

September 2003

Sea Turtles are Hatching!

The hatching season for sea turtle nests has arrived. You know that baby turtles have hatched the night before when you see a shallow crater at dawn with lots of little baby turtle tracks emerging from the crater. The babies use the collective motion of all the siblings hatching out together to work their way up and out of the egg chamber, and move instinctively toward the water.

As part of our data collection tasks, we excavate the nests three days after the babies emerge, and record the numbers of hatched and unhatched eggs in the nest, as well as any babies who did not make it out with the others.



**Crater with baby tracks,
at dawn**



Hatched and unhatched eggs, ready to count

Hatched eggs are separated from unhatched eggs, and any babies found still alive in the nest are released, either at dawn or dusk.



An excavated nest