

Southwest Region

The year 1987 was only an average year for hatching and imprinting turtle eggs at Padre Island NS. with 2,001 eggs received from Mexico and 1,288 hatched for a 64.3 percent hatch. Cool wet weather in Mexico is believed to be the cause of the so-so hatching rate. In years past the hatching rate has been in the 80 percent range, but we feel pretty good anyway because the hatch rate in wild populations is probably between 60 and 70 percent. Of the 1,288 hatchling, 5 died, one was lost in the surf while

"imprinting" the hatchlings, and 1,282 were sent to the National Marine Service in Galveston, Texas for Head Starting, a program where hatchlings are raised in captivity for 9 months until they are about the size of dinner plates. Although no adult Kemps Ridley Turtles nested at Padre Island this year, several adults were seen in the surf and hopes are high that nesting will take place next year.

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The Regional Office staff, with considerable help from other park staff, private organizations such as the Cave Research Foundation and the Nature Conservancy, completed the on-site evaluations of 26 National Natural Landmarks this year. Three potential National Natural Landmark sites were evaluated as well. We are consistently encouraged by the concern and pride that the owners of Natural Landmark properties take in preserving and protecting these areas.