

# VELADOR

Protecting Sea Turtles and their Habitats since 1959

Spring 2001

## STSL launches Free the Beach Campaign

The Caribbean Conservation Corporation, through its Sea Turtle Survival League (STSL), has initiated a new campaign to address the threats to Florida's nesting sea turtles posed by coastal development, construction of sea walls, and endless beach nourishment projects that are degrading Florida's coastline. STSL's new initiative, dubbed the "Free the Beach Campaign" (FTBC), seeks to eliminate or reduce the continued destruction of Florida's remaining coastal habitat by addressing the root causes—poorly designed coastal management policies and ineffective enforcement of existing laws and regulations.

The basic strategy of the FTBC is to utilize a number of issues with high public interest to raise awareness about the problems associated with Florida's coastal management policies. The awareness generated will be molded into broad public and institutional support for specific changes. Key regulatory agency personnel and legislators will be presented with a mandate for change, and CCC will work with these government entities to bring about meaningful reforms.

Loggerheads, green turtles and leatherbacks have been nesting on Florida beaches in increasing numbers over the past decade. Nest production in Florida now accounts for more than 90% of all the sea turtle nesting in the continental United States. While the positive trend in nesting is certainly good news, it is probably the result of conservation measures implemented decades ago. CCC's concern is that Florida's current coastal management policies have the potential to undermine the past 20 years of progress in recovering US sea turtle populations. Coastal construction guidelines, theoretically designed to protect the beach and dune system, are still allowing new construction right up to the dune line—

*see Beach Campaign on page 4*



Barbara Schroeder

The turtle tracks in this photo show how a turtle attempted several times to get around a large "waffle" revetment, but eventually gave up and return to the ocean without nesting. Sea walls and unwise coastal development can reduce or eliminate sea turtle nesting habitat.

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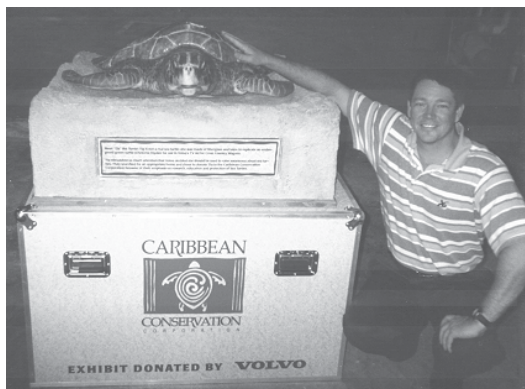
# What's Happening: Current projects in the works at CCC

Implementing the *Free the Beach Campaign* has been, and will continue to be, a major effort by the Caribbean Conservation Corporation's (CCC) Sea Turtle Survival League program, but it is certainly not the only project that CCC has been pursuing. During the past few months, CCC has been developing partnerships with Volvo Cars of North America (through the donation of Tia the Turtle and her display case), and with the Volvo Ocean Adventure to fund education programs related to sea turtles and the Volvo Ocean Race. In addition, CCC is working with Trailside to develop a PBS show focused on CCC's sea turtle research program in Tortuguero, Costa Rica.

### Donated turtle tours in new display case

In January of this year, Volvo Cars of North America announced the donation of the amazingly life-like sea turtle model, dubbed "Tia," to CCC. Within a month, Tia the Turtle began making the rounds to schools and special

events and immediately proved to be an effective tool for raising awareness about sea turtles. To help protect the turtle and add to its educational effect, Volvo



Gary Appelson

David Godfrey, CCC's Executive Director, poses with Tia the Turtle and the display case donated by Volvo.

funded the design and construction of a traveling display case. The case was designed to protect Tia the Turtle during her travels and provides additional information about sea

turtles through panels and graphics built into the display.

During construction of the case, Tia traveled to Miami as part of the kick off celebration to the Volvo Ocean Race's stop over in Miami in 2002. The response by the public to the turtle was fantastic, with "Is that a real turtle?" being the question most often asked. Tia the Turtle was a success. The display was finished in time to attend a similar event in Baltimore. The finished display, complete with a cross section of an egg chamber, was the star attraction at the Volvo Ocean Race event in Baltimore. Tia will continue to make her rounds of engagements at schools and events. Her tour schedule will soon be posted on CCC's web site at <http://www.cccturtle.org>.

### CCC signs partnership with Volvo Ocean Adventure




CCC recently signed an agreement with the Volvo Ocean Adventure (VOA), an environmental education program for the Volvo Ocean Race, an around-the-world sailboat race. The agreement joins the CCC web site and the VOA web site through links and cooperative programs.

VOA will fund the satellite tracking of a green turtle from Tortuguero, Costa Rica, whose release will coincide with the start of the Volvo Ocean Race this September. In addition, CCC will provide information about sea turtles and marine habitats in the areas visited by the boats over the course of the race. VOA will also sponsor a cultural and ecological field trip to Tortuguero for a group of students from the United States. The students will be in Tortuguero to interact with local students and to take part in the release of the satellite tagged turtle. So, keep an eye out for more information about this cooperative program on the CCC web site!

### PBS Trailside program to focus on CCC's Research

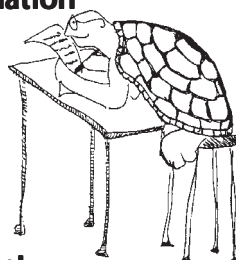
CCC was approached by producers of the award winning PBS TV show, Trailside: Make



Your Own Adventure. The show is produced by the Teaching Learning Network, which will be working with CCC to write the script and find sponsors for the show. The focus will be on CCC's Turtles of Tortuguero Research Participant Program. In part, the show will explain how viewers can get involved in sea turtle research and conservation efforts by making their own adventure with CCC. Please contact David Godfrey if you know of any possible corporate sponsors. 

CCC Salutes the Foundations that are Supporting our Sea Turtle Research, Conservation & Education Programs:

- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation**
- Daniel K. Thorne Foundation**
- Turner Foundation**
- Firedoll Foundation**
- Lobo Fund**
- International Fund for Animal Welfare**
- Kenneth A. Scott Charitable Trust, a Key Bank Trust**
- World Society for the Protection of Animals**



## VELADOR {bel.a.dor}

In Caribbean cultures, *Velador* translates as "one who stands vigil" — originally referring to turtle and egg harvesters who waited at night for turtles to come ashore. Now CCC claims this title for its newsletter, and in Tortuguero, CCC's researchers and volunteers are replacing poachers as the new veladors.

*Velador* is published quarterly for members and supporters of the nonprofit **Caribbean Conservation Corporation (CCC)** and its **Sea Turtle Survival League (STSL)** program.

CCC is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the conservation of sea turtles through research, training, advocacy, education and the protection of natural areas.

STSL is the US-based public awareness, advocacy and education program of the CCC.

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## **International Sea Turtle Update**

### **Hundreds of sea turtle scientists urge Costa Rica's government to ban oil drilling off Caribbean coast**

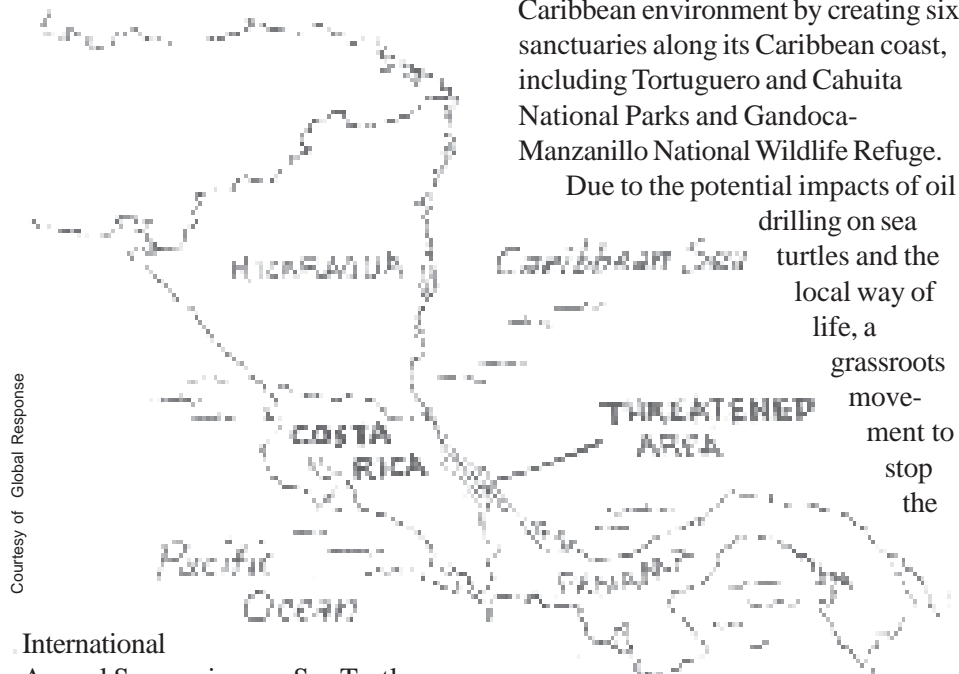
Plans by Harken Energy Corporation, a Houston-based oil company, to drill for oil and natural gas just off the Caribbean port of Limón in southeastern Costa Rica have run headlong into opposition from hundreds of scientists. The proposed drill site is barely five miles off the coastline in a region referred to as the "cradle" of the Caribbean's sea turtle populations.

More than 800 sea turtle biologists and conservationists unanimously approved a resolution at the 21st

dors in the Western Hemisphere.

Many of the communities located along Costa Rica's Caribbean coast have economies based predominantly on ecotourism and local fishing. Each year, more than 50,000 tourists visit Tortuguero National Park to see nesting green turtles, and more than 100,000 visitors enjoy the beaches and lowland forests of Cahuita National Park. Sea turtles are important cultural icons for many indigenous cultures. Costa Rica has recognized its precious Caribbean environment by creating six sanctuaries along its Caribbean coast, including Tortuguero and Cahuita National Parks and Gandoca-Manzanillo National Wildlife Refuge.

Due to the potential impacts of oil drilling on sea turtles and the local way of life, a grassroots movement to stop the



Courtesy of Global Response

International Annual Symposium on Sea Turtle Biology and Conservation, held in February of this year, which calls for the Costa Rican government to ban all oil exploration in its Caribbean marine areas. According to the resolution, which was drafted by Caribbean Conservation Corporation and circulated among Symposium scientists for review and approval, the drilling not only threatens globally significant sea turtle nesting beaches, but also endangers several species of sea turtles that use the offshore areas for mating and migration. In fact, Costa Rica has many of the most important sea turtle nesting beaches and migratory corri-

drilling continues to grow in Costa Rica. Over the past two years, more than 40 organizations including indigenous groups, development associations, tourism boards, local communities, business owners, fishermen groups, environmental organizations, ecotourism operators and religious leaders have been working as a coalition to stop Harken Energy Corporation's plans to extract oil from the environmentally fragile tropical coast.

When Costa Rican President Miguel Angel Rodríguez was

*see International Update on page 6*

### **Beach Campaign from cover**

even on eroding beaches. State and county lighting regulations, designed to protect nesting sea turtles and hatchlings from disorienting artificial lights, routinely go unenforced. Each year, regulations controlling sea wall construction are weakened, resulting in more walls on the beach. Meanwhile, massive dredge and fill projects (beach nourishment) are being planned with little regard for their impacts on turtle nesting and near shore habitats. The cumulative impacts of all these activities could be devastating to Florida's beaches and sea turtles—unless the policies are changed.

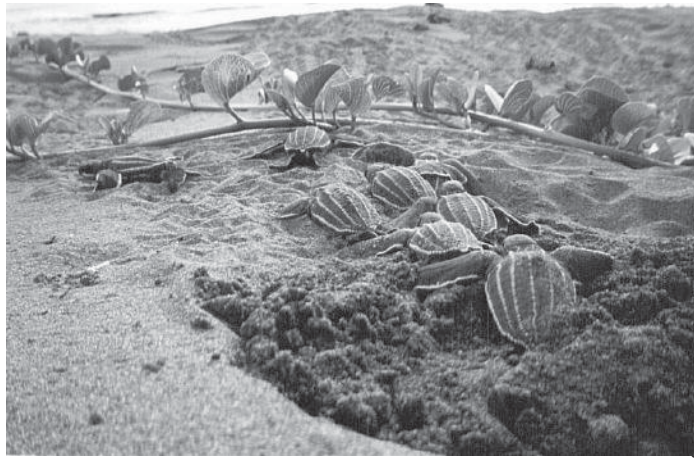
STSL launched its new campaign by meeting with David Struhs, Secretary of Florida's Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) and Dr. Al Devereaux, Chief of DEP's Bureau of Beaches and Coastal Systems. FDEP is responsible for coastal construction permitting and beach management in Florida. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss how current policies will affect Florida's beaches, including the sea turtles that depend on them, decades into the future. STSL, with the help of coastal advisor Dr. Stephen Leatherman, presented its concerns that the rate of coastal development, combined with increasing erosion and sea level rise, could soon result in the entire coast being lined with sea walls and artificially maintained beaches. Encouragingly, FDEP's senior regulators agreed that there was plenty of room to improve how Florida manages its beaches.

First, the FTBC will involve a wide range of stakeholders who are interested in changing Florida's coastal management policies to better protect beaches for people, sea turtles, and the general marine environment. STSL is already gathering input from other organizations involved in beach and marine protection issues. Prominent coastal engineers and marine scientists are being consulted and will be advising STSL during the FTBC. A case for statutory and regulatory reform will be presented through a Coastal Status Report and related educational materials.

Over half of Florida's coastline is experiencing erosion, and almost one-third is classified as "critically eroding." As was reported in the last *Velador*, two main engineering tactics are employed to combat this erosion: coastal armoring and beach nourishment. Both have serious negative consequences to sea turtles. It's not hard to foresee that as sea walls continue to be built, depriving turtles of their nesting habitat, sooner or later armoring will have a measurable impact on the nesting population. Yet the state continues to overlook the cumulative impacts of additional

armoring. Each new armoring permit request is reviewed independently, with no consideration of how an increasingly walled-in beach will affect turtle nesting. There is an assumption by state regulators that nesting turtles will simply move down the beach to unarmored sections, but on many stretches of Florida's coast, the unarmored sections are getting harder to find. The FTBC seeks to strengthen armoring laws that do little to limit this destructive activity.


While adding sand to an eroding beach sounds far less harmful to sea turtles than building sea walls, the fact is these massive dredge and fill projects can have devastating impacts on sea turtles and near shore habitats. Currently, the single most important parameter used by the Corps of Engineers in designing a beach nourishment project is



Emerging sea turtle hatchlings can be disoriented by artificial lights, causing them to head away from the water and possibly die of dehydration.

economics. Nourished beaches are engineered to be square, flat and wide—hardly ideal for sea turtles. Furthermore, sand placement off shore has the potential to bury important turtle and fish feeding grounds. According to state officials, however, such a design makes it easier for dredging companies to calculate how much sand they have pumped. While sand quality is supposed to be closely monitored,

enforcement of any sort of standard is seemingly non-existent. Thus, environmental parameters play only minor roles in the nourishment process. And despite the ever increasing number of nourishment projects in Florida, the ever decreasing availability of sand, and the need to re-nourish many beaches every five years or less, cumulative impacts to sea turtles and other marine life are ignored! Few Floridians are aware of the tremendous long-term economic and environmental costs of these projects. The FTBC will get the word out and demand that environmental parameters be major components of Florida's beach building projects.

The FTBC is just getting underway. Senior Florida regulators have been informed about the purpose of the campaign, and STSL is assembling diverse stakeholders who will support better management of Florida beaches. Public awareness about the problems with current coastal policies will be raised through the press and by distributing informative reports. Gradually, the campaign will build a case for meaningful policy change and work with decision-makers to implement specific revisions in how Florida manages its coastline. Members of the CCC and its Sea Turtle Survival League will be updated on the campaign's progress through future *Velador* issues. In the meantime, if you want more information about the campaign, call STSL Advocacy Coordinator Gary Appelton at (352) 373-6441. 

## Tortuguero Update

### Leatherback Tracks from the Sky

The world looks very different from the window of a Cessna airplane, especially when you are flying at an altitude of only 100 feet. It feels as though you can reach out and touch the top of the coconut palms, and any wind gust that sends the small plane closer to the trees makes your heart pound even faster. Still, it is worth it because you can survey more beaches for leatherback tracks in a day than you can by foot in a whole week.

CCC, in cooperation with Asociación ANAI and Endangered Wildlife Trust, presented an analysis of leatherback nesting along the Caribbean coast of Costa Rica at this year's International Sea Turtle Symposium. It was concluded that data from the three monitoring programs in Tortuguero, Pacuare and Gandoca indicate a slight annual decline, about 2%, in leatherback nesting between 1995 and 2000. However, leatherbacks show little site fidelity and tagging studies have shown that individual leatherbacks use more than one nesting beach both within, and between, nesting seasons. The slight drop in leatherback nesting on the Costa Rica's Caribbean coast could be reflecting a population decline or it might simply mean that the leatherbacks have been shifting their nesting beach preference.

One way to learn more about leatherback nesting patterns is to survey all the beaches in the region. However, the leatherback nesting beaches in Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panamá are approximately 225 km in total length, and surveying them on foot is not an easy task. The best way to survey such a long beach is by plane. Earlier this year, CCC made contact with Lighthawk, an organization that conducts conservation related flights, and arranged two aerial surveys along the coast.

CCC analyzed the surveys and compared the results with aerial surveys conducted in the 1980's. The comparison shows that leatherback nesting appears to have shifted slightly to the south, for this year at least. There was a higher proportion of leatherback nests deposited on the beaches in southern Costa Rica and in Panamá. The beaches in northern Costa Rica still host the majority of leatherback nests, but the proportion of nests on the northern beaches was smaller than documented 20 years ago.

This is both good and bad. It is good because the decline in nesting on northern beaches can be explained by a



Leatherback tracks are conspicuous, even from an altitude of 100 feet, because of their large size.

southerly shifting to other beaches. It is bad because it means that leatherback nesting is shifting away from protected beaches, such as Tortuguero and Pacuare, to unprotected beaches and to beaches in Panamá, where leatherbacks are still killed for their eggs and meat.

The results of this study have been shared with the Costa Rican Ministry of Environment and Energy. Officials will use the information in discussions about expanding protected areas in Costa Rica to provide nesting leatherbacks with protection along a larger section of the Caribbean coast.

CCC hopes to continue cooperation with Lighthawk so that we can conduct aerial surveys along the coast every year in order to better monitor the leatherback nesting population.

An added advantage of flying low and slow is that of putting fear into the egg poachers. During the aerial surveys, outside of the protected beaches, we saw a couple of people poking or digging around fresh leatherback nests. David Smith, the experienced Lighthawk pilot would turn the plane around so we could swoosh low over the poachers for a hair-raising photo opportunity. Every time we did so, we found that the close encounter with the plane had sent the poachers scuttling off into the forest, away from the beach. In the end, the plane ride not only lets us explain where the turtles had gone, it probably helped us save several nests of the critically endangered leatherback. 🌀

By Sebastian Troëng, Research Coordinator

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### Space still available in the Green Turtle Program



If you are planning your summer vacation and would like to travel to Costa Rica to join CCC as a program participant in the Green Turtle Program, space is still available at the John H. Phipps Biological Field Station. No experience is necessary, but you should be at least 18

years of age and physically fit. For more information and date availability, call Dan Evans at CCC at (800) 678-7853 or visit the CCC website at <http://www.cccturtle.org> for a Visual Tour of the research programs, the CCC Research Station and Tortuguero.

### **International Update from page 3**

inauguated in 1998, his first order of business was to sign an international agreement stating that his government would collaborate with neighboring governments in Nicaragua and Panamá to conserve sea turtles—and ensuring the participation of all local user groups in sea turtle management. Under his administration, protection of turtles has never been stronger, with poaching of nesting turtles and their eggs reduced to a minimum in recent years. Thus, conservation-minded Costa Ricans are baffled that their government would risk exposing its fragile coastal and marine resources, and its globally important sea turtles and nesting beaches to the threats posed by oil development.

“A leak or spill, like the recent major incidents off Brazil and the Galápagos, would devastate the abundant, yet fragile biological resources of the region. Local economies are dependent on these resources and their degradation or destruction could destroy the livelihoods of thousands of Caribbean families,” said Roxana Silman, Costa Rican Director for the Caribbean Conservation Corporation. “The increased presence of oil and tar in the marine environment, which will happen even without major spills or accidents, will have serious consequences for the millions of turtle hatchlings that migrate through the area.”

Harken’s oil development was frozen last September when Costa Rica’s Supreme Court sided with indigenous communities who argued that they had not been adequately consulted in the decision to move forward with oil exploration. But in November, Costa Rican courts reversed part of



Oil drilling off the Caribbean coast of Costa Rica would be a major threat to sea turtle nesting beaches and the eco-tourism that has become dependent upon the return of nesting sea turtles.

the earlier finding, allowing the company to submit an application to support its plans to drill offshore.

CCC has been providing senior-level government officials in Costa Rica with feedback about Harken’s drilling application. In particular, CCC has provided convincing evidence that endangered sea turtles would be put at great risk by the drilling operation. Meanwhile, other international advocacy groups have joined CCC and Costa Rican environmental groups in developing an international campaign to stop the oil development. The government’s decision on the project is expected in the near future. 🌀

**by Cindy Taft, International Programs Director**

### **What You Can Do to Help Protect Tortuguero's Turtles from Oil Drilling!**

Write to Miguel Angel Rodríguez, President of Costa Rica and Bruce Huff, CEO of the Harken Energy Corporation at the addresses below:

Bruce Huff, CEO  
Harken Energy Corporation  
16285 Park Ten Place, Suite 600  
Houston TX 77084  
FAX: 281-717-1400

Sr. Presidente de la Republica  
Miguel Angel Rodríguez  
Casa Presidencial  
Apdo. 520-2010 Zapote  
San Jose, COSTA RICA  
FAX: Int'l code + 506-253-9078

#### **Things to consider when writing CEO Bruce Huff:**

- \* Express your alarm that Harken intends to explore for oil and gas along Costa Rica’s Caribbean coast - one of the most biologically rich regions of the planet.
- \* Oil development has harmed and destroyed fragile coral reef, mangrove, and estuary ecosystems around the world; Harken cannot guarantee that such disasters will not occur in Costa Rica.
- \* Tell him that you stand with others in opposition to oil and gas development off Costa Rica’s Caribbean coast and that it would threaten invaluable natural resources and the eco-tourism economy as well.

#### **Things to consider when writing President Rodríguez:**

- \* Costa Rica has been a leader in establishing protected areas and developing eco-tourism to protect the country’s magnificent biodiversity.
- \* He signed an international agreement to work with Nicaragua and Panamá to conserve sea turtles.
- \* Under his administration, protection of turtles has never been stronger, with poaching of nesting turtles and their eggs reduced to a minimum in recent years.
- \* Express your concern about oil/gas development on the Caribbean coast, which endangers exceptionally rich and fragile marine and terrestrial ecosystems, and threatens the eco-tourism economy.

# Adopted turtles of CCC members nest at Tortuguero in 2000 season

From July to September each year, Caribbean Conservation Corporation researchers and program participants tag and collect data on the green turtles that nest on the beaches of Tortuguero, Costa Rica. To help fund this important research, each tagged turtle is available for adoption with a \$25 contribution (\$35 outside of the U.S.). One of the goals of the Adopt-A-Turtle program is to keep adoptive "parents" informed when their adopted turtles turn up in Tortuguero.

During the 2000 tagging season, 129 of the thousands of green turtles that came ashore to nest had been adopted by our members. The turtles (identified by tag number) that came ashore were:

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| No. 23897, adopted by Carol Lis                          | No. 73536, adopted by Garnet Walker                       | No. 75026, adopted by Wolf Elfriede                        |
| No. 36248, adopted by Rebecca Barmore                    | No. 73540, adopted by Leslie Bankston                     | No. 75033, adopted by Anne McKenzie                        |
| No. 45608, adopted by Rufus Rose                         | No. 73724, adopted by Margaret May Dutton                 | No. 75049, adopted by Timothy Elliott                      |
| No. 46448, adopted by Rodrigo Limon Torres               | No. 74043, adopted by John Held                           | No. 75069, adopted by Brent Baker                          |
| No. 55120, adopted by Brian Frentress                    | No. 74049, adopted by Ian & Eric Graham                   | No. 75073, adopted by Brittany Calvert                     |
| No. 70019, adopted by Zelda Barnett                      | No. 74078, adopted by Rebecca McKee                       | No. 75146, adopted by Mrs. Gunning's<br>Kindergarten Class |
| No. 70047, adopted by Amanda Lee Ivory                   | No. 74106, adopted by Millicent Ficken                    | No. 75171, adopted by Carmen Yacabucci                     |
| No. 70110, adopted by Henry Batty                        | No. 74118, adopted by Ted Buettner                        | No. 75351, adopted by Delores Salinas                      |
| No. 70116, adopted by Andy & Betsy Witthohn              | No. 74320, adopted by Curtis Cathcart /<br>Eva Dudzic     | No. 75355, adopted by Ron Bennett                          |
| No. 70215, adopted by Mary Tiegreen                      | No. 74334, adopted by Jim & Becky Schroeder               | No. 75359, adopted by Larry Walton                         |
| No. 70265, adopted by Suzanne Van Ooijen                 | No. 74341, adopted by Brittany Felter                     | No. 75461, adopted by Alpha Zeta of<br>Zeta Beta Tau       |
| No. 70317, adopted by Leigh Weaver /<br>C-5 Kindergarten | No. 74374, adopted by Kiddy Kersden                       | No. 75584, adopted by Paul Smyser                          |
| No. 70319, adopted by Leigh Weaver /<br>C-5 Kindergarten | No. 74425, adopted by The Study Prep School               | No. 75656, adopted by Amity Mank                           |
| No. 71006, adopted by Lisanne Cooper                     | No. 74444, adopted by Karen Beaudoin                      | No. 80069, adopted by Steven Janda                         |
| No. 71018, adopted by Tom & Francesca<br>Groen           | No. 74462, adopted by Marty Key                           | No. 80099, adopted by Lois Umbrello                        |
| No. 71071, adopted by Connolly Family                    | No. 74502, adopted by Marco Gorla                         | No. 80197, adopted by Douglas Fonden                       |
| No. 71205, adopted by James Samuel                       | No. 74537, adopted by S.E.D Courteney                     | No. 80248, adopted by Crook's Class                        |
| No. 71217, adopted by Andre Salz                         | No. 74545, adopted by Marieke Ulder Borg &<br>Femke Wolfs | No. 80277, adopted by Diane Clarke                         |
| No. 71324, adopted by Toby Schaffer                      | No. 74553, adopted by Karin Blom &<br>Andre Vissen        | No. 80450, adopted by Vreeland / Behrens<br>Grandchildren  |
| No. 71336, adopted by Gillian Pearsall                   | No. 74560, adopted by Katie Delahunty                     | No. 80498, adopted by Maria Fabbrini                       |
| No. 71647, adopted by Janet Soren                        | No. 74565, adopted by Deirdre Vorih                       | No. 80527, adopted by Sally & Amy Kilner                   |
| No. 71737, adopted by Pascale Albers                     | No. 74603, adopted by Rosalind Kaplan                     | No. 80588, adopted by Diane Hanna &<br>Glenn Keltto        |
| No. 71783, adopted by James Graybill &<br>Ugo Sap        | No. 74615, adopted by Jordi Devmal Gubern                 | No. 80625, adopted by PJ Maglione                          |
| No. 71790, adopted by Ruby Blondell                      | No. 74617, adopted by Andrea Badiani                      | No. 80636, adopted by Melissa Edgar                        |
| No. 71802, adopted by Julia McLeod                       | No. 74619, adopted by Anil Akoon                          | No. 80744, adopted by Diane Harrison                       |
| No. 71887, adopted by Holly Rua-Doorman                  | No. 74630, adopted by Alexander Freebern                  | No. 80785, adopted by Christine Coltellarro                |
| No. 72150, adopted by Eva Schwirtz                       | No. 74682, adopted by Christine Todd                      | No. 80983, adopted by Roberto Vargas                       |
| No. 72193, adopted by Laura Lohmann                      | No. 74693, adopted by Phillipe &<br>Sylvie-Anne Ombregt   | No. 81096, adopted by Charron Jocelynt                     |
| No. 72197, adopted by Avery Badenhop                     | No. 74696, adopted by Jeanne Otto                         | No. 81112, adopted by Jennie Mizrahi                       |
| No. 72441, adopted by Ruth Houghton                      | No. 74712, adopted by Katie Glockner                      | No. 81120, adopted by Cathie Haynes                        |
| No. 72563, adopted by Johan Lagerlof                     | No. 74717, adopted by Ted & Jeanie Dubinsky               | No. 81227, adopted by Timothy Donaldson                    |
| No. 72580, adopted by Koenigsberg Family                 | No. 74741, adopted by Kathleen Terry                      | No. 81271, adopted by Ingrid Barenthien                    |
| No. 72611, adopted by Denise Calvert                     | No. 74774, adopted by Raymond &<br>Stephanie Dommanschet  | No. 81280, adopted by Patrick Ruhe                         |
| No. 72666, adopted by Kim Birchard &<br>Carol Dorman     | No. 74780, adopted by Geno Duke                           | No. 81296, adopted by Kelvin Magoon                        |
| No. 72868, adopted by Harriet Wiggin                     | No. 74801, adopted by Amy Marley                          | No. 81325, adopted by Michel Kaftan                        |
| No. 72889, adopted by Phoebe Felen                       | No. 74817, adopted by Susan Frigomann                     | No. 81426, adopted by Victoria Webb                        |
| No. 73280, adopted by Laurie Hilliard                    | No. 74851, adopted by Wernli Alessandro                   | No. 81496, adopted by Christian Wethered                   |
| No. 73317, adopted by Gordon Greenwood                   | No. 74881, adopted by Valerie Davidson                    | No. 81600, adopted by Sue Willard                          |
| No. 73320, adopted by Gordon Greenwood                   | No. 74950, adopted by Renate Hammerschmidt                | No. 81785, adopted by Lisa Hardin                          |
| No. 73364, adopted by Sigmund Katz                       | No. 74963, adopted by Joseph Finden                       | No. 81809, adopted by Girl Scout Troop 18                  |
| No. 73367, adopted by Gordon Greenwood                   | No. 75009, adopted by Stephanie Caldwell                  | No. 81917, adopted by Sarah & John Riddick                 |
| No. 73531, adopted by Mrs. Barcel's<br>Science Classes   | No. 75010, adopted by Lucinda Parnell                     | No. 81992, adopted by Caitlin Laffy                        |
|  | No. 75020, adopted by Rhonda Weissman                     | No. 82399, adopted by Clayton Hommel                       |
|  |   | No. 82501, adopted by Marie Nelstrop                       |

Since green turtles do not nest every year, we don't expect to see these particular turtles again in Tortuguero for awhile. *To learn more about the Adopt-A-Turtle program for yourself or as a gift, please call 1-800-678-7853.*

## CCC Appoints New Board President

Anthony D. Knerr, who has served as Board President for the Caribbean Conservation Corporation since 1992, stepped down from his position following the Directors Meeting in April. CCC has benefited greatly from Tony's superb leadership, and forever will be in his debt. He helped guide CCC through many important transitions and advancements. During his decade-long tenure, CCC has been strengthened as an organization, and sea turtle survival has improved in many parts of the Wider Caribbean. As a small token of its appreciation, CCC presented Tony with a bronze sea turtle sculpture—a gift befitting the artful and classy manner in which he guided the organization.

CCC's new Board President is Peggy M. Cavanaugh, who was unanimously elected to fill the position. Peggy has served on the Board since 1997, most recently as Chair of the Membership Committee. Peggy's commitment to sea turtle conservation, her enthusiasm for expanding CCC's role in Florida and throughout the Caribbean, and her graceful skills as a leader, ensure that CCC will continue its momentum of success well into the future.



Anthony Knerr (right) is presented with a sculpture titled "Peaceful Journey" by Joseph Quillan. With Tony, is new CCC Board President, Peggy Cavanaugh, and CCC's Executive Director, David Godfrey.

## CCC Honors its First Staff Member

CCC took the opportunity at the beginning of the 2001 Leatherback Program to honor Leo Martínez, the first person to work for the CCC in Tortuguero, Costa Rica. Called "Tío," Spanish for uncle, by his friends, Tio Leo is one of Tortuguero's founding villagers, and he is now the area's most senior resident. Tío was presented with a plaque from CCC thanking him for his dedicated support and critical assistance in establishing CCC's Tortuguero sea turtle program over four decades ago. Tio's long-time friend and member of CCC's Scientific Advisory Committee, Larry Ogren, prepared two framed photos showing Leo and Larry in Tortuguero; one of the photos shows the men tagging turtles in the 1950's. The plaque and the photos were much appreciated by Leo and his relatives.



Pictured from right to left: CCC Research Coordinator Sebastian Troëng, Leo Martínez, Zelmira Williams and Junie Martínez

CARIBBEAN



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# Turtle Heros

*A newsletter for young sea turtle activists!*



## 4-H Club Sea Turtle Project and Contest

Hi, my name is Patrick Prentice, and I'm from the Exciting 4-H Club in Miami, Florida. My club has been involved in sea turtle projects for about nine years. We've been helping Turtle Ranger Bill Ahern since 1992. I remember waking up at 4 am in the morning to go help Ranger Bill find sea turtle nests, and relocate the turtle nests to a turtle hatchery where they can hatch without incident. This past year we helped set up the hatchery, and almost every Friday we helped release the turtles back into the ocean.



There were three first place contestants from the contest. From left to right, they are Natalia Sagille, Pricilla Aleman, and Daniella Chisholm.

There was a winner for each of three age groups. We gave all the kids that entered a certificate of participation. Thank you to the Sea Turtle Survival League for the great prizes. We hope to continue the contest in years to come.

- Text and photo submitted by Patrick Prentice, Exciting 4-H Club, Miami, Florida.

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**Are you a Turtle Hero? We want to hear your story! Maybe you helped clean up beach litter, or worked with a local turtle watch group. Send us a letter or email that describes what you did to help save sea turtles. Your story might be printed in a future issue of Turtle Heros. If you like to write poems, songs, or draw pictures of turtles, send those, too!**

Turtle Heros is a newsletter for young sea turtle activists. Send you letters to: Turtle Hero, 4424 NW 13th St., Suite A-1, Gainesville, FL 32609. Or email: [ccc@cccturtle.org](mailto:ccc@cccturtle.org).

## The Horrific Disease

A few days ago I saw a show about sea turtles. As I looked on, they talked about a horrific disease. A growth on the skin. They said that the turtles get worse every year due to the water and air temperature. It seems to start as a small, cream colored growth on only a small portion of the skin. Then it gets to where it is all over the turtle, even its shell. It turns into a black color and can get to be 4 inches across and cover 90% (more or less) of the body. When the growth gets on their eyes, the turtle can't find food and starves very slowly because it would take a healthy turtle lots of time to starve. Some turtles have several surgeries due to the reappearance of the disease and some have their flippers taken off, which does not affect the animal's life it seems, but makes them a little slow. I feel just awful and they need us to help. If this gets worse, NO sea turtle will be safe. And with it getting worse by the year, it will be harder and harder to fix the problem, if at all.



- Submitted by Christie Hawkins, Fort Worth, TX

## *You can help sea turtles by reducing the amount of chemicals your family uses!*

Pollution can have serious impacts on both sea turtles and the food they eat. New research suggests that a disease (fibropapillomas, talked about in the above story) now killing many sea turtles may be linked to pollution in the oceans and in nearshore waters. When pollution kills aquatic plant and animal life, it also takes away the food sea turtles eat. Oil spills, urban runoff of chemicals, including fertilizers and petroleum, all contribute to water pollution.

Many people use chemicals and fertilizers on their lawns and gardens. Used motor oil and paints are deadly to plants and animals if not disposed of correctly. Many of these chemicals get washed into coastal lagoons and wash up on beaches. Find biodegradable lawn and garden products that you can use and facilities that properly dispose of toxic chemicals.

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## *What to Do If You Encounter a Nesting Sea Turtle*

In Florida and other states where sea turtles nest, turtle watches are conducted by trained and permitted individuals. The goal is to educate people about sea turtles through direct contact, without disturbing the turtles. If you are interested in going on a turtle walk, you can call Sea Turtle Survival League at (352) 373-6441 for a list of guides near you. Sometimes people encounter sea turtles on their own while walking on the beach at night during nesting season. If this happens to you, here are some simple rules to follow:

- \* Do not walk on the beach with a flashlight or shine a light in the sea turtle's face. The light may cause the female

to abort the nesting process, or other sea turtles nearby may be discouraged from nesting if there are lights on the beach.



- \* Do not take pictures using flashes. This high-intensity light can be even more disturbing than the flashlights.
- \* Stay clear and out of sight of the turtle until she begins laying eggs, otherwise you may scare her back into the sea.
- \* For your safety, stay away from

the turtle's head. Sea turtles, especially loggerheads, have very strong jaws and can harm you if provoked.

- \* Do not handle the eggs or put any foreign objects into the nest. You can introduce bacteria or injure the eggs.
- \* Do not handle or ride the sea turtle. In addition to being illegal, you may injure the turtle or cause her to leave without finishing nesting.
- \* Do not disturb tracks left by turtles. Researchers sometimes use the tracks to identify the type of turtles that nested and to find and mark the nests.
- \* Do enjoy the experience and remember it for the rest of your life.