

Welcome to TimesPeople
Get Started

TimesPeople recommended: **No Fooling Mother Nature**

6:29 AM

Recommend

HOME PAGE TODAY'S PAPER VIDEO MOST POPULAR TIMES TOPICS

Get Home Delivery-Bay Area Welcome, 75200 Log Out Help

The New York Times

Environment

Search All NYTimes.com

Go

WORLD U.S. N.Y. / REGION BUSINESS TECHNOLOGY SCIENCE HEALTH SPORTS OPINION ARTS STYLE TRAVEL JOBS REAL ESTATE
ENVIRONMENT SPACE & COSMOS

Shrimpers Investigated in Gulf Turtle Deaths

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
Published: May 5, 2010

Filed at 5:28 p.m. ET

Green

A blog about energy, the environment and the bottom line.

[Go to Blog](#)



GULFPORT, Miss. (AP) -- Federal authorities are investigating whether fishermen eager to maximize their catch ahead of the massive [oil slick](#) threatening the Gulf Coast have been killing endangered sea turtles, an official said Wednesday.

Wildlife officials say at least 35 endangered sea turtles have washed up on Gulf coast beaches, but it's not clear what's killing them.

Necropsies have shown no signs of oil.

Investigators will look into whether some shrimp boats taking part in an emergency shrimping season removed devices from their nets that are intended to allow turtles to escape, said Sheryan Epperly, sea turtle team leader for the [National Marine Fisheries Service](#).

"The agency has been trying to collect information on not just the trawling fisheries but any other fishing that may have been going on in the area," Epperly said. "If the turtle excluder device is not properly used, then that likely could lead to the deaths of any turtles that get caught in the nets."

Given the endangered status of Kemp's ridley sea turtles, among the most imperiled turtles in the world, tissue samples being collected and examined are being "kept in the chain of custody ... in the event that it could end up in court," Epperly said.

She said officials with either state or federal agencies are looking into whether the turtle excluder devices were removed in haste for the season.

The Washington, D.C.-based conservation group Oceana has said officials need to determine what is killing the turtles quickly. Some experts have speculated they may have eaten fish contaminated by the [oil spill](#).

"It's a good question," BP spokesman Steve Rinehart said. "Is the oil killing these turtles or not?"

Shrimping has long been blamed for sea turtle deaths. Shrimpers are required to install grid-like devices in their nets that are designed to allow turtles to escape. Shrimpers caught without the turtle excluder devices -- or TEDs -- may be fined thousands of dollars and have their catch seized by federal regulators.

Jimmy Rowell, a third-generation shrimper who has been plowing these water for 46 years, said the turtle deaths weren't caused by fishermen.

"It's bull, straight bull," Rowell said Wednesday while working on his boat docked in Long Beach. "They need to be looking at someone else for the turtles. It ain't the fishermen."

Rowell said the devices to protect turtles have cost shrimpers 20 percent of their catch, but

Get DealBook by E-Mail

SIGN IN TO
RECOMMEND

TWITTER

E-MAIL

SEND TO PHONE

PRINT



that it's not worth the fines by fishing without them.

"The commercial fishermen are the best environmentalists out here," he said.

E-MAILED BLOGGED SEARCHED VIEWED

E-MAIL
PRINT



The Times & the Bay Area - now at 50% off when you subscribe for the convenience of home delivery.

Related Searches

- Turtles and Tortoises [Get E-Mail Alerts](#)
- Fishing, Commercial [Get E-Mail Alerts](#)
- Gulf of Mexico [Get E-Mail Alerts](#)
- National Marine Fisheries Service [Get E-Mail Alerts](#)

INSIDE NYTIMES.COM



HOME & GARDEN »



Gardens That Grow on Walls

BUSINESS »



Canada's Doubts on Toyota

FASHION & STYLE »



My Mannequin, Myself: What Talking Heads Say

OPINION »

Op-Ed: Waiting Atop the World
 Even before the general strike, Nepal had entered an advanced state of entropy, writes Manjushree Thapa.

ART & DESIGN »



War Zone Traumas Restaged at Home

OPINION »



1 1/4 teacup sugar



1 cup butter

Leanne Shapton: Raiders of the Night Kitchen