Flatback Turtles & The Power Of Community: Two Decades Of Community-Led Conservation In Port Hedland, Western Australia



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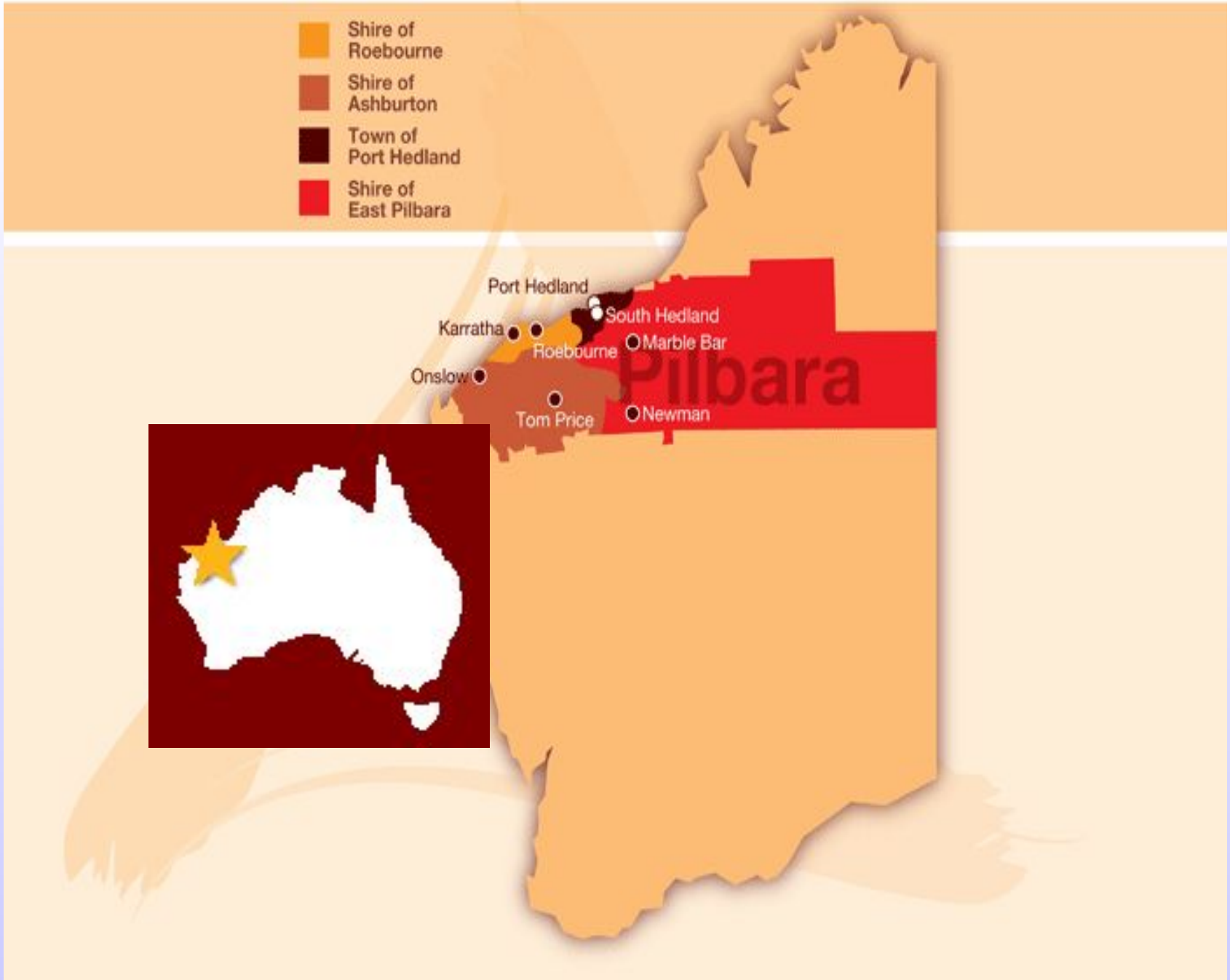
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Photograph Port Hedland Mid 1960s

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Photographs Inner Port Hedland Harbour Today

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imbricata
environmental



A Decade of Monitoring Flatback Turtles in Port Hedland, Western Australia

2004/05 – 2013/14

Prepared for:
Care for Hedland Environmental Association
Sutherland St
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Flatback Turtle Data Collected: Cemetery Beach, Port Hedland

Year	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23*	23/24*	24/25*	25/26*
Nests	577	908	884	919	1,018	779	587	816	957*	821*	602*	462*
False Crawls	458	706	555	1,161	895	1,026	212	476	838*	795*	606*	580*
Total	1,035	1,614	1,439	2,080	1,913	1,805	799	1,292	1,795*	1,616*	1,208*	1,042*

* Sea wall in place resulted in beach lengthened by 280m (increase 40%) for season 22/23, 23/24, 24/24 & 25/26.

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Summary Mark & Recapture Data: Cemetery Beach, Port Hedland

Category	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026
Nights patrolled	50	50	50	50	50
Total number of records (nest, false crawl and unknown)	898	835	894	926	604
Nests	574	451	486	464	284
False crawls	324	384	408	435	302
Individual turtles seen	191	251	225	214	121
New turtles tagged	23	20	21	16	12
Percentage new recruits to the rookery	14	13	9	8	10
Flipper & PIT tags used	154	124	167	56	41
Average carapace length (CCL) for turtles (mm)	89.1	88,9	88.8	89.0	88.7
Stranded turtles	2	2	4	3	2
Rescued stranded turtles	0	1	2	1	0

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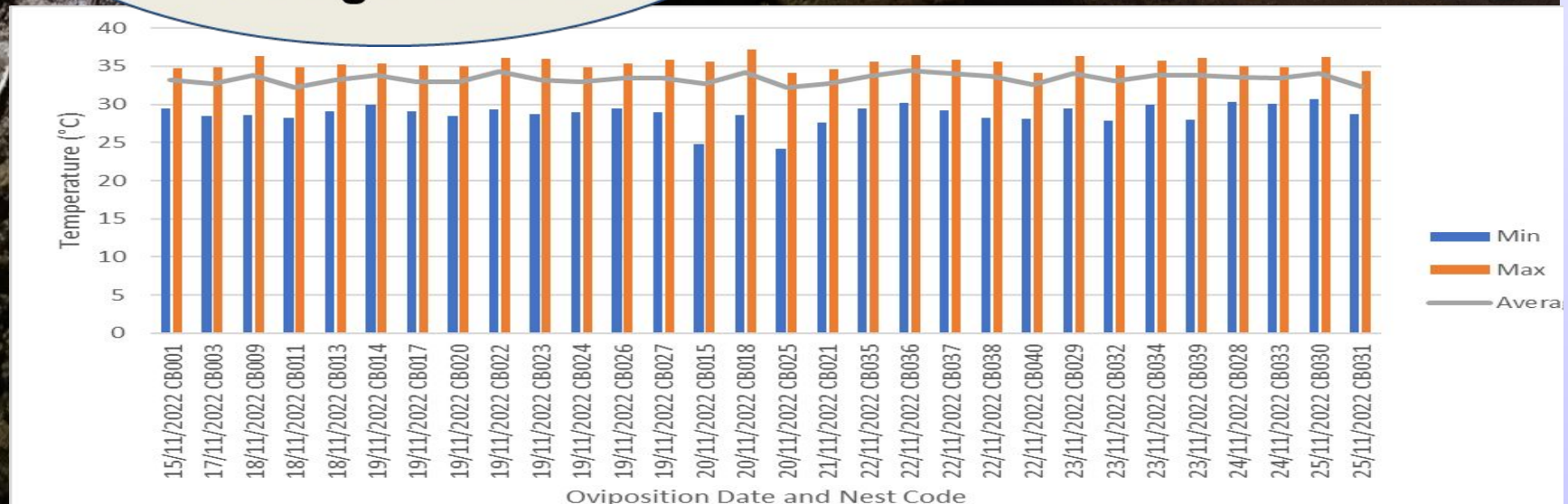
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Average hatching success rate over last 6 seasons has ranged from 67% to 20%.

Average is 48%



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Our Lessons For Success After 20 years

- Volunteer all-inclusiveness. Let everyone get involved!
- Simple volunteer training and consistent methods.
- Make sure the whole community knows about turtles, can see them & protect them.
- Communicate, communicate, communicate – clear, simple and consistent messaging.
- Embrace new opportunities & participate in research
- Know & analyse your own data, look for trends and differences.
- Use your data & observations to back up your views.
- Stay strong and let the data do the talking.
- Just like the turtles, slow and steady wins the race!

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Power of community leading innovative long-term local marine turtle monitoring & conservation.

Play your part to start, support and/or be in a community program today!

Thank You!

Care For Hedland Environmental Association Inc

- Website: https://careforhedland.org.au/
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