

## 9 December 2009 - Turtle season in full swing

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With a total 77 nests to date, Gnaraloo turtle season 2009/10 has entered into full swing. We've had a busy week with monitoring activities, including welcoming Sergio Jacomy on the 1 December 2009 one of the four night turtle trackers this season. Gnaraloo is commencing a new night monitoring program during 2009/10 to compliment the day monitoring activities being undertaken by Amy and I. Sergio's first task was to commence development of the required monitoring procedures and protocols for the night research work.

During Sergio's first few days onsite, he assisted us to install Gnaraloo's new weather station within the turtle rookery areas being monitored as well as 4 sand data loggers provided by researchers at James Cook University (JCU) in Townsville, Queensland. The sand data loggers collect sand temperature data that will be analyzed by JCU researchers upon completion of work at Gnaraloo for turtle season 2009/10

Sergio's willingness to wake up early to participate with the day team's work was greatly rewarded when we had our second encounter for the season with a nesting loggerhead (*Caretta caretta*) on the beach! By following the Turtle Watchers Code of Conduct, we got front row seats to the turtle laying her eggs, covering the egg chamber with sand and returning to the ocean! As we've had 57 false crawls, and 18 nests being damaged by predators or inundated by high tides so far, it was very rewarding to witness successful nesting activity. Now we just have to wait another month to be rewarded with the emergence of hatchlings! Amy & Jessica