



## MEDIA RELEASE

### Abundant Flatback Turtles at Casuarina Coastal Reserve

Parks and Wildlife Service senior wildlife officer Ray Chatto today described this year's Flatback Turtle nesting season at Casuarina Coastal Reserve in Darwin as the best he's seen.

"We have had 20 nestings of the nationally threatened and high profile Flatback Turtle this season, which is nearly twice the previous highest," Mr Chatto said.

Mr Chatto said this year's record number of nests could be assisted by the positive work that began about 15 years ago in this long running program.

He said this work that involved monitoring the nests to ensure the eggs hatched and the young made it to the sea, may now be resulting in some of the young from the early 1990s coming back to their birth place to nest as adults themselves.

"During the past 15 years, the Parks and Wildlife Service has been involved in the successful relocation and hatching of about 100 nests, which has resulted in more than 3500 baby turtles making it safely to sea during this time," Mr Chatto said.

"And not only do the turtles benefit by enjoying a great start to their lives, the people who participate can also learn a lot about the turtles through the public talks that form part of the release program.

"From a handful of people coming along to the releases once or twice a season seven or eight years ago, up to 1500 people or more each season are now coming along to the popular activity."

Mr Chatto said the waiting list of people who participated in the releases of the hatchling turtles into the sea off Casuarina Coastal Reserve had almost been exhausted for the first time since the public viewing of the turtle release program began about seven years ago.

He said people could still call 8999 4555 during office hours to register their interest in turtle releases scheduled during the next month as there are a number of nests that are still incubating.

Mr Chatto said group sizes are generally determined by the number of turtles that hatch from a nest.

Groups of more than 250 people have been involved in the past to get through the waiting list but group numbers can now be reduced to about 100, making releases easier to manage.

Ends

**Media Note – For more information contact Ray Chatto on 0401 110 205**

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