

Turtle Watch News 6



September 2011

Welcome! Exciting news for *Turtle Watch* this month ...

Turtle Nesting Sightings

“Turtles appear to be on the move a bit earlier this year, although I am still expecting higher numbers over the next few weeks,” commented Dr Jacqueline Giles, our Oblong Turtle Consultant.

Reports are coming in, via the *Turtle Hotline* that turtle nesting has commenced for this season. *Hotline* observations have been received from the Cockburn Wetlands Education Centre (CWEC) and Canning River Eco Education Centre (CREEC). Joe Tonga, our camera surveillance consultant, is assessing the information in terms of suitability of the nesting sites for camera monitoring.

If you see nesting behaviour in the 3 research areas –

- Herdsman Lake (Herdsman Lake Wildlife Centre, HLWC),
- Bibra Lake (CWEC),
- Canning River (CREEC/SERCUL)

please advise the eco centre staff and complete the hotline form.

HLWC, CWEC, CREEC or SERCUL will then contact Elaine, who will inform Joe.

Dr Jacqueline Giles, our Oblong Turtle Consultant, provided valuable input regarding **predator observations** for the hotline form. As we are recording ‘predators,’ these will generally be the predators of the adults. However, Dr Giles pointed out that *“fungus preys upon eggs (rather what is inside the egg...), and ants are also predators of hatchlings (in particular the Argentine ant)”*. These latter observations are very useful too and will assist us to develop a more thorough understanding of the ‘predator’ picture. If you notice evidence of such predators please add this information to the hotline form.

Denise Crosbie at CWEC has provided printouts of the ‘**community recording sheet**’ to the bushland management crews at the City of Cockburn to leave in their vehicles in case they come across turtles while in the field. If you do not already have copies of these and would like them, please contact Elaine.

Action: Please keep the nesting reports flowing in. Send information to Elaine for urgent action. Thank you.

Turtles Visited the Frogfest!

The third of our six community education events was held on Friday 30th September at the HLWC Frogfest. Over 100 people attended this evening of frog and turtle talks, along with a Nightstalk (<http://www.perthzoo.wa.gov.au/act/tiwest-night-stalk/>). During the Nightstalk two species of frog were observed ... and an oblong turtle! A *Turtle*

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Watch stall was also open from 6-8pm. Elaine Lewis talked about the research project, while Roger Harris displayed a live turtle and talked about turtle features, food, life cycle, habitat, and more. Visitors participated enthusiastically, with their questions answered by Roger and Elaine. Sincere thanks to Roger for sharing his expertise.

Future Turtle Education Events

The final three turtle education events scheduled for this project are:

- ✚ Saturday 15 October 8-10am, Bird Walk & Talk at HLWC – includes, at 9am, a presentation on turtles by Dr Jacqueline Giles.
- ✚ Sunday 6 November, 11am-5pm, Manning Park Rotary Spring Fair, City of Cockburn - *Turtle Watch* stall conducted by Elaine Lewis.
- ✚ Thursday 17 November, 7-8pm at CREEC - talk on turtles presented by Dr Jacqueline Giles.

Everyone welcome.

Turtle Education Pack

Elaine continues to develop the collection of resources for a turtle education pack. She is liaising with CWEC, Excelsior Primary School and Friends of the Western Swamp Tortoise.

Oblong Turtle Collaborative Research Group

The last meeting of the Oblong Turtle Collaborative Research Group was held on Monday the 29th August, 1.30pm, at Murdoch University in the Environmental Science Building seminar room. Caitlyn (Murdoch University) and Shino's (UWA) PhD research is progressing very well, with Shino providing some preliminary results from genetic analyses of 95 turtles. Dr Giles also advised the turtle monitoring program at Bibra Lake started at the end this month (30th Sept /1st -2nd Oct). If you wish to know more about any of the work of this Group please ask Elaine.

E-bulletin

The fifth e-bulletin was circulated to stakeholder groups:

1. Turtle Watch project team: Dr Jacqueline Giles (Oblong Turtle Consultant); Joe Tonga (Camera Surveillance Consultant); and Dr Jennifer Pearson (Community Education Consultant).
2. Eco-education centres: Roger Harris (HLWC); Vicky Hartill & Denise Crosbie (CWEC); and Hayley Bullimore & Kirsty Rowland (CREEC).
3. Oblong Turtle Collaborative Research Group: Dr Catherine Baudains, Dr Jane Chambers & Dr Mirela Tulbure (Murdoch Uni); Caitlyn Bartholomaeus (Murdoch Uni PhD candidate); Shino Hamada (UWA PhD candidate); and participants listed in 1 & 2 above.
4. City of Cockburn: Climate Change Adaption funding for an 'Oblong Turtle Population and Recruitment Capacity Study' (CWEC).

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5. Environmental and Landcare departments/organisations committed to oblong turtle conservation e.g. DEC, SERCUL.

6. Friends/volunteer groups interested in oblong turtle conservation e.g. Friends of Herdsman Lake and Canning River Regional Park Volunteers.

Feedback on the fifth e-bulletin was received from:

CWEC, CREEC, HLWC, SERCUL, Western Australian Wildlife Rehabilitation Council Inc., Friends of the Western Swamp Tortoise and Coolbinia Primary School.

Mid-Project Report

The mid-project report was submitted to Lotterywest this month. The project is progressing as planned. See attached.

Turtle Watch Information

For further information, you are welcome to contact Elaine Lewis at:

Elaine.Lewis@det.wa.edu.au

Please REMEMBER:

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Thank YOU



Australian Association for Environmental Education -WA

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