

# *Turtle Watch News 7*



October 2011

Welcome! ... to *Turtle Watch* this month ...

## **Turtle Nest Predation**

Recently Elaine Lewis walked around Lake Monger and reported observing seven predated turtle nests near the walking path. How many more predated nests were not so obvious? This experience reinforced the importance of our *Turtle Watch* project. Thank you for your interest and support for the project.

## **Sensational Video Footage ... and a mystery!**

Joe Tonga, our camera surveillance consultant, reported action from one of his Bibra Lake cameras. Continuous camera surveillance occurred between 28th August 2011 and 25th October 2011. Joe recorded 250 x 20sec videos.

What was on this footage? ... quenda, crow, rabbit, blue tongue lizard and last but not least ... a fox! The diary of the fox captured on video:

- 29th Aug. Fox visits; finds nothing.
- 20th Sept. Fox visits; finds nothing.
- 13th Oct. Fox visits; sniffs around, really keen. Starts digging and finds egg. Picks it up with teeth, holds it in its mouth and takes it a short distance to eat it.

The camera requires heat and good movement by an animal to trigger it. The camera did not trigger to show what animal had nested in the vicinity. Maybe, if it was a turtle, it moved too slowly to trigger the camera. Maybe it was a turtle nesting site? The site, soft sand in front of the camera, was not far from the lake. What do you think?

The video of the fox is currently being prepared for dissemination on YouTube. Thank you Joe for sharing this exciting development and for your contribution to the project.

**Action:** If you see nesting behaviour in the 3 research areas –

- Herdsman Lake (Herdsman Lake Wildlife Centre, HLWC),
- Bibra Lake (CWEC),
- Canning River (CREEC/SERCUL)

please advise the eco centre staff and complete the *Turtle Watch* hotline form.

HLWC, CWEC, CREEC or SERCUL will then contact Elaine, who will inform Joe, so that camera surveillance can be set up to determine predator/s involved in the destruction of nests. Thank you.

## **Turtle Publicity**

Murdoch University and the Melville City Herald recently published articles about the Oblong Turtle. See this excellent promotion attached.

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A partnership between *Turtle Watch* and ClimateWatch is also being explored so that promotional bookmarks can be distributed to the general public. ClimateWatch is committed to turtle conservation; see their website to log turtle sightings: <http://www.climatewatch.org.au/>

### **Future Turtle Education Events**

The final two turtle education events scheduled for this project are in November:

- ✚ Sunday 6 November, 11am-5pm, Manning Park Rotary Spring Fair, City of Cockburn - *Turtle Watch* stall conducted by Elaine Lewis.
- ✚ Thursday 17 November, 7-8pm at CREEC - talk on turtles presented by Dr Jacqueline Giles.

Everyone welcome.

### **Turtle *Oblonga* Rescue and Rehabilitation Network**

The Turtle *Oblonga* Rescue and Rehabilitation Network aims to provide the expertise and capacity needed to save Oblong Turtles in emergency situations. Ruth Haight (Network Chair-Secretary) and Dianne Hunter (Treasurer) reported the “*Network’s aim is that every turtle receives expert and compassionate care*”.

The objectives of the Association will be to conserve Western Long Neck Turtles (*Chelodina oblonga*) by:

- Co-ordinating the rescue, rehabilitation and release of turtles affected and displaced by habitat loss.
- Developing guidelines and codes of practice for rescue, rehabilitation and release to maximise the welfare outcomes for native turtles, to ensure that every turtle receives expert and compassionate care.
- Acting as an independent advisory Council to all levels of Government, business and the community on turtle rescue and rehabilitation.
- Inspiring the next generation by informing them about our work and the plight of native turtles.
- Acquiring and disseminating accurate and up-to-date information on all aspects of turtle rescue, rehabilitation, and release protocols for wildlife rehabilitators, volunteers and the community.
- Collaborating with rehabilitators, researchers and veterinarians to increase the knowledge base for this species.
- Operating on a not-for-profit basis.
- Establishing and maintaining a public fund to be called the Turtle *Oblonga* Public Fund for the specific purpose of supporting the environmental aims of Turtle *Oblonga* Rescue and Rehabilitation Network Inc.
- Undertaking such other representations, programs and activities as may, at the discretion of the Network, be considered necessary and proper.

Membership of the Network is free. It is open to Western Australian residents over 18 years and organisations whose aims and ideals are congruent with those of the Network.

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Interested people all over the metropolitan area, who wish to support needy turtles in their local areas, are encouraged to contact the Network. Please see the attachments for more information.

### **Oblong Turtle Collaborative Research Group**

Turtle research by Caitlyn (Murdoch University) and Shino (UWA) PhD is progressing well. Also, Dr Giles advised a turtle study at Bibra Lake started at the end of last month.

### **E-bulletin**

The sixth e-bulletin was circulated to stakeholder groups:

1. Turtle Watch project team: Dr Jacqueline Giles (Oblong Turtle Consultant); Joe Tonga (Camera Surveillance Consultant); and Dr Jennifer Pearson (Community Education Consultant).
2. Eco-education centres: Roger Harris (HLWC); Vicky Hartill & Denise Crosbie (CWEC); and Hayley Bullimore & Kirsty Rowland (CREEC).
3. Oblong Turtle Collaborative Research Group: Dr Catherine Baudains, Dr Jane Chambers & Dr Mirela Tulbure (Murdoch Uni); Caitlyn Bartholomaeus (Murdoch Uni PhD candidate); Shino Hamada (UWA PhD candidate); and participants listed in 1 & 2 above.
4. City of Cockburn: Climate Change Adaption funding for an ‘Oblong Turtle Population and Recruitment Capacity Study’ (CWEC).
5. Environmental and Landcare departments/organisations committed to oblong turtle conservation e.g. DEC, SERCUL.
6. Friends/volunteer groups interested in oblong turtle conservation e.g. Friends of Herdsman Lake and Canning River Regional Park Volunteers.

Feedback on the September e-bulletin was received from:  
CWEC, CREEC, HLWC, SERCUL, Western Australian Wildlife Rehabilitation Council Inc. and Coolbinia Primary School.

### **Turtle Watch Information**

For further information, you are welcome to contact Elaine Lewis at:  
[Elaine.Lewis@det.wa.edu.au](mailto:Elaine.Lewis@det.wa.edu.au)

Thank YOU



Australian Association for Environmental Education -WA

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