



Marine Turtles Western Australia

North West Shelf Flatback Turtle Conservation Program

Monitoring Summary 2022

History of the North West Shelf Flatback Turtle Conservation Program

- Began in 2009.
- Is a 60-year conservation program delivered from the Gorgon Gas Project.
- Is run by the DBCA.

7080

hours of monitoring were contributed by 59 volunteers this season!

Did you know?

The Dampier Archipelago is home to 50% of the North West Shelf flatback turtle population!

Below – Map of the North West Shelf study area. Source: © Landscape / DBCA

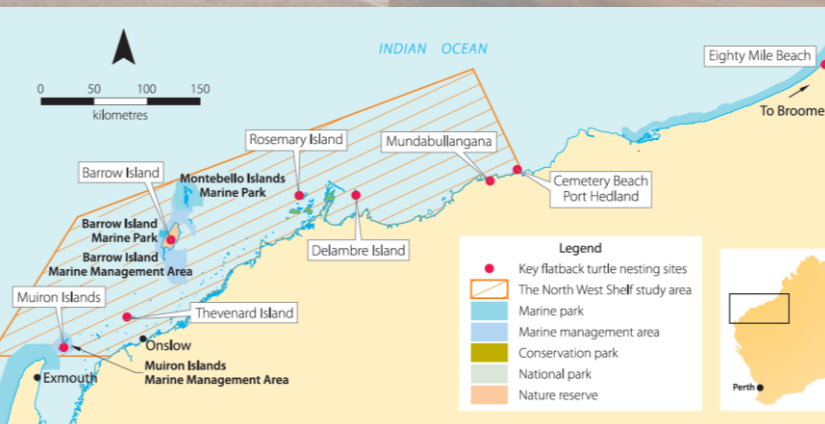
Objectives of the program

This program intends to increase the conservation and protection of the North West Shelf flatback turtle population by:

- Surveying, monitoring and research.
- Reducing interference to key breeding and feeding locations.
- Establishing information and education programs.

The program monitors

- nesting abundance and distribution by completing track counts, tagging and aerial surveys.
- demographic parameters including nesting success, recruitment and survivorship by tagging.
- hatching and emergence success by excavating nests.
- turtle health by measuring mass, carapace length and observations.
- foraging locations and behaviour.

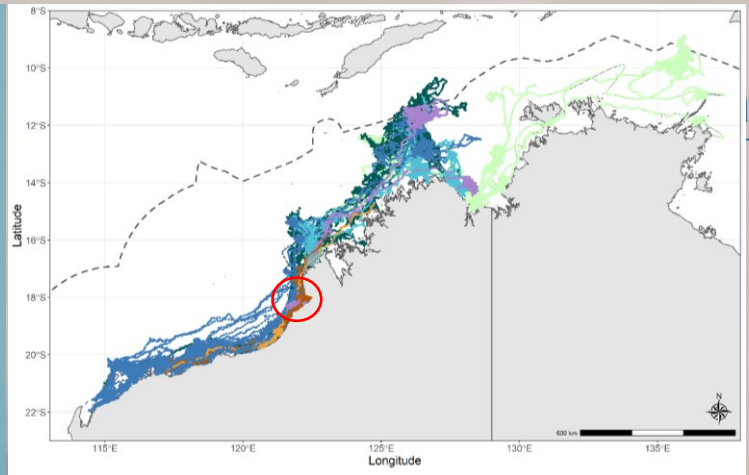


Rangers from the Ngarluma and Yawuru Aboriginal Corporations were involved in monitoring this season.



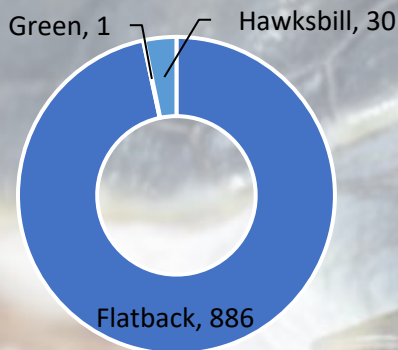
Roebuck Bay Foraging Site

- This is the only flatback turtle foraging ground being monitored in Australia.
- A total of 47 satellite tagged flatback turtles were tracked using the waters of Roebuck Bay for foraging or migration.
- Turtles from populations all across WA use Roebuck Bay.
- 96.4% of turtles used Roebuck Bay as a foraging area.
- Two-thirds of their time was spent in a protected area.



Above - Track paths of 107 flatback turtles satellite tagged in Western Australia. Populations “stocks” are identified by different colour lines. Roebuck Bay is circled in red. Source: © Sabrina Fossette / DBCA

Number of individuals identified at Delambre Island of each species



Delambre Island

- 2022 was the 5th season of monitoring.
- A total of 917 individual turtles were observed over the monitoring season. Some individuals returned several times to the beach.
- Three turtle species were identified, with 97% being flatback turtles.
- 228 turtles were observed for the first time at Delambre, while 657 were “remigrants” (returning after being recorded in a previous season).
- There were 604 nests recorded in the tagging area.

The North West Shelf Flatback Turtle Conservation Program supports monitoring at other Kimberly and Pilbara locations including Cape Domett, Cable Beach, Eco Beach, 80 Mile Beach and Cemetery Beach.

Thevenard Island

- 156 flatback turtles (97%) and 4 green turtles (3%) were observed over the monitoring season.
- 15 turtles were observed for the first time at Thevenard, while 141 were “remigrants”.
- Some individuals returned to the beach up to eight times this season.
- There were 124 nests recorded in the tagging area.

Total individual turtles and number of nests monitored at Thevenard Island over six years of monitoring (2016 – 2022)

