

## Green Turtle with Living Tag Captured in the Southern Bahamas

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On 7 July 2001, Karen Bjorndal and Alan Bolten captured a green turtle with a living tag at their long-term study site in Union Creek, Great Inagua, Bahamas. The turtle had a straight carapace length (SCL; nuchal notch to posterior tip of longer postcentral scute) of 43.6 cm, no indication of previous tags, and an mtDNA haplotype of CM-A3. CM-A3 is the most common haplotype in the Greater Caribbean and is known to occur in nesting populations in México, Costa Rica, Aves Island (Venezuela), and Florida (USA). The living tag was slightly posterior to the center of the fourth left lateral scute. The living tag measured 2.5 by 3.8 cm. The turtle was tagged with flipper tags (primary tag: BP7586), and released at site of capture. The turtle was captured again in Union Creek on 12 June 2002 and measured 47.5 cm SCL.

In the Greater Caribbean, green turtles have been released with living tags by two programs: the Cayman Turtle Farm since 1983 (Wood & Wood 1993) and Tortugas Marinas X'caret, Quintana Roo since 1990 (Zurita *et al.* 1994). In October 1988, 1202 head-started yearling green turtles were released by Cayman Turtle Farm with a living tag in the fourth left lateral scute. In X'caret, 5039 green turtle hatchlings were released three days after hatching between July and October 1997 and an additional 130 captive-reared green turtles were released between December 1997 and March 1998 with a living tag in the fourth left lateral scute. Approximate SCL of head-started yearlings released by Cayman Turtle Farm is 29 cm (Wood & Wood 1993).

We believe it is extremely unlikely that a yearling green turtle released from Cayman Turtle Farm in 1988 with an approximate SCL of 29 cm would be 43.6 cm SCL 13 years later. The approximate growth interval from 29 to 43.6 cm SCL is about 2 years both in Union Creek (Bjorndal *et al.* 2000) and in the waters around Grand Cayman (mean growth rate 8.26 cm/yr; Wood & Wood 1993).

The turtle was almost certainly released at X'caret in 1997 as a hatchling or in 1997/1998 as a captive-reared turtle. This note is the first report of a green

turtle from a rookery in México migrating to the Bahamas and is consistent with an earlier study of the genetic composition of the green turtles in Union Creek, which, based on mtDNA sequences, estimated that 5% of the green turtles were derived from México/Florida rookeries (Lahanas *et al.* 1998). Because we cannot determine whether BP7586 was released originally as a hatchling or as a captive-reared turtle, we cannot calculate growth rates or duration of the oceanic stage. The uncertainty concerning the source of this turtle underscores the need for programs that use living tags to coordinate their coding systems, as recommended earlier (Mrosovsky 1982).

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