

Media Release:

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Innovative Technology Reveals Sea Turtle Biology

A community based marine scientific monitoring program of sea turtle populations around the Northern Territory coastline will be enhanced by innovative technology to investigate the breeding condition of turtles and to track their migrations from their nesting beaches.

The Department of Natural Resources, Environment, The Arts and Sport marine biodiversity research scientist Dr Scott Whiting said the project will continue to work in partnership with Indigenous Sea Rangers across the Top End.

“This project will work with four species of threatened, listed marine and migratory marine turtles including the Olive Ridley turtle, Hawksbill turtle, Flatback turtle and Green Sea turtles but will have implications for a wider range of species,” Dr Whiting said.

The project received a \$161,000 grant through the Australian Government Natural Resource Management Caring for our Country Community Coastcare projects.

“Building from the success of previous community-based monitoring of sea turtles this project will allow some us to purchase additional equipment such as satellite tracking equipment to better understand their biology,” Dr Whiting said.

“It will use innovative techniques including surgical laparoscopy to provide information on the turtles breeding condition and satellite telemetry to track sea turtle migrations.”

The project has multiple objectives including;

- to increase biological knowledge of the sea turtles in each region for use in management decisions
- community participation
- education and awareness raising including involvement in schools and;
- enhancement and continuation of existing successful projects.

Existing Indigenous groups include the Tiwi Land Council, Anindilyakwa Land Council, Mabunji Aboriginal Resource Association in Borroloola and the Board of the Garig Gunak Barlu National Park at Cobourg Peninsula.

Other partner groups include Conservation Volunteers Australia and Coastcare.

The Caring for our Country Community Coastcare grants are aimed at protecting and rehabilitating Coastal environments and critical aquatic habitats and enhancing community skills, knowledge and engagement with Indigenous Australians, volunteers and coastal communities.

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

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Media Note – for more information contact Scott Whiting on 89209 221

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