

Endangered sea turtle rehabs in Fla. Keys (Update)

September 2 2012



In this photo provided by the Florida Keys News Bureau, the hands of veterinarian Dr. Doug Mader ultrasound the front right flipper of an endangered hawksbill sea turtle at the Florida Keys-based Turtle Hospital, Sunday, Sept. 2, 2012, in Marathon, Fla. The female reptile, laden with eggs, was discovered on a St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands beach Aug. 24, just after Tropical Storm Isaac brushed the Virgin Islands. By the extent of her injuries, wildlife officials believe she was repeatedly gaffed by a fisherman . (AP Photo/Florida Keys News Bureau, Andy Newman)

(AP)—A veterinarian says that an egg-laden hawksbill sea turtle, airlifted from the U.S. Virgin Islands to the Florida Keys-based Turtle Hospital is in extremely guarded condition.

Dr. Doug Mader treated the 123-pound turtle Sunday. He said an ultrasound revealed more than 100 eggs, many which were viable, although he could not confirm if they were fertile.



In this photo provided by the Florida Keys News Bureau, veterinarian Dr. Doug Mader, center, ultrasounds an endangered hawksbill sea turtle at the Florida Keys-based Turtle Hospital, Sunday, Sept. 2, 2012, in Marathon, Fla. The female reptile, laden with eggs, was discovered on a St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands beach Aug. 24, just after Tropical Storm Isaac brushed the Virgin Islands. Hospital staff hope to save the turtle and hatch any fertile eggs with the goal of returning them all to St. Croix. (AP Photo/Florida Keys News Bureau, Andy Newman)

Mader stressed the turtle's condition was grave, but said he and other staff would do all they could to keep it alive because hawksbills are rare and classified as endangered.



In this photo provided by the Florida Keys News Bureau, Bette Zirkelbach, directly behind the turtle, trailed by veterinarian Dr. Doug Mader, pushes a gurney to move the endangered hawksbill sea turtle at the Florida Keys-based Turtle Hospital, Sunday, Sept. 2, 2012, in Marathon, Fla. The female reptile, laden with eggs, was discovered on a St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands beach, on Aug. 24, just after Tropical Storm Isaac brushed the Virgin Islands. It was transferred Saturday, Sept. 1, and is in extremely guarded condition. (AP Photo/Florida Keys News Bureau, Andy Newman)

Mader ultimately hopes to return the turtle and any hatchlings to St. Croix, where it was found in the aftermath of Hurricane Isaac. But if the turtle does not survive, he said, they would try to recover the eggs and hatch them in an incubator containing Virgin Islands' beach sand.

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