

# Scores of North Carolina sea turtles have died after being stunned by frigid temperatures

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This image provided by the Center for Marine Sciences and Technology shows surviving cold-stunned turtles waiting in line to be examined at CMAST in Morehead City, N.C. Scores of sea turtles stunned by cold temperatures have died after they were found along the North Carolina coast, officials said. The North Carolina State University Center for Marine Sciences and Technology took in 109 cold-stunned sea turtles from Cape Lookout on Sunday, Jan. 21, 2024 but only 36 survived, the center said in a social media post this week. Credit: CMAST via AP

Scores of sea turtles stunned by cold temperatures along the North Carolina coast have died, officials said.

The North Carolina State University Center for Marine Sciences and Technology took in 109 cold-stunned sea turtles from Cape Lookout on Sunday, but only 36 survived, the center said in a [social media post](#) this week.

After the surviving turtles are treated at the center, they will complete their rehabilitation at the North Carolina Aquarium at Pine Knoll Shores and the Karen Beasley Sea Turtle Rescue and Rehabilitation Center in Topsail before being released back into their [natural habitat](#), the center said.

Cape Hatteras National Seashore said more than 100 cold-stunned sea turtles were also found in recent days along the shoreline between Bodie Island and Ocracoke. Most of the turtles were taken to the North Carolina Aquarium on Roanoke Island's Sea Turtle Assistance and Rehabilitation center, officials said in a [in a social media post](#).

About 24 turtles died, aquarium spokesperson Christian Legner said. There are 105 turtles rehabilitating onsite, including other turtles that have arrived at the center since the cold-stunning season began at the end

of November, Legner said.

When temperatures drop, the cold-blooded reptiles' body temperatures synchronize with their surroundings, leaving them lethargic and making it difficult for them to lift their heads above water to breathe, National Seashore officials said in the social media post. The wind carries the lethargic turtles to the shorelines, which are monitored in [cold weather](#) by volunteers and seashore biologists.

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