
SEA TURTLE RODEO IN THE MIDDLE OF THE PACIFIC OCEAN

CONSERVATION BIOLOGIST ELEANOR STERLING'S *THE NEW YORK TIMES* BLOG BRINGS FIELD RESEARCH AND ADVENTURE TO YOUR CLASSROOM OR OFFICE



Checking sea turtle health: Galapagos shark (K. Frey) and sea turtle with healed bite in shell (F. Arengo).

This week, peek over the shoulders of scientists participating in a sea turtle rodeo in the middle of the Pacific Ocean when you visit *The New York Times*'s "Scientist At Work: Notes from the Field" blog (scientistatwork.blogs.nytimes.com). Blogging this time is Eleanor Sterling, director of the Center for Biodiversity and Conservation (CBC) at the American Museum of Natural History. Sterling and six Museum colleagues will be tagging, monitoring, and observing endangered green and hawksbill sea turtles that forage in and around the Palmyra Atoll National Wildlife Refuge.

"We are smack in the middle of nowhere, just above the equator in the Pacific...The total human population on the atoll varies from month to month...[and] this two-week period we have 17 on the atoll, with two groups of researchers," writes Sterling in her first post on July 28. "We have been working here since 2005, and...we know now that Palmyra Atoll is a foraging site and not a major nesting area for the turtles."

Sterling, a conservation biologist with over 25 years of field research experience in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, has conducted surveys, behavioral research, and ecological studies of primates, whales, sea turtles, and other animals. With her staff at the CBC, she has translated the information gleaned from research into recommendations for conservation

managers, decision-makers, and educators. Sterling has also studied biodiversity and the history of land use in Vietnam, leading to the publication of the award-winning *Vietnam: A Natural History*. She recently blogged from Hon Mo Mountain in Vietnam while surveying endangered primates, the grey-shanked doucs.

For more information on Sterling's research at Palmyra Atoll, check cbc.amnh.org/center/programs/reptiles-seaturtles.html.

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No. 115