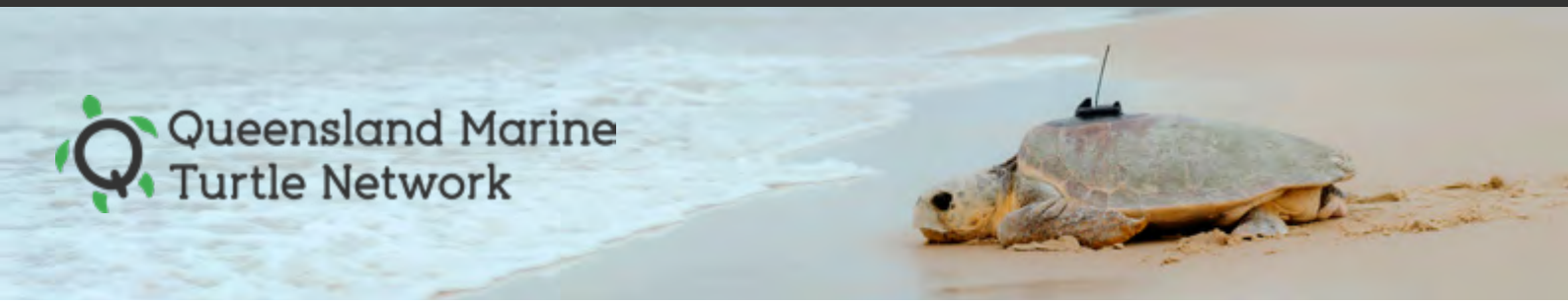


WELCOME

Hello and welcome to the very first edition of the Queensland Marine Turtle Network (QMTN) Newsletter! I'm Sean Williamson, Coordinator of QMTN. I've been working with our outstanding voluntary Steering Group to advance our network over the past 6 months.

We are thrilled to launch this quarterly newsletter to connect and inform our growing community of turtle conservationists, citizen scientists, traditional owners, land & sea rangers, researchers, and turtle enthusiasts across Queensland and beyond.

Your involvement is crucial to the success of marine turtle conservation, and we hope you'll find each issue inspiring and informative. Thank you for your commitment and support for marine turtle conservation.

Together, we're making a difference. Stay connected, stay inspired. **Happy Turtling!**

Sean Williamson (PhD),
QMTN Coordinator

Sean ready to ride the currents

NEW QMTN WEBSITE, SOCIALS & EMAIL

We're excited to announce the launch of the new QMTN website!

Visit qmtn.org or scan the QR code below for the latest QMTN news, history, information, and events. Please help us spread the word by sharing the website with your networks and encouraging fellow turtle enthusiasts to subscribe to our newsletter via the website.

We have also launched public Facebook and Instagram pages for QMTN.

Email us at info@qmtn.org for further information.

Stay informed & connected - subscribe today!

#queenslandmarineturtlenetwork

Queensland Marine Turtle Network

UPCOMING EVENT: 2025 ONLINE FORUM

Join us on 24 July 2025, from 4pm to 6pm, for our 2025 QMTN Online Forum. This two-hour event will be packed with valuable updates, insights, and opportunities to engage directly with our marine turtle network.

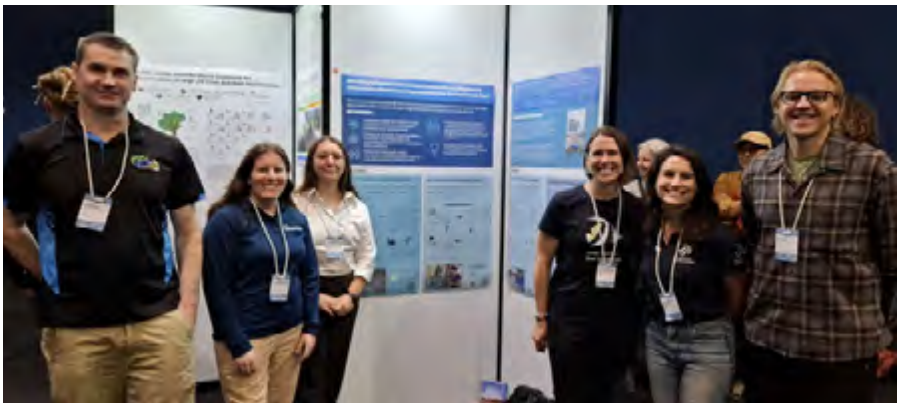
There will be an update on QMTN initiatives, a nesting season debrief from QPWS, some highlights from members across our network and the opportunity to discuss priorities moving forward.

Don't miss this opportunity to stay informed and involved! Registration can be completed here.

QMTN UPDATES & PLANS

We are also thrilled to announce that **QMTN now has 34 member organisations!**

Our Coordinator, Sean Williamson, and Steering Group member Jenn Loder from the Great Barrier Reef Foundation (GBRF) were able to represent QMTN at the recent International Congress for Conservation Biology (ICCB) in Brisbane in June.



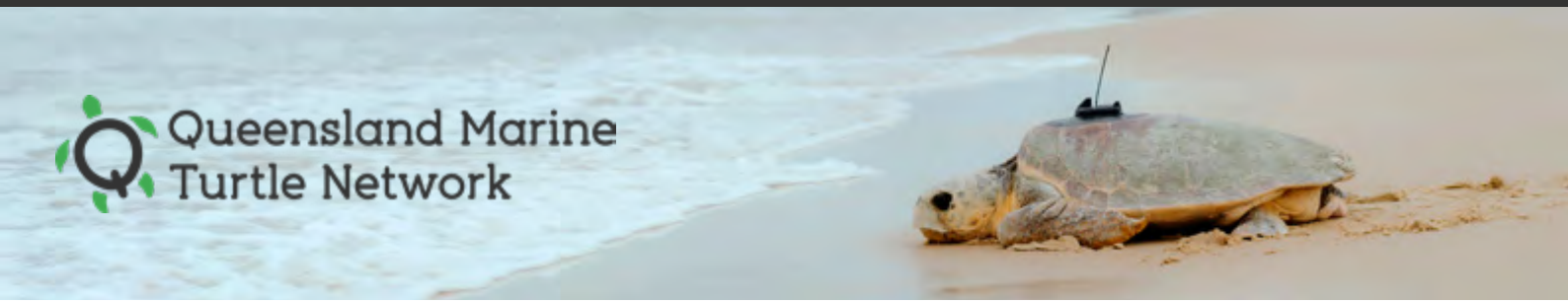
Sean, Jenn & others at ICCB

Sean presented alongside four other Reef Trust Partnership projects on elevating local communities in conservation efforts, highlighting QMTN's role in connecting marine turtle conservation groups across Queensland.

Next, we'll present a poster about QMTN at the **Australian Marine Science Association (AMSA)** conference in Melbourne - please say hi if you're attending.

We're also organising three exciting **webinars between August and November.** Attend our upcoming online forum on 24th July to help shape these webinars and suggest topics of interest.

Queensland Marine Turtle Network



NEWS FROM QMTN MEMBER ORGANISATIONS

MORETON BAY TURTLE SYMPOSIUM RECAP

The Bribie Island Turtle Trackers (BITTs) along with the Moreton Bay Environmental Sustainability Rotary Action Group (ESRAG) and the Redcliffe Environmental Forum (REF) hosted a successful inaugural Moreton Bay Turtle Symposium on the 3rd and 4th of May, 2025.

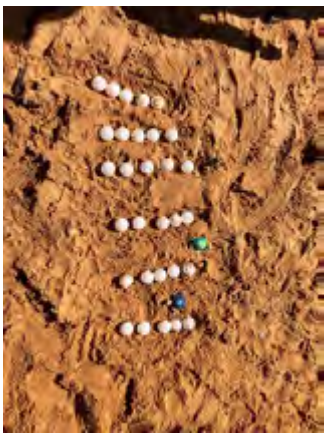
On the Saturday there was an outdoor Family Turtle Awareness Day at Queens Beach, Redcliffe with information booths. There were interactive events such as turtle tracks on the beach leading to a nest that children could help excavate to find turtle eggs (ping pong ball demonstration), creating much excitement for families.

Sunday's event was held at the Komo on Redcliffe's waterfront with presentations by leading experts, including keynote speaker Dr Col Limpus, an internationally renowned authority on loggerhead turtles.

Speakers highlighted ongoing efforts and challenges in conserving the critically endangered South Pacific loggerhead turtles and other species in Moreton Bay.

It was excellent to hear the collective actions of scientists, community organisations, volunteers and government to monitor and protect the turtles of Moreton Bay.

Special thanks go to John Oxenford (BITTs), Colin Scobie (ESRAG), and Bob Crudgington and Peter Row (REF) for organising the successful event.



Plenty of engaging activities & talks

Additional support from Rotary Clubs of Redcliffe Sunrise and Bribie Island, and the City of Moreton Bay was greatly appreciated.

Thank you to all the incredible guest speakers who gave up their Sunday to generously share their knowledge and wisdom with more than 100 attendees. **Stay tuned for next year's event!**

Queensland Marine Turtle Network

WCTTAA ANNUAL POST-NESTING SEASON MEETING

The Western Cape Turtle Threat Abatement Alliance (WCTTAA) recently concluded its annual post-nesting season meeting.

Key achievements celebrated at the meeting included the removal of more than 4,500 feral pigs and the monitoring of nearly 4,000 turtle nests in the last year, which have helped keep nest predation rates below sustainable levels and increased turtle hatching success.

The meeting, hosted by Cape York NRM in Cairns in late March, brought together 50 representatives from six ranger groups and state and federal government agencies, along with other organisations, stakeholders and contractors committed to turtle conservation and feral pest management.

Dr Manuela Fischer, WCTTAA Coordinator, highlighted the value of this annual gathering, “We hold this meeting each year after the turtle nesting season on the Western Cape ends. It’s an opportunity to report findings, discuss challenges and solutions of each ranger group individually, and plan for the next season and future opportunities as an Alliance”.

Marietta Matasia, who made history in 2023 by becoming the first female Ranger Coordinator for Nanum Wungthim Land & Sea Rangers, emphasised the importance of collaboration at the meeting: “We are always happy to share our ideas and learn from each other. Listening to the other groups and their on-ground experiences helps us work together on the issues and challenges that we all face, improve the way we do things and share our success stories”.

The Alliance’s significant contributions were recognised at the 2024 Australian Biosecurity Awards, receiving the inaugural First Nations Award for Excellence in Biosecurity. This prestigious award acknowledges their exceptional efforts in protecting Country and communities from pests, weeds, and diseases.

WCTTAA is supported by Cape York NRM with funding from the Australian and Queensland Governments’ Nest to Ocean Turtle Protection Program and the Queensland Feral Pest Initiative.

Dr Manuela Fischer (left), Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Julie Collins (middle) and Napranum Ranger Shalika Wapau (right)

Queensland Marine Turtle Network

QMTN MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

MACKAY & DISTRICT TURTLE WATCH

Mackay & District Turtle Watch

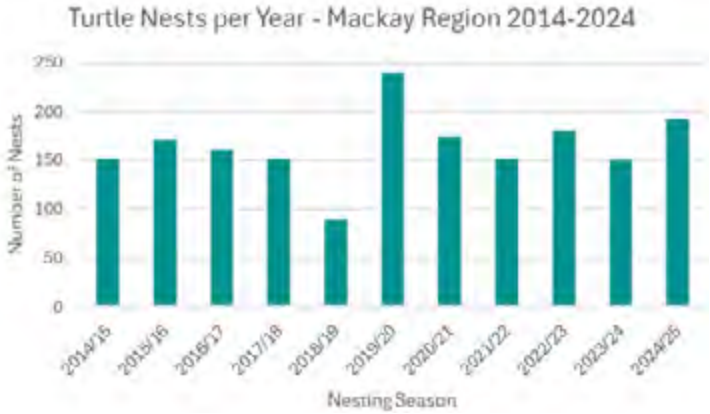
Founded in 1992, Mackay & District Turtle Watch Association Inc (MDTW) is a volunteer group dedicated to monitoring and protecting sea turtles across 220 km of coastline, from Midge Point to Clairview Beach in the greater Mackay Region.

Today, 46 members (including three original volunteers) patrol 19 beaches, recording nesting activity and intervening when nests or turtles are at risk.

In the 2024/25 season, MDTW recorded 192 nests and relocated 43 at-risk clutches, counted 8,136 empty shells for hatching-success analyses, and responded to 38 marine-turtle strandings - transporting stranded turtles to the Whitsunday Turtle Rescue Centre in Airlie Beach.

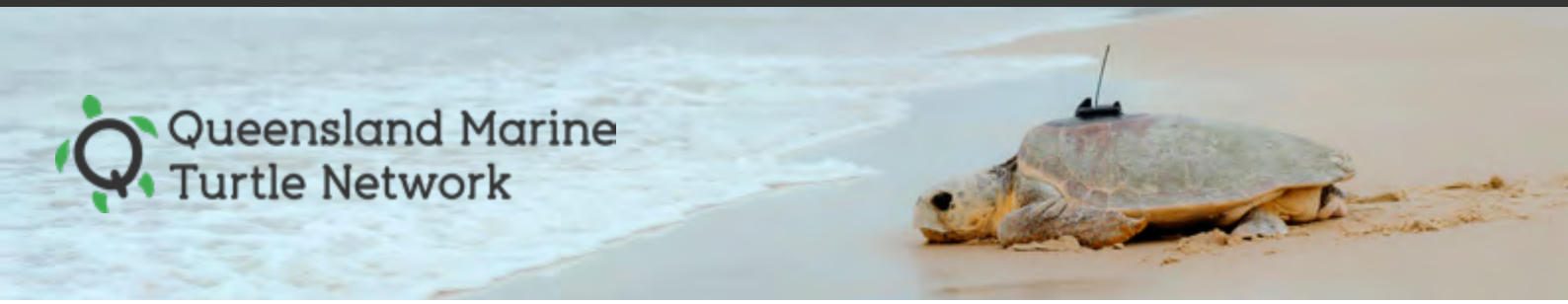
Predominantly Flatback turtles nest here, with occasional Green and Loggerhead turtles, and a rare Olive Ridley sighting.

While MDTW originally focused on documenting nesting distribution and success, habitat pressures - tidal inundation, unregulated vehicle access, light pollution, rising sand temperatures, and fox predation - have made nest relocation an increasing part of their work.



In addition to field surveys, MDTW engages the community via presentations, school talks, guided habitat walks, and information stalls. A recent advocacy win at East Point Beach - achieved in partnership with Traditional Owners, NRM groups, and the public-has restricted vehicle access, allowing dune vegetation to recover and improving nesting habitat.

Looking ahead to the 2025/26 nesting season, MDTW is focused on ensuring our group is appropriately trained and accredited. It is challenging for our group to travel 650 km to Mon Repos for accreditation. We are working with DETSI to ensure our volunteers remain qualified and ready to safeguard our turtles. **Thank you to all Mackay volunteers for your unwavering dedication to sea turtle conservation!**



CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Do you have a story, photo, or experience related to turtle monitoring, research or conservation? We'd love to feature it in our next newsletter! **Email info@qmtn.org with your submissions and ideas.**

QMTN STEERING GROUP

A huge thank you to the voluntary Steering Group who have been driving our mission forward since 2023:

Ainsley Gatley
Sea Turtle Alliance Inc.

Mike Gregory
Nests to Oceans Program, DETSI

Mark Hamann
James Cook University

Kate Hofmeister
Sunshine Coast Regional Council

Nev & Bev McLachlan
Turtle Care Volunteers Queensland Inc.

Jenn Loder
Great Barrier Reef Foundation

John Gatley
Sea Turtle Alliance

In the weeks following our 2025 Online Forum, we will be running an election process for our new Management Committee. Please reach out if you are interested in contributing.

THANKS FOR SUBSCRIBING!

QMTN is currently funded by the partnership between the Australian Government's Reef Trust and the Great Barrier Reef Foundation with in-kind support from our Steering Group.

Australian Government | REEF TRUST | Great Barrier Reef Foundation