

West Pilbara Turtle Program

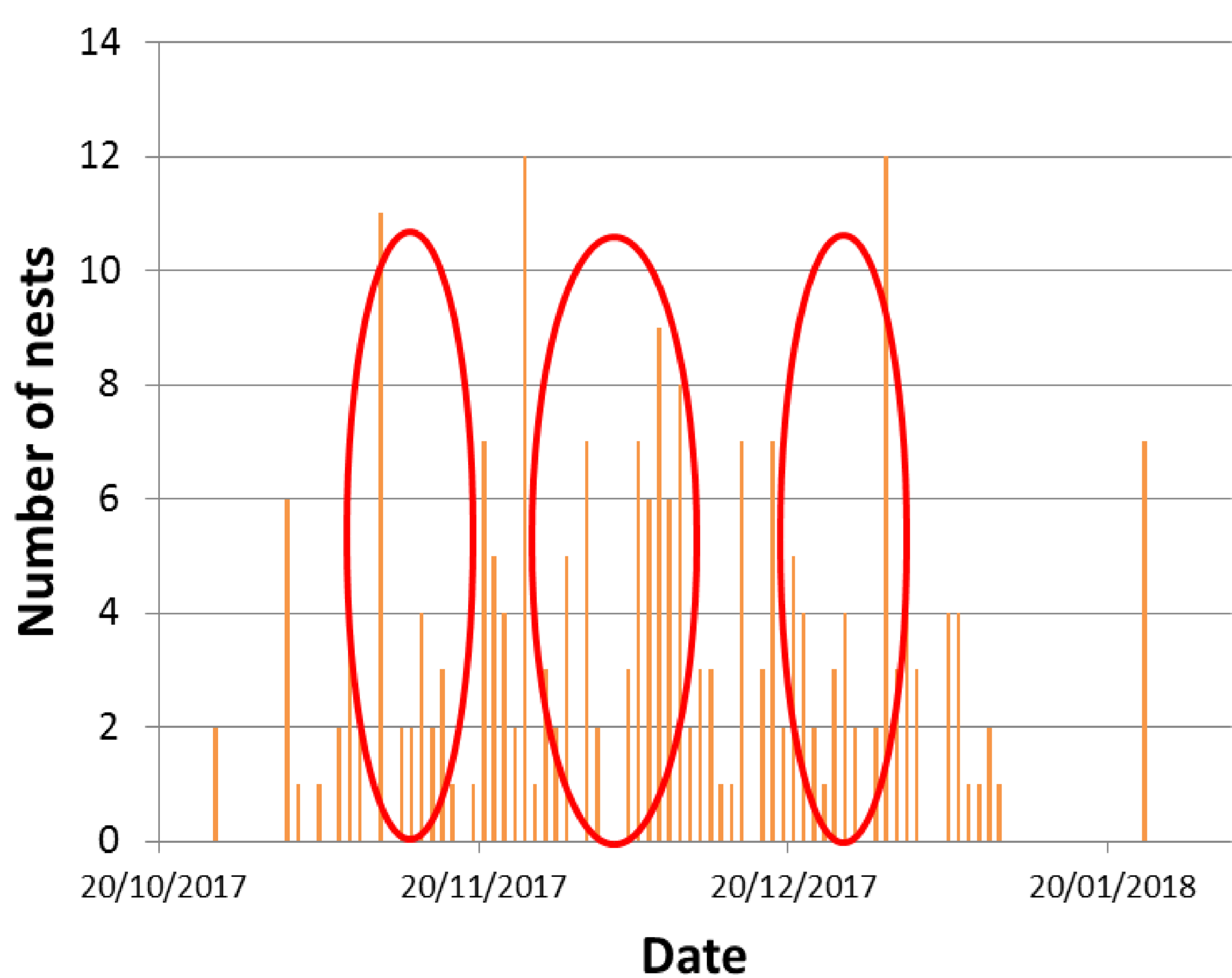


PROGRAM SUMMARY 2018-19

Background

A brief history of the program

- The program is a partnership between Rio Tinto and the Parks and Wildlife Service (P&WS) of Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA), bringing together industry, government and the community to monitor, raise awareness and protect marine turtles across the Pilbara
- WPTP has been operating since 2005 – 14 years
- Over 350 people have signed up as volunteers, since 2005
- 30-50 volunteers actively conducting beach monitoring each year
- Since 2014-15, retention of volunteers has increased and experienced volunteers have increased the number of days they contribute to beach monitoring.



Monitoring methodology 2018-19

- In previous years, Bells Beach near Wickham was monitored every day from 1st November to 1st April
- This year, the following beaches were monitored over a number of peak nesting periods to gain a broader insight into turtle activity in the region and improve the efficiency of monitoring:
 - Bells Beach, Wickham
 - 7 – 21 November 2018
 - 26 November – 19 December 2018
 - 2 – 17 January 2019
 - Cleaverville
 - 26 November – 19 December 2018
 - Boat Beach, Wickham
 - 26 November – 19 December 2018
 - 2 – 17 January 2019.
- This year, yearly estimates of nest numbers and total tracks have been derived from a model developed by A. Whiting in 2018 and used data collected from three sampling periods (shown in adjacent figure) rather than data from every day.

For more information contact the WPTP Coordinator. Phone: 9182 2031. Email: wptp@dbca.wa.gov.au

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Our findings – monitoring data

Monitoring effort

- In 2017-18, there were 122 monitoring days, to cover Bells/Yacht Club Beaches
- In 2018-19, with shorter monitoring periods, there were 185 volunteer days covering 4 beaches
- In 2018-19, we have predicted nest numbers at a new beach, Boat Beach.

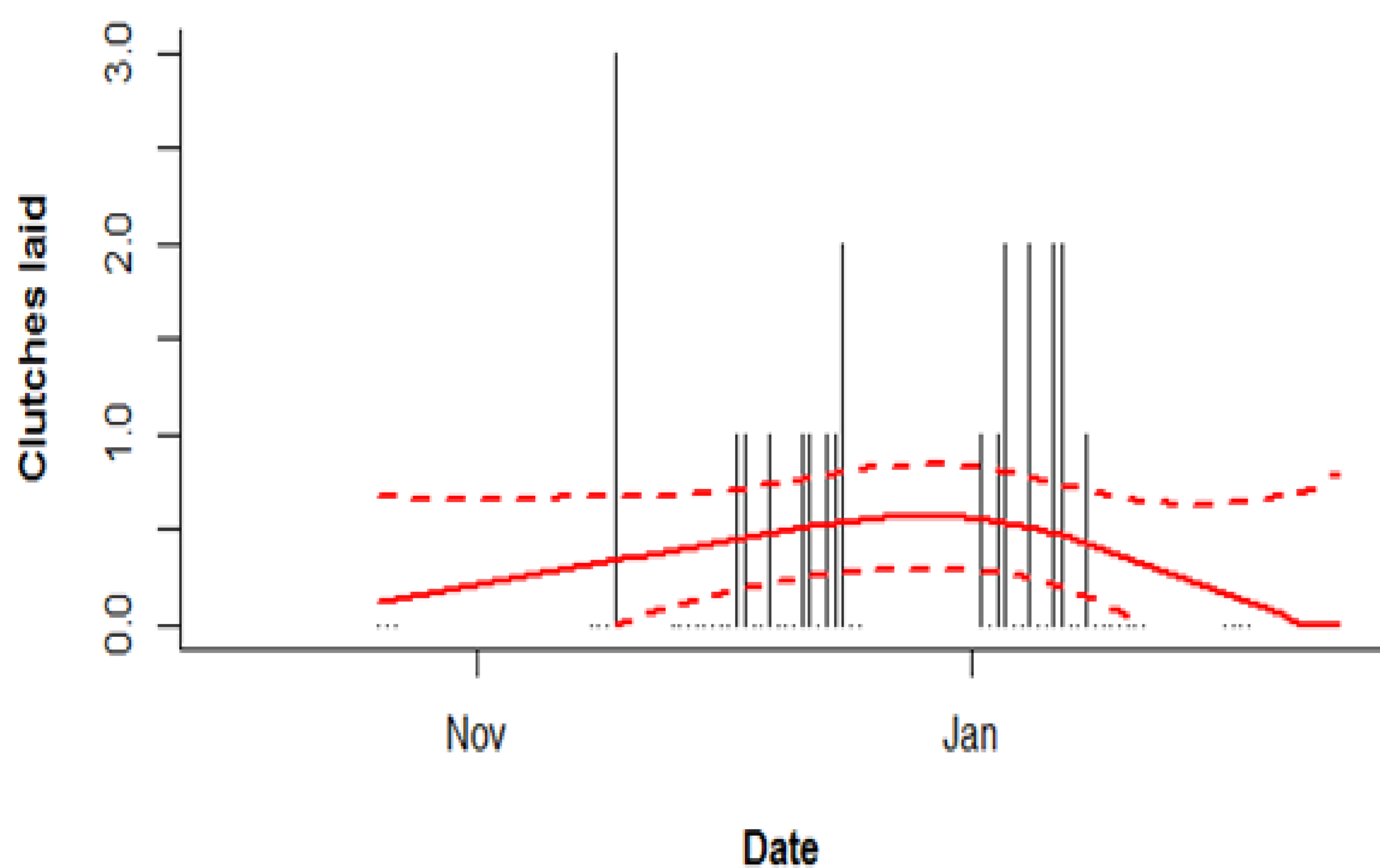
Species identified

- All tracks and nests were identified as belonging to flatback (*Natator depressus*) turtles except one hawksbill (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) turtle false crawl and 14 tracks that were recorded as unknown by volunteers.

Predation/disturbance 2018-19

- 7 reports of disturbance to nests – all of which the disturbance was unknown
- 47 reports of general disturbance to nesting beaches – mostly vehicle, dog, cat and fox tracks on Boat Beach and Cleaverville
- No predator trapping was undertaken in 2018-19.

Site	Days monitored	Nests
Bells Beach	68	167
Boat Beach	41	23
Yacht Club Beach	52	4
Cleaverville	24	8

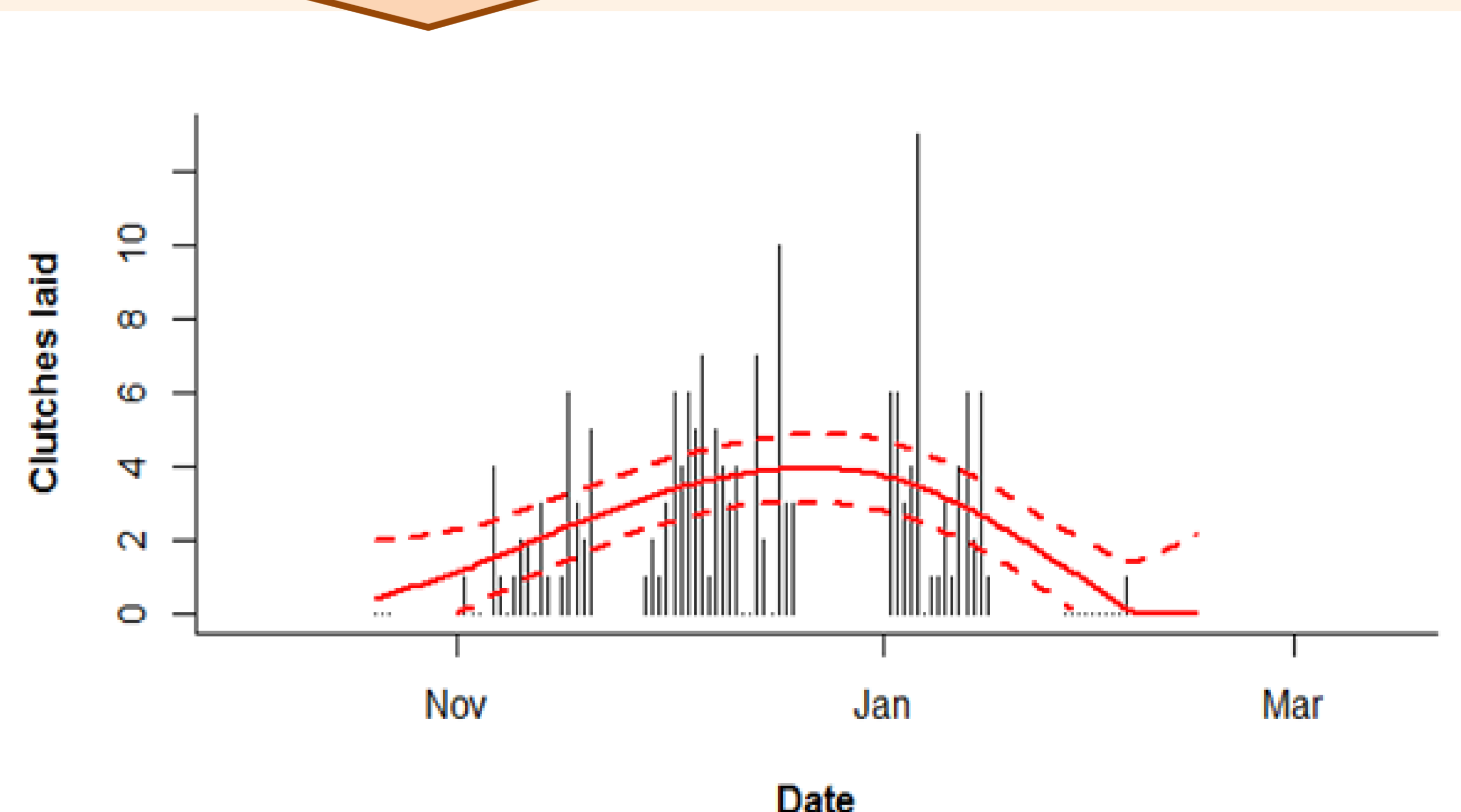


Boat Beach

- Actual count: **23 nests over 41 days**
- Model prediction: **41 nests for season (error range: 13-85)**
- Black vertical bars are actual counts, red lines show model with upper and lower limits.

Bells Beach

- Actual count: **167 nests over 68 days**
- Model prediction: **270 nests for season (error range: 174-395)**
- Black vertical bars are actual counts, red lines show model with upper and lower limits.



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Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions



RioTinto

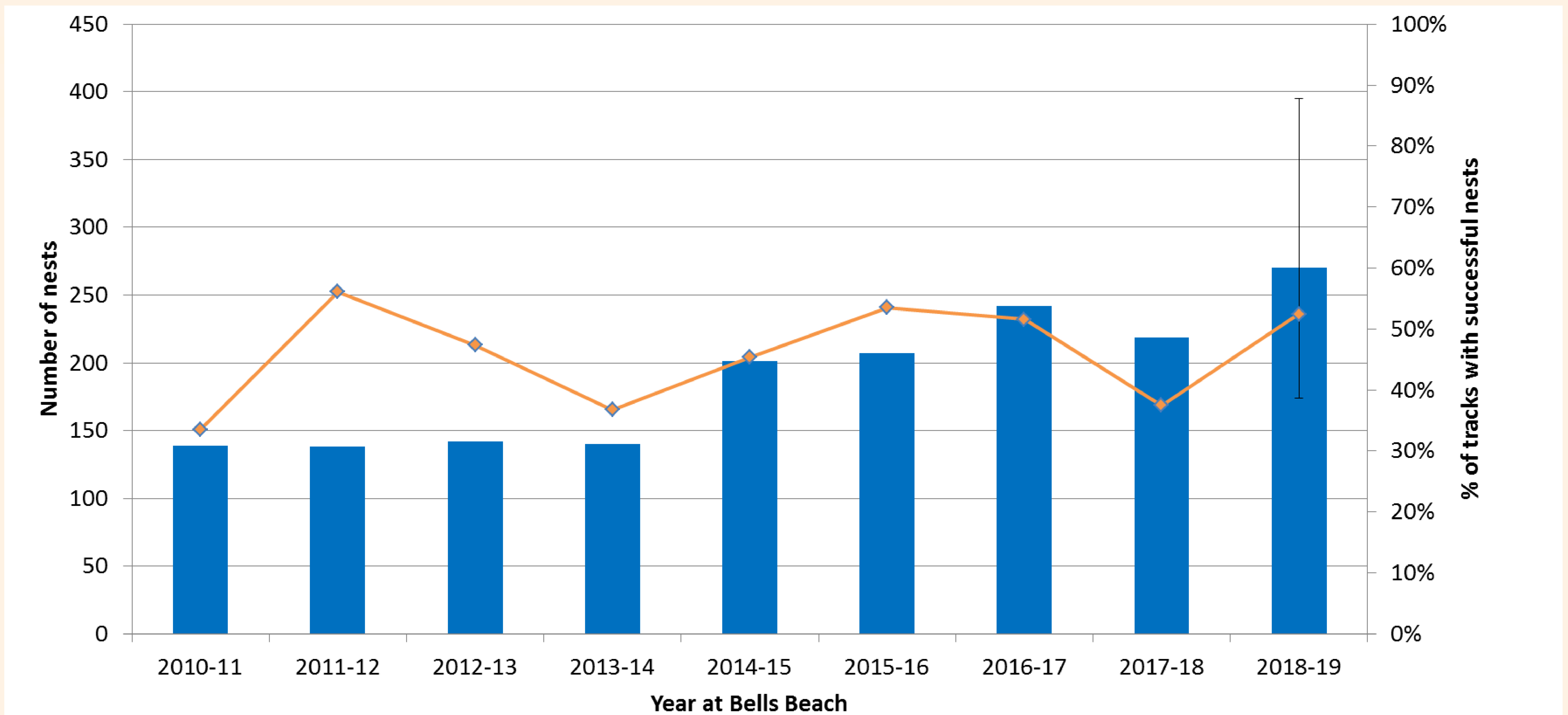
West Pilbara Turtle Program



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Our findings – long term nesting trends

- Despite a really slow start to turtle nesting, modelled data for 2018-19 showed it was a successful nesting season for flatback turtles. Over the same date ranges, we had 167 nests this year (2018-19) compared with 133 last year (2017-18).
- For the full season last year we had 228 nests, and this year 270 nests predicted via the model.



Note: Error bars for 2018-19 show the error range of the model used to predict 270 nests for the season.



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West Pilbara Turtle Program



PROGRAM SUMMARY 2018-19

Other achievements – promotion and education



Produce bags



"Keep cups"

Promotional activities

- In 2018-19 we had 8 promotional projects and many avenues for promoting the program amongst the local community
- We raised \$904 for AQWA Turtle Rehabilitation Program in Perth through our gold coin donations for produce bags
- Over 600 people engaged with our stall at FeNaCING and we had presence on Facebook and local radio stations.



Program banner

West Pilbara Turtle Program

Help monitor nesting turtles, raise awareness and contribute to local turtle conservation!

The program is free, fun and open to all ages.

What is the West Pilbara Turtle Program (WPTP)?
A partnership between Parks and Wildlife Service of the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) and Rio Tinto. The partnership brings together industry, government and the community to monitor turtle nesting and raise awareness on the importance of local beaches for turtle conservation.

Where does monitoring occur?
This season, Bells Beach (near Cape Lambert), Boat Beach (near Wickham) and Cleaverville will be monitored.

How do I register my interest?
Contact the WPTP Coordinator on wptp@dbca.wa.gov.au (08) 9182 2031

Key dates 2018-19:
Season launch: 4 Nov
Daily turtle monitoring by volunteers: 7-21 Nov, 26 Nov - 17 Dec, 2-16 Jan
Volunteer training: 31 Oct, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10 or 11 Nov

Logos: Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions; PARKS AND WILDLIFE SERVICE; Marine Turtles Western Australia; West Pilbara Turtle Program; Rio Tinto

Educational activities

- In 2018-19 we held 10 educational events including library talks, talks to community groups and night tours
- We made contact with many other local groups and schools and hope to build on the educational side of things in the future.



Night tours



Scouts group talk



Library story time

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Other achievements – working with others



Program launch



War on Waste Karratha, Clean-up



Night tours with Ngarluma/ Roebourne community



Joint messaging with Rio Tinto and City of Karratha



Active management and signage at Boat Beach

Working with others

- We had many activities in 2018-19 that involved other community groups or government agencies such as:
 - WPTP program launch with Wickham Tidy Towns and Pilbara Dive Tours
 - Beach clean-ups with War on Waste/Plastic Free Karratha
 - Active beach management with the City of Karratha and Rio Tinto
 - Joint messaging and educational material with Rio Tinto and the City of Karratha
 - Training of 6 Murujuga Rangers and two night tours with Ngarluma Traditional Owners.

Summary

- The program has achieved many things in 2018-19 and has continued to build on the success of the program over time.
- The changes to the program in 2018-19 have been particularly positive, enabling:
 - More focus on training and engaging volunteers
 - Opportunities for volunteers to be involved with Rio Tinto research
 - More influence of key stakeholders of the program including the general community, other community groups and government agencies
 - Timely, active management of important turtle nesting beaches in the local area.
- Modelling of nest numbers showed a successful turtle nesting season, even though it started slowly.
- Active management on Boat Beach through WPTP monitoring was very positive amongst volunteers, the general community and government agencies involved.
- In general there is opportunity to improve or build on:
 - The education component of the program
 - The active management of Boat Beach
 - Working with Traditional Owners to monitoring and manage nesting turtles.

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