

Conservation & Fisheries Department

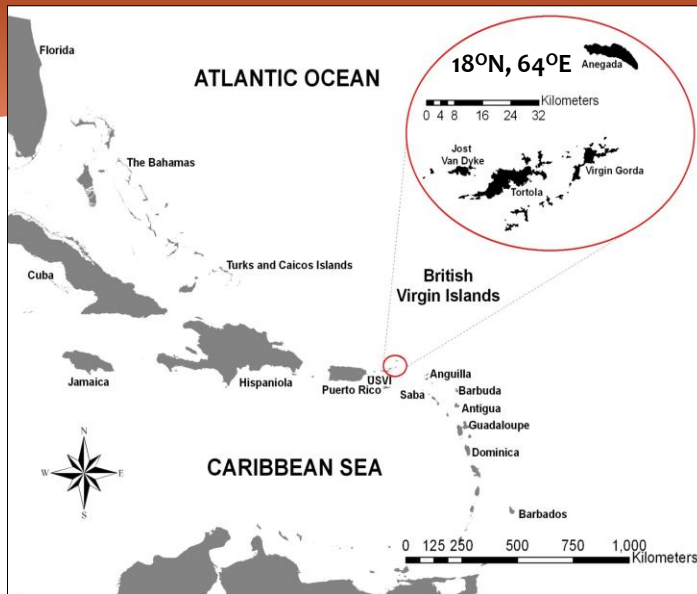
(Ministry of Natural Resources and Labour)

British Virgin Islands (BVI)

Mr. Joel Dore
VIMAT Turtle Project Coordinator
| Marine Biologist Assistant



British Virgin Islands (BVI)



Virgin Islands Marine Turtle Programme (VIMAT)



VIMAT

The “British Virgin Islands (BVI) Turtle Project”, now “Virgin Islands Marine Turtle Programme” was started in 2002 as part of the TCOT Project, where the main objective was to “Assess the impact on marine turtle populations of harvesting - legal and illegal, targeted and non-targeted - in UK Overseas Territories (OT's)”

VIMAT Goals

To determine the abundance & distribution of the marine turtle population in the BVI.

The BVI's In-water Tagging/Monitoring History.

The British Virgin Islands In-water Turtle Tagging/Monitoring Programme started as a continuation of the TCOT Project, that was carried out in 2002 in the UK Overseas Territories (OT's).

How did the programme got started?

- CITES
 - UK signatory of CITES
 - Cuba wanted to export turtles

Site Selection & Sampling

SITE SELECTION

* When selecting sites there are a number of factors to consider?

- Access
- Weather
- Knowledge of turtles in given area

IMPORTANT!

- Obtain information from local fisher folks about known fishing areas

SAMPLING

Sampling is based on the program's objectives

Data

* Analysis of data could determine

- Distribution
- Abundance
- Growth Rates
- Migrations patterns

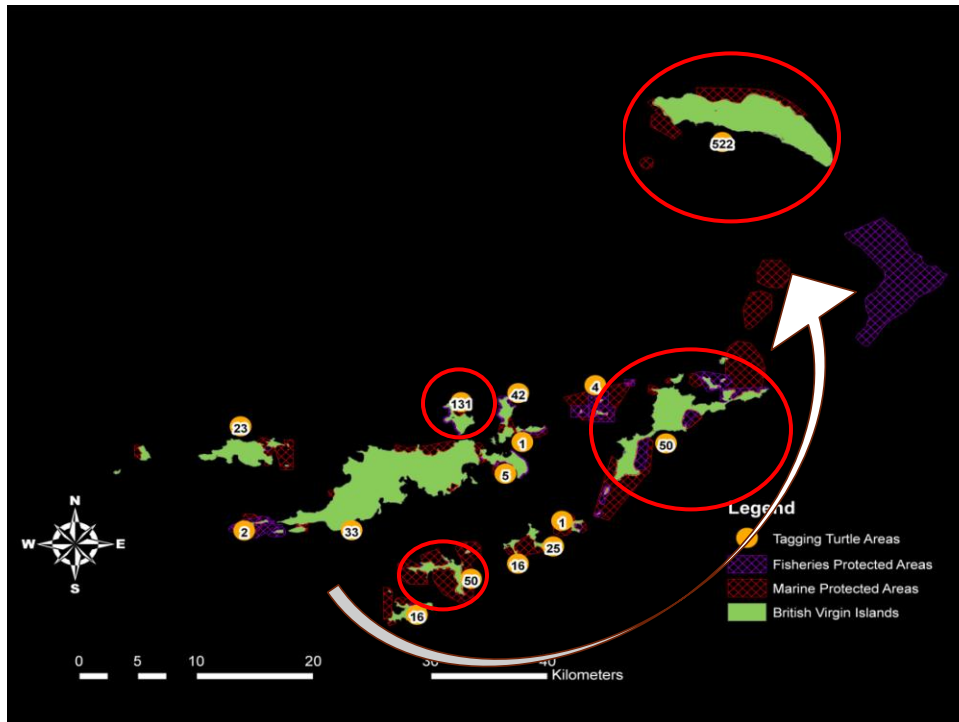


Information gathered from data (BVI)

* Through the observation of the recorded data we've been able to indentify:

- Hot spots
- Growth rates
- Local migratory patterns



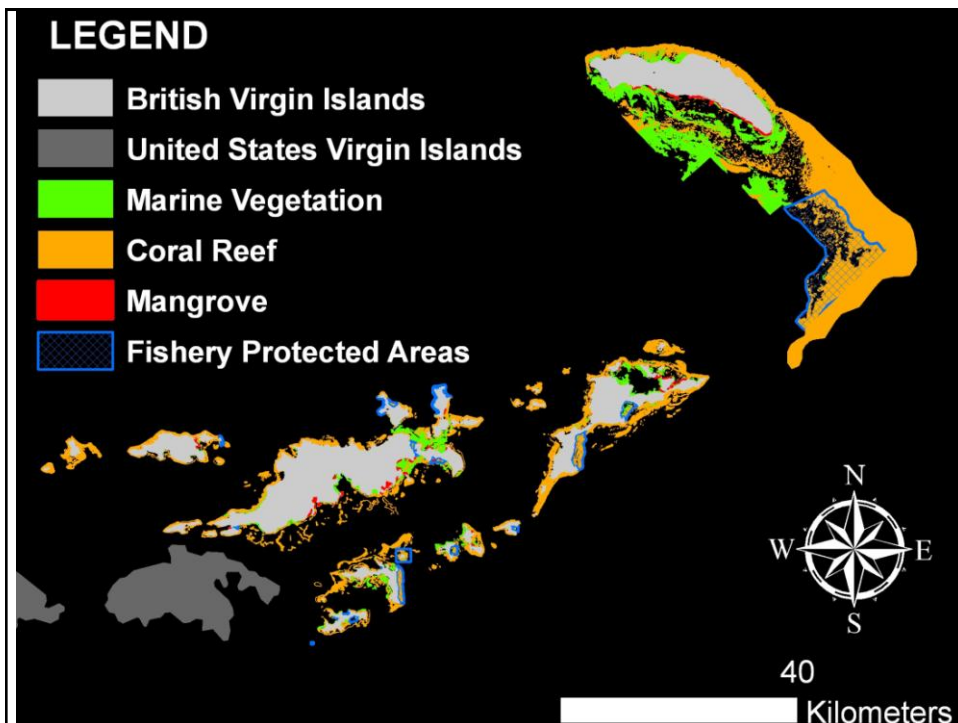


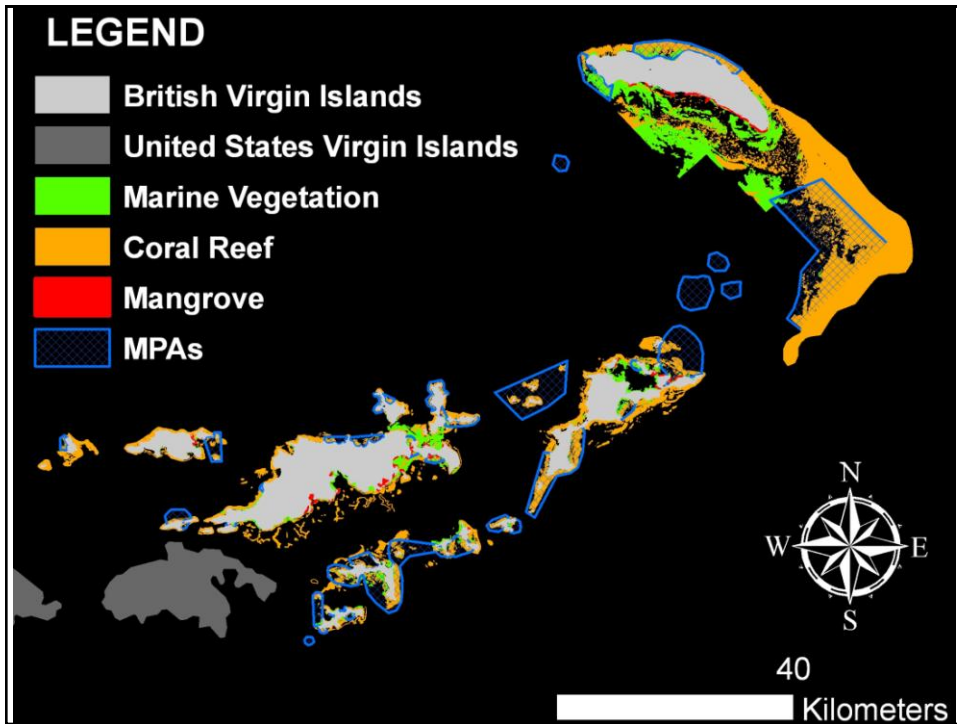
Monitoring Effort

- * VIMAT (BVI)
 - Turtle monitoring is done once or twice a week but is typically based on weather conditions and availability of monitoring resources.
 - Coral reef monitoring is very limited , it is usually done on an as needed basis; but is annually monitored by a local group that carries out the “ReefCheck” protocol.

Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)

- * In the BVI, under the National Parks Systems Plan, there are Fishery Protected Areas (FPAs) and Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)
- * Selecting sites for MPAs were dependent upon extensive stakeholders meetings, the completion of the MARXAN Programme, and habitat mapping (grounding and bleaching).

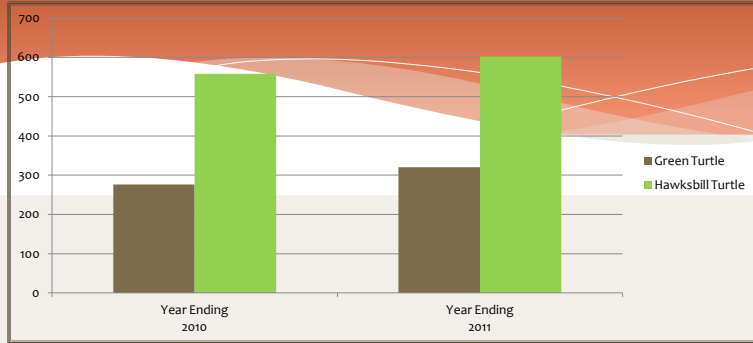




Management Mandate

- * Conservation and Fisheries Department, (under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Labour) is the agency responsible for all marine monitoring in the Territory.
- * Monitoring is conducted with the aid of local legislations and regulations.

In-Water Tagging Update Report

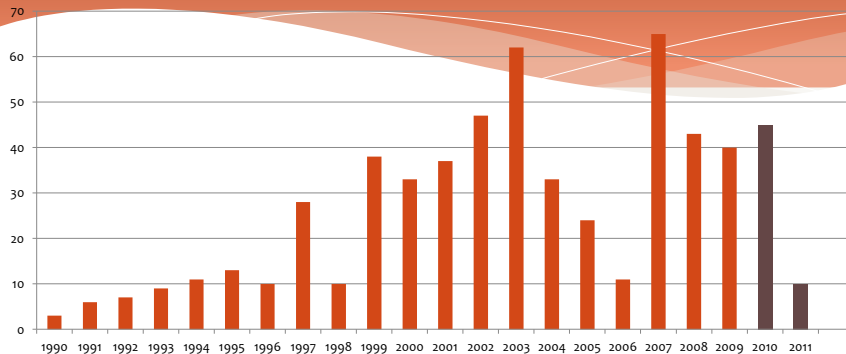


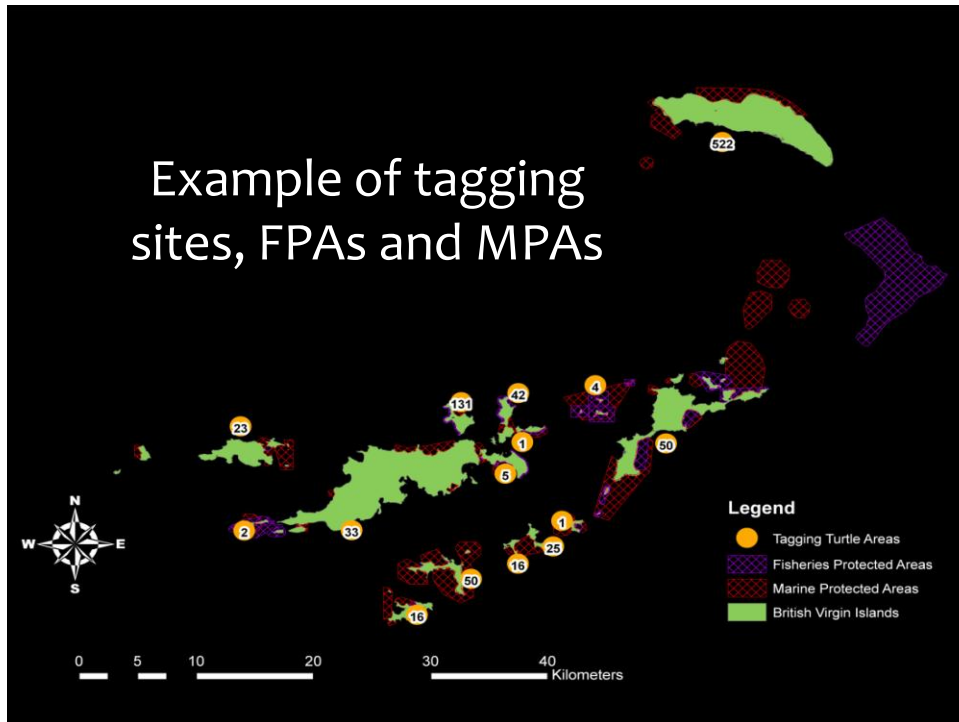
Year ending **2010** we had an increase of: **26 Green** totaling **276** recorded
34 Hawksbills totaling **558** recorded

Year ending **2011** we had an increase of: **44 Green** totaling **320** recorded
44 Hawksbills totaling **602** recorded

Total tagged Turtles year ending 2011 = 922 Animals

Leatherback Nesting Activity Update



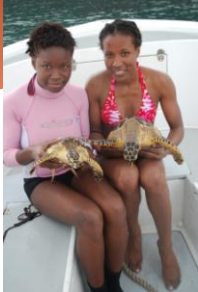


Our Partners and Funding

- * BVI Tourist Board – Using Turtles as a eco amenity to our tourism product, while raising awareness and funds.
- * Summer Sailing Programmes/Companies
-These companies are science scholarship based programmes that occur over the summer break. They assist us with the In-water Tagging Programme.
- * Funding is obtained from our Local Government and Summer Sailing Programmes.

What VIMAT has been doing?

Education & Awareness



Future Projection

- * In ten (10) years we expect that VIMAT will be removed from the Conservation and Fisheries Department and turned into a Non-Government Agency (NGOs).

Networking Strengths

- * Being a member of WIDECASST has provided regional collaboration on best practices and ideas for improving of our local Programme.



Any Questions?

