

Newsletter of the British Herpetological Society

Established 1947



DICE 30th Anniversary ends in celebration!

On the 21st November, a talk was held at the University of to such events being faux pas. He talked about the first MSc Kent to celebrate 30 years of The Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology. The evening event included pre-drinks and then a talk from Professor Richard Griffiths who was speaking on reptile trade. The lecture theatre was packed to the rafters with attendees who were clearly excited for the talk. It started with a warm welcome from Richard Griffiths who then continued with the history of DICE. This included various historical photos of past scholars and individuals who were involved. One of the photos showed the attendance of numerous people to the very first World Congress of Herpetology that was held at the Marlowe Theatre at University of Kent (now moved to another part of the campus) in 1989. Several people from that photo were in attendance at the talk on this evening, still heavily involved. Richard gave a wonderful, energetic recall of events with numerous jokes including one about wearing at tie

student starting in 1991 and future students including Ben Tapley who is now curator at ZSL.

One of the main focus animals was the chameleon. Richard talked of the work in Madagascar and their involvement. That there are 94 species of chameleon in Madagascar compared the 215 living globally emphasising the importance of conservation in that country. Field days were described as being mainly rainy and one photo showed the tarpaulin over tents to shelter from the heavy rains. Then another to show the field researchers washing out on lines when the weather was actually sunny enough to dry clothes. He described how the chameleons are great for distance sampling due to their slow characteristic so they would lay out transect lines and measure to the chameleons when found. Richard then did an impression of a chamele-







on very slowly trying to get away from the researchers which was thoroughly hilarious and the attendees in the theatre burst into laughter.

He went on to discuss the work of PhD student Janine Robinson who had carried out research into the trade of chameleons in Madagascar. She focussed on the supply chain from local collection through to exporter. The changes to prices as you move along the supply chain is astonishing. It becomes extremely overpriced from local through to intermediary and exporter (export pricing being the most approx. 500%). From this, Richard discussed trade and its relation to the transmission and movement of disease. He specifically referred to Bd Chytrid fungus affecting amphibians worldwide. He discussed the identification of salamander chytrid in UK species. Richard had said that although individuals tested positive for the Bd strain, they were seemingly unaffected by this. The UK species seem to live with Bd with little to no ill effects. He gave an example of some newts surveyed in the university ponds. They were affectionately named Clint and Marilyn. Clint being at least 14 years of age and after tested came up as being positive for Bd. Richard explains that the salamander chytrid strain found in captive species could potentially effect UK native species and this is something that they are being vigil over.

To end the talk, Richard announced that the reason for Bob Smith (Director of DICE) not being in attendance for drinks that evening was because DICE had been awarded The Queen's Anniversary Award for Further and Higher Education. This was met with a massive cheer from attendees, a lot of shocked faces from staff and students, stomping feet, clapping hand, cheers and slapping tables. It was extremely clear from this event that the people involved, both past and present, have worked hard, are passionate and proud of what they have contributed to. It was a pleasure to attend and be a part of such an event and of all days to receive the award, there is no better day than the 30th Anniversary. Congratulations to all!

Photos and written by Suzie Simpson







TSA 'Chelonia Conservation and Welfare in Europe' Conference Writtle University College



Eleanor Lien Hua Tirtasana Chubb (Chair of TSA Europe and TWUK) began the proceedings by introducing the conference and welcoming everyone to Writtle College. There was a great sense of support for the learners at the college and it was clear that a lot of them had attended as a raise of hands gave a visible indicator of at least a third of the audience comprised of HE students. A raffle was also presented to raise funds and to be split between the Hermanni project and a grant to be applied for to do research by Writtle students.

Torsten Blank (TSA Europe) was the first speaker discussing the Asian turtle crisis and European contributions to Chelonian conservation. He is a leading expert in the breeding of Coura spp. having worked extensively in Asia. Torsten set the scene where Hong Kong is very built up, housing is packed together with no gardens and yet surrounded on the outskirts by green spaces and streams where the turtles frequent. It was clear that the poaching of turtles is common and even though signage is used to deter poachers, there are still cages and traps found near those signs. Hunters can easily access these areas to collect the turtles so there is a lack of barriers. Locals have said that 20-30 years ago they would have seen many small yellow heads of turtles popping up in the streams but this no longer occurs. Many animals are sold in the markets in the city in small tanks. Shop keepers in Hong Kong have limited space and high rental prices are charged for these. Many rare turtles, such as the Golden coin turtle, are kept at the back behind bars for sale. This species is believed to have cancer curing properties by locals and is also a symbol of status if you keep one as a pet. There are also turtle temples where Buddhists keep turtles in ponds. Breeding facilities have a high amount of protection in Asia and there are a lot of funds put towards security such as enclosures with high fencing to keep turtles from being taken. Torsten runs the Cuora Conservation Centre which conserves 13 species and takes part in breeding programmes. Torsten's team go out and collect traps and destroy them to hinder the poachers efforts in the area. They also remove any invasive species found and bring them back to their centre. They are

continuing their research collaborating with one of the universities where students are tagging turtles as part of their research and tracking programme.

The next speaker was Beate Pfall who is researching the population genetics of various groups of Hermanni tortoises in Spain. The main aims are to manage the individuals being released to facilitate less inbreeding. During their research work, they find that there are multiple issues arising such as handling and stress. Tortoises will release water when handled and the stress can leave them more susceptible to disease transmission but handling was necessary to collect blood samples for this research. So these factors had to be considered especially the time of the year as summer onwards, the tortoises may struggle to replenish water lost. Mycoplasma and herpesvirus were also something that was highlighted. They tested the tortoises collected and found 60% of them had mycoplasma and tested positive for herpesvirus also. No signs or symptoms of this were seen in both captive and wild individuals. It has been suggested that runny noses are an indicator but this was not the case here. Better biosecurity protocols are being put in place to ensure spreading is minimised. They plan to do more investigative work into this element and question whether bad environments contribute.

Adam Davis from Bristol Zoo also spoke about his breeding of turtles and success over the last 10 years. He states that most of the zoo stock obtained are confiscations and the ones he keeps are all part of studbooks. Adam discussed the keeping of Bouretti sp. and that there are not many in collections. He houses them in tubs with leaf litter with a room temperature of 25 degrees centigrade during the day, 20 degrees at night and a basking spotlight of 32 degrees. He recreates seasonality by cooling them down in November and then warming them back up February/march time. He has found that his husbandry of this species has been very successful and in 2012 had his first hatched individual. Since then, he has had 12 hatch and has halted breeding for now as it is hard to find homes for them. He also explained that mycoplasma is a factor considered in working practices in his collection. Many zoos will not take on animals that have tested positive for this but he reassured that as long as correct biosecurity protocols are carried out, it is manageable within a collection. The animals are screened annually, foot dips, gloves and uniforms ensure that the mycoplasma is not spread to any non-infected animals. He continued to talk about Pancake tortoises Malacochesis tornieri and that there has been a rise in individuals being kept in captivity due to breeding success rates increasing over the last few decades. Research is being undertaken to look at the genetic profiling of various individuals.

Matt Rendle (Wildlife Vets International) discussed wounds seen in practice. There are a high number of injuries from dog bites and social fighting. He discussed how usual medication is generally licensed for companion animals or livestock. These are still able to be used for exotics and often vets may use Baytril more than necessary. Wound dressing can also be difficult on chelonian species and handling can have negative effects such as loss of fluids. There tend to be a lack of signs of pain and it can be difficult to manage some as inpatients such as sulcatas which are often managed outside of the surgery setting.

In these cases, clients can phone and communicate with vets if they need advice or assistance. With turtles, dry docking is often advised to keep wounds dry but this can alter the fluid balance resulting in dehydration. We also have to consider the temperature element when caring for these species. Maintaining correct temperatures for them to recover and consider whether the animal is immobile and cannot move to warmer basking areas. Additionally, reptiles tend to move to hot basking spots if unwell and can overheat so this needs to be considered. To minimise stress, they should not be worked with at a great height so always hold them over a table or close the floor and minimise contact with people and handling. Stress inhibits wound healing so this should be lessened where possible. Matt also talked about the holistic approach to wound healing and that every situation is different. He mentioned the use of Manuka honey on infected and yellowish wounds rather than fresh clean ones (be advised by a veterinary professional if considering use of this method).

Our next speaker was Charlotte Ducotterd (Turtle Sanctuary Conservation Center) manages Project Emys in Sweden. Currently, 2400 turtles kept at the centre. Last august, new facilities were built including a large greenhouse and pools outside. The facility is currently run by volunteers working in different areas. The reintroduction programme includes breeding at the breeding station which is a slow process and all the turtles are raised here. All individuals are tested for genetics and diseases before being released. There are several sites including Moulin De Vert, La Courex, La Vielle Then, Teppes der Verbois and Ticino (future plans to release here). The populations average 150-320 individuals at varying life stages. These animals are monitored using telemetry trackers glued to the carapace to oversee there movements. The programme is fully interactive with the public and children take part in releasing the turtles. They name the turtles and this encourages future generations to show an interest in the conservation of the species. Concerns have arisen surrounding the impact of the turtles on the environment and what they eat so further studies are being carried out regarding this. A fascinating, ongoing project by Charlotte.

Chris Newman from the National Centre for Reptile Welfare discussed the centre and the progress that has been made. He started by talking about the history of keeping turtles and tor-



toises and that he has been involved in the reptile importation trade since the 1970's. Nowadays, the trade is mostly driven by captive bred animals. Many turtles have been brought to the centre for rehoming since opening and this continues to rise. Due to changes in EU IAS Regulations (2015), owners who keep *Trachemys sp.* and want to rehome them cannot do so eas-



ily. They can keep them as pets till end of life without breeding, selling or gifting them. The animals can be taken to a sanctuary, which has not existed until the National Turtle Sanctuary started recently. Otherwise, these animals may be euthanised. Due to these issues, keepers of turtles have struggled to rehome and in turn, it is suspected that they have been released into the UK water bodies. There have been large numbers of turtles being brought to the centre due to people not being able to keep them any longer. Some of the main reasons being: children going to



university and not able to care for their pets any longer or take them to uni; change of house and moving due to landlords not allowing pets in residence and unable to care for the animals needs i.e. Size of enclosure. There tends to be a lack of neglect or abuse seen in the animals being brought in and the owners show strong bonds with their animals. They are visibly upset when parting with their animals, some of which have been kept for multiple years since they are long lived animals. The talk by Chris makes it clear that the data and research being collected at the centre is extremely valuable and the service provided is well needed by the local and wider community.

Written by Suzie Simpson



Red Tide on Sanibel

Written by Paul Eversfield

A long overdue return, to the beautiful islands of Sanibel and Captiva this October 2019, was met with a worrying sight on the famous Ding Darling wildlife refuge. An algal bloom, known locally as red tide had blighted the area and caused the death of many fish and other vertebrates in the reserve. The



algal bloom, created by the naturally occurring organism Karelia breves. It has been festering off the gulf coast of Lee and Collier counties for several weeks now, and several fish kills have been reported in both counties. Cell counts in recent weeks have ranged from normal background concentrations to counts of 1 million cells per litre and higher. Fish kills and breathing irritation in humans and other animals can start once levels reach 10,000 cells per litre, according to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. During our visit, the air in the vicinity of the reserve, laid heavy with an irritating aroma, made up of Brevetoxins, which can cause gastrointestinal and neurological problems. Dead fish, were evident in large numbers with rotting corpses across the lagoons. The consequences, higher up the food chain were at the time of our visit less <u>obvious</u>, but no doubt, a worry for staff at the site and

A long overdue return, to the beautiful islands of Sanibel and tourists who come to the islands at this time of year to observe Captiva this October 2019, was met with a worrying sight on the phenomenon of autumn migration.

Aside, this unwelcome natural event, we also timed our visit coincidentally with a news story about a significant confiscation of the native box turtle Terrepene C bauri. Nearly three hundred of the animals had been poached by a group of felons who had no doubt, intended on shipping them illegally out of the USA. A number of the animals collected had evidence of former marking and were part of ongoing studies on the species along the coast of South West Florida. Indeed, most in the haul were identified as native to the island of Sanibel. With this event so current, We were able to re-establish contact with the Sanibel & Captiva Conservation Foundation. I had previously



met the resident herpetologist, Chris Lechowicz, back in 2003, during our last visit to this beautiful island. He his assistants



Mike Mills and Justin Robbins, are currently actively re establishing the seized animals back into natural habitat. The previously marked animals were quite easy to sort out as their locality as it had been studied in situ. The marking, now has added micro chip and in a number of cases radio telemetry. Whilst the poaching and intended smuggling are huge worries, the fact it has stimulated an earnest study of the species on this important it worth it.

Photos by Paul Eversfield.



BHS/AHH Student Competition Submissions at Drayton Manor 2020



The Future of Herpetological Husbandry 28th-29th March 2020

Drayton Manor Tamworth, UK

The AHH and the BHS will be running their annual symposium at Drayton Manor on the 28th and 29th March 2020.

As part of the event, there will be the student competition that is open to all levels providing they are completing some form of research or a project on reptile and amphibian husbandry/conservation etc.

If you know anyone who would like to submit a poster or you yourself want to share your work, then contact us at **The Natter-**Jack via email stated on the last page of this newsletter. You can also ask for further details through our website or Facebook page. The top 10 entries will be invited to attend the event for free, and funding has been offered by UFAW to support travel/accommodation costs.

As a part of the weekend, students can present their posters around the facility and the winner will be offered the opportunity to present their work at the conference. We are contacting universities and colleges directly with instructions and proposal forms but you can contact us directly.

We look forward to seeing your submissions!

ARC/BHS Joint Scientific Meeting 2019 At Bournemouth National Science Society

Written by Steven Allain

Natural Science Society, home to thousands of natural history Aesculapian snakes at the Welsh Mountain Zoo. As someone specimens from fossil shells to taxidermy squirrels and every- else studying a population of snakes in the UK (barred grass the Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Trust (ARC) an the of Tom's research for a couple of years now and it's great to British Herpetological Society (BHS)? I don't think so unless have finally see him deliver a talk about it. Another talk that is you really pull out the big guns for a venue such as the Natural worth mentioning was delivered by my colleague Helen tion. This aside, the affordability of the conference really does illegal trade in sea turtle eggs in Costa Rica using decoy eggs help to attract far more students to the Meeting compared with that contain a GPS tracker inside. The research itself is mindthe Herpetofauna Worker's Meeting (at least in my eyes). The blowing and revealing all sorts of patterns and pathways in Joint Scientific Meeting this time fell on Saturday 30th Novem- trade. Keep up the good work guys! ber, the last day of the month before we saw December in.

For those of you who are not familiar, the Meeting is a one day event with talks given by anyone and everyone involved with herpetological research. This tends to be mainly Masters or PhD students but also ecologists, practitioners and amateurs. The most important unifying quality is that they must be someone undertaking some level of research on amphibians or reptiles. This year we were blessed with talks from my home institutions of the University of Kent and the Institute of Zoology as well as Bangor University and many others. The Joint Scientific Meeting is a great way to get a snapshot of the kind of research that is being undertaken with herpetofauna both in the UK and abroad. It attracts a mixed crowd which makes it the perfect place to network and meet new people that will become life-long friends and colleagues.

The Joint Scientific Meeting is one of my favourite confer- My favourite talk of the Meeting (and I might be biased here) ences to attend each year due to its setting in the Bournemouth was Tom Major's on his PhD research on the population of thing in between. Could you pick a more eccentric place for snakes in my case), listening to Tom speak about his project such as a conference as the Joint Scientific Meeting between really helped me draw parallels with my own. I've been aware History Museum in London or an equally impressive institu- Pheasey at the University of Kent. She's been studying the

> Of course like any conference there are plenty of chances to socialise and the Joint Scientific Meeting is no exception! John Wilkinson plans an annual curry night each year the evening before the conference which is always pretty well attended. Again, this is a great opportunity to catch-up with old friends or even make some new ones before the main event has even started. Some of you may be aware of the recent passing of Prof. Tim Halliday, a number of his books were on offer in a silent auction to raise funds for amphibian and reptile conservation. Thankfully my pockets were deep enough to walk home with a few and donate money to a worthy cause! If you've never been to the Joint Scientific Meeting, then I challenge you to visit next year. Yes Bournemouth isn't a pleasant place towards the end of November/early December (whenever the date falls) but the people and the science make it worth it.



Venom Day 2019 At Bangor University

Written by Steven Allain

beers. Recently I attended the last herpetologically themed also great to see these different groups of people coming toconference in the UK of 2019 (which is incidentally the last of the decade). This is of course Venom Day, held each year at Bangor University and organised by students for the herpetological/venom community. It's a unique conference dedicated to research surrounding venom (and other toxins such as poison). This year the conference celebrated its 10th anniversary so it was quite the momentous occasion for all involved. Venom south-east England but both the conference and the scenery along the way certainly make the whole trip worth it!

Around 150 delegates were in attendance this year with the conference being a sold out event! The evening before the conference was a suitably themed pub quiz and curry. If you've never been to Venom Day, then you are missing out. When is a meal at a local Chinese restaurant that is always very well you arrive in Bangor you can instantly see the concrete mon- attended, this year was no exception. It is usually during this strosity that houses the event. This is the Brambell Building, a time that I like to catch up with other attendees or speakers and giant brutalist tower that houses everything from lecture thea- to have a discussion. 2019 is the 5th year I've attended Venom tres, offices, labs and a natural history museum. Isn't 1960s Day and I'm glad to have played a small part in it - I'll certainarchitecture just marvellous?

As always there were a wide range of interesting talks covering every topic under the sun from the evolution of snakes to how new cancer fighting drugs are being found in venoms across the animal kingdom. Venom Day never ceases to amaze me; every talk was extremely informative and well delivered. I do enjoy it when talks are both engaging and accessible, especially seeing as I'm no biochemist. The audience at Venom Day

Regular readers of Natterjack will know that I am slightly ad- ranges from die-hard venom scientists to amateur enthusiasts dicted to conferences, there's nothing like learning about cool and everyone in between so I'm glad that everyone is thought science, networking with others in your field and sinking some of when these talks are put together and also presented. It's gether and finding common ground. The beauty of science is that you can go away and read up on the topics, therefore making sense of concepts or ideas that may have gone over your head.

This year I was also given the chance to chair one of the sessions as a representative of the British Herpetological Society. Day was held on the 7th December with herpetologists and I'm quite a confident public speaker so it was great to be able venom enthusiasts like making the annual pilgrimage to Ban- to introduce everyone and direct the questions coming to gor. As always, Bangor isn't the easiest place to get to from speakers. I'd certainly do it again, given the chance! Once again I went home with my free Venom Day branded mug which is now living in my office. These were given to each delegate as a way to reduce the amount of plastic used by everyone especially given the copious amounts of tea/coffee we all seem to drink every year. In the evening, after the conference ly be back for many years to come!



An illuminating look at reptile lighting – **Black headed Python**

Written by Stuart Priest

I've been keeping reptiles, especially snakes for over 30 years. was no, I repeat NO sign of the mucus around her mouth and It all started with a garter snake at the age of 3 and has been a nostrils. There was only the slightest trace of a gurgle when she thoroughly enjoyable passion of mine ever since. Through was breathing and her appetite was better than it had ever been. those years there have been many, many trials and tribulations Within 3 weeks there was not even the smallest hint of ill that I've always made an effort to learn from. So, it's not sur- health and to encourage this new behaviour I started adding prising to feel like I knew what I was doing when it came to branches and leaf litter to create a little enrichment. This only keeping reptiles. Using the usual benchmarks, does it eat, does increased her activity levels and created a little muscle tone. it poo and does it shed then Yes, I am highly successful. Add The latest instalment on this beautiful girl is that she has ovuin the next benchmark, do they breed, then I have a fairly high lated and the Male was only to happy to help her there when success rate there too. Just recently I've had a total change of introduced to her vivarium. direction in what I aim to achieve in my personal collection, Taking the same 'enlightened ' view on this and learning from this has been based a lot on what I've read on certain groups on everything that happened, I decided to take the same approach Facebook (Advancing Herpetological Husbandry being chief with some of my other captives. I next rolled this approach out among them). Racks are out and vivarium's are in, ambient and to my trio of Ackies, they arrived to me with both females havbelly heat are a thing of the past and full spectrum lighting are ing been seriously harassed by the Male. One of the girls even in. Sounds obvious but a lot of us keepers have a habit of fall- had a broken fore leg. (Are you noticing a trend for animals ing into the "if it ain't broke, don't fix it" train of thought.

formation I have been seeing online. For that we can have a small back story. I purchased an adult pair of Blackhead Pythons from a friend. They came at a bargain price because the stant gurgles and bubbles that did not seem to get better. A second vet visit gave the same diagnosis and recommendation are the key for healthier and happier reptiles. to carry on the nebuliser treatment.

Drayton Manor Park. Lighting session with Roman Muryn and Dr Francis Baines. They spoke of the myriad benefits of providing full spectrum lighting to reptiles, even snakes (I know, I was always a believer that snakes do not need UV too). So, I came home, invested in a 12% T5 UV tube and a PAR38 Infra-Red Bulb to replace the ceramic heater and LED bulb that she was using before. Within just 2 days it was like I had a new snake, she was actively basking for long periods of time making use of the UV and the Infra-Red, she was many times more active and alert, totally ridding herself of the lethargic attitude she had always had since coming to me. Every day she expected of a responsible reptile keeper. The dark ages are in

needing TLC) I had separated the girls to convalesce and when they were better, I needed them to actually thrive. They already One of the main reasons for my turn around is not just the in- had UV but when I combined this with a combination of Halogen and Infrared bulb it was like I had given them fresh batteries. Tonnes of leaf litter and pinecones add a little enrichment too. The activity levels, time spent basking and hunting went female came with a lung infection, I was made aware of this through the roof. The male is actually busy constantly and not and I carried on the treatment as recommended by the vet. just harassing the females. Increased muscle tone and time Nebuliser twice a day and drained afterwards, mucus and con-spent basking together prove that once again, the correct "full spectrum lighting" and a little environmental enrichment really

All of this is what has firmly pushed me to make the change, if So, back story over and fast forward to the AHH conference at I can see such a pronounced difference in so short of a time then the truth cannot be questioned. I have set about reducing the number of animals I keep so that I can give everything adequate space in a vivarium, with full spectrum lighting and ample enrichment. These are parameters that just can't be provided in a rack, so the racks have to go. I must admit to feeling bad for all the animals I've kept in the past without these conditions, assuming they are doing well because I just judged them by the traditional benchmarks of eating, pooping and shedding, and accepting those as enough. Not preaching here but I for one am converted, and I feel that it's nothing more than what is improved and after just 11 days of this new lighting setup there the past and full spectrum lighting is what banishes the dark.





Pan-Mediterranean Shield for Sea Turtles

Athens, 9 March 2020

portance worldwide and hosts significant sea turtle popula- ing Network that use a specific protocol for recordings, wheretions across its range for mating, nesting, as well as for feeding as others operate independently, applying different protocols and wintering of adult, sub-adult and juvenile individuals. Three of the seven species of sea turtles are found in the Mediterranean. The loggerhead (Caretta caretta) and green turtles (Chelonia mydas) nest here, and the huge leatherback (Dermochelys coriacea) is an occasional visitor. All species are included on the IUCN Red list of threatened species. Sea turtles are cold-blooded, air breathing, egg laying reptiles that spend their mysterious lives at sea but return each summer to the same area they were born to deposit their eggs in the sand. They take 20-30 years to mature and may live up to 100 years. Despite having travelled the world's seas since the age of the Dinosaurs, their survival is threatened due to coastal development, pollution, collision with vessels, fisheries and climate change. As the largest semi-closed basin on our planet surrounded by 23 countries with a total coastline length of 46.000 km, consequently sea turtle strandings occur every day across the Mediterranean, either alive, injured or dead. It is important that these incidents are managed and recorded.

The Mediterranean Sea is a biodiversity hotspot of high im- To date, some Mediterranean countries have a National Strandwithin the same region. The necessity of the elaboration of a



Pan-Mediterranean Stranding Protocol and Database has been identified as a priority, for data collection regarding sea turtles of the Mediterranean. Elaboration of a Pan-Mediterranean protocol for stranding data collection to be adopted by RAC/SPA and UNEP/MAP. The protocol has been included in the targets and recommendations of the 2019 RAC/SPA Updated Action Plan for the Conservation of Mediterranean Marine Turtles and the Recommendation 5 in "Demography of marine turtle nesting in the Mediterranean Sea: a gap analysis and research priorities" by the Demography Working Group of the Conference of the 5the Mediterranean Conference on Marine Turtles (Bern Convention T-PVS/Inf (2015) 15). MEDASSET perceiving this necessity and priority, with the aim of conserving these emblematic creatures, organised a workshop on 24th & 25th February in Athens with representatives from international organisations, ministries, research institutes and NGOs from nine Mediterranean countries: Italy, Greece, Croatia, Turkey, Lebanon, Israel, Libya, Tunisia and Algeria. The key aspect of this meeting is the significant role of the representatives who are directly involved with national networks or in the collec- optimal collection of data applying a common standardised tion of data in their country, as well as the prominent participation of the Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (RAC/SPA) and Regional Activity Centre for Information and Communication (INFO/RAC) of UNEP/MAP. The workshop was chaired by Dr Flegra Bentivegna and the opening speech given by MEDASSET's President, Lily Venizelos.

The purpose of the interactive meeting was: a) to present and discuss the results of our survey with the invited experts, as MEDASSET had distributed a questionnaire and b) to formulate the first Draft for the common Mediterranean Protocol and discuss about the technical specifications of the Database, thus setting the first steps in the implementation of the common



objective. As a result, the Draft will be sent to RAC/SPA, with a view to its finalisation and adoption by the Mediterranean countries in the foreseeable future. In addition, the Pan-Mediterranean Stranding Protocol and Database will contribute to the exchange of scientific knowledge on the causes of injuries and deaths, to further understand and deal with anthropogenic threats such as marine pollution, entanglement in fishing gear etc on a regional wide scale. The second day was dedicated to a visit to ARCHELON's Rescue Centre in Glyfada.

The new scientific project will contribute to the formulation and development of a Mediterranean network of all directly involved in national stranding networks and countries developing them throughout the Mediterranean. This will add to the



method through a harmonised approach, hence overcoming the intercontinental characteristic of the sea and migratory life history strategy of sea turtles. The project is being implemented by MEDASSET and is part of a larger Mediterranean project that is funded by the MAVA Foundation. The "Development of a Mediterranean stranding protocol and database" is implemented by MEDASSET in collaboration with Dr. Flegra Bentivegna with funding from the MAVA Foundation. The survey is part of the project "Conservation of marine turtles in the Mediterranean Region" which is being implemented by ARCHELON, DEKAMER, MEDASSET, Med-PAN, NMPZ, RAC/SPA (lead partner), WWF Greece, WWF Turkey.

All article photos are copyright of MEDASSET. Press release: Eleana Touloupaki, Project Officer

With roots back to 1983, MEDASSET was founded in 1988 in England and 1993 in Greece. It is an international NGO registered as a not-for profit organisation in Greece. MEDASSET plays an active role in the study and conservation of sea turtles and their habitats throughout the Mediterranean, through scientific research, environmental education, lobbying relevant decision makers and raising public awareness. The organisation is a partner to the United Nations Environment Programme's Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP) and a Permanent Observer-Member to the Bern Convention, Council of Europe, since 1988.





British Herpetological Society Annual General Meeting



We have a great set of speakers lined up for the next AGM. Go to our webpage to book your free tickets at: **www.thebhs.org**

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CITIZENS,



...to contribute to Hadlow College's National 'Turtle Tally' Citizen Science Project

Help us collect data on introduced turtle and terrapin species:

We are keeping the webpage open for sightings to be added throughout the year. Watch out for news on the 2020 Turtle Tally.

Visit **hadlow.ac.uk/turtletally** for more details on how to get involved.

NIVERSIT

Why not take a look at our other publications?



Membership with the British Herpetological Society gives access to all three publications for just **£25 a year** (student members, £18).





To our BHS members,

We are always interested in hearing from you. Please feel free to contact me if you would like to share anything regarding herps. We would love to hear about your animals, your experiences, their care and husbandry, ideas, training, research and more.

It is important to us that you have that opportunity to share with the wider community, as we all benefit from sharing knowledge and experience.

Kind regards,

Suzie Simpson

Email: natterjack@thebhs.org

Find out more about The British Herpetological Society on our website at:

https://thebhs.org/

Check out our social media pages too:

https://www.facebook.com/The-British-Herpetological-Society-BHS-295241210567422/ https://www.facebook.com/groups/454242811428496/

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