

TESTUDO

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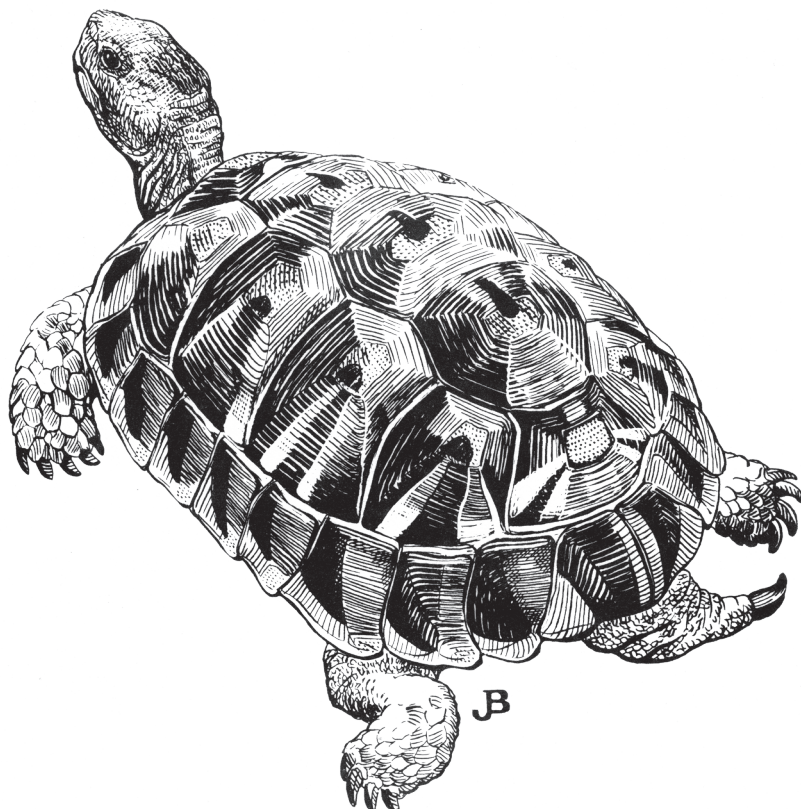


The Journal of the
British Chelonia Group

TESTUDO

Vol. 10 No. 1 2026

BRITISH CHELONIA GROUP



For tortoise, terrapin and turtle care and conservation.

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Cover photo: Participants of a swimming course forming the shape of a turtle on the beach on Boa Vista, Cabo, Verde (courtesy of Turtle Foundation).

Contributions for publication are welcome and may be of scientific or general interest. Please read and comply with the notes for authors before submitting your manuscript.

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The views expressed in this journal are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the editorial team of the British Chelonia Group

EDITORIAL

After a two-year hiatus *Testudo* is back, with the first issue of volume 10 being marked by a move to be a completely digital production and with myself at the helm for the first time. I thank Christine Tilley for her dedication to producing *Testudo* over many years, and Margaret Sutton for producing the final printed version of the journal in 2023. Though *Testudo* may have been on a time out, the work of the BCG never stopped and several articles in this issue relate to projects funded by the BCG and presentations at the BCG Spring Symposium that took place since 2023.

As expected, contributions to the journal cover a wide geographic and thematic range, from an English garden to coral atolls in the south Pacific, from technology to breeding censuses, but admittedly, this time with a skew towards sea turtles - classic flagship species whose conservation involves protection of diverse marine and terrestrial habitats.

We begin the issue with an article by June Chatfield and her observations on tortoise foraging preferences in gardens of the UK. This article was adapted from a presentation given at a BCG Spring Symposium. The little chelonians can be quite adventurous in what they nibble on, but not necessarily in what they consume.

We then skip over to Jordan where I, in partnership with local scientists and conservationists, Mohammad Al-Zibdah and Abeer Bilbeisi, surveyed the 26km coast for potential for sea turtle nesting. Jordan has no reported sea turtle nesting but with a changing climate, sea turtles may expand their breeding range in the Red Sea. Will they be able to find somewhere suitable in Jordan? Read this report to find out.

Boa Vista in the Cabo Verde Islands of the northeast Atlantic is the setting for the next article. Miriam Franken and Thomas Reischig set out the results of the loggerhead sea turtle conservation efforts that have taken place on the island, with a focus on involving the local communities.

Next is a methods paper that sets out to establish is it better to take photographs or record video from drones when determining sea turtle abundance and distribution in nearshore waters. The BCG kindly supported the authors of the article by financing acquisition of a drone to be used for conservation and research around Greece.

BCG champion David Alderton provides an article on pollution and chelonians, again adapted from a presentation given at a BCG Spring Symposium. Problems are many and diverse, but there is hope.

We continue with a record on sea turtle nesting on two atolls in the Cook Islands. Liam Clegg and colleagues present data on field surveys conducted in this remote and relatively understudied region.

Lastly, we present a note from Caroline Pond as an update to her previous publication in *Testudo* on the longevity of the domed Malayan box turtle.

I do hope you find this issue of *Testudo* as interesting to read as I did in pulling it together. The electronic-only format will make the contents more widely available to the chelonian conservation community, cut down on materials use and general carbon footprint of producing an in-print volume. It will also save the BCG a considerable sum of money in printing and distribution costs; money that can instead be directed to supporting chelonian conservation efforts around the world.

Alan Rees

A message from the President, Professor Peter E. Holt

In this, the 50th year of the BCG, it is appropriate to reflect on how far we have come.

The Bristol Chelonia Group was founded by Derek Foxwell and Diane Tottle, assisted by fellow enthusiasts including George Wallace who was Librarian on two occasions and subsequently BCG Historian. The Group had its first meeting in June 1976.

In 1978, the name was changed to the British Chelonia Group and our scientific journal, *Testudo*, was launched the same year. The first copy included the late, great Oliphant Jackson's paper on the Jackson's Ratio, still widely used today. We are delighted to welcome Dr Alan Rees, who for several years was Associate Editor, as the new Editor of *Testudo*. He is already dragging us (some screaming!) into the 21st century by obtaining a new ISSN number for *Testudo* (within weeks, despite a cyber attack on the British Library) so it can be changed from a hard copy into an electronic journal.

In 1984, the BCG was regionalised, with each region holding its own, local meetings but with all regions under the BCG umbrella. In my view, this was a real milestone in BCG history, since the organisation grew large enough to have a real impact on chelonian conservation, welfare and health, not only nationally but, ultimately, throughout the world. Apart from education via local meetings, annual Symposia (run since 1983) and publications, the BCG became able to support global research relating to chelonian conservation and wellbeing. Over the past 20 years, the BCG's support for worthy causes has totalled a quarter of a million pounds! We provide continuing support to organisations like SOPTOM (the Tortoise Village in France), MEDASSET (Mediterranean Association to Save the Sea Turtles - a Greek NGO with Mediterranean-wide reach) and the Galapagos Conservation Trust in South America.

All this has been made possible by the considerable efforts of the army of BCG stalwarts over the years who have run regions, joined committees and represented the BCG at public events. There are too many to name here, but at the risk of embarrassing her, I'd like to express my personal thanks to Henny Fenwick. As well as being the longest serving Committee Member as Newsletter Editor, her dedication and work during her many years as Chairwoman have steered the Group through good times and bad.

We should all be very proud of what the BCG has achieved since its humble beginnings 50 years ago. Here's to the next 50 years!

Emeritus Professor Peter E Holt, BVMS, PhD, DipECVS, FHEA, FRBSB, FRCVS
(proud to be) President of the BCG

Notes for authors

Integrity and style

Papers for Testudo should either be the results of original work or an in-depth review of the literature and must not be offered to any other publication.

Authors should not assume a detailed knowledge of zoology or veterinary science in the readership, and technical terms should be explained when first used.

Papers are peer-reviewed, and acknowledgement of receipt does not guarantee publication.

Submission deadline is 30th April each year. Please contact the editor by email before sending your article: testudo@britishchelonigroup.org.uk

Format for submission

Manuscripts should be formatted with double spacing between lines and wide (2.5cm) margins. Text should be formatted as 12pt Arial. Pages and lines should be numbered to facilitate review.

All authors first names should be supplied, with additional initials and surname. Professional status and other post-nominal letters should not be included. Affiliations should be provided to full postal address and include an email address for the corresponding author. E.g.

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Figures and illustrations can be embedded into the text; but they must also be sent as separate 'jpg' files to ensure no loss of quality for final publication. Figure numbers for maps, photos and diagrams etc. should be inserted into the text and captions supplied.

Tables should provide new information and not be a repeat of the main text and are to be included in the body of the manuscript, together with a relevant caption.

Before preparing a paper, the form of presentation in the current issue of *Testudo* should be taken as a guide. Abstracts and keywords will not be included.

Contributions must be sent as Word files (.doc .docx) and should preferably not exceed 3,000 words. Do *not* use .pdf format.

Formatting the text

Bold type reserved for headings. Bold and Italics for sub-headings. Do not use underlined text. Sections and paragraphs are not numbered. e.g.

Heading

Sub-heading

Paragraph text...

Vernacular names of species should be used throughout the text; however, the species' taxonomic name should be listed at first mention in the text. Italics used for unusual foreign words, e.g. *in situ*, and scientific species names, but not 'et al.'.

Measurements for scientific work should be metric rather than imperial, i.e. millimetres (mm), grams (g), litres (l) etc. with no space between the numbers and the units.

Figures should be cited in the text in order as (Fig. 1) or for multiple figures (Figs 2 & 3) and all included figures should be cited. Tables should be cited in the text in order as (Table 1) and all included tables should be cited.

Supplied images (photos/maps/illustrations) must be at least 300 dpi resolution, i.e. at least 1350 pixels wide.

If material from other sources is used, i.e. graphs, photographs, illustrations etc., copyright permission must be obtained from the publisher or original author for use in *Testudo*.

Citations and References

Lists of multiple citations in the text should be placed in date order, e.g. (Smith 2017, Broadhead & Trent 2020, Croft et al. 2024). All citations should appear in the reference list and all references in the list should be cited.

References should include the author's name and initials, date of publication, full title of book, journal or article and an accurate volume and page reference;

and with books, the publisher and town of publication. For references with nine or more authors, truncate the author list to seven authors and replace the remaining names with 'et al.'.

Journal:

- Altmann, J. (1974). Observational study of behavior: sampling methods. *Behaviour* 49: 227-266.
- Aguirre, A.A. & Lutz, P. (2004). Marine turtles as sentinels of ecosystem health: is fibropapillomatosis an indicator? *EcoHealth* 1: 275-283.
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Book:

- Moll, D. & Moll, E.O. (2004). *The ecology, exploitation, and conservation of river turtles*. Oxford University Press, New York.

Book chapter:

- Shillinger, G.L. & Bailey, H. (2015). Movements and behaviour of adult and juvenile leatherback turtles. In: Spotila, J.R. & Santidrián Tomillo, P. (eds). *The leatherback turtle: biology and conservation*. Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, pp 162-172.

Report:

- Eckert, K.L., Wallace, B.P., Frazier, J.G., Eckert, S.A. & Pritchard, P.C.H. (2012). *Synopsis of the biological data on the leatherback sea turtle* (*Dermochelys coriacea*). U.S. Department of Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, Biological Technical Publication BTP-R4015-2012, Washington, D.C.