

Animal Program as an ambassador animal. This frog weighed 24 g upon arrival, indicating she was at least two years old (Morey and Reznick 2001. Ecology 82:510–522). She was euthanized on 6 April 2018 following several months of declining health (LACM 180802; LACM Photo Collection 2569–2571; 54.1 mm SVL). Given that adult size is reached a minimum of two breeding seasons following metamorphosis (Morey 2005. *In* Lannoo [ed.] *Amphibian Declines: The Conservation Status of United States Species*, pp. 514–517. University of California Press, Berkeley, California), this frog was at least 9 yr old at the time of death. There are no previous longevity records for this species (Morey 2005, *op. cit.*). Among close relatives, a captive *S. intermontana* was documented to be at least 6 yr old (Hall 1998. Cat. Amer. Amphib. Rept. 650:1–17), a captive *Scaphiopus holbrookii* lived 12 yr, 4 mo (Snider and Bowler 1992. Longevity of Reptiles and Amphibians in North American Collections. Second edition. SSAR Herpetological Circular 21), and *Scaphiopus couchii* is estimated to live to about 13 years based on a skeletochronology study (Tinsley and Tocque 1995. Aust. J. Ecol. 20:376–384). Farrar and Hey (2005. *In* Lannoo [ed.], *op. cit.*, pp. 513–514) reported that *Spea bomblifrons* can live to 13 years based on a skeletochronology analysis and cited an unpublished 1997 newsletter of the Southwestern Research Station as support; unfortunately, this appears to be in error and the referenced skeletochronology study actually documented longevity for *S. couchii* (R. Tinsley, pers. comm.).

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TESTUDINES — TURTLES

CARETTA CARETTA (Loggerhead Sea Turtle). POST-NESTING RECAPTURES. *Caretta caretta* primarily nests along the USA east coast from Maryland to Florida, however additional nesting occurs along the northern Gulf of Mexico (GoM) coast from Florida to Texas (Shamblin et al. 2017. Mar. Biol. 164:138; National Marine Fisheries Service [NMFS] and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service [USFWS]. 2008. Recovery Plan for the Northwest Atlantic Population of the Loggerhead Sea Turtle (*Caretta caretta*), Second Revision. 325 pp.). Though adult *C. caretta* forage in northern and eastern GoM waters, few have been tracked migrating to the western GoM (Hart et al. 2018. Ecol. Evol. 8:12656–12669), and observations of gravid or post-nesting *C. caretta* stranding on the Texas coast are rare. Herein, we detail three mark-recapture records of gravid (N = 1) and post-nesting (N = 2) *C. caretta*, tagged in other USA states, stranding on the Texas GoM coast since the establishment of the Texas Sea Turtle Stranding and Salvage Network in 1980.

First, on 19 June 1992, a *C. caretta* was observed nesting on Bald Head Island, Brunswick County, North Carolina, USA. The female measured 97.2 cm straight carapace length (SCL), 77.5 cm straight carapace width (SCW), and was tagged with two metal Inconel tags (QQV382, QQQ383; National Band and Tag Company, Newport, Kentucky, USA). This female was observed

nesting on Bald Head Island on two additional occasions in 1992. On 19 July 1994, the *C. caretta* was again observed nesting and was tagged with a new metal Inconel tag (SSJ700) in the front left flipper. The final observation of this female nesting on Bald Head Island was recorded on 4 August 1997. On 20 May 2013, a severely decomposed *C. caretta* stranded on Bolivar Peninsula, Galveston County, Texas, USA. This individual measured 96.8 cm SCL, 73.7 cm SCW, and had a metal Inconel tag in the front left flipper (SSJ700), identifying her as the *C. caretta* observed nesting on Bald Head Island, North Carolina, from 1992–1997. The stranded turtle's carapace was covered with epibiota, and most of the plastron was not present upon discovery. The SCL and SCW measurements recorded in 2013 likely vary from the measurements recorded in 1992 due to deterioration of the stranded *C. caretta* before discovery in 2013. The *C. caretta* was buried on the beach at the stranding location.

Second, on 9 June 1998, a *C. caretta* was captured in a pound net in Carteret County, North Carolina, USA. The *C. caretta* was tagged in the front left shoulder with a passive integrated transponder (PIT) tag (407A0D112B; Biomark, Boise, Idaho, USA) and released from the NMFS Beaufort Lab on 12 June 1998, after inclusion in a behavioral study. The *C. caretta* was released on Harkers Island, North Carolina, and measured 56.4 cm SCL and 44.9 cm SCW. On 14 July 2013, a *C. caretta* stranded on Matagorda Island, Matagorda County, Texas. The *C. caretta* had a PIT tag (407A0D112B), identifying the turtle as the *C. caretta* captured in Carteret County, North Carolina, in 1998. The stranded *C. caretta* measured 96.0 cm SCL and 72.0 cm SCW, documenting ca. 39.6 cm of SCL growth in ca. 15 years. The *C. caretta* was transported to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Sea Turtle Facility in Galveston, Texas, where the turtle received an ultrasound on 15 July 2013. The ultrasound confirmed that the *C. caretta* was female, had developing follicles, and several calcified eggs. She was active and healthy; therefore, she was released into the GoM on 16 July 2013 on Galveston Island, Galveston County, Texas. No *C. caretta* nests were documented on Galveston Island in 2013, however 13 nests were documented on North Padre (N = 12) and South Padre (N = 1) Islands that year. Nine of these nests were documented prior to this female's release; three were documented after.

Third, on 26 June 2016 at 0022 h, a *C. caretta* was discovered digging a nest cavity in Zone #6 on Manasota Key, Sarasota County, Florida, USA. The *C. caretta* measured 83.3 cm SCL and 63.1 cm SCW. Two metal Inconel tags (LLP805, LLP806) were applied to the front left and right flippers, and a PIT tag (982.000364215976) was applied to the rear right flipper. The patrollers that discovered the female left the nesting site at 0047 h while the *C. caretta* was covering the nest cavity. The minimum size accepted for the adult stage of the *C. caretta* species is 82.0 cm SCL_{std} (Turtle Expert Working Group [TWEG]. 2009. NOAA Technical Memorandum NMFS-SEFSC-575. 131 pp.). This observation of a nesting *C. caretta* measuring at a smaller SCL than average for the adult neophyte stage (91.2 cm SCL_{std}; TWEG 2009, *op. cit.*) provides empirical evidence that *C. caretta* at this size can be reproductively mature. On 18 March 2020, a dead *C. caretta* was located stranded on the GoM coast in Galveston, Texas. The *C. caretta* measured 83.6 cm SCL and 64.0 cm SCW. A PIT tag (982.000364215976) was present in the rear right flipper, identifying the *C. caretta* as the female documented nesting on Manasota Key, Florida in 2016. The distal end of the front left flipper was amputated, though the wound was healed. The *C. caretta* was taken to the NOAA Sea Turtle Facility in Galveston,

Texas, for necropsy. During necropsy, the liver was noted to be black in color, swollen, and to contain cysts. The *C. caretta* was buried on the beach in Galveston following necropsy.

These three mark-recapture records demonstrate connectivity between northwestern GoM waters and *C. caretta* subpopulations on the USA east coast, as well as between northwestern GoM waters and *C. caretta* subpopulations nesting on the Florida GoM coast. The two post-nesting females likely died while foraging and were deposited on the Texas coast after drifting with GoM currents, though the live, gravid female may have been seeking suitable nesting habitat prior to stranding. *C. caretta* nesting along the northwestern GoM remains low compared to other GoM beaches but may increase as efforts to protect and recover the *C. caretta* Northern Gulf of Mexico Subpopulation continue.

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CARETTA CARETTA (Loggerhead Sea Turtle). TAG RETENTION RECORD. Flipper tag loss in marine turtles is often highest immediately following initial tagging due to human error and tag failure but stabilizes to a lower rate over time (Omeyer et al. 2019. Biol. Conserv. 240:108248; Pfaller et al. 2019. Mar. Biol. 166:97). To our knowledge, the longest reported Inconel tag retentions for *Caretta caretta* are 11.5 and 12.9 years (Casale et al. 2017. Eur. J. Wildl. Res. 63:12; McNeill et al. 2013. Herpetol. Rev. 44:221–226). Similarly, the longest reported Inconel tag retention for any sea turtle species appears to be 29 years, observed with a *Chelonia mydas* (Humburg and Balazs 2014. NOAA-TM-NMFS-PIFSC-40. 14 pp.). Here we report a 28-year Inconel flipper tag retention for an adult female *C. caretta*.

On 8 June 2020, a female *C. caretta* was encountered returning to the ocean during a non-nesting emergence on Jekyll Island, Georgia, USA (31.12026°N, 81.41156°W; WGS 84). The flipper tag (Inconel 681, National Band and Tag Company, Kentucky, USA) was observed on the second most distal large scale on the posterior edge of the right front flipper. This tag was originally applied as a set, using a double-tagging method of applying a second tag on the opposite flipper, on 17 June 1992 on Jekyll Island, Georgia as part

of an ongoing mark-recapture study (unpubl. data). Thorough investigation revealed that the left front flipper only had a scar, thus the second tag had since been lost.

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CHELYDRA SERPENTINA (Snapping Turtle). PREDATION. *Chelydra serpentina* is an omnivorous and opportunistic species utilizing both ambush and active hunting as means to consume a wide range of flora and fauna (Punzo 1975. J. Herpetol. 9:207–210). As an adaptation to their diverse diet, *C. serpentina* displays a ram-feeding mechanism which is unique when compared to other aquatic organisms with similar head size (Lauder and Prendergast 1992. J. Exp. Biol. 164:55–78). Although not typical in their diet, adult *C. serpentina* have been documented successfully hunting and killing prey items larger than their jaw gape, including medium sized mammals such as the North American Porcupine (Smith and Casper 2015. Herpetol. Rev. 46:241–242). More commonly, *C. serpentina* are known to occasionally drown and consume waterfowl (Bobbie et al. 2015. Herpetol. Rev. 46:77). Here, we report the first documented observation of predation of a Great Egret (*Ardea alba*) by *C. serpentina*.

On 24 July 2020 at ca. 1900 h, at least two *C. serpentina* were observed by MW attacking and consuming an adult *A. alba* in the floodplain adjacent to the Barnyard Run at Huntley Meadows Park in Alexandria, Virginia, USA (38.75403°N, 77.10589°W). The egret (ca. 89 cm total length) was observed to be in apparent distress, low in the water and with sodden plumage. No wounds were visible, but injuries were assumed as the *A. alba* was having difficulty moving and made no flight attempts. A *C. serpentina* (ca. 61 cm total length) was observed to be in close proximity. At 1920 h, after several unsuccessful attempts at movement by the *A. alba*, the *C. serpentina*, now joined by a second smaller *C. serpentina*,



FIG. 1. Two *Chelydra serpentina* (partially submerged on center-left, and nearly entirely submerged in center, respectively) attack an *Ardea alba* (right) in Virginia, USA.