

Sea Turtle Stranding Assessment



South Carolina
Aquarium

Answer Key

1. Is it normal behavior for a sea turtle to strand? Why or why not?

No, turtles should be free swimming in the ocean or on the beach laying eggs.

2. If a sea turtle was found unable to move and the water was cold, then why do you think it stranded?

Cold-stunning – water too cold for the cold blooded turtle to swim.

3. A sea turtle was found stranded with large cuts on its carapace. Why do you think it stranded?

Boat strike

4. If a sea turtle was very lethargic, covered in epibionts, and underweight, why did it strand?

Debilitated Turtle Syndrome

5. A sea turtle has many small punctures in its shell. Why do you think it stranded?

Most likely shark bite, but could be stingray barbs wounds

6. Is floater syndrome a human-induced cause or a natural cause for a sea turtle to strand?

Can be both. Natural – bacterial infection in body cavity. Human – gas build up in intestines due to impaction (debris stuck in intestines)

7. Is cold-stunning a human-induced or a natural cause for a sea turtle to strand?

Natural

8. Many sea turtles strand after ingesting marine debris. What could be done to help prevent sea turtles from stranding due to marine debris ingestion?

Don't litter, pick up trash, use canvas bags

9. How could you help prevent sea turtles from stranding due to boat strikes?

Follow boating regulation signs for speed, keep a close eye out for animals

10. How could you help prevent sea turtle from stranding due to fishing gear entanglement?

Always dispose of fishing line properly (recycle it when you can), be careful when using ropes and fishing line. Use circle hooks instead of j-hooks.