Queensland Marine Turtle Network

QMTN 2025 Online Forum Summary - 24 July 4-6pm

Overview

QMTN held a forum on Zoom with 97 attendees registered. QMTN Coordinator, Dr Sean Williamson, opened with an overview of QMTN's recent achievements and strategic priorities, followed by a QTCP nesting-season debrief from Kyle Debets (DETSI). Member organisations then shared success stories: Dr Manuela Fischer highlighted predator-management successes under the WCTTAA alliance, and Bethlea Bell showcased FBA's Team Turtle CQ youth engagement program. The forum closed with live Mentimeter polls - gauging regional threats, training needs and interest in a 2025 member snapshot - and a rapid feedback survey, ensuring all voices helped shape QMTN's plans for collaboration, data-sharing and capacity-building in the year ahead.

Presentations

QMTN Overview - Dr. Sean Williamson (QMTN Coordinator)

- QMTN mission, history and governance - find out more here
- New QMTN website and dedicated email info@qmtn.org
- Updates on network membership (34 orgs.) and priority activities
- Upcoming activities: Snapshot Survey, Conservation and Research Priorities Report, identification of collaborative network projects, upcoming Management Committee Election, Online Webinars

QTCP Nesting Season Debrief - Kyle Debets (Threatened Species Operations | DETSI)

- 2024/25 Mon Repos nesting season data presentation
- Encouragingly busy nesting season this year w/ over 500 individual loggerheads - the largest season since the 1970s!
- If you are collecting data for QTCP, enhance data-reporting, submit your data to turtle.volunteers@detsi.qld.gov.au

Western Cape Turtle Threat Abatement Alliance (WCTTAA) - Dr. Manuela Fischer (WCTTAA Coordinator)

- Alliance of Western Cape Indigenous Land & Sea Ranger Groups - find out more here
- Collaborative work to protect marine turtles and their nesting habitats from predation and other threats - more than 4,500 feral pigs removed and over 4,000 turtle nests monitored in the last year alone!
- WCTTAA was recognised with prestigious national awards for their work and is supported by Cape York NRM and the Australian and Queensland Governments' Nest to Ocean Turtle Protection Program and the Queensland Feral Pest Initiative

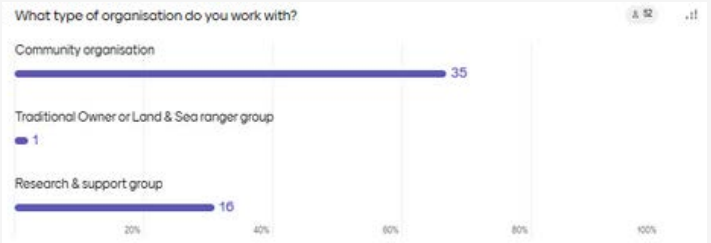
Team Turtle CQ Team Hatchlings - Bethlea Bell (Fiztroy Basin Association)

- Youth engagement and community awareness program by FBA's Team Turtle CQ - info
- Team hatchlings' "Turtles about, so lights out!" campaign video and podcast
- Initiatives - beach cleans, community education at markets, events and school talks

Interactive Mentimeter Session Highlights

Over 50 Forum Participants responded to interactive questions

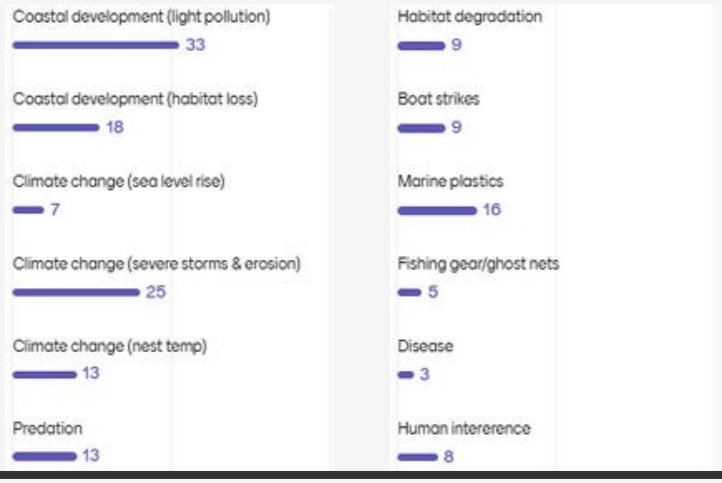
- Most respondents work with community orgs (67%), with 31% from research & support groups, and just one respondent (2%) from a Traditional Owner / Land & Sea Ranger Group - QMTN is committed to expanding engagement and will follow up on suggestions to better enable and support participation
- Most had not attended the 2023 QMTN Forum (78%)



Interactive Session Highlights Continued

Top Regional Threats (54 respondents with multiple selections)

- Coastal development (light pollution): 33 (61%)
- Climate change (severe storms & erosion): 25 (46%)
- Coastal development (habitat loss): 18 (33%)
- Marine plastics: 16 (30%)
- Predation: 13 (24%)
- Climate change (nest-temperature shifts): 13 (24%)
- Habitat degradation: 9 (17%)
- Boat strikes: 9 (17%)
- Human interference: 8 (15%)
- Climate change (sea-level rise): 7 (13%)
- Fishing gear / ghost nets: 5 (9%)
- Disease: 3 (6%)



Gauging Interest and Utility of a Future QMTN 2025 Snapshot Survey (53 respondents)

Most respondents (83%) were interested in participating, and some wanted more information to understand the opportunity (17%)

Desired Snapshot Content:

1. Collaboration & partnerships – who's doing what and where, and where to link up and foster collaborations
2. Training & QTCP authorisations – processes, local trainers, re-authorisation pathways
3. Member data – volunteer/staff numbers, geographic coverage, funding needs, gaps, needs and support
4. Data-collection methods – platforms, reporting standards, monitoring apps
5. Community education – outreach programs, messaging campaigns

Activities Participants Would Like to Expand or Add to Their Work (44 respondents)

- First Nations engagement
- Local authorisations (Online and/or in regional centres)
- Foraging ground monitoring, genetics & satellite tagging
- Collaborations with researchers - research prospectus docs
- Youth engagement, education & citizen-science programs
- Light-pollution audits & mitigation
- Fundraising for training opportunities and outreach
- Targeted conservation actions in line with recovery plans

Additional Training Needs - Beyond QTCP Authorisations (45 respondents)

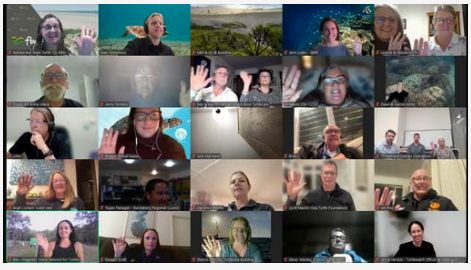
- Volunteer & public engagement - resolution skills, managing crowds
- Training Courses - first-aid, 4WD, grant writing, data collection, social media
- Biology / Science - turtle biology, strandings, rehabilitation, monitoring light
- Data systems - entry, analysis, QTCP database contributions and standards
- Authorisations & governance - legislative changes, certifications, interacting w/ gov.

Suggestions for Activities that QMTN Could Coordinate to Support Your Work (47 respondents)

- Data-sharing platforms & resource repositories
- Regional training coordination & authorisations registry
- Community-education campaigns & volunteer registers
- Publication lists & financial support for volunteer travel

Suggestions for Upcoming QMTN Webinar Topics (41 respondents)

- DETSI updates & recent research findings
- Light-pollution monitoring & management strategies
- Community engagement & behaviour-change tactics
- Training & authorisation processes
- Funding opportunities & cross-border coordination
- Strandings, rehabilitation & rehabilitation updates



Acknowledgements: Thank you to all the wonderful participants of the 2025 QMTN Online Forum. It was great to connect and share. The Queensland Marine Turtle Network would like to respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Queensland, the Elders past present and emerging and the ongoing and critical role First Nations people all around the world have in caring for country through environmental conservation and sustainable practices. QMTN is funded through June 2026 by the partnership between the Australian Government's Reef Trust and the Great Barrier Reef Foundation.

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