PHOTO-IDENTIFICATION OF HAWAIIAN GREEN SEA TURTLES

Austin Richardson[1], Lawrence H. Herbst[2], Peter A. Bennett[3], and Ursula Keuper Bennett[3]
[1]Grade 6, Sir John A MacDonald Middle School, Brampton, Ontario, Canada
[2]Albert Einstein College of Medicine, 1300 Morris Park Avenue, Bronx, New York 10461, U.S.A.
[3]Turtle Trax http://www.turtles.org (Canada) howzit@turtles.org

Our study demonstrated that use of facial markings is a reliable way to identify individual green sea turtles. Dr. Herbst and I had to compare 25 turtles appearing on videotape with 93 images representing 30 animals. We correctly matched 21 animals to their photos and weren't fooled by the remaining four whose photos were intentionally withheld from us.

The basic use for facial photo records is for underwater fieldwork where turtles either don't have tags or you will disturb them if you have to read the tags. Reading faces lets you stay farther away and observe them more naturally. - possibly for their entire lives.

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Compilers:

F. Alberto Abreu-Grobois
Raquel Briseño-Dueñas
René Márquez-Millán
Laura Sarti-Martínez

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
William M. Daley, Secretary

NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION
D. James Baker, Administrator

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Penelope D. Dalton, Assistant Administrator for Fisheries

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