

VELADOR

Protecting Sea Turtles and their Habitats since 1959

Spring 2002

Costa Rica Says “No” to Offshore Oil Drilling



CCC File Photo

In what is surely one of Caribbean Conservation Corporation’s most significant conservation victories, the government of Costa Rica recently denied permit requests from a group of American companies seeking to begin offshore oil drilling very near Tortuguero National Park. For two years, CCC has been directly

advising government officials and local organizations about the potential impacts of oil drilling on the Tortuguero sea turtle nesting colony. Our efforts paid off with a resounding “NO” to the oil companies. Giving CCC and its members great pride is the fact that the

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CCC Honors Its Past, While Planning for the Future

The Caribbean Conservation Corporation has been carrying out its mission for over four decades. The long course of CCC's history is filled with milestone events and a collection of successes that have altered the fate of several marine turtle species. When CCC's founding members gathered back in 1959 to form the first group in the world dedicated to sea turtle protection, they had a vision for what this organization could become. Through the dedication, hard work and contributions of countless individuals, CCC has achieved that vision by maturing into a major force for sea turtle conservation around the world.

The fruits of CCC's labor can be seen in the annual turtle nesting numbers from Tortuguero, Costa Rica, where green turtle nesting has shown an encouraging upward trend. In Florida, we can celebrate the establishment of the *Archie Carr Refuge* and rejoice in loggerhead, green turtle and leatherback nesting that sets new records every few years. In Bermuda, the island's growing, healthy population of juvenile green turtles reveals another rich story of conservation success.

As CCC reflects on these achievements, we must recognize the countless people who contributed their time, expertise and resources to make these successes possible. Recently, CCC organized two events to honor the many people who have given of themselves to advance the cause of sea turtle conservation. The first event was a reunion party for everyone who has ever worked on the Tortuguero turtle program. The reunion was held in conjunction with the 22nd Symposium on Sea Turtle Research and Conservation, which took place this past April in Miami. Nearly 200 people attended the

event.

Also in April, CCC held a black-tie fundraising event in New York City. The inaugural Founders Circle Gala celebrated CCC's long history by honoring one of our founding Board members — Dr. H. Clay Frick, II. CCC presented Dr. Frick with the *Archie Carr Lifetime Achievement Award* — an award established this year to begin recognizing individuals who have made lifelong contributions toward the protection of sea turtles. Dr. Frick was selected as the first recipient of this award because of his immeasurable contributions toward the protection of marine turtles in Bermuda.

In recent years, new heroes for turtle conservation have emerged. CCC's current team of staff and volunteers are leaving their mark, and one day people will reflect upon the importance of recent victories — such as stopping Costa Rica from allowing off shore oil drilling near Tortuguero. In this *Velador*, you can read about this monumental victory and the role played by CCC staff, especially Roxana Silman and Sebastian Troëng.

While CCC celebrates its past and honors the circle of founders on whose shoulders our success has been built, we are also beginning a new chapter in our history. This next chapter requires that we look ahead at the work still needed to safeguard sea turtles and their habitats. To ensure CCC is equipped to carry on its mission, we are establishing the Founders Circle Endowment, which will provide lasting financial support for our work. You are invited to join CCC's next generation of visionary founders by contributing to the Founders Circle Endowment. Please call me personally to learn more or to make a pledge. With your help, CCC can continue confronting the new and unforeseen threats to sea turtle survival.



David Godfrey
CCC Executive Director

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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Tortuguero Sea Turtle Data Provides Contribution to Global Assessments

Over the last year, the Marine Turtle Specialist Group of the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) has been assessing the global status of many of the world's sea turtle species. The assessments are used as the basis for the species' classification in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. This has implications for how sea turtle species are conserved and how they are protected under national and international legislation.

The criteria used to list species are based on population declines over a time interval of 10 years, or three generations, whichever is longer. Obviously, in the case of long-lived and late-maturing sea turtles, three generations is a much longer time period than 10 years. For example; for hawksbill turtles one generation is estimated at 35 years and for green turtles at an impressive 47 years.

Needless to say, there are no places in the world where hawksbill turtles have been monitored for 105 years or where green turtle populations have

been followed for 141 years. However, CCC's Tortuguero sea turtle monitoring programs provide the most long-term nesting data for sea turtles anywhere in the world. For that reason, the IUCN Marine Turtle Specialist Group's Hawksbill, Green Turtle and Leatherback taskforces have all contacted the CCC for information on the Tortuguero nesting trends. CCC happily provided data on the hawksbill (decline of 82% since 1956), green (encouraging nesting trends since 1971) and leatherback (stable trend since 1995) nesting populations.

The use of Tortuguero data in the global assessments of hawksbill, green and leatherback turtles shows the importance and value of CCC's long-term monitoring effort at Tortuguero. The data not only help in conserving sea turtles at Tortuguero but also aid in global sea turtle conservation strategies.

In the current IUCN Red List of Threatened Species the leatherback and hawksbill turtles are classified as *Critically Endangered* and the green turtle as *Endangered*. 🌀

CCC To Attend 2002 CITES Conference

CCC must send delegates to the November, 2002 CITES (Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species) meeting in Chile to ensure the continued protection status of hawksbill and green sea turtles. The cost of sending three delegates to this 14-day conference is about \$10,000. With the help of foundations and our members, CCC is hoping to raise the funds needed for this critical mission.



Please add your voice to ours as we fight for the future of Caribbean hawksbills by making a donation to CCC's *Save the Hawksbill Fund*. Your gift will make a critical difference. You can use the return envelope enclosed in this newsletter. Be sure to earmark your gift to the *Save the Hawksbill Fund*. For more information or to make a credit card donation, please call (800) 678-7853. Thank you!





Oil Drilling Rejected from cover

government's official statement denying the permits included nearly ten references to CCC and sea turtle conservation.

On February 28, 2002, the National Technical Environmental Secretariat formally rejected the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) presented by an oil company to get a permit to drill for oil off the Caribbean coast of Costa Rica. After two years of campaigning against oil drilling because of its potential impact on sea turtle populations, the hard work CCC and a handful of other groups put into the issue has finally paid off.

Costa Rica's Caribbean coast hosts globally important nesting populations of green and leatherback turtles, a hawksbill nesting population of regional importance and also occasional nesting by loggerhead turtles. Along the coast, sensitive coral reefs and mangrove swamps can also be found. A couple of miles offshore, ocean currents concentrate sargassum seaweed in large rafts where post-hatchling sea turtles find food and refuge. Previous experiences and studies indicate that both sea turtles and the coastal habitats mentioned are sensitive to the environmental impacts caused by oil drilling.

In November 1999, the US-based oil company MKJ Xploration began marine seismic surveys to determine if oil or gas could be found offshore. A vessel moved up and down the coast and fired powerful

airguns repeatedly into the water to identify suitable drilling sites at the bottom of the sea. The impact of this activity on fish stocks, sea turtles and marine mammals has never been possible to determine.

In previous years, oil drilling rights to large tracts of Costa Rican territory were given out to the highest bidding oil companies. However, the boat firing airguns was the first news that many coastal residents and organizations had of the plans to drill for oil off the coast.

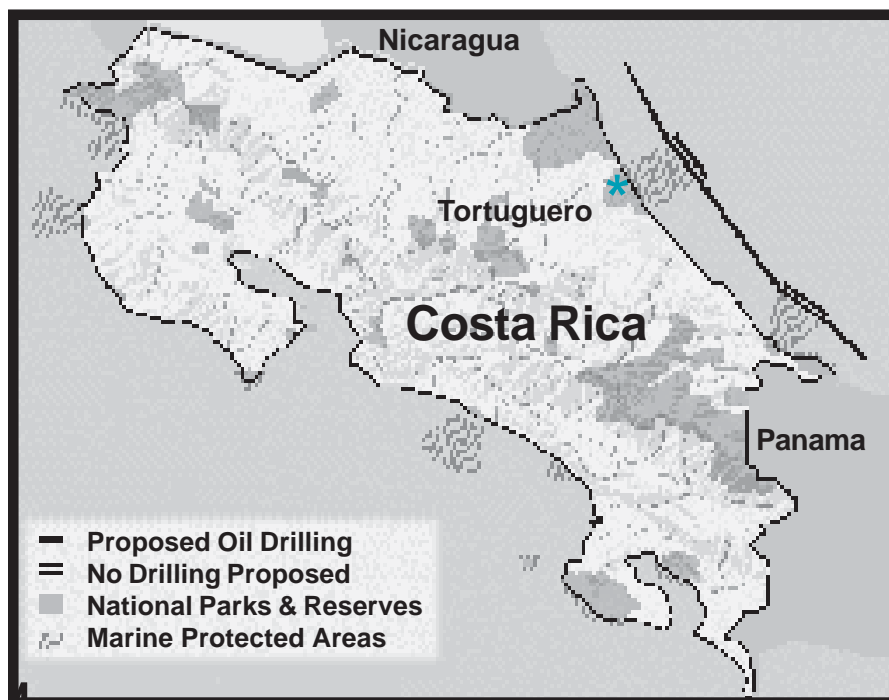
Immediately, CCC began evaluating the potential impacts that oil drilling could have on the area's sea turtle populations and the habitats upon which they depend. It quickly became apparent that oil exploration would have profound effects on the Tortuguero turtle population which CCC and others have been protect-

Crude oil, absorbed through the skin and lungs, or injected in the gut, can negatively impact almost all the physiological systems of sea turtles.

ing for over four decades. Crude oil, absorbed through the skin and lungs, or injected in the gut, can negatively impact almost all the physiological systems of sea turtles. Lethal and sub-lethal impacts include carcinogenesis, increased susceptibility to parasites and diseases, decreased dive times, decreased nutrient assimilation, organ dysfunction, disturbed hormone balance, abnormal development and disruptions to sense organs, respiration and blood chemistry. Sea turtle deaths caused by oil spills have been recorded in the Gulf of Mexico, the Gulf of Arabia and many other locations.

CCC prepared a scientific summary on the potential impacts that oil exploration could have on sea turtles and sent copies to the Minister of Environment and Energy and to the many local groups that had begun organizing against oil exploration. Time was of the essence. One oil company was already preparing its Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), which was the last step before acquiring drilling permits. The first drilling rig was planned for construction south of Tortuguero National Park, only a couple of miles from the coast.

As soon as the EIA had been presented, CCC evaluated the document to determine if it had sufficiently considered the area's sea turtles. CCC also facilitated the evaluation of the EIA by coral reef, environmental policy and





A view of the Tortuguero coastline which would be under direct threat from oil spills or leakages.

an additional four times. The ruling stated that "...[the EIA]...should have seriously considered that the sea turtle populations of Caribbean Costa Rica are ecologically and economically important..."

As expected, the oil company appealed the ruling to the Minister of Environment and Energy. The outgoing Minister Elizabeth Odio gave a final blow to the exploration plans by rejecting the appeal. For now, it appears that the threat of oil exploration has been

averted and that the future is still bright for Costa Rica's Caribbean sea turtle populations.

**By Sebastian Trøeng
CCC Scientific Director**

geography experts. All the evaluations were sent to the Minister and the National Technical Environmental Secretariat, the government agency responsible for assessing the EIA.

After its initial review, the Environmental Secretariat requested additional information from the oil company, and again CCC provided technical evaluations.

For two years, CCC continued to provide local groups and elected officials with sound scientific arguments against oil exploration. CCC staff also met with government officials, politicians and coastal communities to point out the benefits of conservation and the economic and ecological significance of the country's sea turtle populations. Through public hearings in Limón, the largest town on the coast, and widespread media coverage, the arguments against oil exploration became known throughout Costa Rica.

Late in 2001, it became apparent that the Environmental Secretariat's ruling on the oil exploration EIA would coincide with Costa Rica's presidential and legislative assembly elections. Through the coalition of groups working together against oil exploration, CCC's arguments reached many of the election campaigns. Based on these arguments, all three leading presidential candidates openly expressed their opposition to oil drilling.

Finally, on February 28, 2002, the Environmental Secretariat rejected the oil company's EIA. A 52-page document, probably the most extensive ruling ever made by the Secretariat, detailed the reasons for the rejection. CCC was mentioned eight times in the ruling, sea turtles

CCC salutes these foundations and grantors for their recent support of our sea turtle research, conservation and education programs:



- Care for the Wild International
- Jeff Phipps
- Kenneth A. Scott Charitable Trust
- Helen C. Frick Foundation
- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
- Daniel K. Thorne Foundation
- Moore Charitable Foundation
- Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation
- Commission Marine Turtle
- License Plate Grants Program

Recent Events & Activities



CCC Holds Founders Circle Gala!

A cold, New York City rain did not dampen the spirits of the more than 120 people who attended Caribbean Conservation Corporation's Founders Circle Gala, which was held April 25 at the Racquet and Tennis Club.

The black-tie event honored Dr. H. Clay Frick, II, the 2002 recipient of

CCC's **David Godfrey & Elise Frick**

Archie Carr Lifetime Achievement Award. Dr. Frick, a founding member of CCC's Board of Directors, designed and initiated a systematic study of the juvenile green turtles inhabiting the waters around Bermuda. Begun in 1968, the Bermuda Turtle Project is now the longest, continuous study of its kind in the world.

ous study of its kind in the world. Dr. Archie F. Carr, III, CCC Board Member and oldest son of CCC's Founding Scientific Director Dr. Archie F. Carr, Jr., presented the award, sharing with Gala guests details of Dr. Frick's rich history with CCC.

"It so happens that Clay Frick became a hands-on turtle man, himself. He didn't just support the CCC, he jumped in the water and tagged sea turtles," Dr. Carr said. "This award recognizes his unwavering support, from the very beginning, for CCC, and for his direct, personal, and irrepressible, contributions to green turtle research and conservation, especially in Bermuda."

Dr. Frick's daughter, Elise, shared her childhood memories of working with her father to capture and collect data on Bermuda's turtles.



CCC Executive Director David Godfrey addressed the guests as well, highlighting CCC's recent conservation programs and successes, and announcing the establishment of CCC's Founders Circle Endowment. CCC established the endowment to provide a permanent funding source for CCC's international sea turtle research and



Peggy Cavanaugh



Alex Woodley & Greg Tripoli



Warren Aderson & Mora Shantzis

said CCC Executive Director David Godfrey. "Experience has taught us that there are no quick fixes when it comes to saving sea turtles. It takes time and commitment. For that reason we established the Founders Circle Endowment. By supporting the endowment, donors can ensure the long-term protection of sea turtles and their habitats in the Caribbean."

After being wined and dined to the jazz sounds of the Joe D'Elia Band, Gala guests participated in an



Florence Stone & Dr. Archie Carr, III

memories of working with her father to capture and collect data on Bermuda's turtles.



Carmel Mc Gill & Deborah Srb

and conservation programs. Items auctioned included trips to Tortuguero and Florida, beautiful artwork and jewelry, fine serveware and crystal, gift certificates to elegant restaurants, and first edition books written by Dr. Archie Carr, Jr.



Chuck Wilberger

and conservation programs. Items auctioned included trips to Tortuguero and Florida, beautiful artwork and jewelry, fine serveware and crystal, gift certificates to elegant restaurants, and first edition books written by Dr. Archie Carr, Jr.

Our warmest thanks go to the following individuals & companies whose support helped make the Founders Circle Gala a success

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Auction items were donated by Holbrook Travel, Lynn Chase Designs, Steuben, Sarah Jane, Onne van der Wal, Robert Graham, Arthur Court Designs, Tia Lynn & Chuck Wilberger, Jeff Phipps and three Anonymous donors.



Tania Perez, Summer Johns & Jennifer Lanier

The Founders Circle Gala takes its name from the original



Jordy Urstadt, Chris Rajczi, Jane Rajczi & Aileen Haviland

circle of turtle enthusiasts, who, in 1959, established the Caribbean Conservation Corporation. The group was brought together by Joshua Powers, who, after reading Dr. Archie Carr's first book, *The Windward Road*, was so inspired to save sea turtles that he sent

copies of the book to twenty friends inviting them to join the cause. Each Gala guest was given a complimentary copy of the book in the hopes that they, like CCC's founders, would make a personal commitment to ensuring the continued survival of sea turtles.

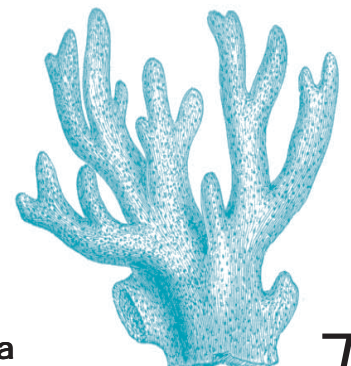
CCC would like to extend our warmest thanks to the individuals and companies whose time and support helped make the Founders Circle Gala such a success. Additional photos from the Gala can be viewed on CCC's website at www.cccturtle.org/gala.



Sue Ellen Smith, Roger Stone & Helen Clay Chace

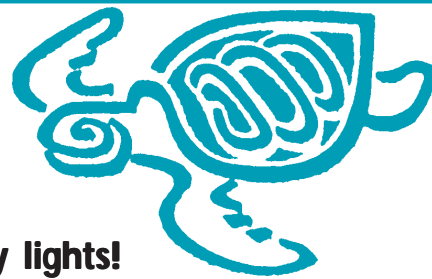


Staff from FUEL, North America



Turtle Heroes

A section recognizing sea turtle activists!



Turtle group gets Home Depot to highlight turtle friendly lights!

On Saturday, May 4, 2002, Turtle Time, Inc., a sea turtle conservation and education organization based in Lee County, Fla., set up an educational display table at the Home Depot in Fort Myers, Fla. Turtle Time's display featured turtle-friendly lights that were available in the store, as well as the raw materials that people could buy to build shields for problem lights.

"We feel very fortunate that they welcomed us," said Eve Haverfield, President of Turtle Time, Inc. "This is a first for Home Depot, a company that usually doesn't host groups wanting to use their premises."



The table was staffed by Eve Haverfield (pictured) and Carol Lis, Lee County Code Enforcement.

Carol Lis



Eve Haverfield

Home Depot's employees even got involved and wanted to learn more about sea turtles and turtle friendly lights. In addition, the store manager placed a sea turtle sticker in a plastic sign holder on the shelf to alert people looking for 25-Watt yellow bug lights (pictured at left). The yellow bug lights are an inexpensive way for coastal home owners, hotels, and businesses to reduce the amount of light seen by nesting female sea turtles and hatchlings as they emerge from a nest. Way to go Turtle Time!

Gifts That Keep on Giving

Since November of 2001, Emily Friedman of Omaha, Ne. has adopted 34 sea turtles for members of her class in honor of their Bar and Bat Mitzvahs, including one for herself. Not only have Emily and her family generously supported CCC's efforts by donating money in the form of gift adoptions, but they have also helped us to spread our message of sea turtle preservation to 34 new members. In addition to her special gifts of sea turtle awareness, Emily is also raising money to protect endangered sea turtles for her Mitzvah project. 🐢

Turtle Heroes wanted for the Tortuguero Green Turtle Program

If you are planning your summer vacation in July or August 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. You should be at least 18 years of age and be physically fit. For more information and date availability, call Dan Evans at (800) 678-7853 or visit the CCC website at www.cccturtle.org for a Visual Tour of the research programs, the CCC Research Station and Tortuguero. 🐢



Laurie M. Penland

Thanks for Your Support!

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Carl Ernstrom
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Elizabeth Ferris
Paul Feyerabend
Peter Fichte
Millicent Ficken
Brandon Finnie
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Barbara Gettinger
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Joan Gilbreth
Jason R. Gilbreth
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Girl Scout Troop #533
Girl Scout Troop #598

Girl Scout Troop #2227
Hanna Gleason
Yael Gluck
Ken Gmitter
Kevin Paul Godburn
Famille Godin
Maria Carolina Goodfellow
Robert Goselin
Janell Gottula
Pat Grantham
Joan Grass
Leslie Graul
Ellen Gray
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Sonia Groves
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Mary Harrison
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Kerry Haselton
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Sharilyn Wardrup & James Burns
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Sandrine Jelsma
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 Skyler Sun
 Talea Sutherland
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 McKenna Swett
 Enzo Hermkens En Sylvia Van Gompel
 Molly Tallman
 Juliet Tallmer
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 Shirley Tan Kirchen
 Julie Tanno
 Tarawa Terrace II Elem. School
 Jonathan Tauer
 Nick Taylor
 Lisa Taylor
 Murray Taylor
 SueEllen Tees
 Jeremy N. Teeters
 Mrs. TenEyck
 Danny Thomas
 Captane Y Helen Thomson
 Seth Tiddy
 Linda M. Tiller
 Tanna Timbes's Class
 Sean Todd
 Lindsey Tonge
 Barbara & Ed Tonningsen
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 Heather Trasker
 Jon Treadway
 Dylan Michael Triplett
 Martinus Tromp
 Melissa Trousdale
 Jennifer Tung

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 Jeanina Umaña
 Ms. Ushers Class/ K I Sawyer School
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 Marijke Van Der Ploeg
 Patricia Van Dobben
 Alijd Van Doorn
 Mieke Van Kasbergen
 Van Vloten
 Liselotte Van Wunnik
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Leave a Legacy Through CCC's Founders Circle Endowment

The Caribbean Conservation Corporation's founding scientific director, Dr. Archie Carr, dedicated his life to studying and protecting sea turtles. Dr. Carr's lifelong commitment to and enthusiasm for sea turtles inspired generations of scientists and conservationists. Today, the worldwide movement to save sea turtles can be traced back to Archie Carr and the circle of supporters who helped him found the CCC. The legacy left by this original "founders circle" is the CCC itself — the oldest and most accomplished sea turtle conservation group in the world.

Now, CCC invites you to leave a lasting legacy of support by contributing to the newly-established

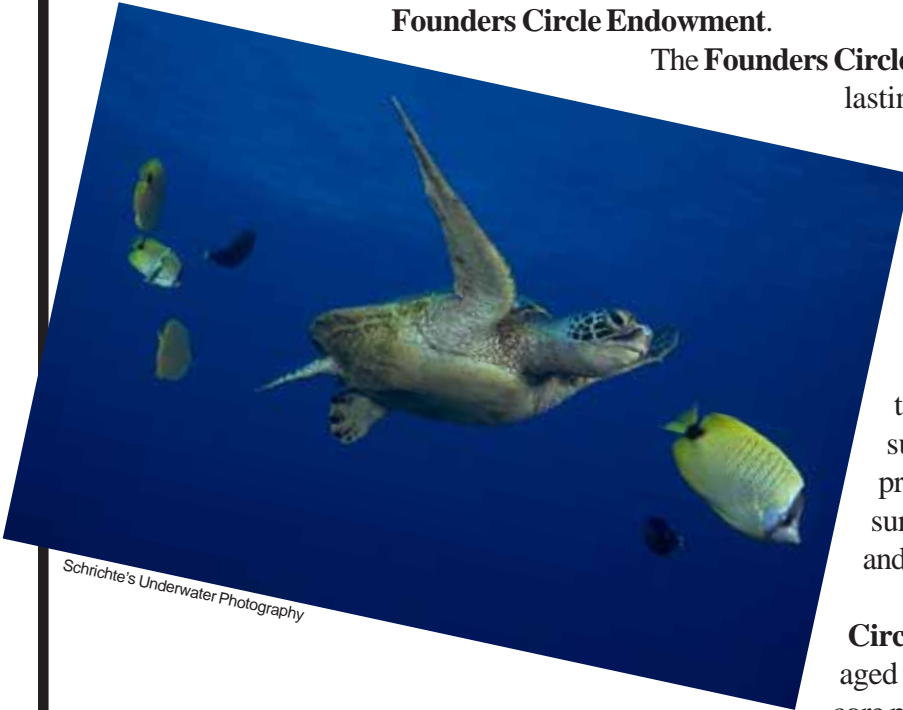
Founders Circle Endowment.

The **Founders Circle Endowment** will provide reliable and lasting support for CCC's core research and

conservation programs. Specifically, proceeds from the endowment will help sustain CCC's sea turtle monitoring and protection program in Tortuguero, Costa Rica — the longest continuous program of its kind in the world. Ongoing programs to study and protect sea turtles and their habitats in Florida and Bermuda will also be supported by the endowment. Together, these programs are helping ensure the long-term survival of sea turtles in the Wider Caribbean and Atlantic.

Funding contributed to the **Founders Circle Endowment** will be protected and managed to provide reliable annual funding for CCC's core programs. Without a sustained commitment to

programs in Tortuguero and elsewhere, gains in sea turtle populations that have been documented over the past four decades could be wiped out in a very short period of time. CCC must vigilantly carry out its efforts, and the endowment will help make this possible. Please join CCC's new Founder Circle by making a contribution or pledge to this new endowment. To learn more contact David Godfrey at (352) 373-6441 or david@cccturtle.org.



Schrichte's Underwater Photography

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