

Outline Protocol for Turtle Retrieval from an Oiled (or Oil Alert) Beach

- 1) If oil is visible on beach (or suspected based on oil in area) put on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE – tyvek suit, rubber boots, nitrile gloves, eye protection) before going into oiled area, and place two plastic bags at place of exit from beach.
- 2) Put label/dry erase board with Spill Name “Deepwater Horizon”, Date/Time, Beach Name & Stranding ID # next to turtle.
- 3) Take digital photograph of turtle - photo should include the entire animal, highlighting any oiled region, and the label/dry erase board.
- 4) Visually inspect turtle

If there is visible oil on the animal:

IMPORTANT: Avoid touching/contaminating oil sample with your nitrile gloves!

- Use a wooden spatula (tongue depressor) to scrape visible oil from scutes/skin.
- Wrap sample (entire spatula) in aluminum foil (dull side to sample) and fold edges.
- Write label on (freezer, lab, or masking) tape – include Spill Name “Deepwater Horizon”, Date/Time, Beach Name and Stranding ID #. Wrap tape completely around aluminum foil packet. Place sample in plastic bag.

If there is **NO** visible oil on the animal:

IMPORTANT: Do not allow nitrile gloves to touch gauze or area being sampled.

- Use forceps or hemostats that have been cleaned with alcohol to pick up a 4x4 gauze and rub gauze over a section of skin and/or scutes in a circular motion (top of neck is a good location or you can sample elsewhere on turtle if there is apparent sheen or residue).
- Wrap gauze in aluminum foil (dull side to sample) and fold edges.
- Write label on (freezer, lab, or masking) tape – include Spill Name “Deepwater Horizon”, Date/Time, Beach Name and Stranding ID #. Wrap tape completely around aluminum foil packet. Place sample in plastic bag.

- 5) Complete Observer, Stranding Date, Stranding Location and Condition portions of STSSN form. Use GPS to record location in DD.DDDD format. If no GPS available, provide a very detailed description of location, using reference points that can be found on a map.
- 6) Place STSSN Reference# ID band (if available, or substitute flagging tape temporarily) on right front flipper (or other flipper if right front is missing).
- 7) If turtle is alive, place in transport container and take to nearest intake facility.
If turtle is dead, complete remainder of STSSN report form, including measurements, if possible.
- 8) Place turtle carcass in plastic bag; include paper label with Stranding ID # inside bag with carcass. Label outside of bag with Stranding ID #.
- 9) On exit from beach, if oiled, dispose of oiled PPE in one trash bag, securely close, and take with you for hazardous waste disposal. Place rubber boots into second bag and close loosely until next stranding response.
- 10) Transport carcass to intake facility.
- 11) Complete Chain of Custody form.
- 12) Provide all samples taken and forms completed along with turtle to intake facility. Make sure forms are completely filled out and all samples are labeled and sealed according to evidence collection protocols. Photographic evidence must be maintained on original digital media.