

NOAA Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center

Mission Report

Mission Number: MR-20-05

Chief Scientist: Shawn Murakawa

Operator-in-Charge: Captain Russ Cox (Pago Pago Marine Charters)

Small Boat ID/Type: *Double Hooked*, 49' catamaran

Mission Title: Monitoring and tagging marine turtles at Rose Atoll, National Wildlife Refuge (NWR)

Mission Area: Rose Atoll NWR

Mission Dates: December 2–12, 2019

1. Schedule

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| 2 December | Flew to Pago Pago. |
| 3 December | Met with USFWS/DMWR, mission prep/logistics, and inspected boats. |
| 4 December | Transited to Rose Atoll; 0430 departed harbor; Captain Russ Cox; 1600 arrived at Rose Atoll. |
| 4–9 December | Conducted in-water and land-based surveys/captures of turtles. |
| 10 December | 0730 departed Rose Atoll, transited to Pago Pago. 1745 arrived Pago Pago. |
| 11–12 December | Debriefed, broke down/cleaned gear from boat, and packed equipment. Met with USFWS staff. Departed Pago Pago/arrived next day Honolulu. |

2. Mission Results

- 4 December Surveyed Rose Island for nesting turtle tracks and counted 13 paired tracks. Identified, collected skin samples and morphometrics, and applied metal/PIT tags to 4 nesters. Applied satellite transmitter to 1 nester. Deployed 1 temperature data logger.
- 5 December Transited to Sand Island to survey for nesting turtle tracks and counted 2 paired tracks and 143 body pits. Surveyed the inner lagoon and counted 4 adults, 4 sub-adults, and 1 juvenile turtle. Identified, collected skin samples and morphometrics, and applied metal/PIT tags to 7 nesters. Applied satellite transmitter to 1 nester. Deployed 2 temperature data loggers.
- 6 December Transited to Sand Island to survey for nesting turtle tracks and counted 2 paired track and 4 body pits. Surveyed the inner lagoon and counted 4 adult turtles. Identified, collected skin samples and morphometrics, and applied metal/PIT tags to 7 nesters. Applied satellite transmitter to 1 nester. Deployed 4 temperature data loggers.
- 7 December Transited to Sand Island to survey for nesting turtle tracks and counted 1 paired track and 7 body pits. Surveyed the inner lagoon and counted 4 adult turtles. Identified, collected skin samples and morphometrics, and applied metal/PIT tags to 4 nesters. Applied satellite transmitter to 1 nester. Measured 1 hatchling.
- 8 December Transited to Sand Island to survey for nesting turtle tracks and counted 3 paired tracks and 6 body pits. Surveyed the inner lagoon and counted 1 crawl and no body pits. Identified, collected skin samples and morphometrics, and applied metal/PIT tags to 7 nesters. Applied satellite transmitter to 1 nester. Deployed 5 temperature data loggers.
- 9 December Transited to Sand Island to survey for nesting turtle tracks and counted 1 crawl and 0 body pits. Surveyed the outer reef and observed 0 turtles. Surveyed the inner lagoon and counted 7 adults, 8 sub-adults, and 4 juvenile turtles. Identified, collected skin samples and morphometrics, and applied metal/PIT tags to 5 nesters. Deployed 3 temperature data loggers.
- 10 December Departed Rose at 0730 and returned to Pago Pago 1745.

3. Field Party

| Name | Role | Organization |
|----------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| Shawn Murakawa | Chief Scientist | PIFSC |
| Marylou Staman | Sea Turtle Scientist | JIMAR |

Other participant were as follows (a total of 8 personnel took part in the mission): 1 NOAA employee, 1 JIMAR employee, and Russ Cox (Charter Captain), the first mate Jerry, Brian Peck (USFWS), Elyse Sachs (USFWS) and Rachel Rounds (USFWS).

4. Attachments



Figure 1. Rose Atoll NWR, American Samoa.



Figure 2. First nester encountered at Rose Atoll NWR, temporarily identified as A1, after the application of a satellite transmitter to her carapace.

5. Approvals

Submitted by: _____
Shawn Murakawa
Chief Scientist
Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center

Approved by: _____
Michael P. Seki, Ph.D.
Science Director
Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center