

# Neonatal Care of Sea Turtle Hatchlings

## Thoughts and Techniques



*Carla Daniel, Barbados Sea Turtle Project*

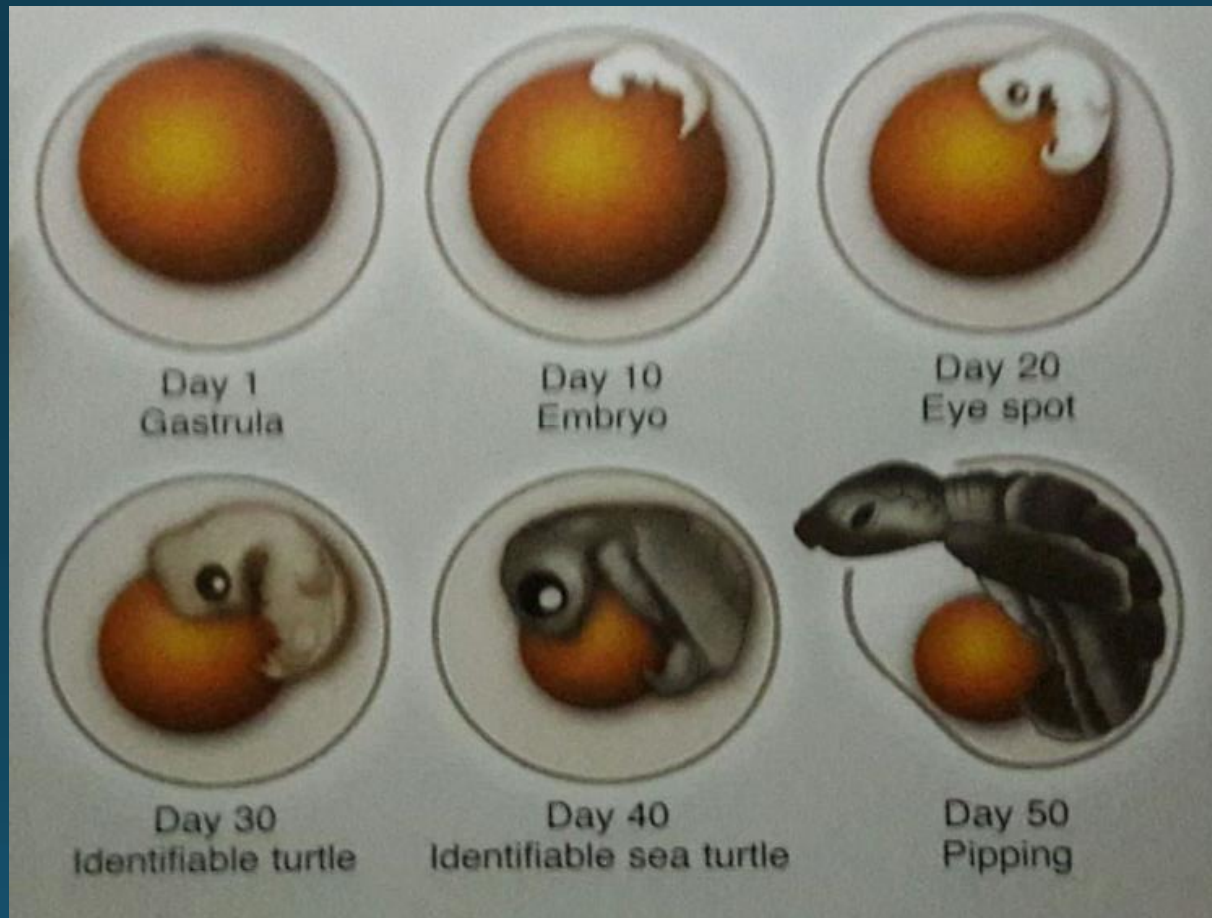
WIDECAS<sup>T</sup> Annual General Meeting  
Trinidad, 2018

# Hatchling Encounters

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# Embryonic Development



- A Nest and its Developing Eggs, Reprinted from **Our Sea Turtles: A Practical Guide for the Atlantic and Gulf, from Canada to Mexico**, Blair and Dawn Witherington

# Final Days

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- One of the last stages of hatchling development is the absorption of the Yolk . Fully Developed hatchlings have a smooth closed plastron.





28.08.2011 10:19

• Photo by Angela Picknel

# Premature Hatchlings



## Resulting from

- Predation
- Washout
- Excavation
- Disturbance





# How can you help? Hatchling ICU

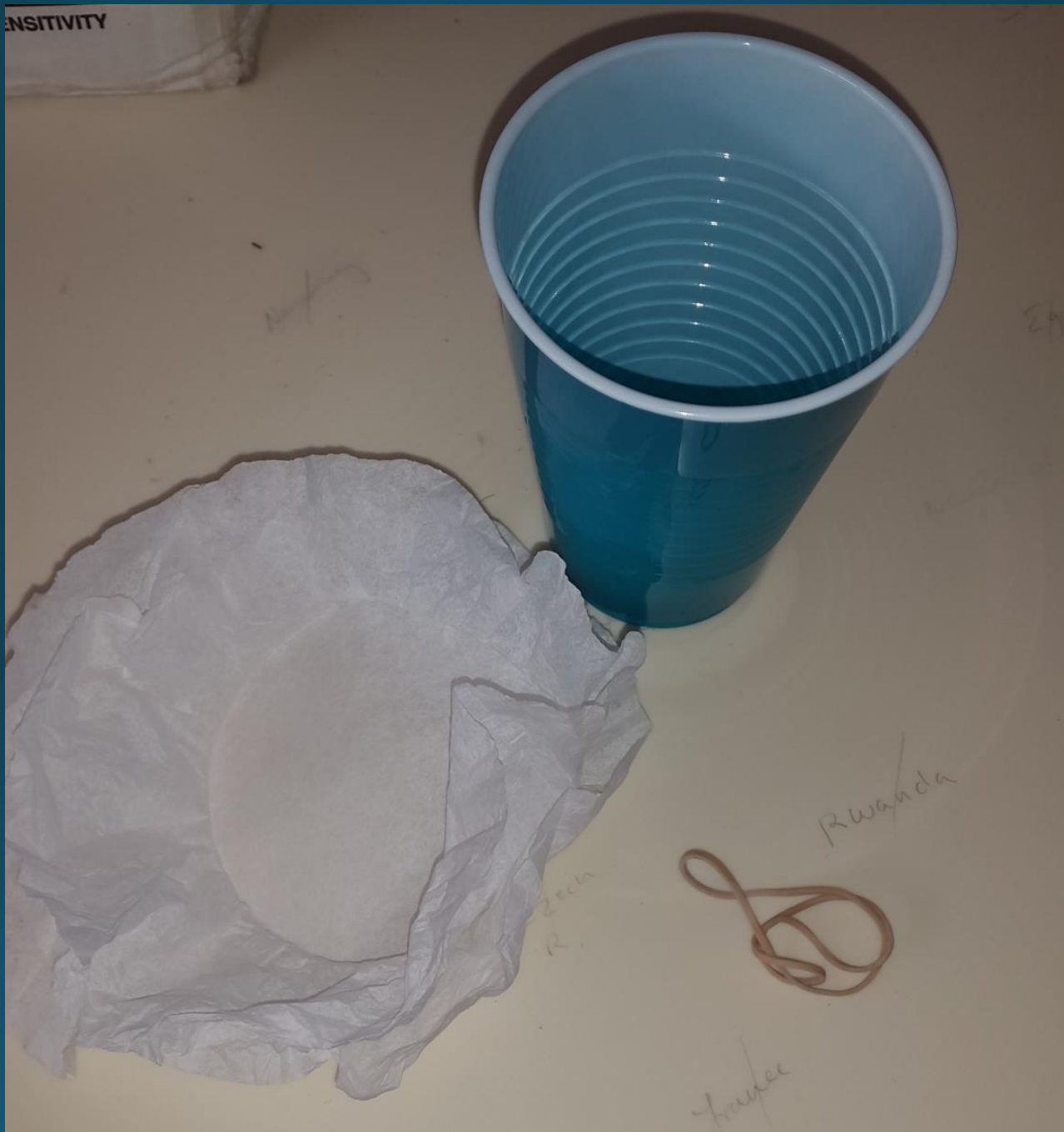


1. Cups
2. Tissue
3. Rubber bands





SENSITIVITY



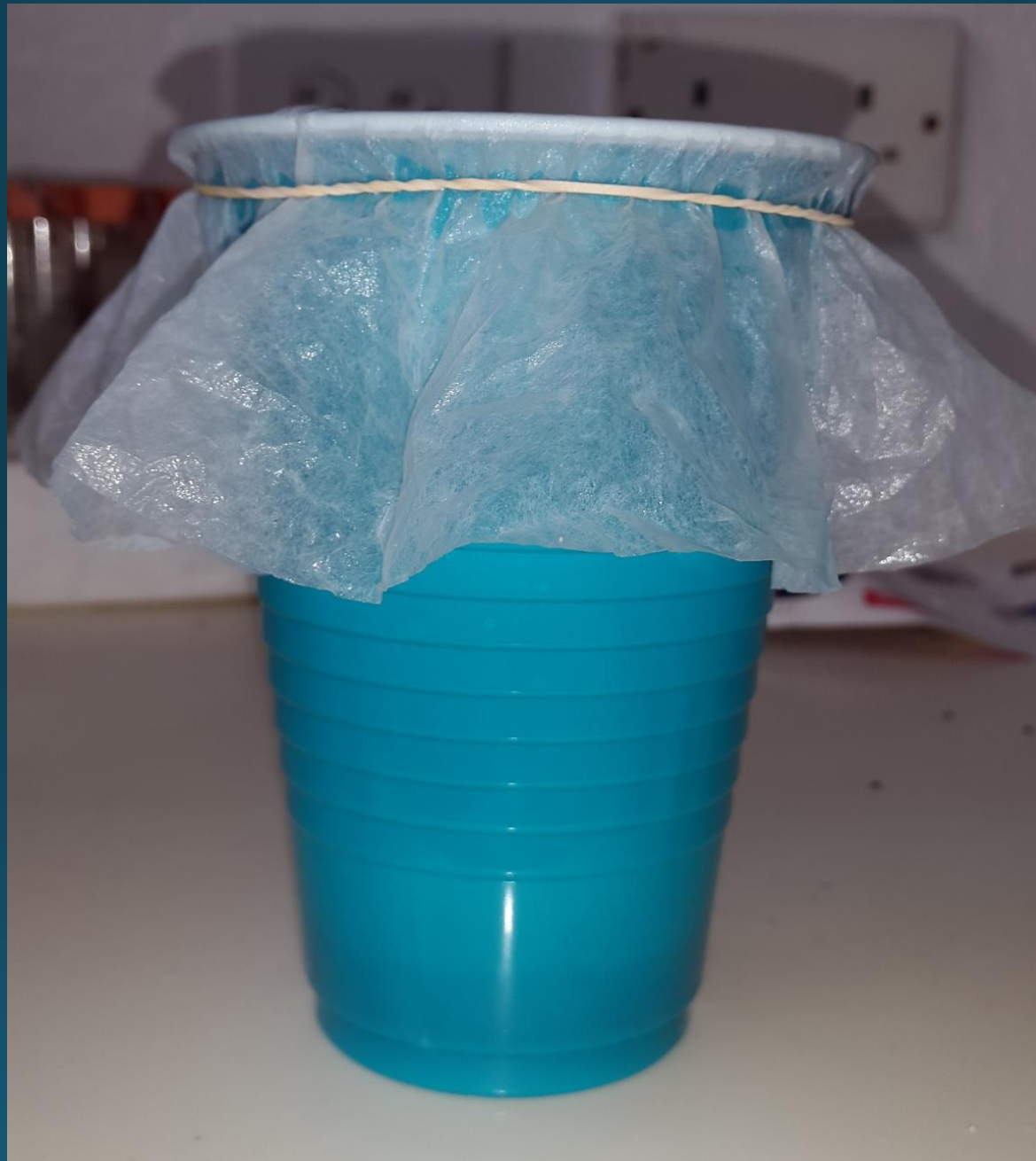
Rwanda

Zach  
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# Important Considerations

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- **Are the hatchlings viable?**
- >> (deformities, too premature, ruptured yolk)



# Important Considerations

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- Is the ICU the best option?
- >> What about relocation or container incubation? How many?



# Important Considerations

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- **Should the hatchling be removed from the egg?**
- >> How and when was it pipped?



If yes –

**If present remove  
membrane from  
around body**

**Rinse gently in  
clean fresh water**



# Troubleshooting - Lord of the flies !



- There are larvae (maggots) eating the hatchling!
- >> Recovery is possible.



Avoid by –

- Washing hatchling if exposed
- Cover cup securely
- Cover ICU with net
- CHECK DAILY

# Release !

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- **Keep for as little time as possible** (release with company)





# Please Remember

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- Ensure the tissue completely covers the top of the cup
- Ensure that there are no holes in the tissue
- That both tissues are clean and damp
- CHECK DAILY
- RELEASE ASAP



A close-up photograph of two baby turtles, likely sea turtles, resting on cracked white eggshells. The turtles have dark, patterned shells and heads. The eggshells are covered in a layer of light-colored, granular material, possibly sand or crushed shells. The background is dark and out of focus. The text "Our Lives Are" is overlaid in blue, and "WORTH IT!" is overlaid in pink.

Our  
Lives  
Are

WORTH  
IT!