

4TH Australian Marine Turtle Symposium

BUNDABERG

SOUTHERN GREAT BARRIER REEF QUEENSLAND

SEPTEMBER 8TH – 10TH 2018

Convenor:

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The 4th Australian Marine Turtle Symposium will be held in Bundaberg from the 8th to the 10th September 2018 and will celebrate 50 years of Turtle Research at Mon Repos.

The Australian Marine Turtle Symposium had its inaugural meeting in Buderim, on Queensland's Sunshine Coast in September 2012. The objectives were to bring together people and projects from throughout Australia and bridge the gap between local meetings and the annual International Sea Turtle Symposium.

At that meeting it was decided to convene the Australian Symposium every 2nd year in a different State or Territory. Over 90 participants enjoyed 2 days of key note addresses and research presentations by community groups. Sessions of particular interest were panel discussions on Satellite Telemetry and Bio-logging.

The event was hosted by TurtleCare Volunteers Qld Inc., a not for profit organisation, focussed on fostering conservation through the study and enjoyment of Marine Turtles. This group was formed in 2003 to support the Wreck Rock Turtle Monitoring Project by assisting with fund raising and awareness.

The focus for the 2nd Australian Marine Turtle Symposium was to bring together scientists, industry, government, community and indigenous groups to share knowledge and build partnerships for turtle conservation in Australia. This resulted in the formation of collaborations, the transfer of knowledge, the raising of awareness and the increasing of capacity to deliver conservation and recovery of marine turtles in Australia.

It was held in Hillary, in Perth's northern region in August 2014 and organised by the Turtle Group at the Department of Parks and Wildlife W.A. A major feature was the corporate sponsorship by groups such as Chevron Australia Pty Ltd, Inpex Operations Australia Pty Ltd, Imbricata Environmental, Wildlife Computers, West Pilbara Turtle Program and Woodside Energy Ltd.,

A total of 147 attended coming from the 8 Australian States and Territories, the Cocos Islands, New Caledonia and Thailand.

The 3rd Australian Marine Turtle Symposium was organised by AusTurtle Inc., a not for profit organisation established in 2004 to promote sea turtle conservation and research in Northern Australia in conjunction with the Northern Territory Department of Land Resource Management. It was hosted by the Territory Wildlife Park in Berry Springs. There was a strong focus on nesting biology, in-water monitoring, conservation management, anatomy and physiology of marine turtles providing another opportunity for researchers, rangers, managers, community groups and non-government organisations to engage and exchange information on the most recent developments in marine turtle conservation and management. Workshops included turtle necropsy, turtle tagging and animal ethics.

Participants enjoyed a field trip to Charles Darwin University Aquaculture facility to visit marine turtles currently kept for rehabilitation and eventual release. Some also enjoyed an optional day trip to the Territory's longest running turtle monitoring project on Bare Sand Island.

The theme for the 4th Australian Marine Turtle Symposium will be "An environment good for turtles is good for us". Our focus will be on engaging the diversity of professional and non-professional community groups, indigenous communities involved in caring for our country, students and individuals with interest in conservation.

It will be our pleasure to be part of a year of celebration of 50 years of Turtle Research at Mon Repos. Dr Col Limpus first visited Mon Repos as a 5 year old child and it became a family tradition beginning in 1956 to see the new year in at Mon Repos beach. In 1968 Col started a 4 year study of Flatback turtles which got out of hand and is still running. A legacy is being built by Col to instil the love, appreciation and practice to sustain turtle populations in younger generations. His research convinced the Queensland Government to declare waters off Mon Repos a Marine Park in 1990 and assisted in making turtle exclusion devices compulsory on fishing trawlers in 2001. He was honoured with the awarding of the Public Service Medal in 1993.

The 2018 Symposium is to be held at the Bundaberg Regional Council's recently opened ultra-modern Multiplex Community Centre. It is anticipated that over 150 delegates from all Australian States and Territories and neighbouring countries will attend. An organising committee comprising notable turtle researchers and turtle conservation volunteers from around Australia is organising a program to engage the diverse range of participants as well as members of the general public who wish to attend.

The Qld Department of Environment and Science has offered in kind support in the form of use of facilities at the Mon Repos Turtle Research Base for free camping. It is hoped that sponsors will come on board to enable the Symposium to offer greatly reduced registration fees to enable students, members of indigenous communities and overseas visitors to attend while still providing financial benefit to local businesses and traders. Sponsors will be offered the opportunity for recognition in all publications including registration information, the published "Proceedings of the Symposium" and the website. Bundaberg and North Burnett Tourism is already on board with design and maintenance of our web site with registration form and booking service for accommodation, travel, car hire and attractions.