

Demonstration of the presence of the Kemp's turtle, or Ridley's turtle *Lepidochelys kempii* in the Caribbean waters of Martinique

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**Demonstration of the presence of the Kemp's turtle, or Ridley's turtle
Lepidochelys kempii in the Caribbean waters of Martinique**

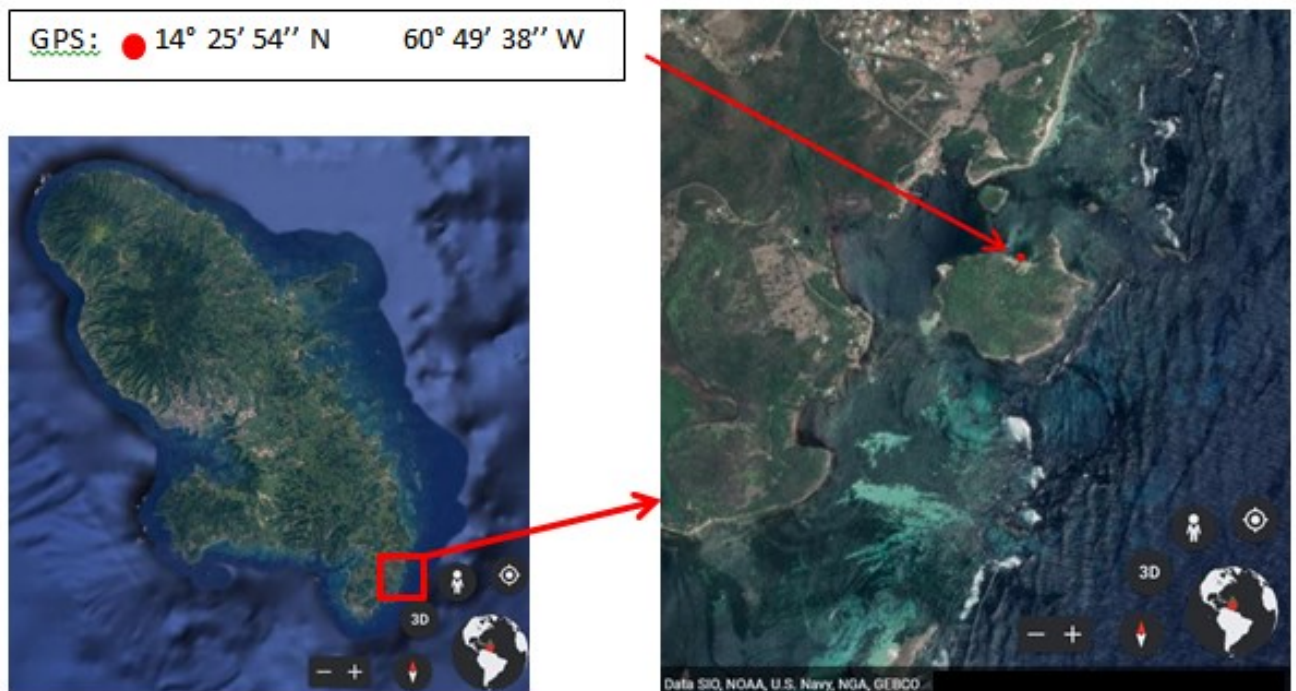
Species determination report of the sea turtle discovered decapitated on Friday, September 13, 2013 washed up on the beach of the islet Chevalier in the territory of Sainte-Anne Martinique, eastern Caribbean.

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Location of the position where the decapitated corpse of an adult female sea turtle was discovered:





Maximum estimated carapace length: ≤ 65 cm

Maximum estimated weight: ≤ 50 kg

Determination key:

In the absence of the head and therefore according to the observable data given the state of decomposition of the corpse, we proceeded by logical deduction according to criteria based on:

- the analysis of the number of pair (s) of claws on the upper limbs. (1)
- the analysis of the number of pairs of costal scales on the back of the carapace. (2)
- analysis of the general shape of the plastron and its characteristics in number, shapes and sizes of inframarginal scales. (3)

(1) The criterion of the number of pair (s) of claws observed on the upper limbs of the marine turtle, which is the subject of our species identification report, leads us to exclude the hypothesis that it could be the Hawksbill turtle *Eretmochelys imbricata* known as Karèt in Martinique, nor the loggerhead turtle *Caretta caretta* known as Toti Jòn in Martinique. Indeed, the turtle discovered decapitated on Friday, September 13, 2013 washed up on the beach of the islet Chevalier in the territory of Sainte-Anne Martinique, had only one (1) pair of claws on its upper limbs.

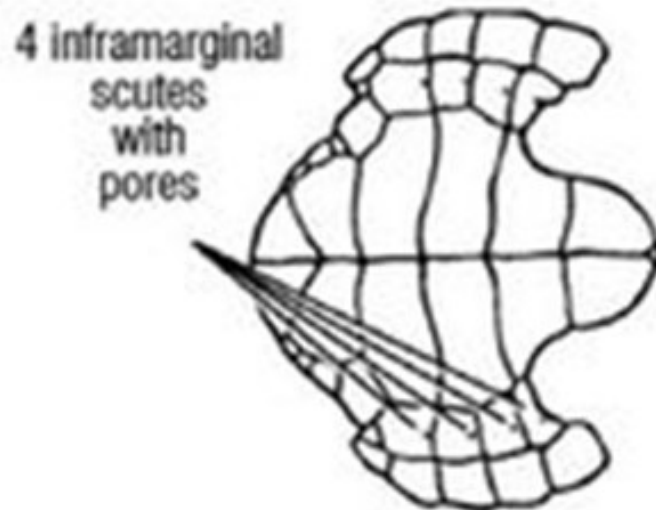


(2) The criterion of the number of pairs of scales or costal plates on the back of the carapace which is five (5) for the turtle discovered decapitated on Friday, September 13, 2013, indicates that it cannot be the Green turtle species *Chelonia mydas* (for which there are 4 pairs of costal scales on the backrest), nor of the olive turtle species *Lepidochelys olivacea* (for which there are 6 or more pairs of costal scales on the backrest).



(3) The criterion of the general shape of the plastron as well as its characteristics in number, positioning, shapes and sizes of inframarginal scales, and other details, such as that of the presence of a small well marked scale at the posterior end of the plastron, confirm that it is a Kemp turtle; taxon: ***Lepidochelys kempii***. Note that the edge of the shell is smooth, therefore different from that of the denticulated hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*).

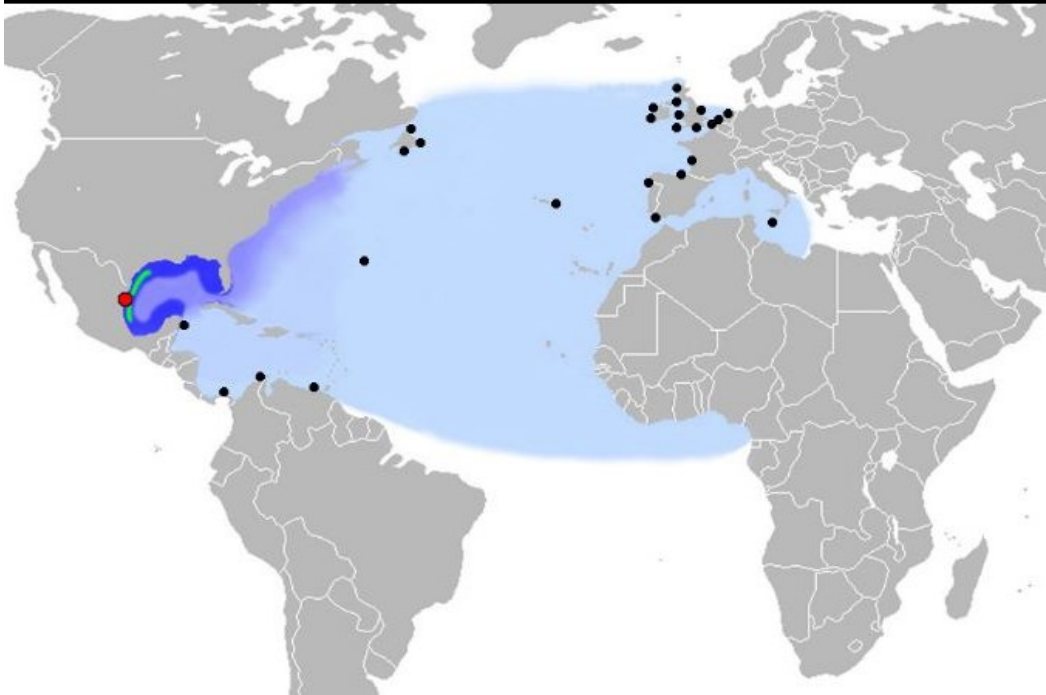




This is evidence of the presence of the Kemp's turtle, or Ridley's turtle in Martinican waters; of a specimen observed as being therefore of the species *Lepidochelys kempii*, a species classified as critically endangered by the IUCN, very rarely observed in Martinique waters and generally below the latitude of 16 °, although the species has already been attested to be present on the coasts of Venezuela, Colombia and Costa Rica.

Martinique, Eastern Caribbean,
Data reprint of the September 2013 report
April 2021

Distribution of Kemp's ridley sea turtle (*L. kempii*):



Distribution of Kemp's ridley sea turtle (*L. kempii*):

red dot = primary nesting beach; **green** = primary adult male range;
dark blue = primary adult female range; **mid-blue** = juvenile and subadult range;
light blue = accidentals and vagrants (95% juveniles and subadults),
black dots = verified records.

Sources : https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Kemp%27s_ridley_sea_turtle

	Tête	Dossière	Plastron
Tortue imbriquée	2 paires d'écailles préfrontales	4 écailles costales 2 paire de griffes écailles imbriquées (se chevauchent)	4 écailles inframarginales
Tortue verte	1 paire d'écailles préfrontales	4 écailles costales 1 paire de griffes	4 écailles inframarginales
Tortue olivâtre	2 paires d'écailles préfrontales	6 (ou plus) écailles costales 1 paire de griffes 6 (ou plus) écailles vertébrales	4 écailles inframarginales (avec pores)
Tortue caouanne	Plus de 2 paire d'écailles préfrontales	5 écailles costales 2 paires de griffes	3 écailles inframarginales

head	carapace	plastron
2 pairs of prefrontal scales Hawksbill - <i>Eretmochelys imbricata</i>	scutes imbricated (overlapping) 4 lateral scutes	4 inframarginal scutes without pores
1 pair of prefrontal scales Green turtle - <i>Chelonia mydas</i>	4 lateral scutes	4 inframarginal scutes without pores
more than 1 pair of prefrontal scales Kemp's ridley - <i>Lepidochelys kempii</i>	5 lateral scutes	4 inframarginal scutes with pores
more than 1 pair of prefrontal scales Olive ridley - <i>Lepidochelys olivacea</i>	6 or more lateral scutes 6 or more vertebral scutes	4 inframarginal scutes with pores
more than 1 pair of prefrontal scales Loggerhead - <i>Caretta caretta</i>	5 lateral scutes	3 inframarginal scutes without pores

