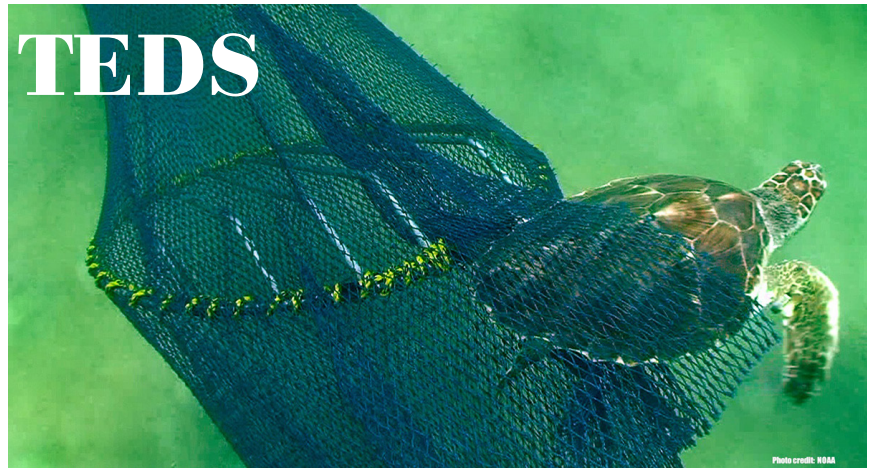




The Case for TEDS

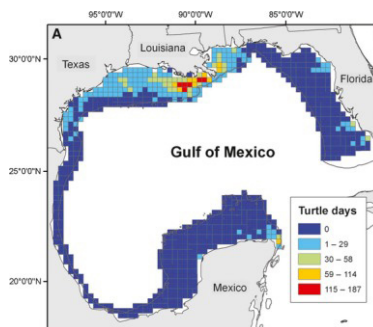
TURTLE EXCLUDER DEVICES (TEDS) HAVE BEEN A REQUIREMENT IN ALMOST ALL OFFSHORE SHRIMP TRAWLERS SINCE 1987. When installed correctly, research has shown that TEDs allow 97% of turtles encountered to escape.

Reports of stranded sea turtles along the Gulf Coast increased significantly in 2010, triggering a review of fishing regulations.



WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Many species of sea turtles live in the waters off Louisiana's coast, but one species—the Kemp's Ridley—is found mostly in the Gulf of Mexico. These turtles are already fighting an uphill battle to survive, as they are slow to mature and their nests are often raided by predators. In addition to interaction with fishing gear, they have multiple habitat issues such as construction, onshore lighting and sea level rise.



Foraging habitat and environmental characteristics of foraging sites selected for 31 female Kemp's ridley turtles from 1998 to 2011 (Shaver, D. et al, 2013)

The good news is that the number of Kemp's Ridley nests and hatchlings has more than doubled since 2000. However, because shrimping has been identified as the major cause of sea turtle mortality in Gulf waters, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has increased enforcement and inspection efforts.

Proper installment makes an enormous difference in capture rates, with a corresponding level of violation severity. For instance, a TED installed at the correct angle of 55° is shown to capture only 3% of sea turtles encountered. Increase that angle to 60°, and the capture rate jumps as high as 70%.



For full details on TED regulations, visit <http://bit.ly/2Fuhy1g>

Current NOAA gear requirements for trawlers:

Any shrimp trawler in the Gulf Area must have an approved TED installed in each net that is rigged for fishing.

Exceptions to the TED requirements include:

- Boats with no power retrieval system
- Bait shrimpers (with specifications)
- Pusher-head, wing net or skimmer trawl
- Try nets (headrope length of 12 or less)

These boats must follow tow time restrictions:

- 55 minutes from April 1 through October 31
- 75 minutes from November 1 through March 31

WHY DOES COMPLIANCE MATTER?

In 2011, the NOAA Office of Law Enforcement boarded 551 vessels to check for TED compliance. Of those vessels, only 65.88% were in compliance with the TED regulations (designed and installed correctly).

NMFS proposed to monitor and ensure compliance of shrimp trawls required to use TEDs so that sea turtle catch rates remain at or below 12% of all sea turtle interactions (maintain an 88% TED effectiveness rate); with actions outlined below:

Compliance Rate	Action
88% or higher	Gear Management Team (GMT) outreach
Between 88% and 84%	Enforcement pulse and GMT outreach
Below 84% for 2 consecutive periods	Minimum 30 day shrimp closure; enforcement pulse, GMT outreach

TED inspections of the shrimp trawl fleet in 2016

showed a marked improvement in TED compliance, with 97% compliance in December 2016. It is critical that offshore shrimpers continue to follow federal regulations to avoid such severe action as a shrimp closure.

