



Natural Selections

Legacy Program Update

FY 2008 Pre-Proposals due to the Legacy Program

September 4, 2007: The Legacy Program is accepting pre-proposals submitted for FY 2008 funding for the management, stewardship, and preservation of DoD's natural and cultural resources. The deadline for pre-proposals is 4 September 2007. All pre-proposals submissions will be accepted online through the Legacy Tracker at www.DoDLegacy.org.

National Public Lands Day: The National Environment Education Foundation (NEEF) is abuzz with organizing the 14th annual National Public Land's Day (NPLD). Last year, over 1,100 sites participated in celebrating NPLD. This year, NEEF predicts 1,300! This national partnership enlists volunteers to work with land managers to restore and enhance public lands and learn about resource conservation issues. They build trails, bridges and docks and remove invasive plants to make room for fragile native species. Volunteers also restore habitat for wildlife, install signage, and make facilities universally accessible.

The Legacy program is funding a total of 36 NPLD events, 29 of the sites involve natural resources, and 7 involve cultural resources. Be sure to reserve 29 September to volunteer. For details visit <http://www.publiclandsday.org/>

Legacy Project Highlight of the Month

Legacy Project 04-182 Aquatic Management Strategies and Actions Through a Comprehensive Management Plan for the Gulf Coastal Plain Ecosystem Partnership (GCPEP) Phase I and II.

The Gulf Coastal Plain Ecosystem Partnership (GCPEP) is an example of a successful partnership that has been able to frequently attain ambitious landscape scale conservation goals and objectives through

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In The News

Operators and Installation Managers join forces at first ever DoD Sustaining Military Readiness Conference

By Pedro Morales, Jane Mallory, Hillori Schenker
DoD Legacy Resource Management Program Staff

The 2007 Sustaining Military Readiness (SMR) Conference brought together nearly a thousand DoD personnel and other interested professionals in the natural and cultural resources conservation, operational, and planning community in an effort to promote military readiness through conservation, compatible land use planning, and encroachment mitigation. The SMR Conference took place at the Coronado Springs Resort in Orlando, Florida from July 30 to August 3, 2007.

The week-long conference featured a day and a half of workshops, followed by the official conference kick-off with the Opening Lunch and Plenary Session. Mr. Alex A. Beehler, ADUSD(ESOH) hosted the Plenary session that featured a Senior OSD Panel, Senior Military Panel, and speakers from the Department of

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Training

Riparian Zone Ecology Restoration/Management: June 23-27, 2008, in Phoenix, AZ. This course addresses planning and management issues that pertain to riparian (streamside) ecosystems in a variety of ecological and geographical settings. Emphasis is placed on the ecology, restoration and stewardship of riparian habitats associated with Civil Works projects and activities. Students will receive instruction on the functions and ecological importance of riparian zones, conservation needs, potential impacts resulting from various land use practices, and restoration and management techniques that can be applied to maintain or improve riparian systems. For more details visit <http://pdsc.usace.army.mil/CourseListDetail.aspx?CtrlNbr=281>.

Health & Environmental Risk Communication Workshop: January 22-24, 2008 in Barstow, CA & April 1-3 in MCB Quantico, VA. This 3-day ISEERB approved course provides attendees with basic knowledge and tools to effectively communicate risk and risk management issues to stakeholders of diverse interests. This includes developing a proactive program to establish and maintain a sound relationship through dialogue with stakeholders based on mutual trust and credibility. Instruction focuses on how to have open discussions on environmental restoration issues, establish confidence in communicating key messages, develop effective media and public meeting techniques, improve verbal and non-verbal communication skills, and revitalize stakeholder dialogue. Although the course was originally designed to meet the needs of restoration personnel, other environmental personnel can benefit from this training. Eligible personnel include Military and civilian personnel responsible for communicating environmental risk management issues to the public, regulators and/or media stakeholders including remedial project managers, BRAC Environmental Coordinators, Base Closure Team members, installation environmental program managers, experts, engineers, scientists, health and safety personnel, natural resource personnel, and others. For more information visit <https://www.cecos.navy.mil/coursedetail.cfm?courseid=67>.

Natural Resource Compliance: January 15-18, 2008 in Corpus Christi, TX. This course offers instruction in specific natural resource laws, regulations, policies, Executive Orders, DoD Instructions, and other guidance, noting Service-specific requirements. Course addresses stewardship, preservation, and process; fish, game, and wildlife management laws; protection of wetlands, waterways, and other protected ecological areas; forest and land use management laws; and interservice cooperation. Practical exercises and guest speakers are included. This course is approved by the Interservice Environmental Education Review Board (ISEERB). For details visit <https://www.cecos.navy.mil/coursedetail.cfm?courseid=42>.



Announcements and Events of Interest

NEW! Wildlife Habitat Council 19th Annual Symposium “The Value of Green”: November 12-13, 2007 at the Hyatt Regency Baltimore, MD. Each year, WHC brings together record numbers of corporate, government and conservation leaders from around the globe. Learn how to build an awareness, understanding and commitment to biodiversity. Innovative sessions will explore economic benefits, volunteerism, invasive species, educational resources...plus much more! Participate in hands-on outdoor workshops or attend indoor conservation training. For registration details and general information visit <http://www.wildlifehc.org/events/symposium.cfm>.

NEW! 10th Watershed & Wetlands Workshop: October 22-25, 2007 at the Carousel Resort Hotel, Ocean City, MD. Watershed and wetland protection and restoration are now more crucial than ever and have been made part of the EPA's list of priorities. Protection and restoration using the watershed approach is an important venue for all who strive to protect our vital aquatic resources. This workshop will increase dialogue and foster partnerships among federal, state, and local agencies, tribal nations, non-governmental organizations, the scientific community, private industry, and all other stakeholders involved in the management of aquatic resources. Topics important to our aquatic resources such as sea-level rise, limited funding for research, monitoring, and restoration, population increase, guidance subsequent to the RAPANOS decision, and other relevant and current issues confronting all interested in aquatic environments are open for discussion. For details visit <http://www.wetlandsworkgroup.org/>.

Partners in Environmental Technology Technical Symposium & Workshop: December 4-6, 2007 at the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel in Washington, D.C. This conference assembles environmental researchers and technology developers with the defense user and regulatory communities to showcase cutting edge environmental technologies and ideas, as well as communicate the most difficult challenges of our defense establishment. The conference has a comprehensive technical program consisting of concurrent sessions highlighting proven environmental technologies, as well as technologies needed to address emerging DoD environmental challenges. Full registration in advance is \$415. For online registration and details visit <http://www.serdp-estcp.org/symposium/>.

NatureServe Conservation Conference: October 1 - 3, 2007 at the Denver Marriott West, in Golden, Colorado. The NatureServe Conservation Conference 2007 is an international training, education, and networking event for the environmental conservation community. Conservation leaders, thinkers, and doers come together for three days of education, discussion, idea exchange, and professional networking. This conference joins natural resource management professionals from the non-profit, government, and corporate sectors to learn from each other, share innovations, and discover useful opportunities for collaboration. For more details visit the conference website at http://www.natureserve.org/visitLocal/cons_conference2007.jsp

Annual Conference on Ecosystem Restoration and Creation: The 34th anniversary of The Annual Conference on Ecosystems Restoration and Creation will be held November 1 - 2, 2007 at the Trinkle Building located on the Plant City campus of Hillsborough Community College (Plant City, Florida). The Annual Conference provides a forum for the nationwide exchange of results of the latest scientific research on restoration, creation, and management of not only freshwater and coastal systems but total ecosystems including upland and transitional areas. For more details visit their website at <http://www.hccfl.edu/depts/detp/ecoconf.html>

Coming Soon! 2007 EPA/State/DoD Region III Environmental Colloquium: October 30 - November 1, 2007 at the Radisson Plaza Lord Baltimore in Baltimore MD. There is a pre-conference reception on the evening of October 29 at the National Aquarium. The theme for this year's Colloquium is "COMPLIANCE AND BEYOND – Merging Mission and Environment." This is two and half day environmental forum is an excellent partnering and training for environmental professionals at all levels within DOD, state and EPA. Details for this conference are not readily available but you will find preliminary information at http://www.bakerprojects.com/r3_envconf/.



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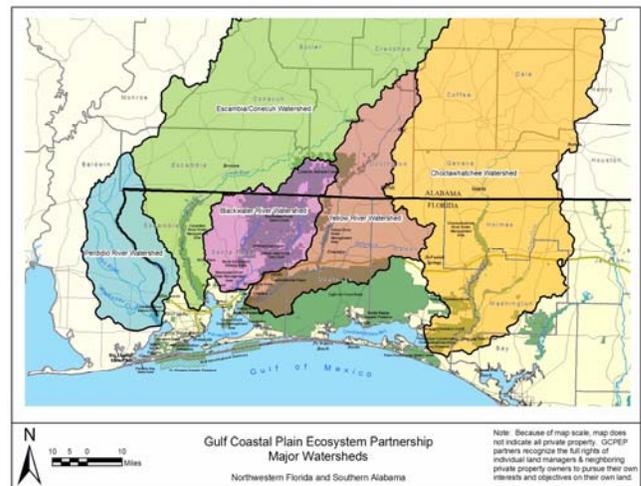
respectful, positive, and result-oriented action. Operating under a Memorandum of Understanding since 1996, the strength of the partnership is facilitating cooperative projects among partners of differing missions while overcoming significant challenges. GCPEP has established effective cross-boundary methods for managing and restoring both aquatic and terrestrial systems in northwest Florida and south Alabama.

Initially, the partnership consisted of 850,000 acres with 6 public and private partners enrolled. Collectively, the partnership now contains over 1,052,000 acres of land and water in one of the most biologically significant regions in North America with the 10 partners enrolling lands that are being managed for a wide variety of missions. The initial goal was to connect adjacent lands for wildlife habitat as well as for addressing other land management issues. The GCPEP partners continue to receive extensive benefits from involvement in the partnership including resource and information sharing, cooperative project support, and leverage of existing funds for each of the partners.

This collaborative project was modeled on previous successful GCPEP projects and addressed the following threats: encroaching incompatible development, incompatible/inadequate water management, information and data gaps, and other emerging threats. The GCPEP Steering Committee identified the following as priority issues to be addressed through research, improved management and cooperative projects:

- Aquatic species and natural communities' management;
- Land and watershed protection;
- Dirt road management;
- Invasive/Exotic species management
- Native plant restoration;
- Nature based tourism and recreation; and
- Communications and public education.

With support from the Legacy Resource Management Program, progress has been made in improving management of the focal conservation targets selected by the GCPEP Steering Committee. This progress towards improving conservation conditions on the lands and waters surrounding military lands within the GCPEP area has led to greater flexibility for the military mission.



Major Watersheds managed under the Gulf Coastal Plain Ecosystem Partnership

This project significantly increases the options available to Eglin AFB's flight path and military operations, while improving the management and restoration of aquatic species and natural community conservation targets found on Eglin AFB and the surrounding GCPEP landscape in both Florida and Alabama.

This project addresses threats and solutions on and surrounding Eglin AFB, leading to a more effective regional aquatic conservation effort. In addition, this regional landscape scale effort could prevent future state or federal listings of imperiled aquatic species, such as the Florida bog frog (*Rana okaloosae*), by improving the conservation status of imperiled aquatic species and natural communities regionally. GCPEP is having significant regional and national implications, serving as a model of how to regionally manage and restore aquatic resources. The main emphasis of this project involved working with the GCPEP partners to develop a comprehensive GCPEP Aquatic Management Plan. The GCPEP staff accomplished this task by facilitating and participating in partnership-wide planning and collaborating, building upon the previously completed GCPEP Conservation Area Plan, to strengthen aquatic conservation strategies and actions.

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the Interior and Representatives from the State of Florida. The conference also highlighted two full days of session tracks with presentations in the areas of Sustainability, Natural Resources, Cultural Resources, and Encroachment Mitigation. The conference wrapped up with a full day of field trips to military installations (Cape Canaveral Air Force Station and Avon Park Air Force Range), as well as to the Disney's Wilderness Preserve. The 5-day scheduled conference also featured exhibitors and more than 60 posters that summarized results of recently funded projects.

Perhaps the most significant outcome for this conference is that it gave a common stage for natural and cultural resource managers to engage and share ideas with trainers and installation operators. "It was productive and open dialogue, it got operators and managers talking to each other" said Peter Boice, DoD Conservation Team Leader. Several conference attendees were glad to have the opportunity to attend sessions of importance for their day-to-day responsibilities but not necessarily in their area of expertise. Getting the operators, trainers, and managers to cross the hallway and listen in to presentations outside the traditional tracks they are accustomed was a major goal of this conference, and was one reason this conference was such a great success.

For the military it was also an opportunity to reach out to their installation personnel. During his remarks in the Opening Lunch MGen Lehnert, Commanding General, Marine Corps Installations West said "A country worth defending is a country worth preserving" highlighting the need for the military and the environmental community to work together and pursue continued dialogue.

This conference sent the right message to installation personnel: good conservation stewardship helps lower the impact on the mission. Logistically the conference proved to be challenging, it was the first time three different DoD offices representing 7 DoD programs joined forces to put together such a large conference. The DoD Legacy Program was the single largest contributor to the conference, provided the seed money for its implementation, and was instrumental in bringing other sponsors on board.

The Sustaining Military Readiness Conference was sponsored by the Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Installations and Environment, Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Readiness, and the Office of the Deputy Director for Operational Test and Evaluation.

Warblers, Vireos, and Tanks: Army Tries New Approach

A novel program enlists civilian landowners in a bid to preserve habitat of endangered birds

By Mark Clayton

Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

The rumble of tanks and the blasts of exploding shells at Fort Hood Army base seem not to perturb the golden-cheeked warbler or the black capped vireo.

The endangered birds, in fact, are thriving in the oak and juniper groves in lesser-used parts of the sprawling base. But as private land surrounding Fort Hood is developed, reducing nesting habitat, the Army is concerned that the base will become the bird's last haven-- putting areas needed for tank training off limits forevermore.

Enter nearby rancher Clay McClellan, a veteran of the "warbler wars" of the 1990s and an unlikely hero in the ongoing story of an endangered species' quest for survival. He has signed a contract pledging to preserve some warbler-friendly acreage on his property, and the Army is paying him to do it.



Mr. Philip Grone, Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Installations and Environment, Mr. David Duma, Principal Deputy Director for Operational Test and Evaluation, Dr. Paul Mayberry, Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Readiness, and Mr. Alex Beehler, Assistant Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Environmental, Safety and Occupational Health, respond to questions from the Sustaining Military Readiness Conference attendees.

"Back a few years ago when this came up, we just got bulldozers out and started wiping it out," Mr. McClellan says of warbler habitat. "But these days, the government is taking a friendlier approach toward us."

Getting paid to be a protector is a big reason McClellan and 10 other landowners have put 1,400 acres of prime habitat into a fledgling program that, scientists and the Army hope, will prompt warblers to take up residence off-base. If it works-- still a big "if"-- not only would the Army get to use more of Fort Hood for training rather than for nesting, but the Bush administration would likely apply this market-based model of species protection to other endangered creatures nationwide.

"We think this system will do a lot for the warbler and begin changing thinking in this part of the country about endangered species," says Steve Manning of the Texas Watershed Management Foundation, a local group with ranching interests that helped devise the program. "In the long run,... our system could become a national model."

Military houses protected species

The Army's interest in the experiment-- called the Recovery Credit System (RCS)-- extends beyond Fort Hood. Almost 100 military installations are home to at least 150 federally protected species. As nearby land is bulldozed and developed, the bases bear "a disproportionate burden for critical habitat management to support species recovery," according to a recent RAND Corp. study commissioned by the US Department of Defense to look at readiness.

"Tank training is our bread and butter, something we have to do," says John Cornelius, chief of natural resources management at Fort Hood who discovered the warbler there and fought to save it. "Over the long run, we think this RCS system will provide a safety net for us and for the birds." There's no arguing that Fort Hood's existing program to help the endangered birds has paid off. For 15 years it has preserved shrubs and trees the birds prefer-- and both species have rebounded. About 5,400 warbler pairs were nesting at Fort Hood this spring, more than twice the 2,000 pairs the federal recovery plan mandates. Now, however, the Army is reducing the birds' "core" habitat on the 217,000-acre base. In 2003, about 66,000 acres-- nearly one-third of Fort Hood-- had restrictions to help the warbler and the vireo. In 2005, however, the Army sought a new biological opinion from the US Fish and Wildlife Service, which oversees the birds' recovery. As a result, warbler habitat where tank movements are restricted was reduced to fewer than 10,000 acres today.

Warblers and vireo populations "appear stable," says Richard Kostecke, a project scientist with the Nature Conservancy, an environmental group that has long overseen the bird recovery plans at the base.

But the core habitat reduction leads critics of the plan to charge that RCS is mainly designed to get the Army off the warbler hook. RCS offers only fragmented habitat spread out over vast areas, compared with the base's stable, concentrated program, says Kieran Suckling, policy director of the Tucson-based Center for Biological Diversity. Offering 10-, 20-, and 30-year landowner commitments-- instead of perpetual easements-- raises questions about fluctuating habitat, he says. Finally, there is no requirement that numbers of birds actually increase.

"They would have you believe this system will result in a net increase in warbler numbers, but that's highly unlikely," he says. "The only reason this program exists is because the military is about to nuke the best warbler habitat in the state of Texas."

Still, the RCS program is not without environmental credentials. Environmental Defense, the Washington-based environmental group, has signed on to design it. Texas A&M University and state wildlife researchers will do field research. "It's a first-of-its-kind system," says David Wolfe, senior scientist at Environmental Defense who is designing the evolving RCS system. "We've got fulltime management and monitoring. So far, we've been surprised at its popularity. We can't keep up with demand."

That demand speaks to a dramatic change in attitude from the old days. Then, some landowners in the area, fearing government intrusion over the endangered birds, adopted the motto: "Shoot, shovel, and shut up."

Low bidder wins the contract

Other programs, too, pay people to help preserve the environment. What makes RCS different is its focus on endangered species and the fact that it is market-based, says Dr. Wolfe. If McClellan, for instance, is the low bidder, he is then selected to save trees and terrain the birds like and to slash brush they don't.

In coming months, the RCS system will begin trading "conservation unit" credits for saving key habitat. If warbler habitat on the base were to be damaged by one of the frequent brush fires, base commanders would be able to purchase RCS credits instead of cutting training to meet Endangered Species Act requirements.

If RCS catches on, some worry the additional private habitat could, in the end, weaken the bird populations by allowing Fort Hood to set aside even less warbler acreage. To Mr. Suckling, though, the RCS program's fatal flaw is its emphasis on keeping detailed landowner data secret, preventing groups like his from ensuring public accountability.

RCS defenders envision 40,000 or more acres and scores of landowners in the system within a few years. But that won't happen without privacy of individual land data, says Mr. Manning of the Texas Watershed Management Foundation.

"We are doing everything openly and aboveboard," Manning says. "But landowners here are concerned about privacy. So it's a balancing act." Wolfe notes, as well, that the program includes extensive on-site monitoring and management oversight.

Better for landowners than for birds?

Still, other experts aren't satisfied. Jim Bergan, director of science and stewardship for the Nature Conservancy in Texas, has direct supervisory responsibility for the Fort Hood species recovery project. While he is hopeful the RCS will work, he says it currently serves the needs of landowners more than it does the endangered birds.

"It all goes back to doing what's right by the US taxpayers and trying to incentivize landowners," he says. "It's certainly possible to make the program too landowner-friendly-- and that's just not right. You've got to show benefits at the end of the day for the warbler."

Special Announcement

If you have gopher tortoises or gopher tortoise habitat on your installation or range, please contact Rebecca Evans at Rebecca.Evans@us.af.mil or (229) 257-2963. She is collecting information on gopher tortoise management for a study on DoD gopher tortoise policy.

Recent Natural Resources Documents On [DENIX](#) and Web

NEW! [North American Pollinator Protection Campaign Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\)](#): signed June 26, 2007: this MOU's purpose is to commit to cooperation between the Department of Defense and the Coevolution Institute in matters relating to the management and conservation of pollinators and their ecosystems in DoD's natural resource management plans and practices. Visit <https://www.denix.osd.mil/denix/Public/Library/NCR/policy.html?fm-dodcp>.

NEW! [DoD Partners In Flight Fact Sheets](#): The following fact sheets have been posted on the DoD Partners In Flight page on DENIX, the updated versions of Bird Aircraft Strike Hazard (BASH), International Conservation: DoD's Connection to Neotropical Migrants in Latin America and the Caribbean, Important Bird Areas: DoD lands benefit priority bird species, and the newly released fact sheets: Bird Species of Concern: Identifying Priority Bird Species of Conservation Concern on DoD Lands, Bird Conservation Database: Web-based Access to Bird Research and Management Information on DoD Lands, and West Nile Virus: Minimizing the threat to humans and birds. All this fact sheets are available at <https://www.denix.osd.mil/denix/Public/Library/NCR/dodpif.html>.

NEW! [DoD Legacy Resource Management Program Expected Products Submission Procedure](#): 2 helpful pages that detail the correct method for submitting products to Legacy, which forms are required and where and how the forms are generated. Visit https://www.denix.osd.mil/denix/Public/Library/NCR/legacy_fs.html?fm-legacy for details.

[Fact sheet: DoD Southeast Region Threatened, Endangered and At Risk Species \(TER-S\) Workshop](#): (Legacy 03-310): This fact sheet highlights a partnership-based workshop that developed a targeted and prioritized research and management action plan on issues related to threatened, endangered, and at-risk species (TER-S) of interest to the military throughout the Southeast Region. The fact sheet can be found at https://www.denix.osd.mil/denix/Public/Library/NCR/endangered_sp.html?fm-natres.

[Fact Sheet: The North Carolina Sandhills Weed Management Area: Facilitating Regional, Invasive Species Management Partnerships Among DoD and Neighboring Land Stewards](#): (Legacy 6-334): This 3 page fact sheet details a project that formed the Weed Management Area (WMA) partnership of Federal, State and local government agencies, as well as, individuals, and various interested groups that cooperatively manage non-native invasive plant species (NIS) in the NC Sandhills. The fact sheet summarizes the project objectives and accomplishments to date. Visit <https://www.denix.osd.mil/denix/Public/Library/NCR/invasivespecies.html?fm-natres>



Did You Know?

Loggerheads! - The loggerhead sea turtle, *Caretta caretta*, was listed in 1978 as a threatened species and it is considered "vulnerable" by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature. Recent population studies have concluded that the number of females that nest in the Southeast U.S. is continuing to decline. The U.S. Federal government has listed the loggerhead as endangered worldwide. Florida beaches account for one third of the world's total population of loggerheads. The carapace of subadult/adult loggerheads is reddish-brown. Average carapace length is about 92 cm and average body mass about 113 kg. Hatchlings can vary in color from light to dark brown. Flippers are dark brown with white margins. The plastron is the bony plate that forms the underside of a turtle's shell, covering its belly and other under parts has a faded yellow ochre appearance.



One of six "day-old" threatened loggerhead sea turtle hatchlings was released at the beach on Cape Canaveral Air Force Station by the installation biologist on August 3, 2007. This 2 inch long little fellow was nicknamed Skippy. Photo by Pedro Morales.

The loggerhead is the most common sea turtle in Florida. Named for its large head, the loggerhead has powerful jaws crush mollusks, crabs and encrusting animals attached to reefs and rocks. Loggerheads sometimes scavenge fish or fish parts, but they are not considered fish eaters. An estimated 14,000 females nest in the southeastern U.S. each year. The loggerhead is a large turtle with adults weigh 200 to 350 pounds and measure about 3 feet in length. Survival in Florida threatened by drowning in shrimp trawls and habitat loss Extensive ground and aerial surveys as recently as 1990 put loggerhead nest estimates at 50,000-70,000 per year in the Southeast U.S. This number represents approximately 35-40% of the world population of loggerhead turtles.

It is assumed that hatchlings live out their "lost years" in rafts of Sargasso and/or debris in open ocean drift lines. They remain part of this drifting community and grow to 40 or 50 cm carapace length. They then migrate to the shallower coastal waters which become their foraging habitat.

The loggerhead mating season is from late March to early June. Little is known about courtship or mating habits of the loggerhead (or those of any other sea turtle, for that matter). In the southeastern United States, adult females begin to nest as early as late April and they continue right up to early September. Nesting activity is at its peak in June and July. Average clutch size varies from 100 to 126 eggs along the southeastern United States coast.

Loggerheads nest at night. The average interval between nesting seasons is two to three years, but this can vary from one to six years. Natural incubation periods range from 53-55 days in Florida to 63-68 days in Georgia. The time it takes for eggs to hatch is inversely related to temperature. As with all sea turtles, sex determination in hatchlings is also temperature dependent.

Contact Us

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