St Eustatius Country Report

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Outline

- Just where is St Eustatius?
- Laws protecting turtles
- Turtles in the Marine Park
- Statia’s Role in Sea Turtle Conservation
- Research on Statia’s Sea Turtles on land and in-water
- Questions
Where is St Eustatius?

Laws protecting Sea Turtles in St Eustatius

- 1978 Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (Bonn Convention)
- Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) Protocol of the Cartagena Convention
- Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles
- Turtles are protected year round on St. Eustatius
Species of turtles in Statia’s waters

- Leatherback Turtle
- Hawksbill Turtle
- Green Sea Turtle
- Loggerhead Turtle (unconfirmed sighting in 2003, confirmed tracks in 2010/13)

Statia’s role in sea turtle conservation

Goal: to promote the long term survival of the endangered sea turtles populations of Statia

- Monitor sea turtle nesting and foraging populations
- Protect habitat and reduce impacts on nesting populations
  - Conducting beach clean-ups
  - Limit impacts on nesting beaches (sand mining, erosion, driving)
- Involve the local community
Concerns on index beach:

- Driving on sand
- Cliff falls
- Beach Erosion
- Sand Mining
Research and Monitoring
past, present, future

Beach Mapping 10 years - ongoing

- Long term record of sand movement and beach erosion
- Facilitates better management of the nests and decisions on relocation or not

Average of the distance from the stakes to HTL in 2006 - 2011
**Sand temperature survey – Swansea University**

- Black volcanic sand
- Some areas high % of cooked eggs
- Results so far....

**Shading experiment – Wageningen University**

Palm leaves, white sand, white sheet

Preliminary results: Palm leaves seem to work the best, dropping the temp by up to 1º after 3 days
Leatherback Hatching Success

- History of low nesting success
- 2009 – pilot nest relocation project
- Hatching success in relocation area was 0%

- Use the shading method advised or …

Incubation

Program has the equipment and know how but no opportunity yet
Future project: sand analysis

In water surveys
In-Water survey in 2008 and 2011

- Survey is done around the entire island
- Most sightings are on the Caribbean side of the island – the busiest side

In Water Dive Sightings

- Collaboration with the local dive shops to provide data of all sighted sea turtles in marine park
- Started in 2005 and is ongoing
- Size, sex, distribution, activity, environment, periods
G5 Loggers – Swansea University

- G5 ‘s record temperature and pressure
- Learn about movements and feeding behaviour
- Sleeping turtles on the Chien Tong Wreck

Population assessment at Chien Tong

- Results from the G5 logger research continued in follow up population assessment study (40 turtles counted)
- Tagging Sea turtles with all-weather paint stick and the Lincoln-Petersen method will be used
Notable since we last spoke

Albino green hatchlings
• Track – 5 time visitor to Statia
• Miracle nest relocations

Laid Dec 13, hatched March 31
108 days incubation!!!!!!

Thanks to the following:

[Logos of various organizations]
Closing – Questions and Answers

Thank you for your interest