

A belated welcome to season 2001/2002. It has already been a busy season, with tagging taking place at Rosemary and Varanus Islands, and planned for Barrow Island and Munda Station. Once again, the volunteer workforce has been indispensable.



ROSEMARY ISLAND

Over 200 turtles have been encountered at Rosemary this season, with trips in September, October and December. The majority have been Hawksbills, with some Flatbacks in the December trip. Once again this year, numbers of Green turtles are very low.



NEWS FROM OTHER LOCATIONS

Delambre Island

A trip to Delambre Island in the Dampier Archipelago by a group of local gals revealed both Flatbacks and Hawksbills nesting. 54 turtles were encountered in two nights, 50 of which were Flatbacks. None had tags.

This is part of the inventory survey which is intended to reveal which beaches in the archipelago are used by which species of nesting turtles. This work is very important in providing an overall picture, and will assist CALM to make decisions about the future management of these areas.

Varanus Island

Peter Salinovich and Pat Cullen have been busy tracking down turtles on Varanus Island. While this is not a large rookery, their constant presence on the island means that virtually every turtle that emerges to lay is checked, tagged if necessary and measured. Thanks to Apache Energy for their continuing support of this program.

They have also been assisting Kellie Pendoley with her continuing PhD research in both the Lowendal and Montebello groups of islands.

Cowrie Beach, Munda Station

Tagging at this important Flatback turtle rookery is planned for early January, with volunteers from both Karratha and Perth getting involved.

Barrow Island

It again appears as if the Green turtles are staying away this year, as track numbers reported on Barrow Island have been very low. However, tagging is planned for mid-January, with assistance from Chevron Australia. Bob Young will be very ably assisted by Anna and Rob Vitenbergs. Apparently Rob spent some time on the island during its development in the 60s and is keen to see what has changed. He's in for a big surprise!



MARINE RESERVE PROPOSAL

Many of you may be aware of a proposal to make the Dampier Archipelago a marine conservation reserve. A community Advisory Committee appointed by the Minister for the Environment and Heritage assists CALM in the development of an indicative management plan for the area. They have met 6 times and have begun to consider zoning for the area. One of the areas under consideration included the SW corner of Rosemary Island in order to protect nesting and mating turtles.

Community input is a vital part of the development of the indicative management plan. Updates on this process will be made available at regular intervals. Should you want further information on progress or wish to comment on the proposal, please contact Fran Stanley on 9143 1488.