

# **A Preliminary Assessment of Hawksbill Turtles In Palm Beach County Waters**



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## **Project objectives**

Characterize Palm Beach County's hawksbill population structure

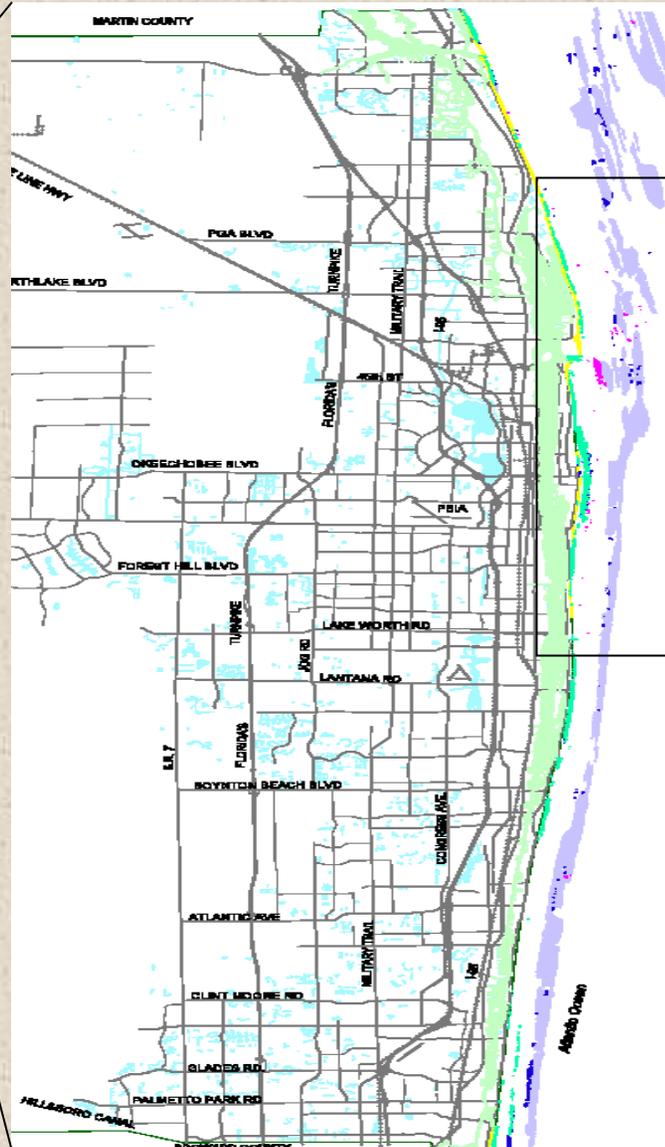
Investigate the relationships between individuals of this population and other populations

Test the feasibility of photo-identification

Investigate the role of hawksbills in the reef community

Establish the importance of Palm Beach County reefs as developmental habitat for this Critically Endangered species

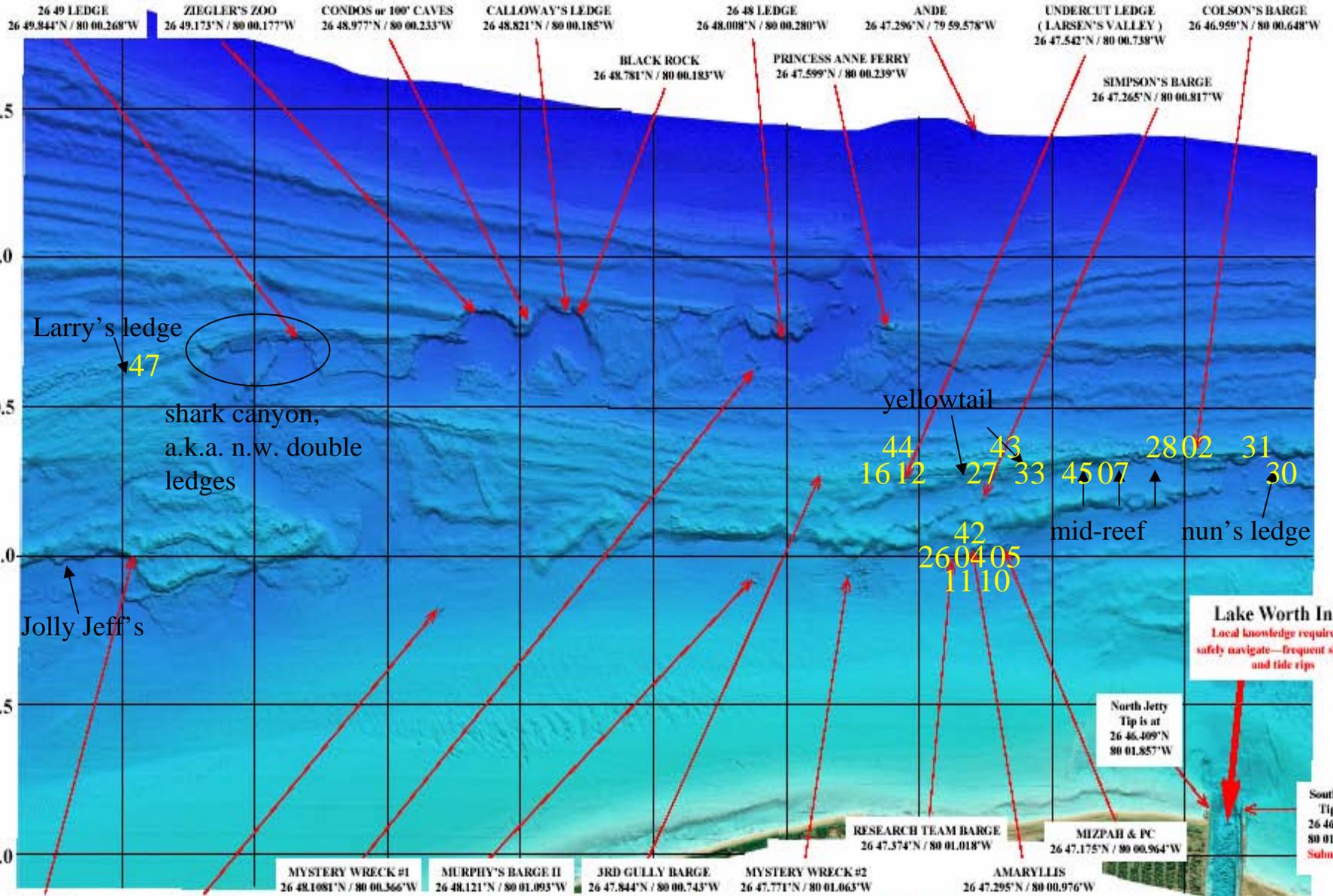
**FLORIDA**  
www.50states.com



Area of Focus

26 50.5 26 50.0 26 49.5 26 49.0 26 48.5 26 48.0 26 47.5 26 47.0 26 46.5

# CHART # P5 - 4-1/2 MILES NORTH OF LAKE WORTH INLET TO 1/3 MILE SOUTH OF LAKE WORTH INLET



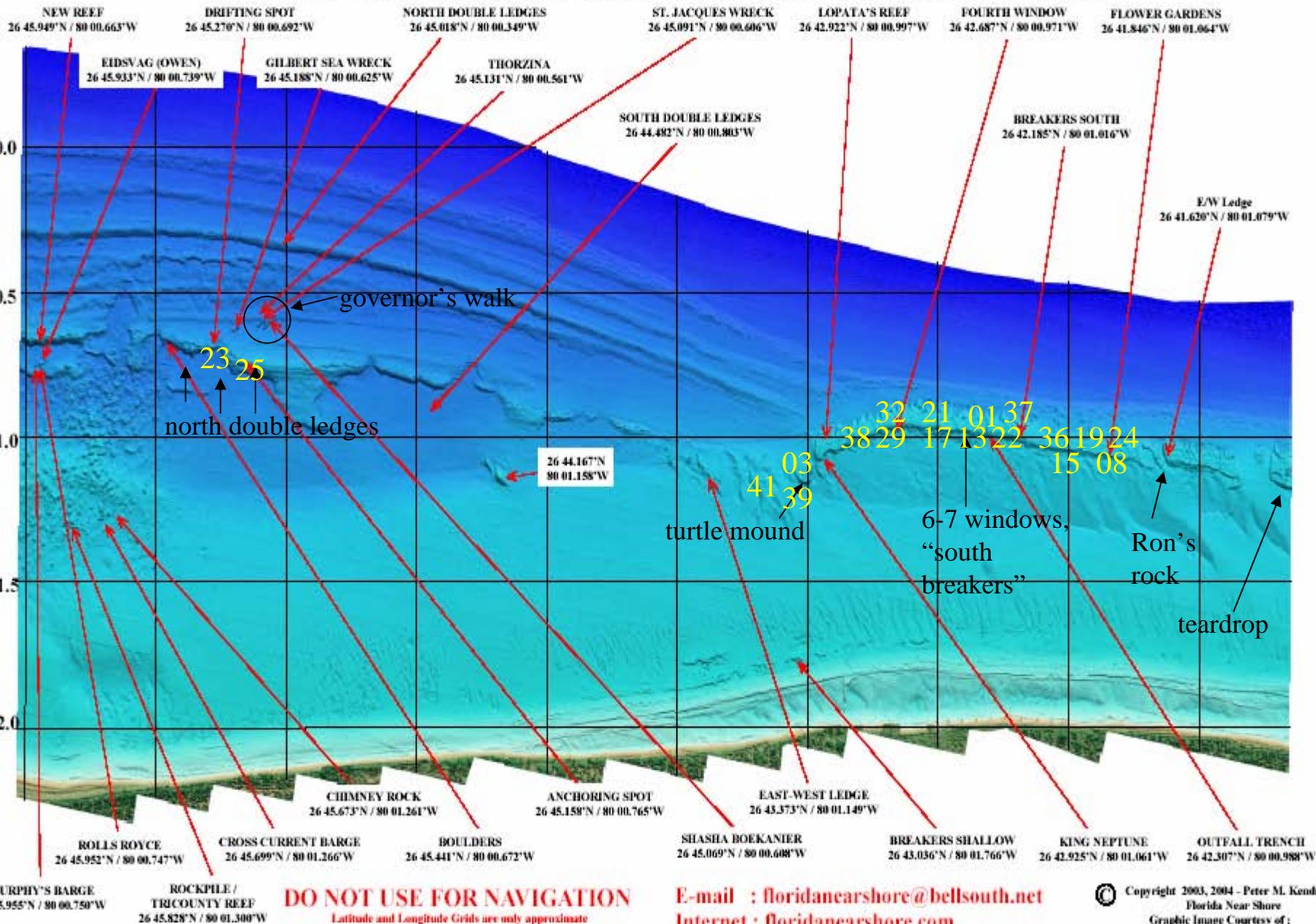
**DO NOT USE FOR NAVIGATION**  
Latitude and Longitude Grids are only approximate

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Palm Beach County DERM

26 46.0 26 45.5 26 45.0 26 44.5 26 44.0 26 43.5 26 43.0 26 42.5 26 42.0 26 41.5

# CHART # P6 - 1/3 MILE SOUTH OF LAKE WORTH INLET TO SOUTH PALM BEACH

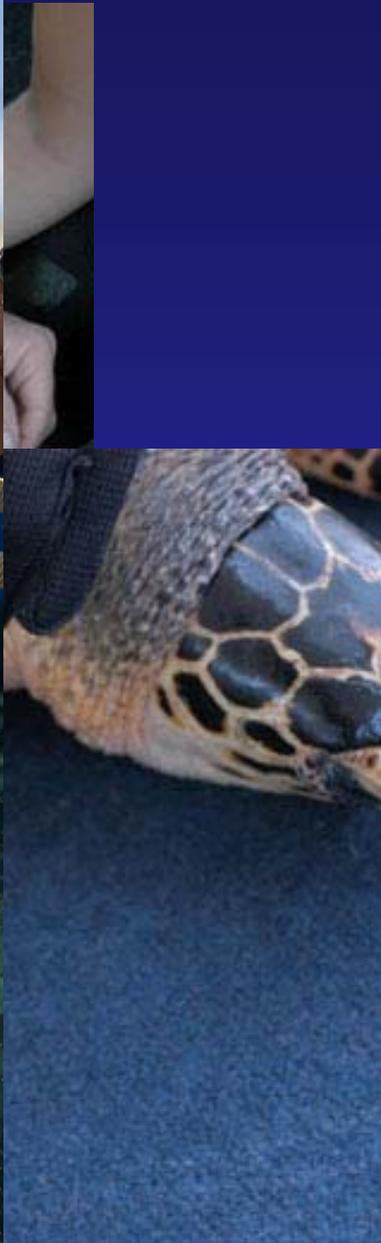


**DO NOT USE FOR NAVIGATION**  
Latitude and Longitude Grids are only approximate

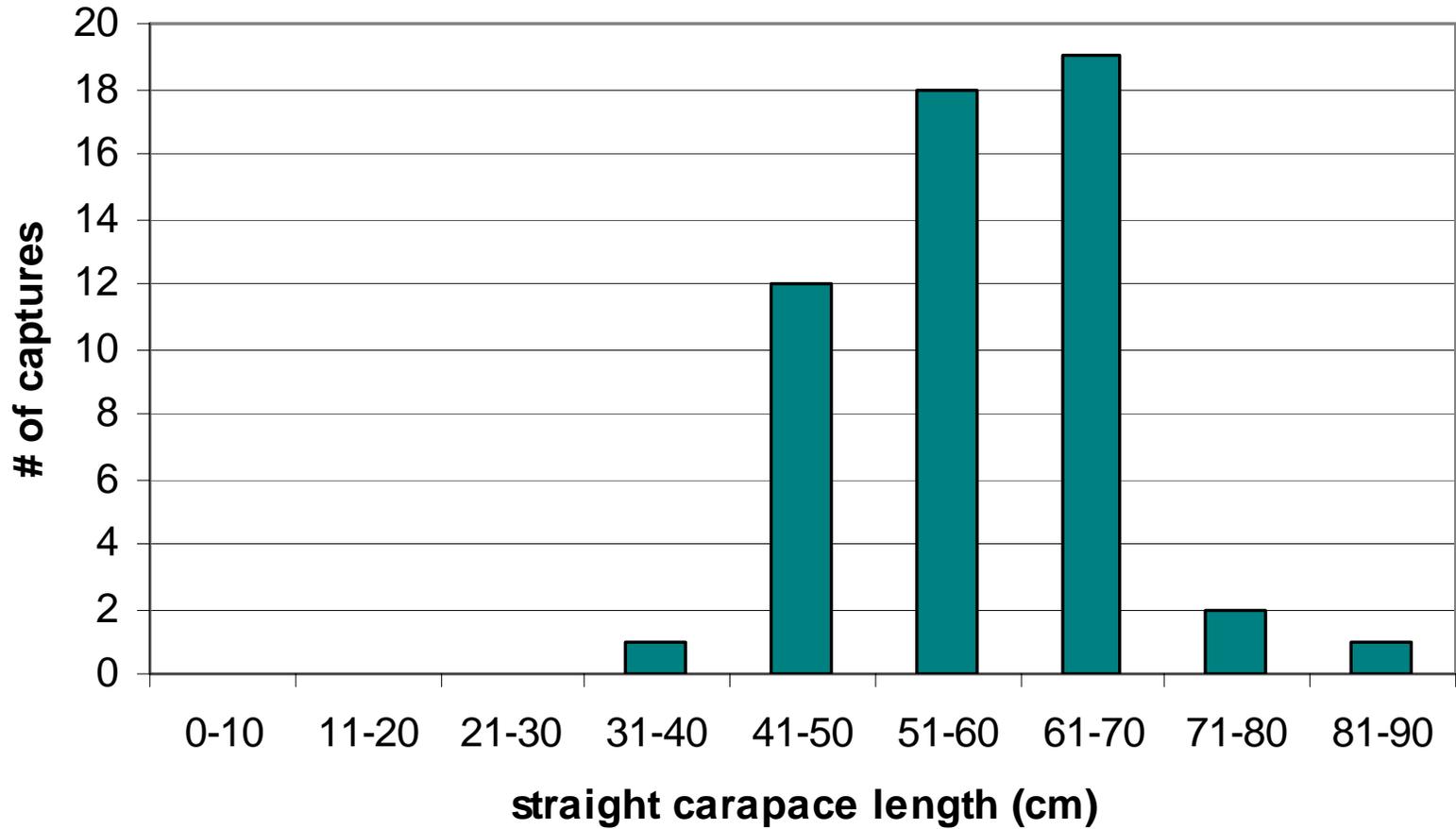
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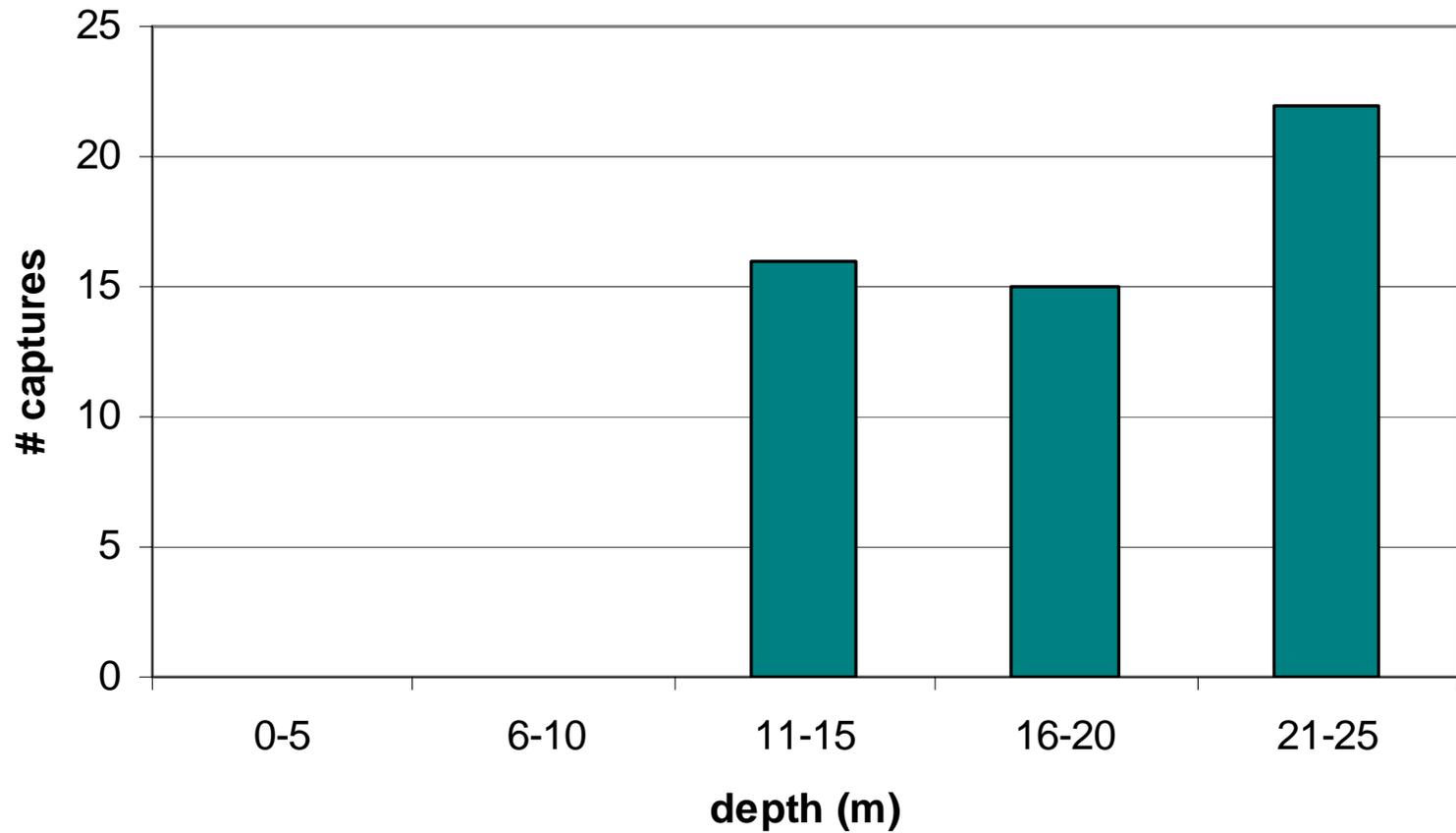




## Size class of captures (n=54)



## Depth at capture (n=54)



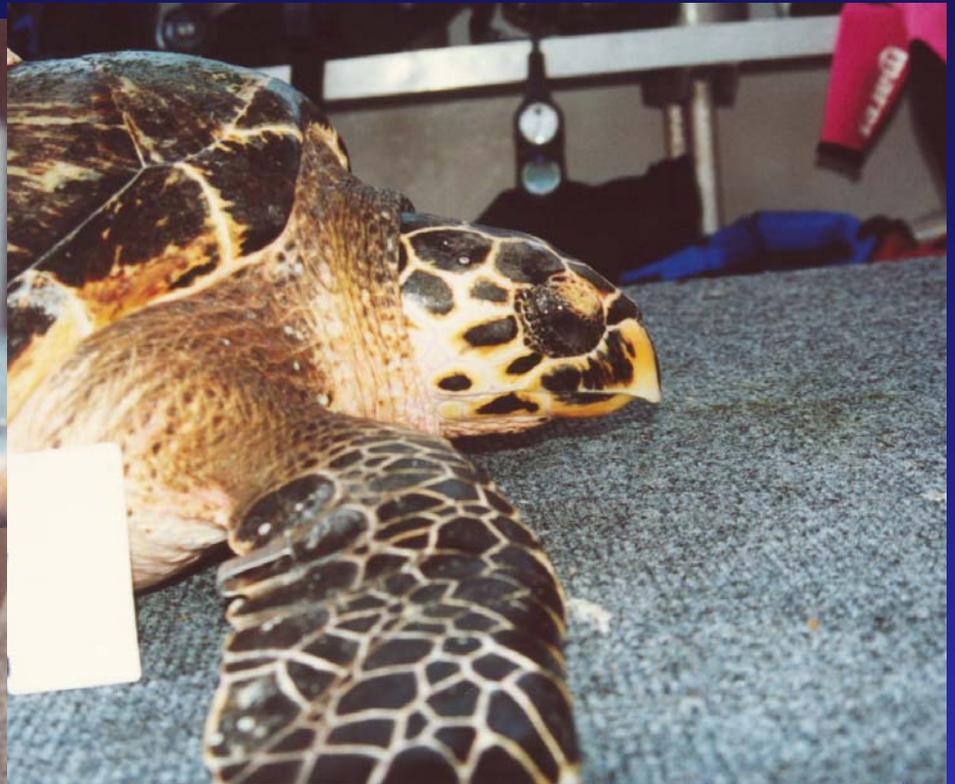
# Photographic Identification





**Epibiont patterning**





**Cranial scute  
pigmentation**

Results so far...

54 turtles captured in 51 days diving

24 confirmed re-sightings representing 13 turtles

Longest records: 220, 250, 680\* days

All seen in close proximity to capture site

Efficacy of hand-capture proven

21% have Milliporina (*Hydrozoa*) colonies on carapace



# The next year...

Tissue samples to be analyzed for stock assessment

Blood collection for gender determination

Begin to characterize reef habitats with digital videography

Expand study area



Many Thanks!



Dr. Anne Meylan, Amy Fifer, Chris Johnson, Dave Cowan, Mike O'Neil, all dive assistants

