Project Update: February 2007

The following are the preliminary results of the project "**Nesting ecology and public participation for conservation management of the Olive ridley (*Lepidochelys olivacea*) sea turtle at Gorgona National Park – Colombia**" supported by the Rufford Foundation Booster Grant (2006 – 2007).

Field surveys conducted during the 2006-2007 nesting season at Playa Palmeras

- 5 Olive ridley nesting females were tagged and measured during surveys conducted in Playa Palmeras at Gorgona National Park between October 2006 and January 2007.
- 16 tracks were recorded during morning surveys and 36 nests monitored with an average clutch size of 93.1 eggs per nest.
- 3.316 eggs were laid on Playa Palmeras during the nesting season and 2.742 hatchlings emerged and were released successfully into the sea.
- The obtained hatching success was 79.7%, with an incubation average time of 57.8 days.
- 6 Blood and 36 tissue samples were collected from turtles and hatchlings and stored at – 20° C for the genetic identification of the Olive ridley nesting colony at Gorgona National Park.
- 47 hatchlings were collected for sexual determination using histological techniques which are currently developed.

Public participation for the conservation management of sea turtles

- Oral presentations on the biology and ecology of sea turtles were given to more than 300 students from the San Jose High School at the town of Guapi in mainland.
- So far one educational demonstration has been developed with local fisherman to introduce them in the use of new fishing technologies (turtle d-hookers and circle hooks).

Left: Nesting female intercepted during beach surveys at Playa Palmeras. Right: Researcher counting egg shells after hatchlings emergence

Left: Nest after exhumation to determine hatching success. Right: Dissected hatchling for gonads removal and sex determination.

Left: High school students attending a sea turtle biology and ecology talk. Right: Local fishermen during educational d-hookers demonstrations.