

Bellini, C., and T. M. Sanches. 1998. First Record Of A Loggerhead Turtle In The Fernando De Noronha Archipelago, Brazil. *Marine Turtle Newsletter* 79:22.

### **FIRST RECORD OF A LOGGERHEAD TURTLE IN THE FERNANDO DE NORONHA ARCHIPELAGO, BRAZIL**

On 21 September 1995, a loggerhead sea turtle, *Caretta caretta*, was recorded on video in the Fernando de Noronha Archipelago, at a depth of 14 m, in a place known as Pedras Secas (03o51'00" S, 32o22'04" W). The site is frequently visited by SCUBA-diving companies. The video runs for approximately five minutes. The video indicates that the turtle was not tagged, it was in apparent good health, and it lacked any evidence of injury. Comparing the size of the turtle to the size of the divers, we estimate that it was an adult and probably a female (based on the absence of a long tail).

Fernando de Noronha is a nesting area for green turtles, *Chelonia mydas*, and a feeding area for green and hawksbill, *Eretmochelys imbricata*, turtles (Bellini and Sanches, 1996). There is only one record of a leatherback turtle, *Dermochelys coriacea*, and one of an olive ridley, *Lepidochelys olivacea*, in Fernando de Noronha; both turtles were incidentally captured in fishing nets in the vicinity of the archipelago (Bellini and Sanches, 1997). Prior to September 1995, loggerheads had never been documented.

Of the five species of sea turtle found in Brazil, the loggerhead is the most common along the continental coast. Its main nesting areas are located in the State of Bahia, including the Abrolhos Archipelago, and in the State of Espirito Santo. Nesting areas are also found in the States of Sergipe and Rio de Janeiro (Marcovaldi and Marcovaldi, 1987). In Brazil, the nesting season for loggerheads is mainly from September to March (Marcovaldi and Laurent, 1996).

Due to the unexpectedness of this record, the authors intend to intensify the diving activity at the site where the turtle was found, in order to obtain further information about the seasonality and abundance of loggerheads in the Fernando de Noronha Archipelago.

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