

## Sea Turtle Update

(Continued from page 22)

On July 10, volunteer Sandy Bridger found an almost eradicated 30-inch loggerhead crawl behind Roosevelt Beach. This was the 10th false crawl of the season, and there was no apparent nesting attempt made. The return crawl was totally gone. As was becoming normal, it poured during the night, dropping about two inches of rain on the beach.

False Crawl #11 was discovered on July 12 by new volunteer Karen Antczak. It was a 40-inch loggerhead false crawl, and one of the longest I have ever seen. The turtle came up over the dunes to check out the backyard of Laurie Case (one of our volunteers from last season) before taking a long stroll down the beach on her return to the ocean. Laurie notified me of the crawl just moments before Karen did.

Nest #10 was found on July 14 by volunteer Danny Frye. Although it had poured rain, it was an obvious nest. It was a 39-inch loggerhead crawl, nearly as long as False Crawl #11. It took Danny only about 10 minutes to locate the eggs five inches down and remove one for testing.

False Crawl #12 was found on the morning of July 16 by new volunteers Karen and Mike Antczak, along with volunteers Marty and Terry McCabe. It was a 42-inch loggerhead crawl, but there was no nest.

On July 21, Nest #11 was discovered by volunteer Anne Charlton while out walking her beach patrol with Teresa Thaxton. After digging for a while, Anne found the eggs eight inches down and removed one for testing. Also on July 21, Nest #1 boiled at 9:05 p.m., after a 61-day incubation, with volunteers Eric Granger, Louie Schrum, and Danny Frye in attendance to make sure all the hatchlings made it safely into the ocean.

On July 24, Nest #12 was discovered by new volunteer Sue Cochrane. Sue found the eggs 12 inches down, after some digging by both of us and Marty and Terry McCabe. Sue removed one egg for DNA testing.



Sue Cochrane (left) puts eggshell in test tube held by Peggy Deneau at Nest #12.

—Photo by Terry McCabe

Nest #1 was excavated on Monday, July 25, at 7 p.m. by Elizabeth and Eric Granger (who found the nest). Louie Schrum inventoried the contents. In the nest were 117 shells, one dead hatchling and two live hatchlings that were released to walk into the ocean. The emergence success of Nest #1 was 97.4%, and the success of hatch was 100%. What an excellent nest.

On July 28, False Crawl #13 was discovered by a resident of Pine Knoll Townes named Scott, who notified my daughter, Suzanne. It was a 32-inch loggerhead crawl, located two lots east of Pine Knoll Townes I.

Very early on the morning of July 30, I received a call from Michele Lamping, the coordinator for Atlantic Beach, that there was a crawl just over the Pine Knoll Shores line from Atlantic Beach. I called volunteer Danny Frye, who was about to patrol that section of beach, and he met me there. This was an extremely long 40-inch green turtle crawl that went up into the dunes three times before returning to the ocean. Unfortunately, there was no nest, and we had False Crawl #14.

The morning of July 31 started out with a call from Teresa Thaxton, notifying me of a crawl behind Pine Knoll Townes I. This was False Crawl #15. While we were checking for the possibility of eggs, people came up and told us there was another crawl behind Ocean Terrace. That turned out to be False Crawl #16. People saw us taking measurements and told us there was another crawl behind the house at 409 Maritime Place. That one was False Crawl #17. When we were finished there, we heard there was another crawl near the public access at Maritime Place, and False Crawl #18 was documented. We thought we were done, and I came home, only to get a message from Sue Cochrane. She had found another crawl behind the Maritime West condos next to The Inn. When I got there, it was another false crawl, #19. False Crawl #15 was a 35-inch crawl, and False Crawl #19 was 32 inches. The other three were all 29-inch false crawls. We wondered if they were all made by the same indecisive turtle.

The month of July saw a tremendous increase in action, with five nests and 10 false crawls. On the last day of July, an unprecedented five false crawls were reported, documented and checked for signs of nesting. Some volunteers were kept busy from 6 a.m. right up until lunchtime. Next month's *Shoreline* will detail our activity in August.



From left: Elizabeth Granger, Louie Schrum and Eric Granger excavate Nest #1.

—Photo by Peggy Deneau