



NOAA Technical Memorandum NMFS-SEFSC-631

PROCEEDINGS OF THE THIRTY-FIRST ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM ON SEA TURTLE BIOLOGY AND CONSERVATION



10 to 16 April 2011
San Diego, California, USA

Compiled by:
T. Todd Jones & Bryan P. Wallace

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NOAA Fisheries Service
Southeast Fisheries Science Center
75 Virginia Beach Drive
Miami, Florida 33149

May 2012
(Updated November 2012)



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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The President's Report may be found in its entirety in the Marine Turtle Newsletter 130:30-33, 2011 entitled 'President's Report for the 31st Annual Symposium on Sea Turtle Biology and Conservation 'The Next Generation of Research and Conservation', 10-16 April 2011, San Diego, California, USA.'

by Jeffrey Seminoff, President, ISTS

<http://www.seaturtle.org/mtn/archives/mtn130/mtn130p30.shtml>

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Proceedings of the 31st Annual Symposium on Sea Turtle Biology and Conservation

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East Asia Regional Meeting	Yoshimasa Matsuzawa
Eastern Pacific Hawksbill Initiative (ICAPO) Meeting	Alexander Gaos, Ingrid Yañez
Indian Ocean & Southeast Asia Regional Meeting	Maggie Muurmans, Rahayu Zulfiki, SMA Rashid, Lalith Ekanayake
IOSEA Marine Turtle Meeting	Douglas Hykle
IUCN Marine Turtle Specialist Group Annual Meeting	Roderic Mast, Nicolas Pilcher, Brian Hutchinson
Mediterranean Regional Meeting	Paolo Casale
Pacific Islands Region and Partners Meeting	Irene Kelly
Pacific Leatherback Turtle Conservation Fund Meeting	Asuka Ishizaki
RETOMALA XVIII (Latin America) Meeting	Alan Zavala, Juanpablo Muñoz, Carlos Mario Orrego
Science of Advocacy Meeting	J. Nichols, Todd Steiner
WIDECAST (Caribbean) Regional Meeting	Karen Eckert
Freshwater Turtle & Tortoise Symposium	Chuck Shaffer
NMFS Scientific Research and Enhancement Permits	Amy Hapeman
3 rd Workshop on Data Analysis in Marine Turtle Research	Tomo Eguchi
3 rd Workshop on Sea Turtle Stable Isotope Research	Karen Arthur, Kim Reich, Bryan Wallace
Marine Turtle Conservation Fund (MTCF) - Grant Writing Workshop	Earl Possardt
Marine Turtles, Hooks, and Related Lesions Workshop	Mariluz Parga
Public Participation in Turtle Conservation Workshop	Samantha Burgess
San Diego Schoolchildren Education Workshop	Frances Kinney, Barbara Andrews
San Diego Teacher Education Workshop	Frances Kinney, Barbara Andrews
Sea Turtle Medicine Workshop	Heather Harris
Student Professional Development Workshop	Lisa Komoroske

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STUDENT AWARDS

There were 181 student presentations – 58 papers and 123 posters with \$5,500 US awarded to 12 recipients. The awards committee was composed of Lisa Campbell, Matthew Godfrey, and Jeanette Wyneken. Student judges: Karen Arthur, Larisa Avens, Ray Carthy, Paolo Casale, Emma Harrison, Craig Harms, Jennifer Keller, Mike James, Cynthia Lagueux, Kate Mansfield, Catherine McClellan, Zoe Meletis, Terry Norton, Dave Owens, Andrea Phillott, Nick Pilcher, Peter Pritchard, Kim Reich, Erin Seney, Kelly Stewart, Tony Tucker, Roldan Valverde, and Thane Wibbels. The awards were financed by the International Sea Turtle Society. (Note that as in previous years, the judges decided not to award prizes in certain categories, based on their ranking system)

Breeding Biology

Best Oral Presentation

Anthony Rafferty, Pilar Santidrián Tomillo, James Spotila, Frank Paladino, Richard Reina. Embryonic death is linked to maternal identity in the leatherback turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*). (Monash Univeristy) \$500

Runner Up Oral Presentation

Jeanne Garner, Tomo Eguchi, Duncan MacKenzie, Scott Jacques. Evaluating steroid hormone data in association with reproductive parameters in a population of endangered leatherback sea turtles and the application to conservation and management. (Texas A&M University) \$250

Best Poster Presentation

Hannah B. Vander Zanden, Karen A. Bjorndal, Alan B. Bolten. Nutrient transport by green turtles. (University of Florida) \$500

Conservation through Social, Economic, Cultural, & Legal Pathways

Best Oral Presentation

Courtney Shephard. Optimizing U.S. Endangered Species Act protection by integrating recovery planning, Section 7 Consultations, and incidental take authorizations: A sea turtle case study. (Duke University). \$500

Foraging, Physiology, & Movements

Best Oral Presentation

Simona Ceriani, James D. Roth, Daniel Evans, Llewellyn M. Ehrhart. Satellite tracking confirms the use of stable isotopes to infer foraging grounds of loggerhead turtles (*Caretta caretta*) nesting on Florida's East coast. (University of Central Florida). \$500

Runner Up Oral Presentation

Alexander R. Gaos, Rebecca L. Lewison, Ingrid L. Yañez, Wallace J. Nichols, Andres Baquero, Michael Liles, Mauricio Vasquez, Jose Urteaga, Bryan Wallace, Jeffrey A. Seminoff. Satellite telemetry reveals novel insights into the biology and conservation of hawksbill turtles (*Eretmochely imbricata*) in the eastern Tropical Pacific. (San Diego State Univeristy). \$250

Foraging, Physiology, & Movements

Best Poster Presentation

Morgan Young, Michael Salmon, Richard Forward. Visual wavelength discrimination by the loggerhead turtle. (Florida Atlantic University). \$500

Health & Rehabilitation

Best Poster Presentation

Virginie Plot, Jean-Patrice Robin, Thomas Jenkins, Sabrina Fossette, Jean-Yves Georges. Physiological state and condition in nesting leatherback turtles in French Guiana. (Université Strasbourg) \$500

Population Assessment

Best Oral Presentation

Brian M. Shamblin, Mark G. Dodd, Kristina L. Williams, Michael G. Frick, Terry M. Norton, Stephanie Ouellette, Rebecca Bell, Douglas M. Hoffman, Debra Barnard-Keinath, Gale G. Bishop, Scott Coleman, Stacia Hendricks, Tammy Smith, Campbell J. Naim. Genetic mark-recapture of the female loggerhead population nesting in Georgian 2008-2009: Abundance, nest site fidelity, and relatedness. (University of Georgia). \$500

Best Poster Presentation

Vanessa Bezy, Roldan A. Valverde. Comparison of methodologies for estimating the nest density of olive ridley arribadas at Ostional, Costa Rica. (UNC – Wilmington). \$500

Threats

Best Oral Presentation

Qamar Schuyler, Kathy A. Townsend, Justin Marshall. To eat or not to eat? The roles of choice and vision in ingestion of marine debris by sea turtles. (University of Queensland). \$500

Best Poster Presentation

Leigh Ann Harden, Amanda S. Williard. Using spatially explicit predator-prey model to investigate bycatch risk of terrapins in crab pots. (UNC – Wilmington). \$500

ISTS AWARDS 2011

Award certificates were designed by Dawn Witherington.

President's Award

Margie Stinson

Ed Drane Award for Volunteerism (new award)

Ed Drane

Life Time Achievement Award

Sally Murphy

Karen Bjorndal

Peter Pritchard

Champions Awards

Jepson Prince

Sinkey Boone

Colum Muccio

Grass Roots Awards (new award)

Ingrid Yañez

KEYNOTE PRESENTERS

Peter C. H. Pritchard

The Eastern Pacific: Where the Turtles are all Different

Karen A. Bjorndal

Planning Our Future: Expanding the Known, Learning the Unknown, and Minimizing the Unknowable

VIDEO PRESENTATIONS - WILD AND SCENIC FILM FESTIVAL

Your Unknown Killings

Jayesh Shirakhane

Port of San Diego, NOAA Project

Barbara Moreno

The Heartbreak Turtle Today

Sea Turtle Restoration Project, presented by Carole Allen

The Jurassic Journey

John Dutton

Between the Harvest

Scott Drucker

Saving Sea Turtles of Sri Lanka

Thushan Kapurusinghe

Kurma

Arun Krishna

Sanctuary in the Sea: a Gulf of the Farallones Experience

Bob Talbot

Sea Turtle Conservation with Grupo Tortuguero

Roger Roth, presented by Wallace J. Nichols

Page #

65. ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS ON LOGGERHEAD NEST INCUBATION TEMPERATURES AND HATCHING SUCCESS IN SOUTHWEST FLORIDA: IMPLICATIONS FOR CLIMATE CHANGE
Jill Schmid, David Addison, and Victoria Vazquez
65. YEARLY NESTING PATTERNS AND SITE FIDELITY IN SOUTHERN BAJA CALIFORNIA SUR OLIVE RIDLEY SEA TURTLES
Nicole R. Schuetz, Nancy E. Mathews, Timothy R. Van Deelen, Jorge Gonzalez Villalba, and Graciela Tiburcio
66. INCUBATION TEMPERATURES OF LOGGERHEAD TURTLE (*CARETTA CARETTA*) NESTS DEPOSITED ON NORTHWEST FLORIDA BEACHES
Brail S. Stephens, Margaret M. Lamont, Raymond R. Carthy, and Lorna Patrick
67. SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS OF RAINFALL ON INCUBATION DURATION AND HATCHLING SEX IN LEATHERBACKS MAKE INCUBATION DURATION A POOR INDICATOR OF HATCHLING SEX
April Stevens and Chow-Fraser
67. A PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF LEATHERBACK PIT TAGGING DATA FROM THE BIRD'S HEAD PENINSULA, PAPUA BARAT, INDONESIA
Ricardo F. Tapilatu, Deasy Lontoh, Peter H. Dutton, Manjula Tiwari, Scott R. Benson, Creusa Hitipeuw, and Thane Wibbels
68. TEMPERATURE-DEPENDENT SEX DETERMINATION AND TURTLE CONSERVATION PROGRAMS: WHICH TEMPERATURES ARE BEST?
Corie Therrien and Thane Wibbels
68. WHERE HAVE THE NEOPHYTES GONE?
Dominic Tilley and Kathryn Levasseur
69. SEASONALITY OF OLIVE RIDLEY SEA TURTLE (*LEPIDOCHELYS OLIVACEA*) EMBRYOS WITH REGARD TO INCUBATION TEMPERATURE AND RAINFALL AT NANCITE BEACH, COSTA RICA
Roldán A. Valverde, Luis G. Fonseca, and Romeo M. Spínola
69. GENETIC VERSUS ENVIRONMENTAL CAUSES OF EXTREME MALFORMATIONS OF FLATBACK EMBRYOS
Roger Vanderlely and Michael L. Guinea
70. INTER-NESTING MOVEMENTS OF HAWKSBILL TURTLES (*ERETMOCHELYS IMBRICATA*) NESTING AT NEEDHAM'S POINT, BARBADOS
Julian A. Walcott, Scott A. Eckert, and Julia A. Horrocks
70. DETERMINE THE SEX RATIO OF GREEN TURTLE HATCHLINGS IN TAIWAN; HISTOLOGICAL EXAMINATION
Cheng Wan-Hwa, Chang Yu-Yin, Lee Ken-Pei, King Rowena, and Cheng, I-Jiunn
71. THE EAST END MARINE TURTLE PROJECT, ST. CROIX, U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS (1994-2010)
Ryan C. Welsh and Amy L. Mackay
71. MAZIWE ISLAND: CO-MANAGEMENT INITIATIVE LEADS TO FIRST HATCHING SUCCESS IN OVER THREE DECADES
Lindsey West, Catharine Joynson-Hicks, John Mbugani, and Omari Abdallah
72. EXPANDING NESTING RANGES: THE SOUTHERNMOST RECORDS OF *CHELONIA MYDAS* AND *LEPIDOCHELYS OLIVACEA* NESTING ACTIVITY IN THE EASTERN PACIFIC
Jasper. H. Wester, Shaleyla Kelez, and Ximena Velez-Zuazo
72. INCREASING HATCH SUCCESS AND DETERMINING CAUSES OF LATE-TERM MORTALITY IN DOOMED LEATHERBACK SEA TURTLE (*DERMOCHELYS CORIACEA*) NESTS
Emily G. Weston and Jeanne A. Garner

SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS OF RAINFALL ON INCUBATION DURATION AND HATCHLING SEX IN LEATHERBACKS MAKE INCUBATION DURATION A POOR INDICATOR OF HATCHLING SEX

April Stevens and P. Chow-Fraser

McMaster University, Hamilton, ON Canada

The effects of rainfall on in situ sea turtle nests have largely been understudied. Existent literature details the effects of large rainfall events causing drowning; however, incubation durations and hatchling sex ratios resulting from exposure to consistent rainfall have mostly gone unstudied. The aim of this research was to determine the effects of rainfall on incubation duration as it related to potential sex ratios of Leatherback sea turtle nests on Playa Norte, Costa Rica. Daily ambient air temperature and rainfall were monitored throughout the nesting seasons. In-nest temperatures were monitored by placing HOBO® tidbit data loggers in the middle of each clutch (n=15). As expected, a significant positive correlation ($p=0.0395$) for rainfall on incubation duration was found. However, incubation durations (mean=64 days) proved to be incorrectly predicting sex ratios arising from those nests, as determined by in-nest temperatures during the critical sex determination period. This research is significant in light of species conservation and the potential climate change impacts of increasing global temperatures and weather pattern changes. As it is important to be able to reliably estimate potential sex ratios, this work will help modelers predict sex ratio production more accurately and possibly help protect those habitats necessary for male hatchling production during increasing global temperatures.

A PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF LEATHERBACK PIT TAGGING DATA FROM THE BIRD'S HEAD PENINSULA, PAPUA BARAT, INDONESIA

Ricardo F. Tapilatu¹, Deasy Lontoh², Peter H. Dutton³, Manjula Tiwari³, Scott R. Benson³, Creusa Hitipeuw⁴, and Thane Wibbels⁵

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³ Protected Resources Division, Southwest Fisheries Science Center, National Marine Fisheries Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

⁴ WWF Indonesia, Kantor Taman A9, UnitA-1, Kawasan Mega Kuningan Jakarta 12950, Indonesia

⁵ Department of Biology, University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB), AL 35294-1170

Jamursba-Medi and Wermon beaches on Bird's Head Peninsula in Papua Barat, Indonesia, are believed to support the largest remaining nesting aggregation of endangered leatherbacks in the Pacific. The Jamursba-Medi beach complex is separated from Wermon by about 30 km. Nesting activity peaks in July at Jamursba-Medi, whereas at Wermon nesting activity is bimodal with peaks in December and June. Beginning in 2003, we began periodically tagging females with Passive Integrated Transponder (PIT) tags. Tag-recapture effort was opportunistic through 2008, but a systematic protocol was initiated during the 2009-2010 nesting season. Between 2003 and 2010, 977 distinct females were tagged. Remigration intervals were documented for some females, and a few females nested on both Jamursba-Medi and Wermon during the same season. Committed long-term population monitoring and protection are prerequisites for determining the conservation status and initiating the recovery of the Pacific leatherback. We thank U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. National Marine Fisheries Service, Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council and International Sea Turtle Society for their generous supports to fund our participation in the Symposium.

- Sprintall, Janet**, 146
- Squires, Dale**, 7
- Srodes, Zander**, 123
- St. Clair, Katie I.**, 164
- St. John, Jill**, 122
- Stacy, Brian**, 10, 13, 19, 21, 296
- Staggs, Lydia A.**, 11, 179
- Stahelin, Gustavo D.**, 193, 293
- Stamper, Andy**, 11
- Stapleton, Seth**, 35, 228
- Stasiak, Iga**, 185
- Steiner, Todd**, 9, 16, 89, 98, 124, 131, 282
- Steinwald, Molly**, 113
- Stephan, David L.**, 179
- Stephens, Brail S.**, 20, 66
- Sterling, Eleanor J.**, 155, 165, 193, 249
- Sterner, Andrew T.**, 250
- Stevens, April**, 67
- Stewart, Kelly R.**, 23, 250
- Stock, Charles A.**, 287, 296
- Stohs, Stephen M.**, 276
- Stokes, Kimberley L.**, 176
- Stokes, Lesley W.**, 294
- Strahlendorf, Jean**, 301
- Stringell, Thomas B.**, 205
- Suárez, M. Medina**, 62
- Sugiyama, Takafumi**, 276
- Sullivan, Laurie**, 20
- Summers, Tammy M.**, 96
- Svensden, Guillermo**, 147
- Swimmer, Yonat**, 133, 213, 256, 262, 294
- Swithenbank, Alan M.**, 176
- Takase, Mai**, 119
- Talavera, Ana L.**, 295
- Tanaka, Eriko**, 119, 153
- Tanga, Jean-Jacques**, 163
- Tanjung, Maburri**, 109
- Tapia, Amaury Cordero**, 202
- Tapilatu, Ricardo F.**, 67, 133, 146
- Tarbox, Buffy Martin**, 124, 291
- Teas, Wendy**, 11, 13
- Techera, Bruno N.**, 162
- Tellería, María T.**, 289
- Templeton, Robert P.**, 175
- Testa, Jamie C.**, 251
- Therrien, Corie**, 68
- Thomas, Christine**, 271
- Thomas, Rachael**, 198
- Thorvalson, Kelly J.**, 205
- Tiburcio, Graciela**, 65
- Tilley, Dominic**, 46, 68, 241
- Tinelli, Antonella**, 204
- Tiwari, Manjula**, 67, 79, 119, 177
- Tokpa, Andrew S.**, 119
- Tomás, Jesús**, 177
- Tomaszewicz, Cali Turner**, 125, 178
- Tomillo, Pilar Santidrián**, 60, 117, 296
- Torres Hahn, Anelise**, 26
- Torres, Perla**, 78, 252
- Toruño, Carlos**, 219
- Townsend, Kathy A.**, 290
- Tran, Diem-Hong**, 256
- Trapani, Christina M.**, 19, 179, 190, 256, 296
- Trejo, Carlos Delgado**, 297
- Tremblay, Yann**, 58
- Trindell, Robbin**, 13, 15