SEA TURTLE HANDLING AND TRANSFER INSTRUCTIONS
for DREDGING OPERATIONS

IF YOU ENCOUNTER AN INJURED OR UNRESPONSE SEA TURTLE,
please immediately call the National Marine Fisheries Greater Atlantic Region Hotline:
866-755-NOAA (6622)

Any sea turtle taken incidentally during dredging must be handled with care to
prevent injury, observed for activity, and transferred to a local rehabilitation
facility according to local rehabilitation plan and the following procedures:

1) A sea turtle that is dead (that is if muscles are still and/or flesh has begun to
rot), must be photographed, measured, and preserved (refrigerate or freeze) until
disposal procedures are discussed with us.

2) A sea turtle that is actively moving should not be released back into the water.

3) If a sea turtle is alive but unresponsive, you must attempt resuscitation as
described in Step 5.

4) Arrange for transfer of live turtle to local rehabilitation facility and prepare
turtle as described in Step 6.

5) Resuscitation Steps:
   • Place the turtle top shell up and elevate its hindquarters at least 6” (of 15-
     30°).
   • Keep the turtle shaded and moist.
   • Periodically rock the turtle gently side to side by holding the outer edge of
     the shell and lifting one side about 3” then alternate sides.

6) Transfer Steps:
   • Injured turtles should be moved to a primary care facility as soon as
     possible.
   • Turtles should be moved in a plastron down position.
   • Do not transport turtle in water, but keep moist with a damp towel.
   • Any attempt to move the turtle should be done by holding both sides of the
     carapace; do not lift the turtle by the flippers.