  
being very familiar with this area observer was worried  
about the turtle being crushed or pinched against the pipe.  
The observer thought the safest thing to do for the turtle  
would be to let the dragarm down a couple of feet and let  
the turtle escape. As the dredge was approaching the dump  
the dredge was slowing down and the dragarm was put down  
a couple of feet. The turtle immediately swam over the wall  
and dived down. The turtle seemed to escape uninjured. This  
turtle must have been swimming in the area at the end of  
cut. When the drag was being brought up the turtle must  
of got caught in this area. This appears just to be a freak  
accident that the turtle got caught. But with help from the  
crew and the observer the turtle seemed to escape with no  
harm. This area the turtle was picked up at was the north  
side of the channel and just past the jetty area. The observers  
will keep a check on this area as part of the routine when  
the observer makes the inspections of the dragheads and  
inflow cages. This turtle was a juvenile sized kemp's ridley.