

facilities evaluate their procedures, especially feeding, to find ways of reducing interactions that could lead to habituation in turtles that will eventually be released. Standing behind a blind during feeding so the turtles would be less apt to result in turtles associating humans with food is one approach that could be helpful.

Public education about the life histories and conservation needs of sea turtles has generated widespread support for their protection. Live exhibits are one of the most effective ways of getting the message across. Placing an emphasis on maintaining turtles that cannot be released in the wild is an option that could be used effectively to point out threats to sea turtles and their habitats. This would address concerns about habituation. It should also be noted that, many of the juvenile turtles in facilities have been live strandings whose size did not correspond to the typical size of juveniles normally found in Florida waters. Periodically hatchlings are also brought to State agencies by individuals who find them by chance on a nesting beach. Regardless of their origin, many of these animals are held in facilities until they are 45 cm SCL, the typical

size of juvenile loggerheads found in Florida waters. Educational displays or programs at facilities that hold these turtles should consider addressing these circumstances with an emphasis on sea turtle life history and the importance of protecting nesting beaches and juvenile habitat in Florida and elsewhere around the world.

Acknowledgements: Many thanks to Pat Wells for taking a swim, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Florida Marine Research Institute, Sea Turtle Stranding and Salvage Network DataBase.

SWINGLE, W.M., D. WARMOLTS, J. KEINATH, & J. MUSICK. 1994. Loggerhead sea turtle head-start evaluation: captive growth rates and post release movements and behavior. In: K.A. Bjorndal, A.B. Bolton, D.A. Johnson, & P.J. Eliazar (Ed.). Fourteenth Annual Symposium on Sea Turtle Biology and Conservation. NOAA Technical Memorandum NMFS-SEFSC-351, pp. 289-292.

Early Report of Fibropapilloma from St Croix, USVI

Peter J. Eliazar, Karen A. Bjorndal & Alan B. Bolten

Archie Carr Center for Sea Turtle Research and Department of Zoology, University of Florida, PO Box 118525, Gainesville, Florida 32611 USA (E-mail: accstr@zoo.ufl.edu)

Early records of the incidence of fibropapillomatosis in green turtles are valuable in recreating the origin and spread of this disease. Recently, we came across correspondence in the archives at the Archie Carr Center for Sea Turtle Research that apparently provides such a report. On 22 June 1971, William Rainey, then with the Caribbean Research Institute in St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands, wrote to Archie Carr with the following information:

"We have a green turtle captured near St. Croix which (in addition to imbedded barnacles) has numerous 1-5 cm wide pendant growths of soft, whitish, papillose tissue on the eyelids, throat and both sides of the flippers. The growths on the eyelids nearly blind the animal. The growths harbor leeches about 1 cm long with delicate branching, filamentous gills which extend laterally from the

body. I discussed the animal's condition with Peter [Pritchard] by phone and it seemed unusual to him. ...A set of slides made from an excised growth has been sent to the Department of Animal Diseases, University of Connecticut."

The turtle was captured by a diver north of St. Croix at a depth of 15 m on the edge of the shelf on the 20th of April 1971. Straight carapace length measured 52 cm; the turtle was tagged (C1456, UF tag) and released. In his response of 16 July 1971, Archie Carr wrote:

"The infestation affecting the green turtle from St. Croix is something completely new to me and I hope you get a diagnosis for it."

There is no record of a diagnosis having been received from the University of Connecticut.