NARRATOR: Hundreds of baby sea turtles are expected to take an unusual course to the ocean this season. Environmental specialists from several federal agencies are working with FedEx to move turtle nests from the oil-threatened beaches of the Gulf of Mexico to the Atlantic coast in hopes of improving the survival chances for the endangered species.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, the National Park Service, NOAA, FedEx and conservationists are taking part in this unprecedented effort to move some 700 nests hundreds of miles to NASA's Kennedy Space Center.

The nests include sea turtles from several threatened or endangered species, including loggerheads, Kemp's ridley, leatherback, and green sea turtles.

Each egg is taken carefully by hand from a nest as it is excavated. The eggs are placed into Styrofoam boxes and then taken by FedEx on special trucks to Kennedy.
Center hatchery. She and her team watch over the nests for signs of the hatchlings.

Jane Provancha: "The sign that these animals are starting to pip and come and prepare to emerge over the next two days is very big, very big. Good news. This means they survived the excavation process, they survived the trip across the state of Florida, they made it into our facility and they are doing what they normally would do, and this is, this is just great. Good stuff."

NARRATOR: The turtles are handled just as delicately as they are readied to be released.

Jane Provancha: "...we'll take the hatchlings and put them in here. We'll reduce the amount of sand because it's too heavy. We'll put them in here and we'll take them to the beach in this."

NARRATOR: Once they've hatched and are considered ready to make the trip, the turtles are taken to beaches along a 100-mile stretch of Florida's Atlantic Coast and set free in the surf.

Once in the ocean, the turtles generally make their way to developmental habitats offshore where they eat and grow.

Unknown Person: "Yay!"