

**** Analyzing the abundance of Fibropapillomatosis in Green Sea Turtles (*Chelonia mydas*) From Curaçao**

Ginah-Marie Lione Marten¹, Ard Vreugdenhil², Phil Allman¹

¹Department of Biology, Florida Gulf Coast University, Fort Myers, Florida, ²Sea Turtle Conservation Curaçao, Willemstad, Curaçao

Fibropapillomatosis is a cancerous disease that impacts all seven species of sea turtles, and has been documented across all ocean basins. The disease is initiated by Chelonid Alphaherpesvirus 5 (ChHV5) and can be horizontally transmitted through the water column. It is important to document the prevalence of fibropapillomatosis as we continue to explore environmental predictors of the disease. Anecdotal observations suggest FP tumors are common in green turtles on some fringe reefs surrounding the island of Curaçao, but not observed on other reefs. We conducted 28 SCUBA surveys on reefs from May through August 2022 to document the presence or absence of turtles with visible tumors. We used photo ID techniques to ensure animals were not counted twice. We visited 12 dive sites and observed 45 turtles. Thirty-two (32) had external tumors and 13 did not. We observed green, hawkbill, and loggerhead sea turtles, but tumors were only observed on green turtles. Dive sites that had the highest prevalence of tumors were sites most adjacent to industrialization and urbanization. Five heavily impacted turtles were rescued and taken to a veterinarian to have the tumors removed. We hope to test water quality across the sites to determine if there is a pattern of tumors with distribution of poor water quality. We anticipate that this effort will give us more knowledge about comprehending fibropapillomatosis.