

Project Update: September 2012

In September 2012, Jess Williams presented a talk at the First Australian Marine Turtle Biennial Symposium on the sunshine coast in Queensland. The 2-day symposium was a huge success with over 150 sea turtle researchers, environmental officers, rehabilitation specialists and community groups attending. Her talk presented the first preliminary results of the research, discussing the application of recreational divers as 'citizen scientists' for monitoring in-water monitoring in Mozambique. In addition to the symposium, she participated in a field trip to Toolakea beach in Townsville to catch juvenile green turtles which foraging in shallow intertidal pools. The turtles were caught, tagged, weighed and measured as part of an ongoing study in the area to monitor the health and diet.

Now returned to Mozambique, fieldwork for the project is about to commence as October to February is the official nesting season for sea turtles in Mozambique. The first report of nesting loggerheads has already been confirmed in the south of the nation and we expect nesting turtles any day in Inhambane Province. Along with the start of the nesting season, we expect that there may be an increase in the rates of illegal take of nesting sea turtles, given the ease to poach an animal from the beach compared to the water. We will be working on the ground with a number of collaborators to monitor the rates of poaching in the next few months.