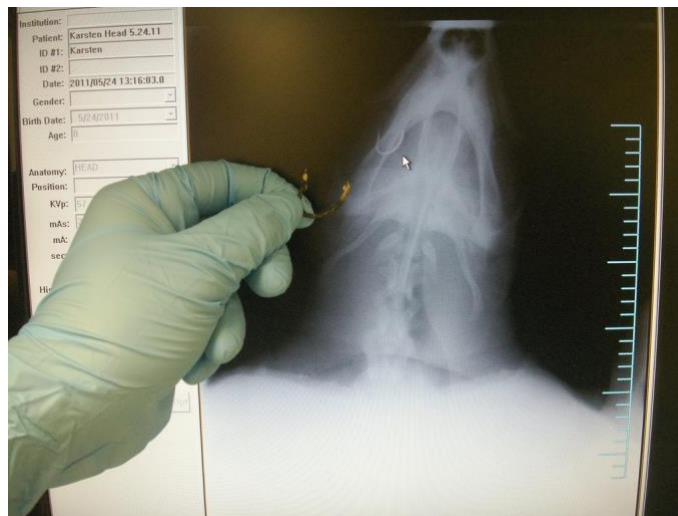


**THE TURTLE HOSPITAL
SEA TURTLE RELEASED OCTOBER 25, 2011**



After five months of rehabilitation at The Turtle Hospital, Karsten, a 109-pound subadult loggerhead sea turtle, was released off of Sombrero Beach in Marathon, Florida Keys, and quickly swam away. Pictured releasing Karsten are Mike Puto and Turtle Hospital staff Jo Ellen Basile, Tom Luebke, and Richie Moretti (in blue shirts), along with several members of the Society of Environmental Journalists (photo by Larry Benvenuti). Twenty of the journalists were visiting the Keys this week and scheduled time to visit the Hospital and help release Karsten.



Karsten was found floating on May 24, 2011, in a local canal by homeowners and was named after their young son. He had a fishhook in his jaw and another in his esophagus. The fishhooks were expertly removed by our volunteer veterinarian, Dr. Doug Mader of Marathon Veterinary Hospital, using an endoscope and grabbing tool. Karsten suffered from lockjaw as a result of his injuries and infection and could not open his mouth to eat. Animal care staff stretched his jaw daily and fed him squid using a tube to place the squid down his throat. After months of this labor-intensive therapy, Karsten began to open his mouth a little on his own and was able to eat a few small squid. He passed his big test recently and was able to catch and eat a live lobster: a sign that Karsten was ready to go home.

There are 24 sea turtle patients at The Turtle Hospital, all available for viewing by joining one of the Guided Educational Programs offered at 10:00, 1:00, and 4:00 daily. Eleven permanent resident turtles cannot be released due to their injuries, most of them because of boat hit damage. Other reasons turtles are under rehabilitation here include fishhook and debris ingestion, fishing gear entanglements leading to flipper amputation, infection, and, primarily in the green turtle population, a debilitating tumor disease called Fibropapillomatosis. For more information or to make a reservation (recommended), please call (305) 743-2552.