

REPRODUCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF GREEN TURTLES, *CHELONIA MYDAS*, IN TORTUGUERO, COSTA RICA

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Tortuguero, located on the northern Caribbean coast of Costa Rica, has the largest nesting population of green turtles (*Chelonia mydas*) in the Western Hemisphere. The Sea Turtle Conservancy (STC) is responsible for conducting an on-going long-term sea turtle monitoring and conservation program at the site. This research provides scientific information needed to characterize reproductive aspects of the green turtle. The goals of this study were to evaluate various characteristics of green turtle reproductive biology, specifically to determine if female size is correlated to either clutch size or hatching success. The data was collected during the STC's annual Green Turtle Program between June-October of 2010–2012. During the nesting seasons of 2010, 2011 and 2012, 125, 93 and ~70 nests were marked, respectively, with a total of ~288 nests for three seasons. This study showed that 66.4% and 68.3% (2010 & 2011, respectively) of sea turtles whose nests were marked were newly tagged females, the remaining were previously tagged individuals. The majority of nests were located in the 'border' zone (areas with partial shading), reflecting the nest site selection preference of green turtles. The average clutch size in 2010 was 110.8 eggs (33-167), and 116.7 eggs (65-173) in 2011. The 2012 nesting season is still in progress and data are not available yet. We will present the results from 2010–2012, including female size, hatching success and any significant differences detected between years.