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**Saving the sea turtles of Anguilla: combining community action  
with scientific evidence to drive legislative change**

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# Turtle conservation in Anguilla

- In recognition of the severe decline in regional sea turtle populations the Government of Anguilla (GOA) established a five-year moratorium on sea turtle harvesting in 1995 that has since been extended to 2020.

## However

- Lack of data on sea turtle populations in Anguilla limits effective policy enforcement
- Despite the moratorium, the tradition of eating turtle meat and eggs remains deeply engrained in Anguilla's culture, and turtles continue to be hunted illegally in Anguilla's waters while eggs continue to be collected from nests.
- The moratorium is highly debated among the public and has become political





# Our project

- 3 year €400,000 EU BEST Funded project (2016-2019)
- Occurring at a key moment, with the sea turtle moratorium set to end in 2020
- Aims to collect robust scientific data to support the decision making process, while also addressing the impact on the livelihoods and cultural heritage of local people who may be affected by such conservation measures.



University of  
Roehampton  
London



**WIDECAST**

Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network



# Ecological data collection

## Population estimates of nesting turtles

- Weekly beach monitoring throughout the breeding season recording species and track widths to provide estimates of number of breeding turtles

## Nestling survival

- Nests excavated after estimated incubation period to record number of eggs, number of hatchlings etc.

## Population estimates of foraging turtles

- Weekly at-sea capture of foraging turtles for flipper tagging
- Analysis of 15+ years of mark-release recapture data for population and survival estimates

## Collection of movement data

- Satellite tracking of 12 foraging and 12 nesting turtles to identify important at-sea areas



# Qualitative data collection

- Local staff undertook qualitative data collection and analysis training in 2017
- Questionnaire designed and piloted
- 50 stakeholder structured interviews conducted

**Conducted with the aim of understanding the local communities views on turtle conservation and the turtle moratorium.**



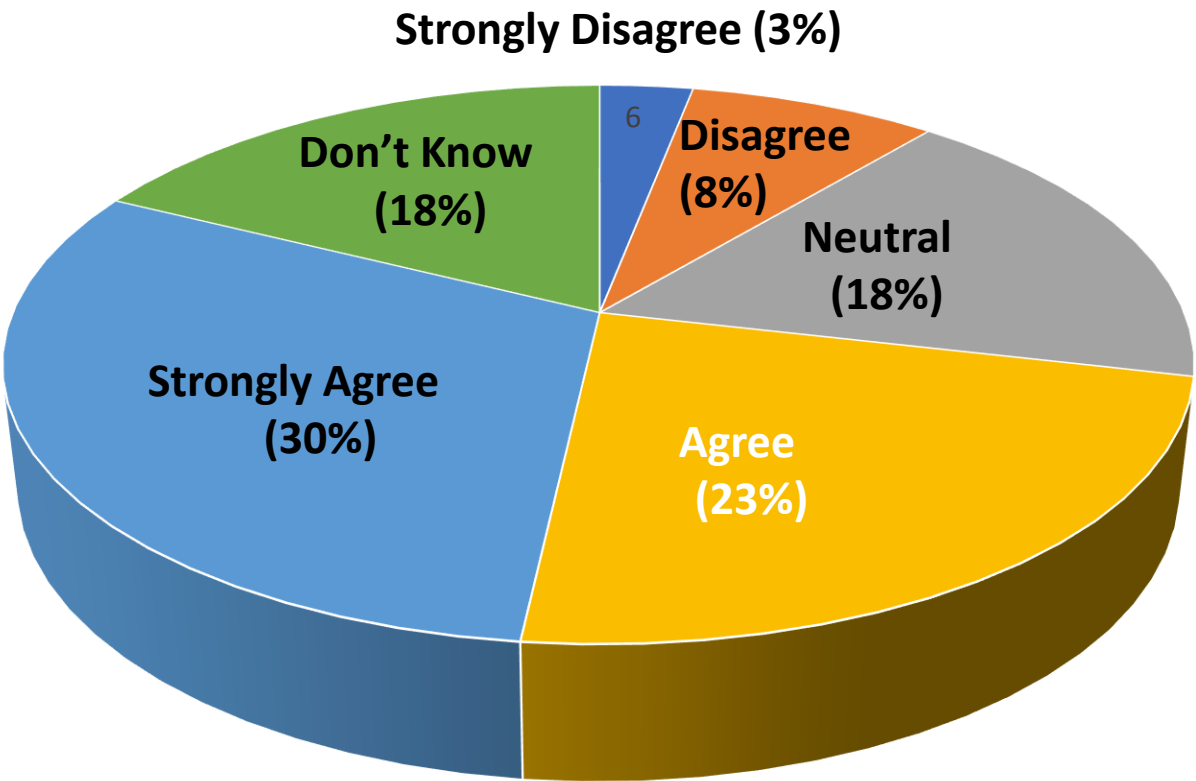
Results  
so far.....



# Qualitative data collection

Do you agree with the current ban?

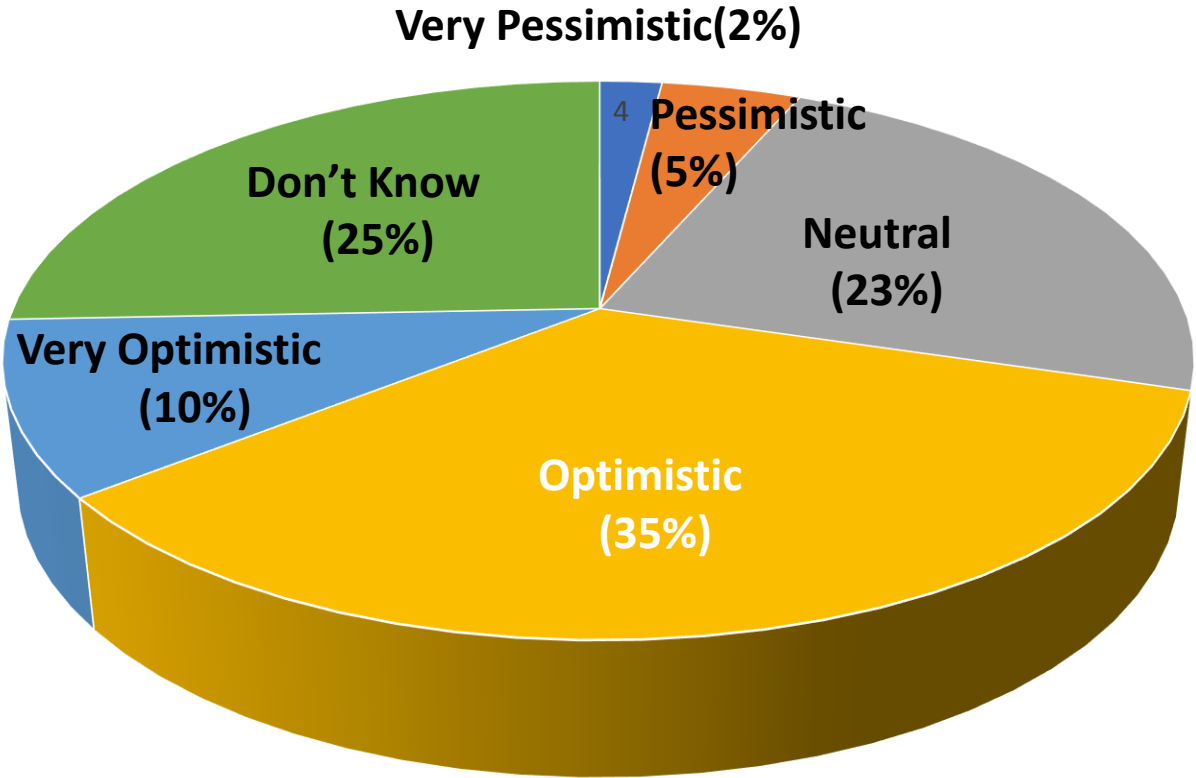
- only 3% strongly disagree with the ban
- 53% agree with the ban
- 36% do not express a preference  
(i.e over a 1/3 are persuadable)



Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
6	16	35	46	61	35
3%	8%	18%	23%	30%	18%

# How do you feel about the future of turtles in Anguilla?

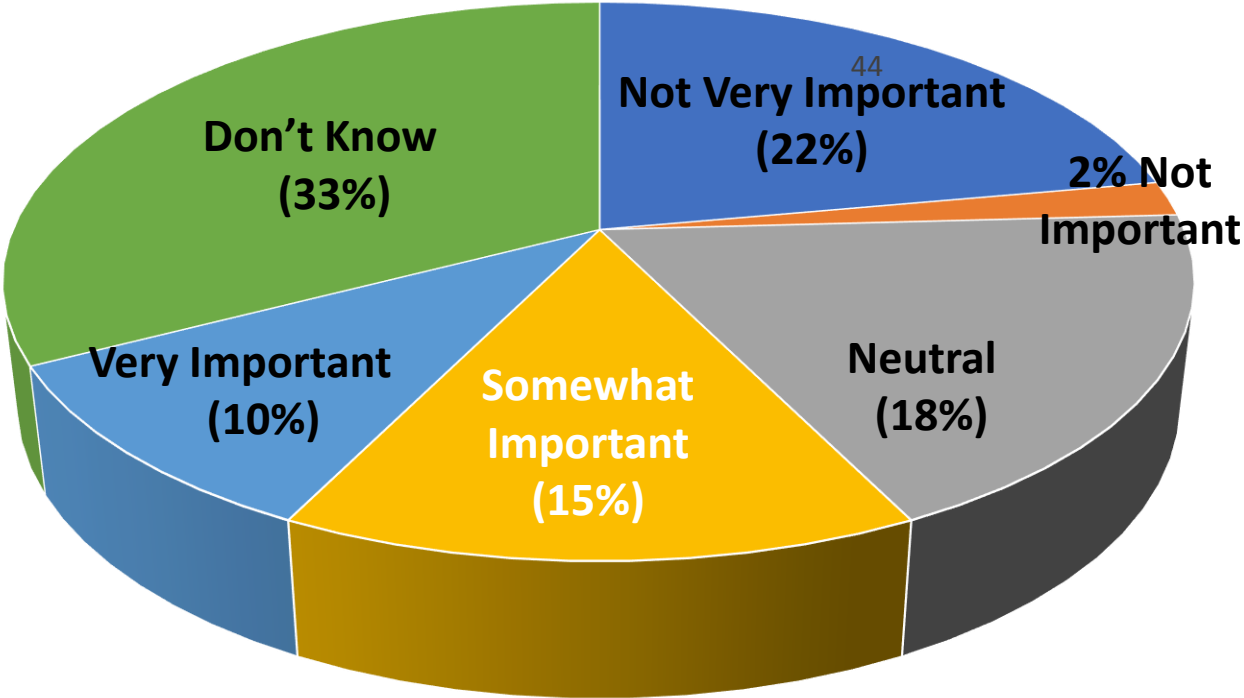
- 45% optimistic about the future of turtles
- 7% pessimistic about the future of turtles
- 48% do not express a preference (ie a 1/2 persuadable constituency)



Very Pessimistic	Pessimistic	Neutral	Optimistic	Very Optimistic	Don't Know
4	9	46	69	20	51
2%	5%	23%	35%	10%	25%

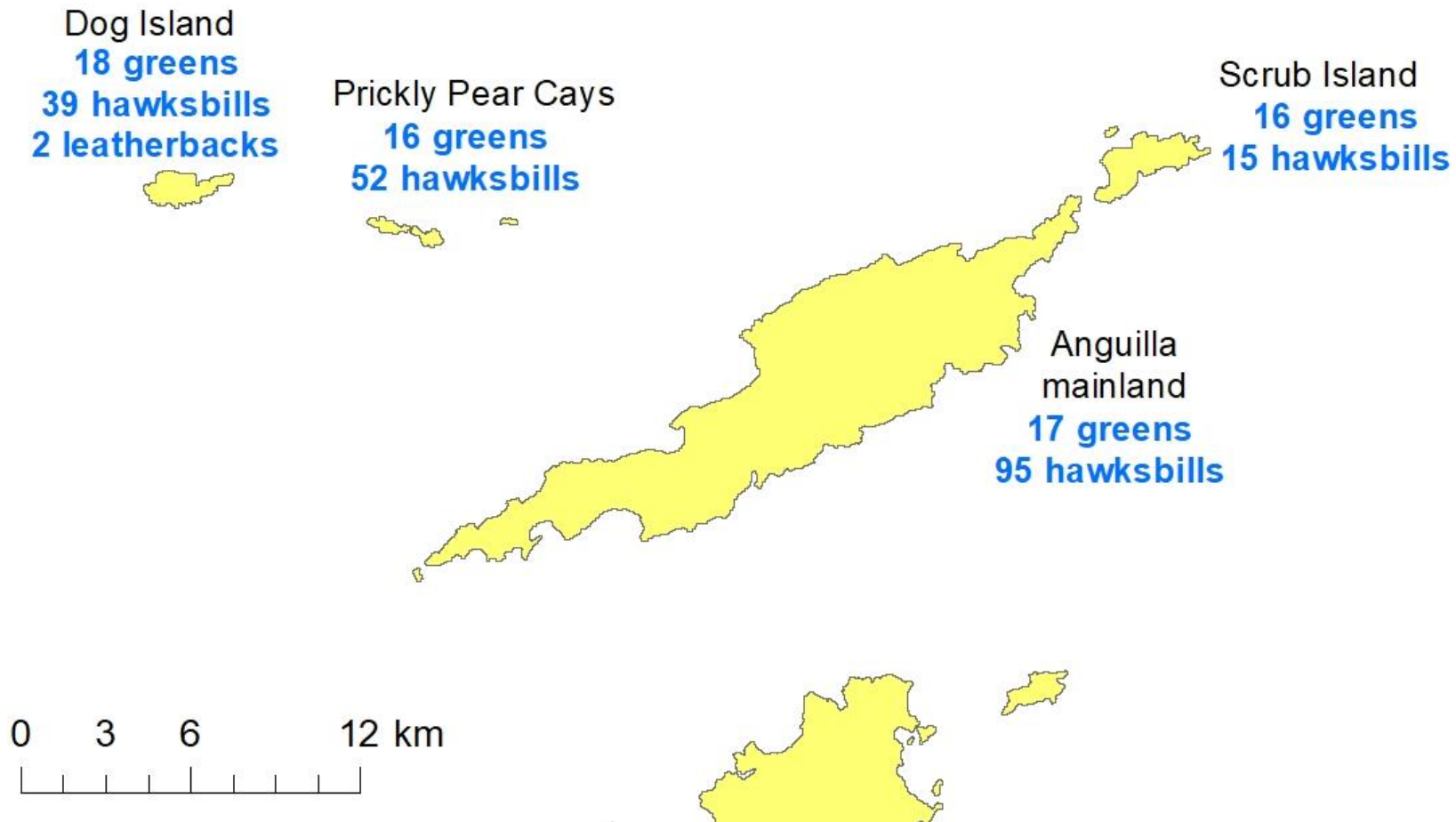
# How important are turtles for tourism in Anguilla?

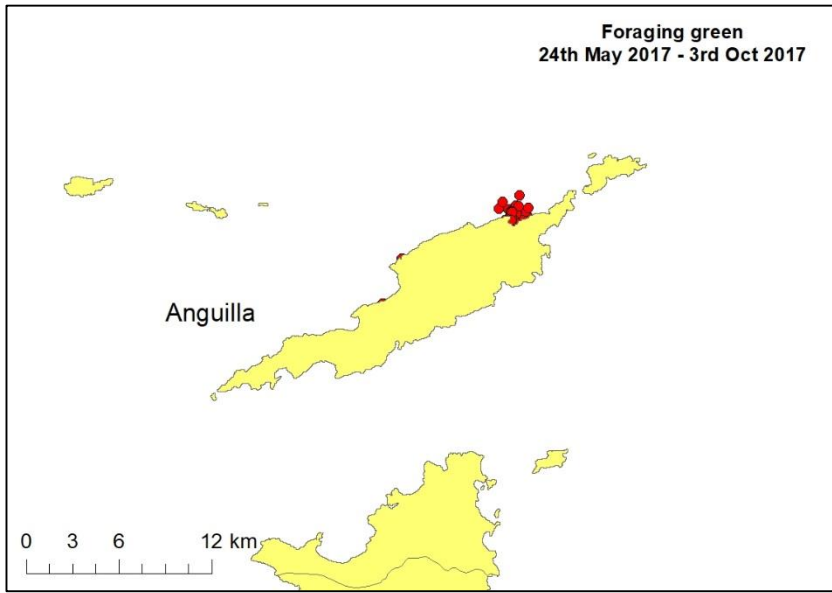
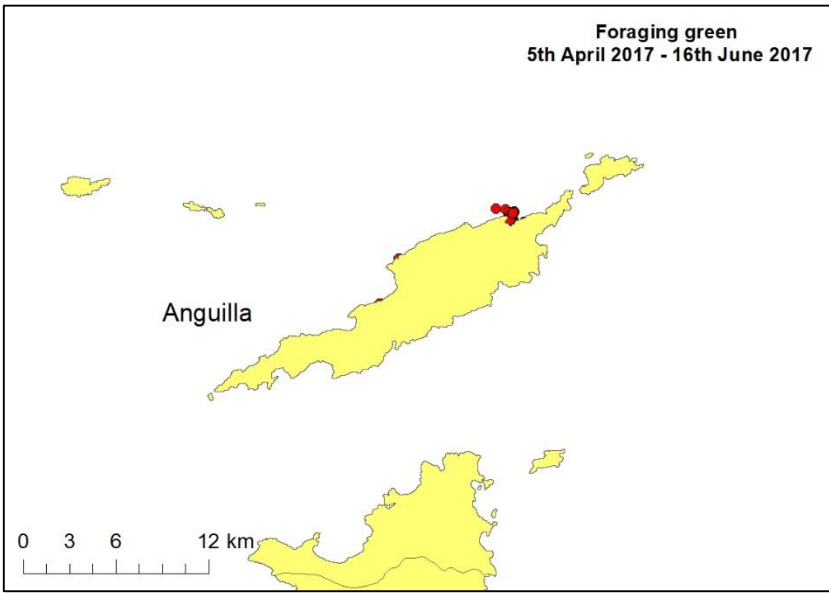
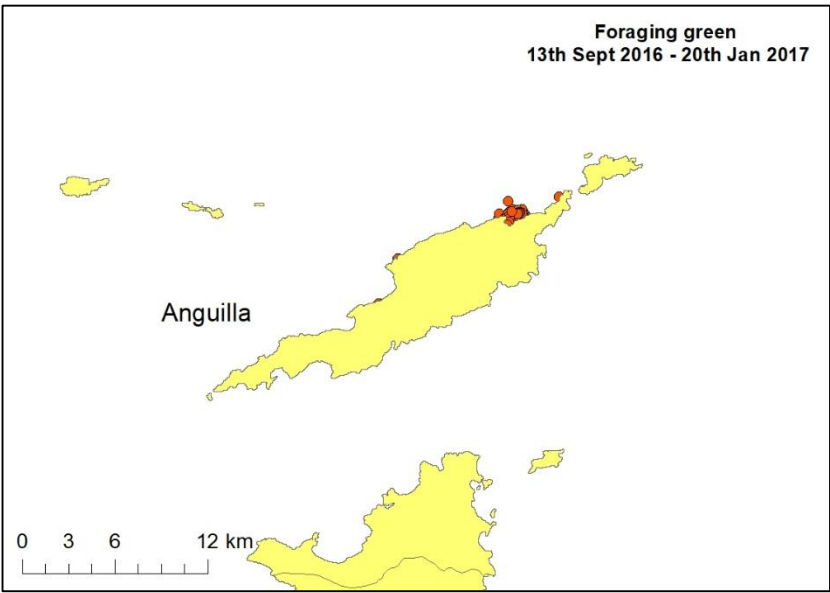
- 22% see turtles as Not Very Important
- 51% Neutral/Don't Know
- Only 25% see turtles as Somewhat / Important for tourism in Anguilla



Not Very Important	Not Important	Neutral	Somewhat Important	Very important	Don't Know
44	4	37	29	20	65
22%	2%	18%	15%	10%	33%

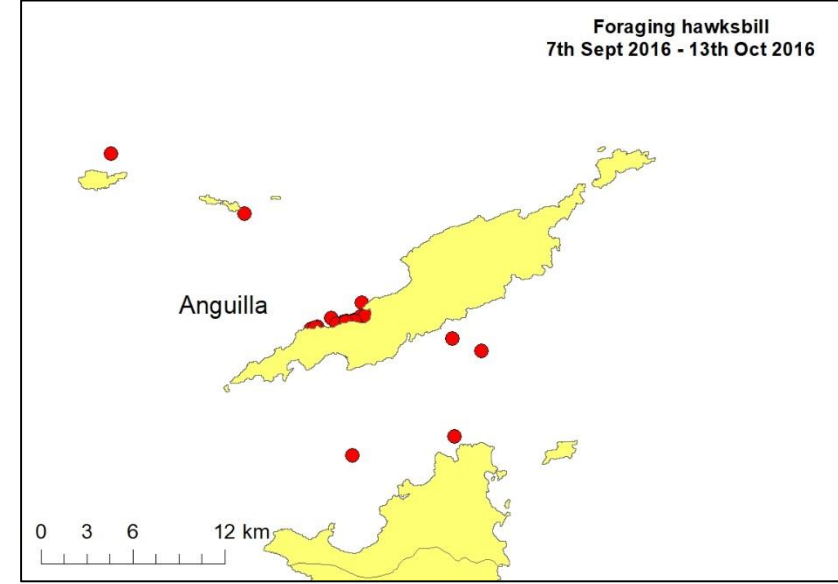
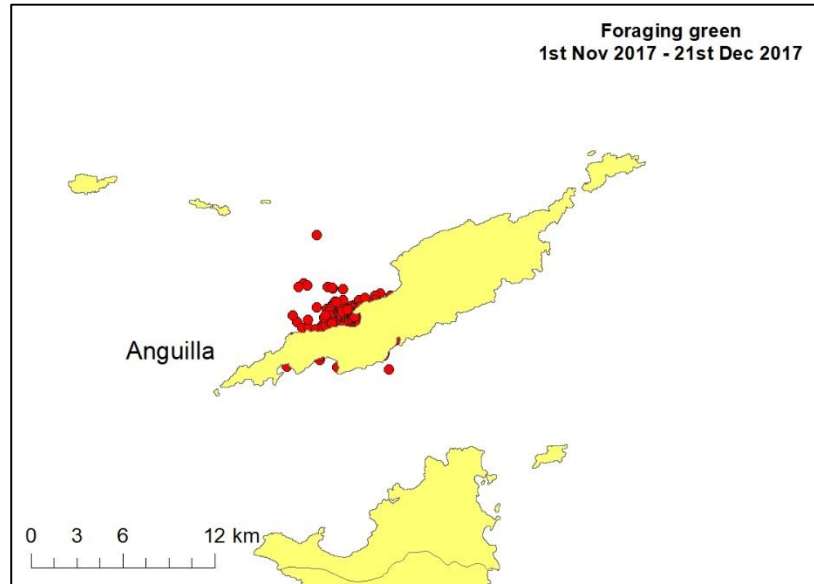
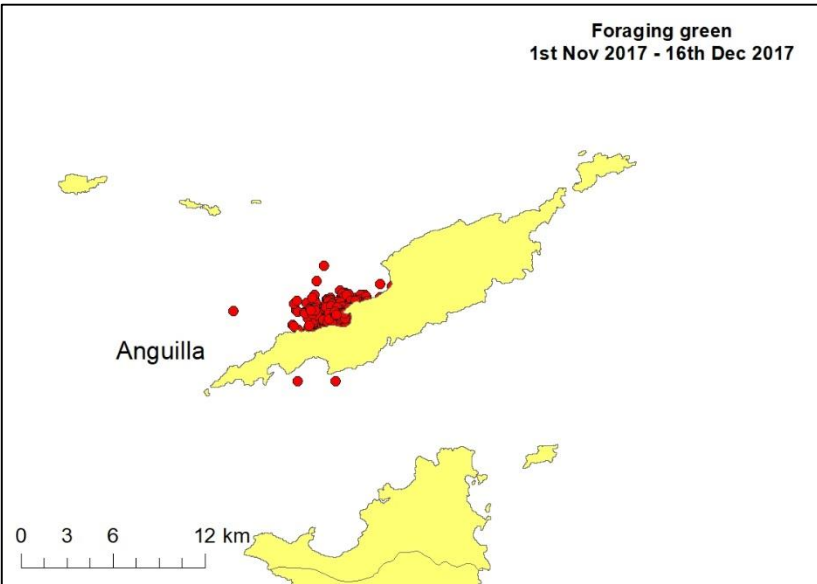
# Nesting beach monitoring





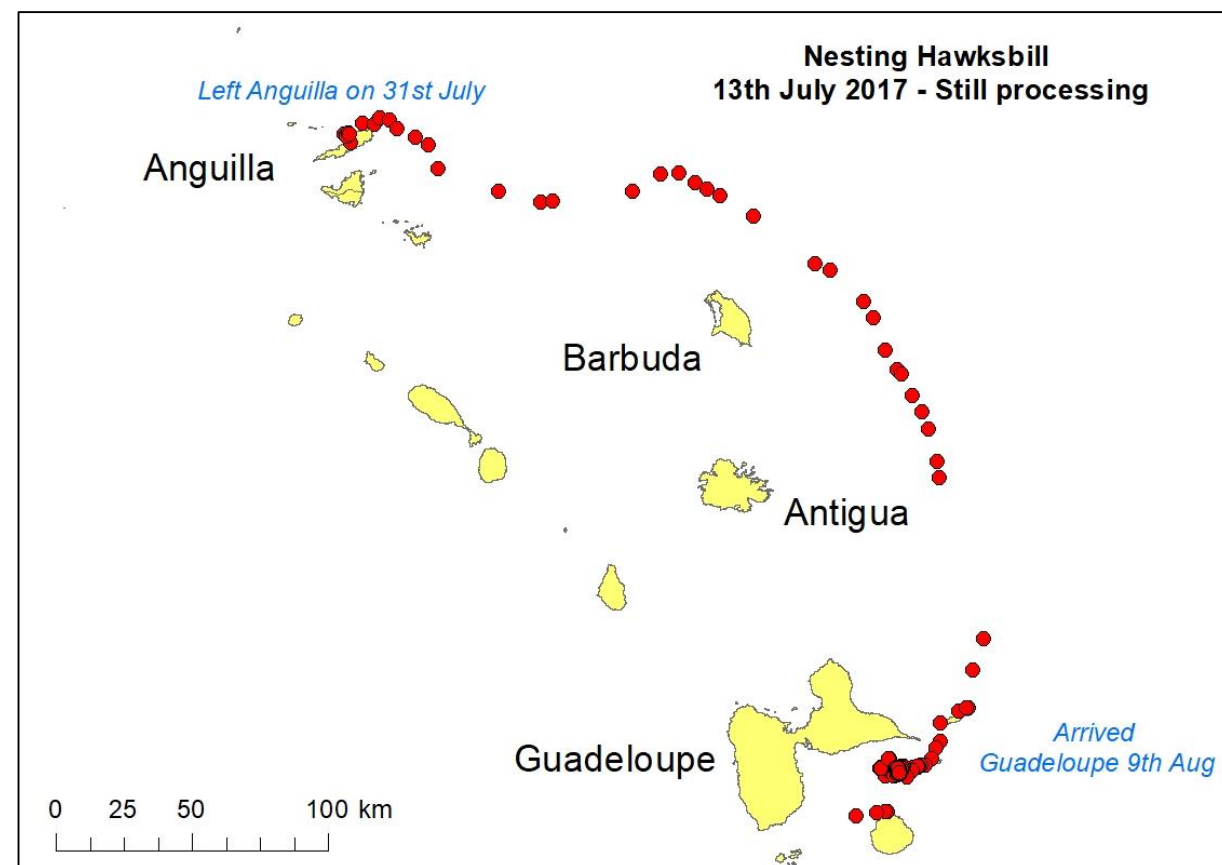
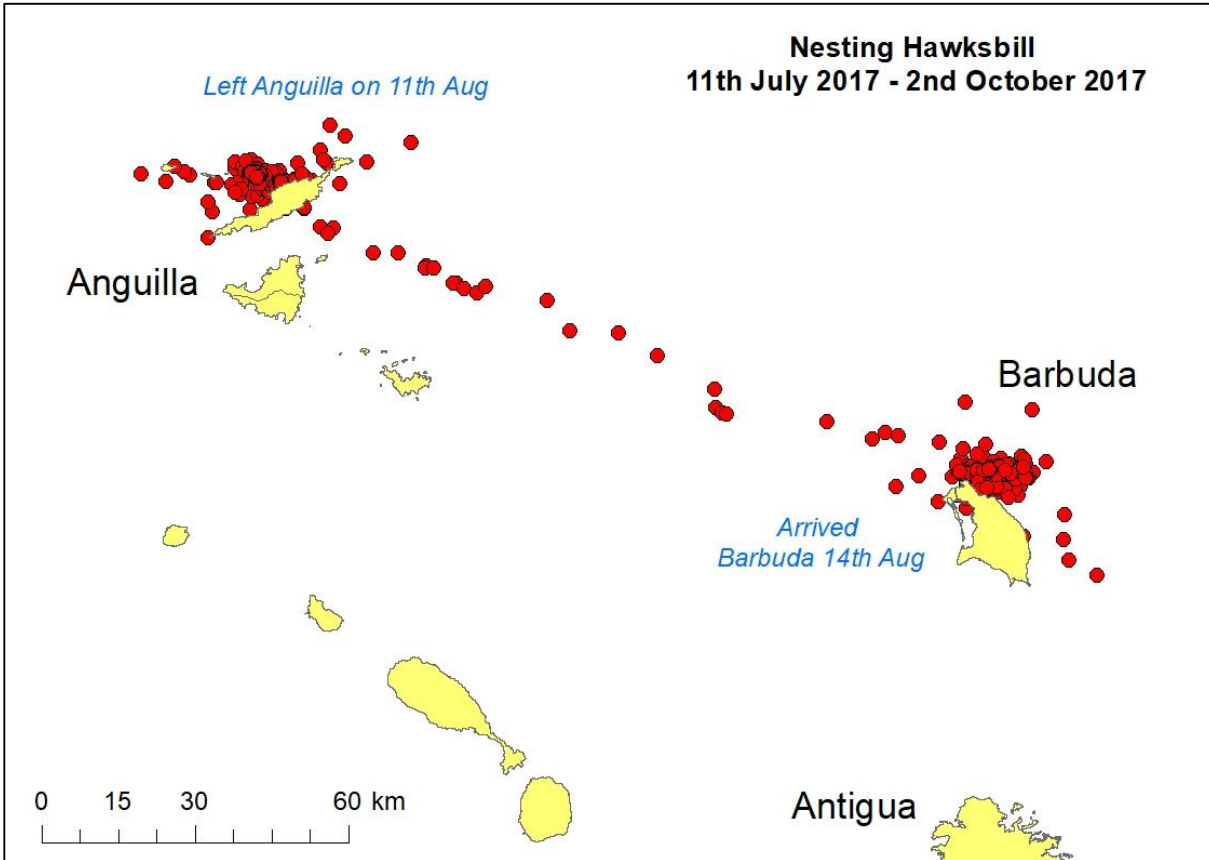
# Foraging turtles

12 satellite tracked to date



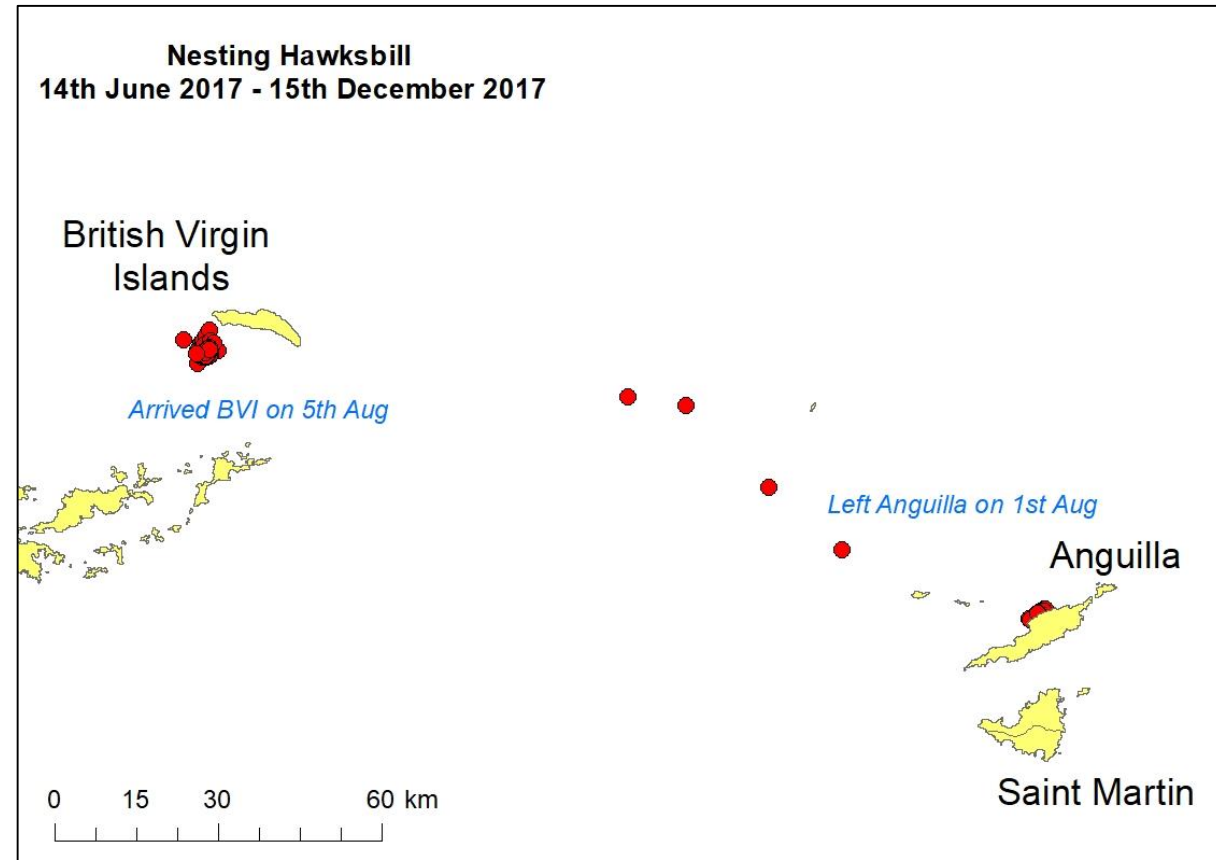
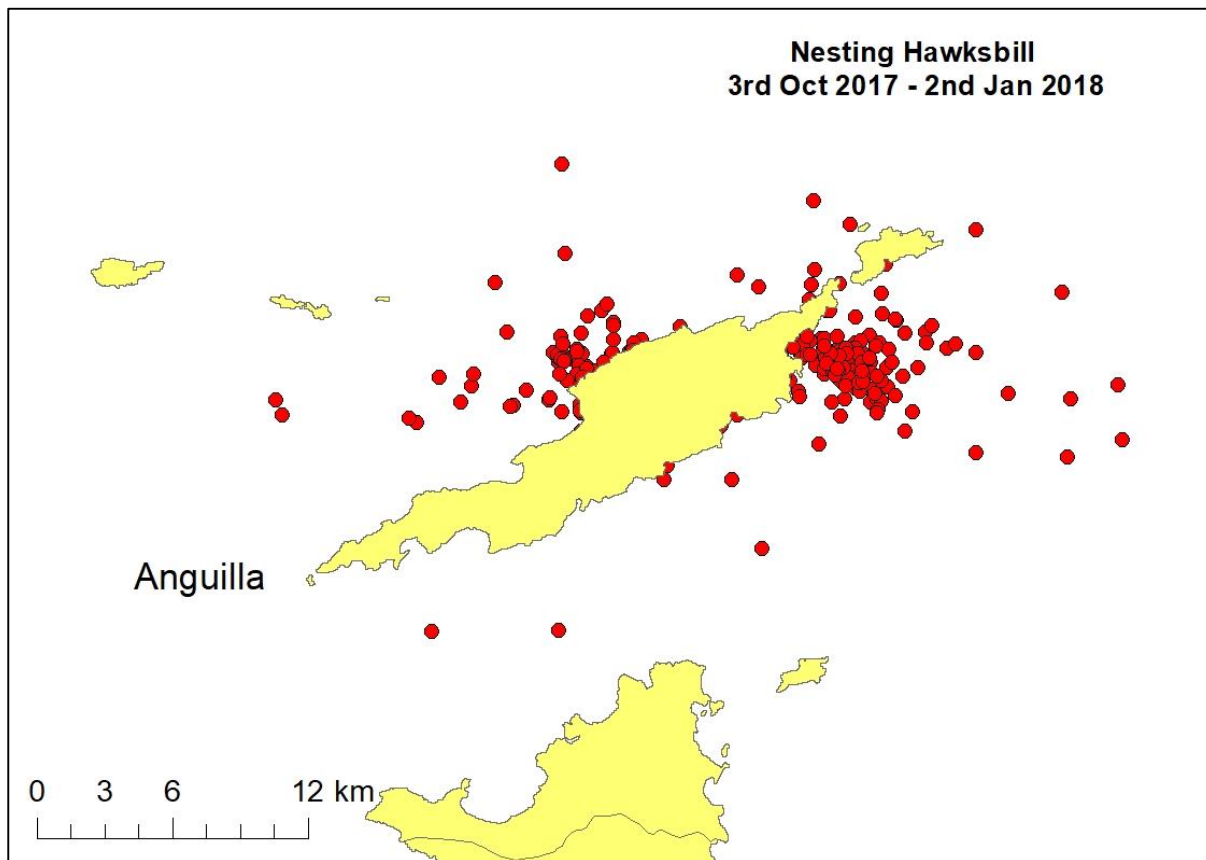
# Foraging turtles

*5 more smaller Sirtrack loggers to deploy on hawksbills later in 2018*



# Nesting turtles

4 satellite tagged so far



# Nesting turtles

8 more loggers to deploy in 2018

# Mark-recapture data

	Total flipper tagged since 2002	Total recaptured x1	Total recaptured x2	Total recaptured x3
Greens	254	56	12	1
Hawksbills	124	15	12	1
Leatherback	7	0	0	0



# What next?

- Continue to monitor nesting beaches – and estimate nesting population sizes based on number of crawls and crawl width
- Continue to deploy satellite loggers, and analyze movement data in relation to marine protected areas in Anguilla.
- Analyze mark-recapture data to provide populations estimates
- Hold a sub-regional turtles meeting in Anguilla
- **Present all findings to Government of Anguilla prior to 2020 moratorium review**

