

PRELIMINARY APPROACH TO THE HATCHLING SEX RATIO OF A POPULATION OF CARETTA CARETTA OF BOA VISTA ISLAND, CAPE VERDE ARCHIPELAGO (WESTERN AFRICA)

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Abstract

A nesting population of loggerhead sea turtles *Caretta caretta* has recently been described for Boa Vista Island, Cape Verde Archipelago (Western Africa). Since 1998, "Projecto Cabo Verde Natura 2000" has monitored three beaches during the turtle breeding season. The beaches being monitored - Calheta, Errata and Ponta Cosme - are located in the southeast part of Boa Vista Island. This work intends to give a first insight into the Boa Vista Island sea turtle population's sex ratio using a histological approach, as sexual determination in sea turtles is known to be temperature-dependent (TSD or temperature-dependent sex determination). Between 16th August and 29th September 2003, recently dead hatchlings from the beaches mentioned above were collected and necropsied for gonad withdrawal. Only hatchlings found dead due to natural death or predation were collected. 49 hatchlings were necropsied and duplicate gonads were preserved in Bouin's preservative and 10% formaline for histological sex assignment. This is the first preliminary assessment of this population's sex ratio. In 2004, field-season data on this subject will need to be further improved and eventually compared with incubation temperature data.