

This study aims to provide a wealth of data relevant to the creation of a *Darwin Initiative Biodiversity Action Plan* for the conservation of Endangered marine turtles in the Cayman Islands.

In-water Research



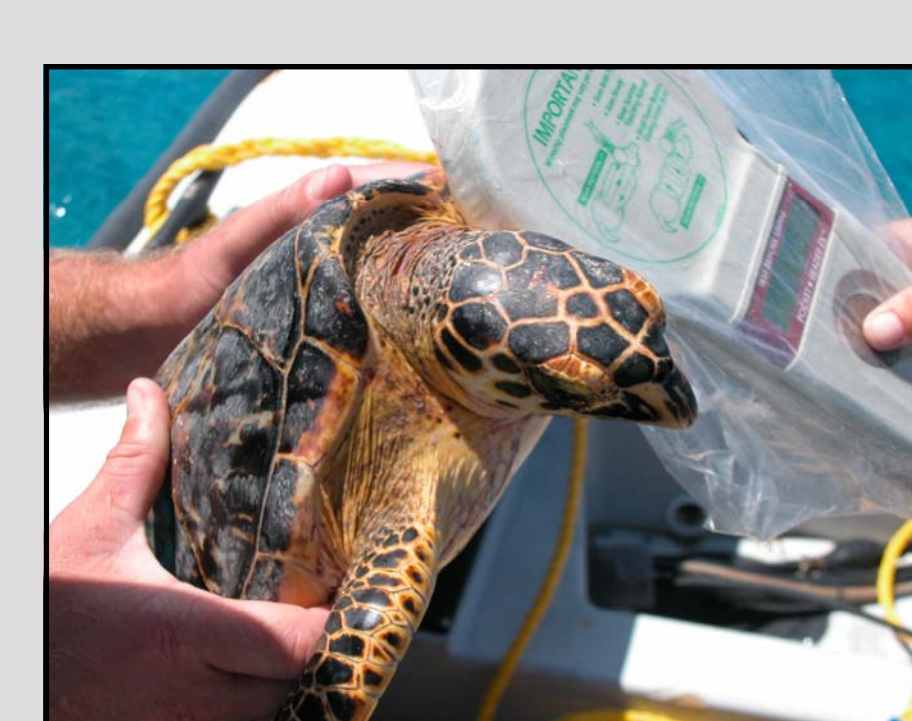
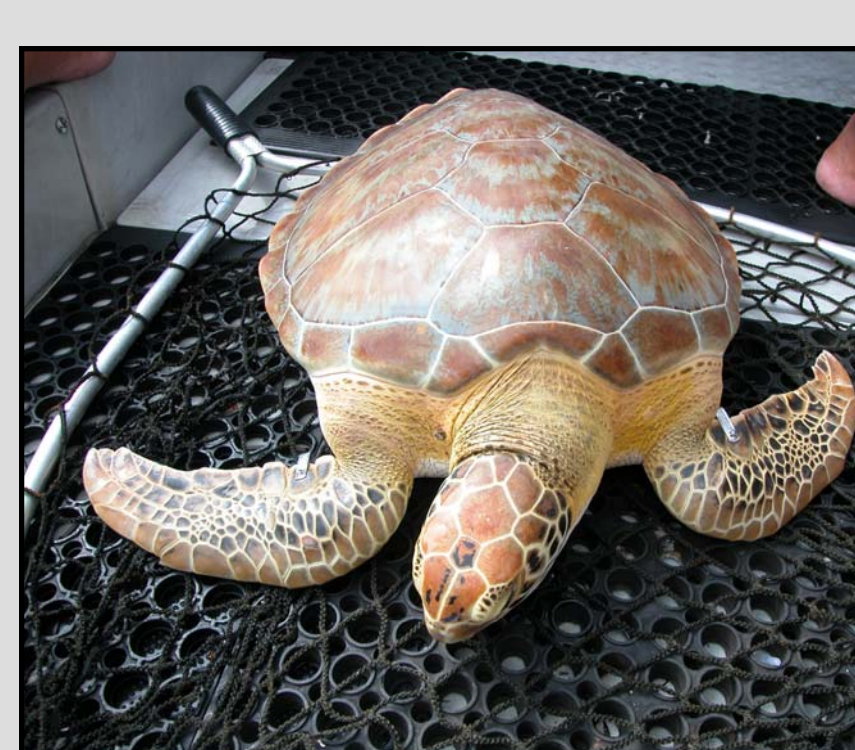
Hawksbill Capture



Freediving capture



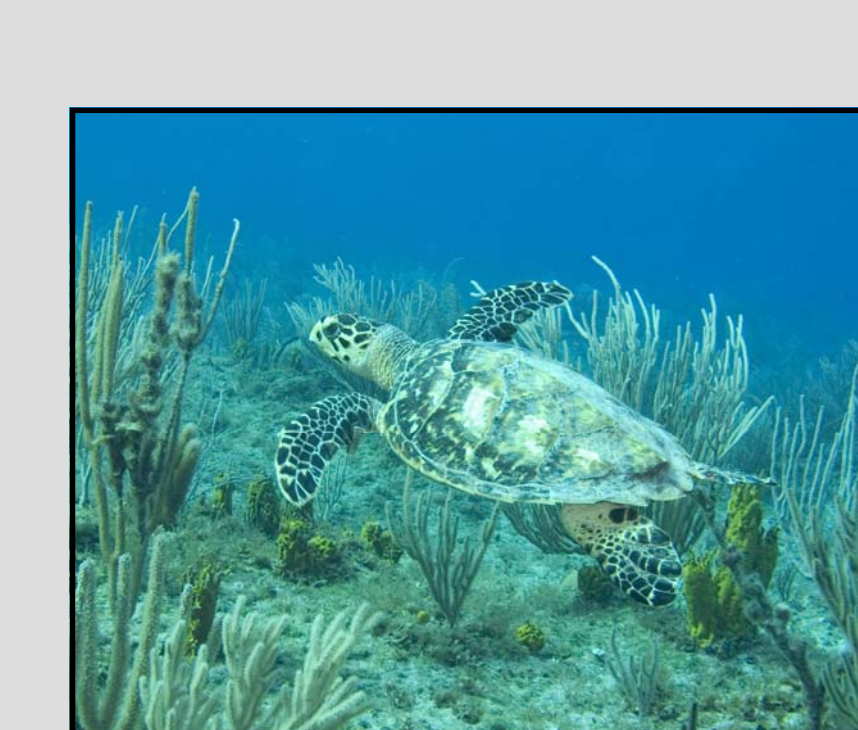
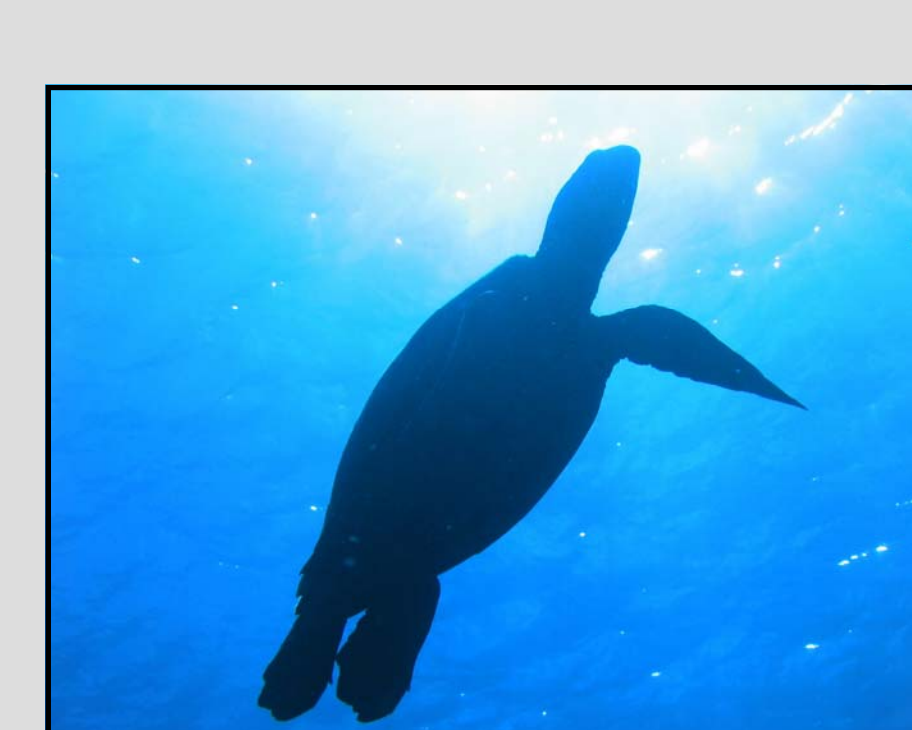
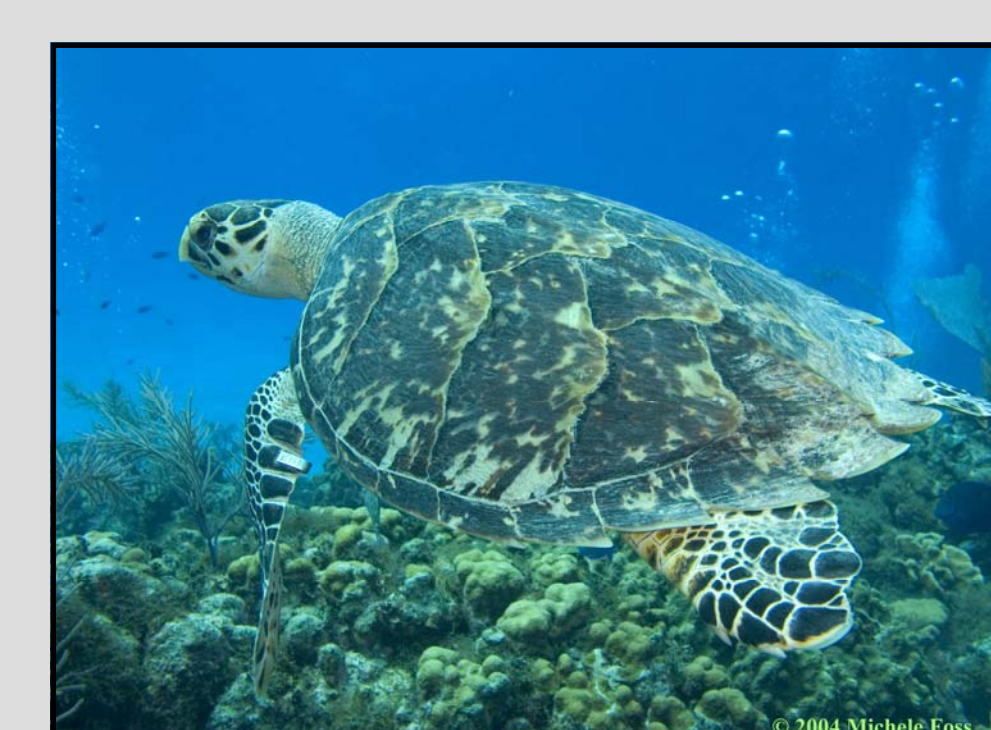
Green turtle capture



Tagging and sample collection



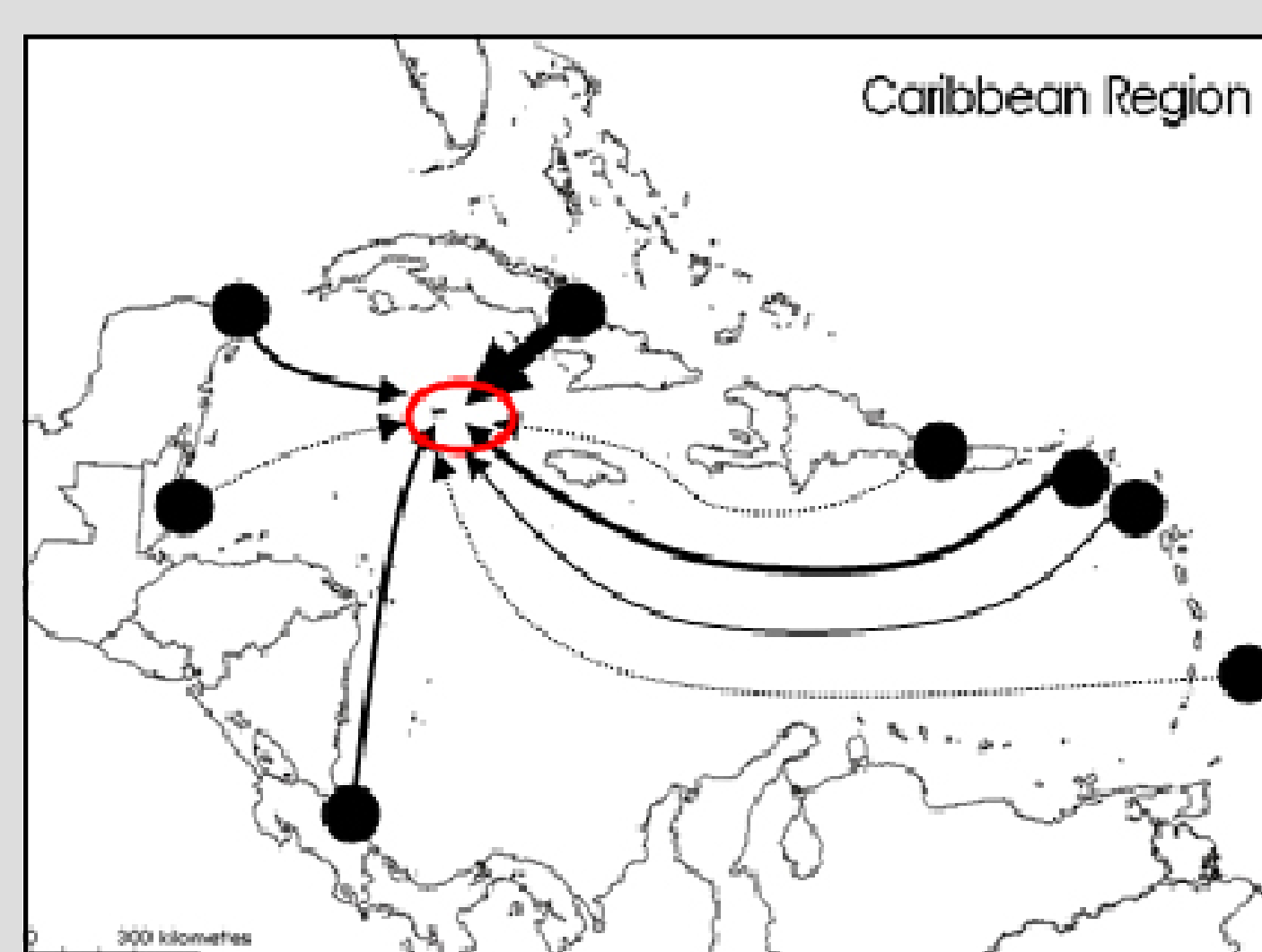
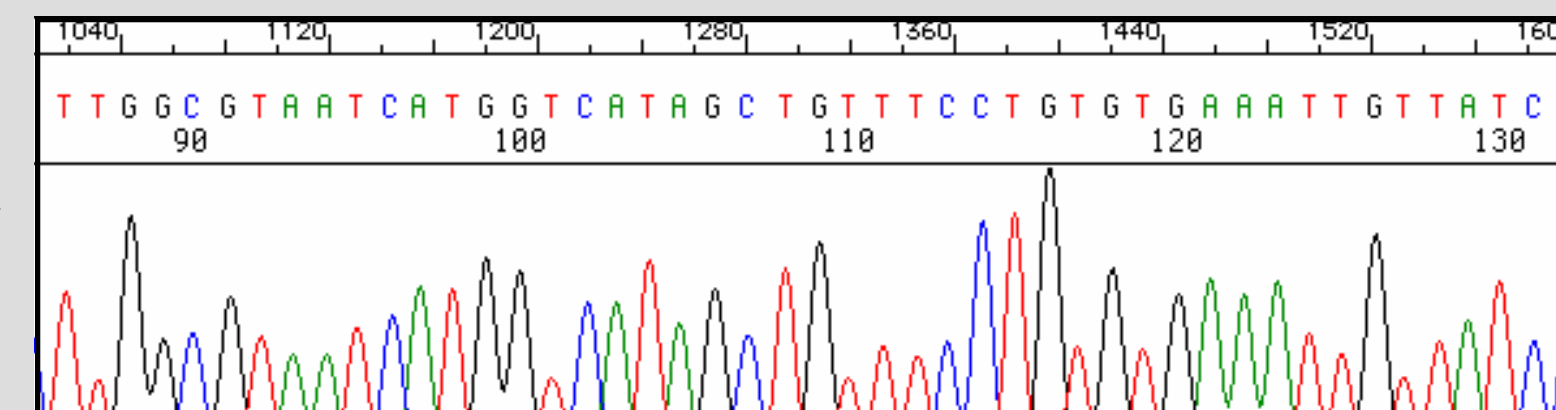
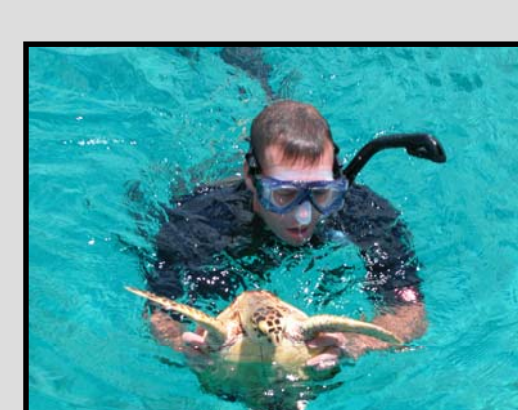
Release!



Turtle sightings are reported to the DoE by divers

Genetic Analysis

By taking a harmless tissue sample, we can use a turtle's DNA as a kind of genetic barcode - allowing us to identify the country where it was born.



Young hawksbills in the Cayman Islands are born in distant parts of the Caribbean. These young turtles will live for many decades on our reefs before returning to nest on the beaches where they



Juveniles



- Hatch overseas
- Live in Cayman as juveniles
- Migrate overseas when they mature

Adults



- Born in Cayman
- Live overseas
- Return to Cayman to nest

"I SEE LOTS OF TURTLES—HOW CAN THEY BE ENDANGERED?"

Since few turtles survive to maturity, many young turtles (such as those we see around the Cayman Islands) are needed to support even small populations of adults.

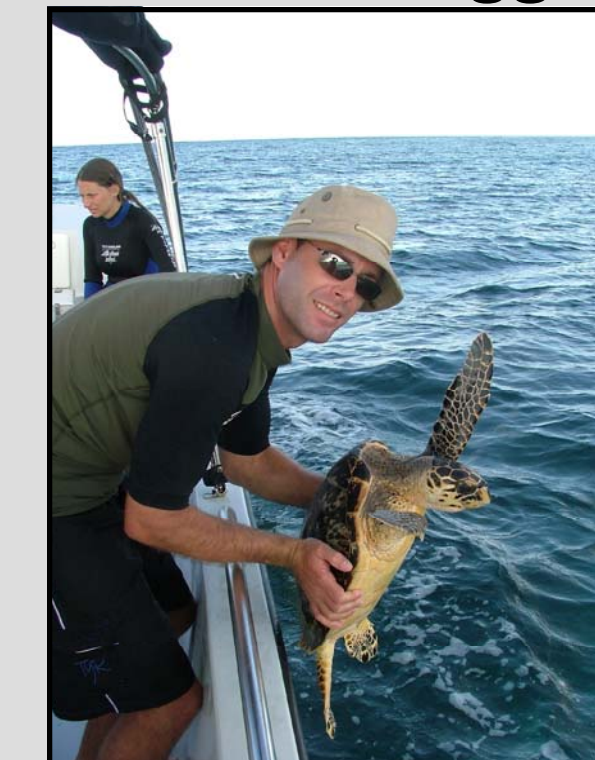
Diving and Tracking

Time-Depth Recorders and ultrasonic acoustic tags deployed on twenty-one juvenile hawksbill turtles

Attach tags



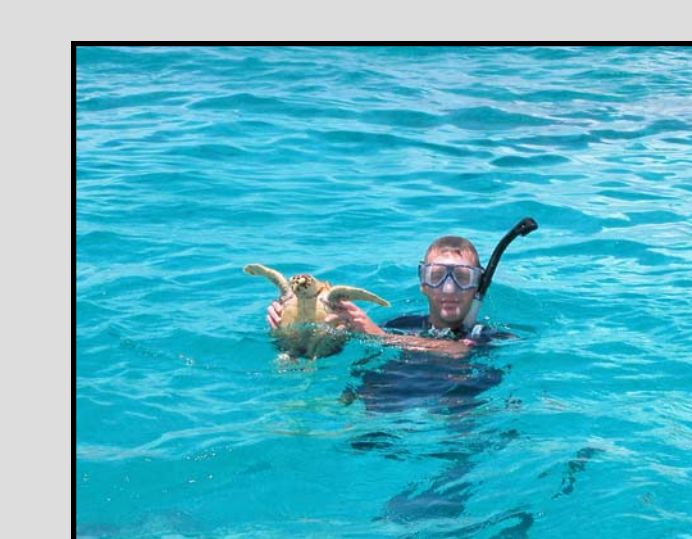
Release tagged turtles



Track Movements



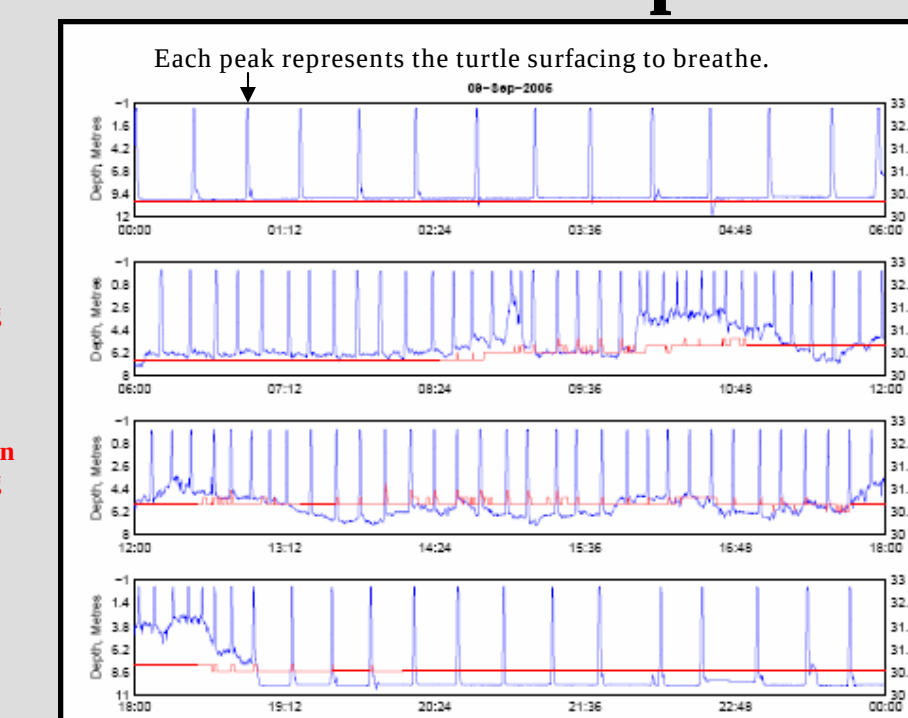
Recapture after several weeks



Remove tags



Download dive profile



Next: Integrate tracking and diving data with Darwin Initiative Habitat Mapping.

