

# ARK rescues animals, sends them home

**T**ake an ever-changing menagerie that can range from pelicans to turtles. Stir in a staff that consists mostly of volunteers. Add nearly \$30,000 a year for food alone. That's the Animal Rehabilitation Keep (ARK) at The University of Texas at Austin Marine Science Institute (MSI).

The ARK's mission is to accept animals that are injured or ill and rehabilitate them so they can be returned to their natural habitat. In some cases this is no more than a few days' care; in other cases it's months of feeding, observation and care for 24 hours a day.

The ARK has been rescuing and rehabilitating injured and sick wildlife in the Coastal Bend of South Texas for nearly 25 years. While the University of Texas provides utilities and some help from maintenance personnel, the ARK is financed entirely by donations from individuals and foundations. Expenses include construction of facilities and materials for any maintenance and operations, supplies, medicines, food for the animals, pumps, filters, heaters, air conditioners, washing machines, ice makers, and salaries for animal attendants and coordinator.

Although the ARK isn't open to the public, group tours can be arranged in some instances. Call (361) 749-6793



A crew of ARK volunteers uncovers some eggs laid by a Kemp's ridley turtle on Mustang Island. The eggs will be incubated and

hatched, and the baby turtles will be returned to the beach so they can make their way back into the Gulf of Mexico.

for more information or to arrange for a tour. ARK officials ask that tours be limited to 20 or more; a

donation will be asked for to help defray expenses. Tours will usually be scheduled on Wednesdays or

Saturdays.

The ARK can always use more volunteers, also. If you have time

to spend helping a disabled animal (or money to donate, of course!) call the same number.

Take a cruise on the Island and have fun in the sun for the whole family!

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