

Sea turtles make comeback on Texas coast

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Turtle patrols on the beaches around Galveston, Texas, are tracking what appears to be a comeback of the Kemp's ridley sea turtle.

Fifteen turtle nests have been found this year on the upper Gulf Coast of Texas, seven of them on Galveston Island, The Houston Chronicle reported. Most of the finds on the island were made by the turtle patrol.

Ten nests were discovered last year.

The patrol consists of college students and other volunteers who walk the beaches looking for turtle tracks that may lead to nests. Once the nests are found the eggs are removed and taken to a hatchery.

Like other sea turtles, the Kemp's ridley deposits its eggs in a nest on a beach. The hatchlings, if left in place, are on their own from the moment they emerge from the egg, and most quickly fall victim to predators.

Andre Landry -- director of the Sea Turtle and Fisheries Ecology Research Laboratory at Texas A&M University -- said about half the nesting turtles on the upper Gulf coast began life in the "Head Start" program, which cared for hatchlings from Mexico on Galveston Island.

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