

Media Release:

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Tracking Green Turtles All the Way Home

Satellite transmitters have been attached to two adult female Green turtles in the Cobourg Peninsula area to assist scientists find out more about their home foraging grounds and track their migration journey between foraging and nesting.

Department of Natural Resources, Environment, The Arts and Sport Marine Biodiversity research scientist Dr Scott Whiting said green turtles can migrate up to 2500km between their foraging grounds and nesting grounds meaning these turtles could go as far as Western Australia, Queensland, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea or even the Philippines.

“Satellite transmitters were attached to the turtles last month after they had finished laying eggs on Smith Point Beach which is located in Garig Gunak Barlu National Park on the Cobourg Peninsula,” Dr Whiting said.

“The larger turtle, which has a shell length of 110cm, was named Wadagil Ngardimardi by the Traditional Owners of the area, and the smaller turtle that measures 94.3cm was named Matilda by Conservation Volunteers Australia.

“Both transmitters were attached late last month and the transmitters are now sending signals to the satellites which analyses the information and gives a fairly accurate location, and we are checking their movements online each day.

“Matilda has finished nesting for the season and has travelled over 600km so far and is currently located to the east of Timor Leste and near the Indonesian island on Pulau Leti.

“Wadagil Ngardimardi is still hanging around the nesting beach and may have several more clutches of eggs to lay before she heads for home.

“The migration distances and constant speeds are amazing – Matilda is currently averaging over 20km each day.

“We’re using the transmitters to follow the turtles return trip home after nesting to help us identify where they live - this information is vitally important as we need to identify threats these populations face throughout their life, including in areas outside of the Northern Territory.

“The satellite technology allows us to get a better understanding of the lives of these turtles and translates the information quickly into a mappable format that can be viewed by everyone.”

To view the turtle tracks go to www.seaturtle.org/tracking and select Green Turtles - Northern Territory.

This project is a partnership between NRETAS and Conservation Volunteers Australia with partial funding by the National Heritage Trust.

Ends

Media Note – for more information contact Dr Scott Whiting on 8920 9221 or Glenn McFarlane (Conservation Volunteers Australia) on 8981 3206 or 0428 533 057

Images – green turtles fitted with satellite transmitters heading out to sea

Map – courtesy of www.seaturtle.org

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