

# VELADOR

Protecting Sea Turtles and their Habitats since 1959

Issue 3, 2003

## CCC to Help Operate an Environmental Education Center in the Archie Carr National Wildlife Refuge

Since its establishment in 1990, the Archie Carr National Wildlife Refuge has been a major success. The 20 miles of Florida coastline located within the Refuge boundary is home to the most important sea turtle nesting habitat in the United States. Ongoing surveys show that nesting by loggerheads, green turtles and leatherbacks has increased significantly in the past dozen years, with the annual number of nests now regularly exceeding 20,000.

The success of this protected area for sea turtles is especially welcome news considering the continued growth of single-family residences and businesses along the barrier island on which the Carr Refuge is located. Part of this success is no doubt a result of ongoing public education and outreach efforts by CCC and others aimed at making sure local residents and visitors know about the area's importance to sea turtles and other wildlife. For over ten years, CCC has led efforts to increase awareness and support for the Carr Refuge by distributing educational materials, conducting guided sea turtle walks and giving presentations to local groups and schools. These efforts seem to have paid off, at least so far.

However, the long-term effectiveness of these educational programs would be limited without an educational facility or visitor center located within the Refuge itself. Fortunately, Brevard County, Florida, in which most of the Carr Refuge is located, has recognized this urgent need and has committed to building the Barrier Island Ecosystem Center (BIEC) on land currently occupied by an abandoned beachfront restaurant. Recognizing CCC's



Rendering of the Barrier Island Ecosystem Center in the Archie Carr National Wildlife Refuge on the east coast of Florida.

unique capabilities and connection with the Archie Carr Refuge, the County has established a formal partnership that will allow CCC to design and operate the educational programs at the BIEC.

By contracting with CCC to run the BIEC education programs, the County will minimize its operational responsibility for the facility, while capitalizing on CCC's expertise in running a natural resource education center. For over a decade, CCC has run its own Natural History Museum and Visitor Center in Tortuguero, Costa Rica—site of a similarly important sea turtle nesting beach that is located in a national park. The BIEC partnership will allow CCC to expand the reach and effectiveness of its educational activities in the Carr Refuge. In addition, CCC will operate the BIEC Gift Shop, which will generate the revenue necessary to sustain the ongoing education programs.

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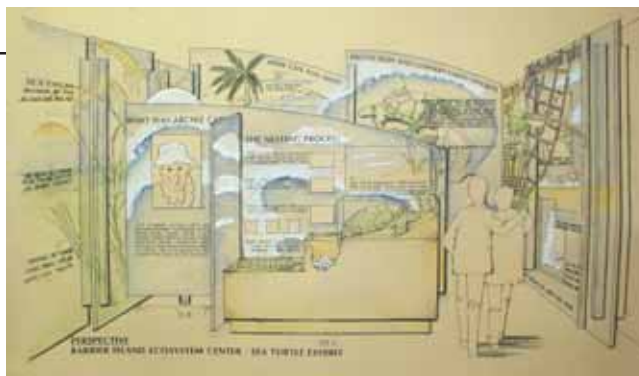
**from cover**

As the past decade has demonstrated in the Carr Refuge, people can live and play on important sea turtle nesting beaches without significantly affecting nesting success. But it requires a well informed public that is

committed to behaving in a manner that doesn't harm nesting turtles or their nests. As the human population on Brevard County's south beaches continues to grow, CCC and the BIEC will play an increasingly important role in protecting the fragile barrier island and its globally important sea turtle nesting beaches.

Construction on the BIEC should begin before the end of 2003, and the facility will open to the public in early 2005. Once completed, the BIEC will provide a focal point for the Archie Carr National Wildlife Refuge and the associated barrier island by providing exhibit space, a presentation hall, a small research library and ongoing educational programs that promote stewardship of the area's fragile natural resources. The BIEC will host visiting school groups from throughout Brevard County, as well as local residents and tourists. The facility, its gift shop and its exhibits will also be open daily to the public.

The BIEC would not have been possible without the generous support of the Richard K. Mellon Foundation. The Mellon Foundation purchased the abandoned "Chuck's Steakhouse" and donated the parcel to Brevard County for the purpose of building and operating an educational facility. The County also owns two adjacent parcels stretching across the narrow barrier island—from the Indian River Lagoon to the Atlantic Ocean. The proximity of these adjacent public lands will allow CCC and the County to provide visitors with a unique interpretive hiking trail that weaves through a cross section of all the barrier island habitats.



Rendering of sea turtle exhibits designed by CCC.

For the past several years, CCC worked closely with local residents, county commissioners and staff to secure the funding necessary to raze the old structure and build a new, state-of-the-art, environmentally-friendly center. Brevard County has earmarked just over \$2 million for the project, which will cover all the construction costs and the cost of building the educational exhibits. CCC has contributed to the effort by completing preliminary designs for the facility's exhibits through a grant provided by the Florida Coastal Zone Management Program.

For the past 13 years, a coalition of public and private partners has worked to purchase undeveloped beachfront property within the proposed boundaries of the Archie Carr Refuge. The goal has been to buy as much of this vulnerable beachfront habitat as possible—before it is lost forever to development. Within the 20 miles of the refuge "boundary," about 9 miles of beachfront is now in public ownership. The remainder of the area consists of a patchwork of single-family homes, small motels and isolated undeveloped lots. For the most part, the land acquisition phase has concluded, and a coalition of partners calling itself the "Archie Carr Working Group" is striving to safeguard this unique refuge for sea turtles and other coastal wildlife. Construction of the BIEC will fulfill one of the major goals of the Working Group by providing ongoing interpretive programs to both residents and visitors to the Refuge.

**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 around the Caribbean, CCC's researchers and volunteers are replacing poachers as the new veladors.

*Velador* is published 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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The Caribbean Conservation Corporation's Turtle Heroes Program relies on the talents, skills, and efforts of individual volunteers.

Turtle Heroes are interested in more hands-on involvement with sea turtle conservation, such as staffing tables at a local events or festivals, or giving educational presentations to schools or groups. This section highlights some of the activities of CCC's Turtle Heroes.

## Taking it to the Beach

Panama City Beach visitors got more than "fun in the sun" last March when local Turtle Hero Lorraine Hon staffed an ocean-side information table, teaching beachgoers about sea turtles and CCC's conservation efforts.

According to Lorraine, reactions to her efforts were enthusiastic, although, she admits, she had to work hard to catch party-bound students' attention. "I had to get up and walk the beach," she said. "But once I started talking to them, people were really interested, especially the kids. They really wanted to know how they could help."

An employee of Nextel Corporation, Lorraine took advantage of her company's "Volunteer Day": a program which encourages employee civic activity by offering paid leave for volunteer work of their choosing.

Lorraine has found other ways of working sea turtle activism into her daily life. A talented artist, Lorraine tells her clients all about the CCC. So far, she's received six pledges for membership!

Way to go Lorraine and Nextel! Keep up the good work!

## Volunteers Without Borders

Twelve-year-old Sibylla Hegarty, of Namibia, Africa, recently proved that sea turtle conservation knows no national boundaries by staffing a CCC information table at Windhoek International School's International Day, an annual festival designed to promote understanding of world cultures. Sibylla earned the distinction of being the first student in the school's history to organize a charity booth at this important local event.

According to fair attendees, Sibylla's booth was a great success. "Many people complimented her on her initiative, and showed interest in the aims of CCC," said Marisa Kelly, a Windhoek resident. Particularly popular were her guessing-games and contests, which she used to raise money, pass out CCC literature, and educate people on sea turtle conservation. Her efforts paid off—by the day's end, she had



earned \$26.00 dollars for the CCC!

Sibylla's work with the CCC is just the beginning of her life as a sea turtle activist: she's focusing her studies on science in preparation for the University of Cape Town, where she plans to study Marine Ecology. Thank you, Sibylla, for all your ingenuity and hard work.

## Activists in Training

Two Florida fourth grade students are showing their stripes as the next generation of conservationists. Jesse Smith-Appelson, daughter of CCC's Sea Turtle Survival League Advocacy Coordinator Gary Appelson, and Nora Moraga-Lewey organized a fund-raising drive within the fourth grade class of Gainesville's J.J. Finley Elementary School. Students were asked to donate 50 cents apiece in order to adopt a satellite-tagged sea turtle. Jesse and Nora used the adoption drive to educate their classmates on sea turtle conservation issues. Altogether, they raised over \$50! Way to go, Jesse, Nora, and the fourth grade class at J.J. Finley: we appreciate your hard work!

## An Activist in the Making

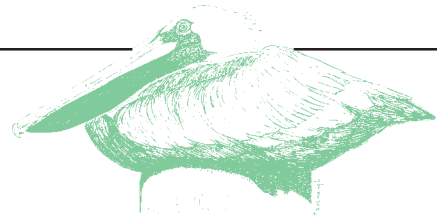
Five year old Meghan Taschenberger recently proved it's never too early to start saving sea turtles. Meghan spent her summer re-searching sea turtles: she even attended sea turtle talks during the family vacation! Meghan culminated her summer of sea turtle activism with a lemonade stand, where she raised funds for CCC by selling drinks and a variety of handmade sea turtle merchandise like sea turtle magnets, bookmarks, necklaces, and cookies in the shape of turtles. She even wrote a book on sea turtles, which she used to educate visitors to her lemonade stand about sea turtle conservation. Meghan well-exceeded her fundraising goal \$100: all together, she raised \$240! The CCC salutes your efforts, Meghan. Thank you for all your hard work and support.



Meghan models her own sea turtle t-shirt design.

**Want to join the Turtle Hero program? Contact Tracie Vida at [tracie@cccturtle.org](mailto:tracie@cccturtle.org) or visit our website [www.cccturtle.org/turtleheroes](http://www.cccturtle.org/turtleheroes).**

# Tortuguero Season Update



## Turtles, trash and tracks in Tortuguero

As green sea turtle nesting in Tortuguero draws to an end, it is time to reflect upon another season. The 2003 green turtle season began in June with the arrival of a multinational team of research assistants (RA's) from six different countries—Canada, Columbia, Peru, Spain, U.S. and Venezuela. In September, 2003, several new RA's arrived and the list of countries represented expanded to include Chile, Cuba and Uruguay. CCC also had two local Ticos (Costa Ricans) in this group who had been working on a sea turtle project run by the Costa Rican Coast Guard in Parismina, a village just to the south of Tortuguero.

While nesting seemed slow at the start of the season, it improved over the next two months, peaking at 1,575 nests laid in a single night on August 24<sup>th</sup>! By the time the last green turtle crawls ashore, probably sometime in November, CCC expects to document at least 97,000 nests laid this year, which, believe it or not, is a LOW year for Tortuguero!

CCC reached its target of 1,000 newly-tagged green turtles in late September, and Research Assistants have worked hands-on with over 2,200 green turtles. In addition, during the green turtle season CCC encountered five nesting leatherbacks, the last of which nested on July 7<sup>th</sup>; and 14 hawksbills, which are extremely rare on most Caribbean beaches.

All the CCC researchers and volunteers get excited when a turtle is encountered with tags from previous years. This season, CCC found 14 "old girls," which were originally tagged in the 1980's. The oldest turtle encountered was seen nesting on July 21<sup>st</sup> (tag number 21487). According to CCC's tagging database, this turtle was first tagged in 1980 - 23 years ago! Another old turtle (identification number 27369) was seen on July 22<sup>nd</sup>; she was first tagged in 1984, but has been encountered 22 times since then, in seven different years - 1984, 1987, 1990, 1993, 1998, 2000 and 2003!

On rare occasions, turtles tagged by other research projects away from Tortuguero will be found by CCC. This year was no exception. On July 18<sup>th</sup>, a turtle with tag numbers V3106 and V3107 were recorded, and it appears that this turtle was tagged in 2001 in Pacuare Nature Reserve, south of Tortuguero on the Caribbean coast. Another unusual tag was reported on September 14<sup>th</sup> - AM709. CCC contacted projects in Mexico and learned that this



female green turtle was tagged in-water, in feeding grounds close to Isla Mujeres, sometime between May 1996 and May 1997. We are still waiting for information regarding another turtle which was seen on October 19<sup>th</sup> with tag numbers V3408 and V3409, which we believe was also tagged in Pacuare.

CCC's work is not limited to walking the beach at night to tag turtles. CCC staff and volunteers also work with children from the local school, teaching them about sea turtle biology and conservation. A group of students from the University of North Carolina, who were volunteering with CCC in August, organized a Turtle Activity Day at the CCC field station. The children practiced tagging and measuring turtles (using a life-size model in the visitor center, not a real turtle!), performed nest excavations on the beach (with a "nest" of seeds not eggs!), created turtle art and participated in a turtle quiz. Despite a typical Tortuguero-style rainstorm, the day was a great success and inspired some of the children to want to be more actively involved. Since then CCC has had regular volunteers from the village helping on our nightly patrols.

## Help CCC Spread the Word!

Help CCC raise awareness about its work and attract new members by sharing your copy of the Velador with others. When you and your family are finished reading this issue, how about placing this copy on a reading table in your office or at a local library. By helping spread the word about our work, you can help us attract important new members and financial supporters.

Garbage in the village continues to be an unsightly problem in Tortuguero. In addition, garbage on the beach has negative impacts on nesting sea turtles! Consequently this has been the focus of our environmental education activities. We have involved the school children in beach-cleaning days, and recently had them



The beach at Tortuguero, Costa Rica hosts the largest green sea turtle nesting population in the Western Hemisphere. But garbage on the beach has a negative impact on sea turtle nesting.

create garbage cans using hundreds of used soda cans found during a Village Clean-up game. The garbage cans are working marvelously and are already in use at the school and other sites in the village.

Everyone at the CCC station is aware that we share the beach each night not only with the turtles, but also with the myriad of wildlife that inhabits Tortuguero National Park. Evidence of these animals is often seen during morning beach patrols: tracks of coatis, raccoons, iguanas and even freshwater turtles that occasionally nest on the beach. However, the one track that makes the hair on the back of our necks stand up, reminding us that we work in a truly wild environment, is that of the jaguar. This year, as in previous years, CCC found turtles that had been killed by jaguars, bearing the characteristic bite marks to the neck. The cats are seldom seen, and so it was a rare occurrence when one of our night patrols returned from the park and reported seeing a jaguar walking on the beach. It was rarer still when just days later another group returned with news of a second sighting. More amazing is the fact that



- one RA – Jimmy, from Parismina – was present on both occasions!! Some would say lucky, others maybe not!
- Fortunately, jaguars are not known to threaten humans, so we feel very safe while working the beach. For the next few nights everyone was a little more sensitive to the slightest noise in the vegetation. All of these wildlife sightings are just part of the magical experience of working with turtles at Tortuguero, Costa Rica.

By the time you read this, the nesting season will be winding down for another year. However, as the females become less numerous, the hatchlings have become more abundant. On most nights, CCC researchers see ample evidence of their journey from the nest to the sea: hundreds of tiny tracks fanning out across the sand. We can only hope that many of them will manage to avoid the countless predators and human-caused threats they will confront, and that they live to return and complete their life cycle. 🐢

**By Dr. Emma Harrison**  
Field Coordinator

## ***Turtle Heroes wanted for CCC's Tortuguero Research Programs***

Planning your spring break or summer vacation in Costa Rica? Consider joining CCC on a sea turtle nesting beach as a Sea Turtle Research Participant! Space is still available at the Phipps Biological Field Station for the 2004 Leatherback and Green Turtle Seasons.

No experience is necessary. You should be at least 18 years of age and be physically fit. For more information, call Dan Evans at (800) 678-7853 or visit CCC's website at [www.cccturtle.org](http://www.cccturtle.org) for a Tour of CCC's Research Programs, Station & Tortuguero.



Laurie M. Penland



# Holiday Shopping Catalogue



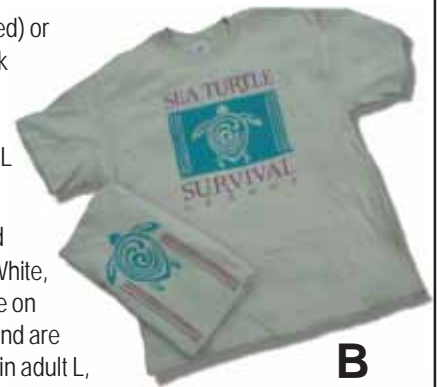
To view images of all CCC's merchandise items visit our online gift shop at [www.cccturtle.org](http://www.cccturtle.org)

**A. "Baby Sea Turtles"** - A wonderful new design. These cute hatchlings look great on Metro Blue (pictured) or



**A**

Caribbean Blue cotton T-shirts or Women's Black Scoop Neck. T-shirts available in children X-S, S, M & L and adult M, L, XL. Women's Scoop Neck available in adult women sizes M, L and XL. **\$19.95**



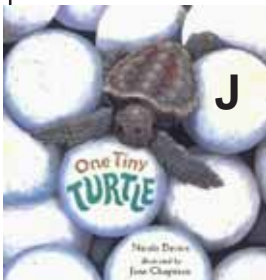
**B**

**B. Wear your support** - Our beautiful teal and purple logo looks great on these colorful shirts. White, Ash, Sand, Iris, Goldenrod or Black (text is white on black shirts). White, Ash, Iris, Goldenrod and Sand are available in adult S, M, L, XL. Black is available in adult L, XL only. **\$19.95**

**C. STSL Baseball Cap** - This Sea Turtle Survival League soft baseball cap is a high quality brushed twill, adjustable cloth strap with a sandwich layer brim (white layer between two layers of khaki). Adult size, khaki color only. **\$19.95**

**Our selection of books includes four books by Archie Carr, the founding Scientific Director of CCC.**

**D. *The Windward Road*** - Archie colorfully describes his travels to Caribbean beaches in the 1940s and 50s, where he looked for clues in his effort to unravel the mysteries of the enigmatic sea turtle. This book alerted the world to the decline of sea turtle populations, and won several awards. **\$19.95**

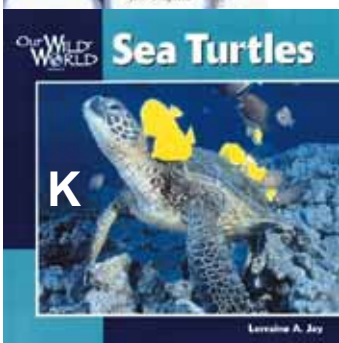


**J**

**E. *High Jungles and Low*** - A vivid and passionate discourse of the time Archie spent in Honduras in the 1940s. **\$19.95**

**F. *Ulendo--Travels of a Naturalist in and out of Africa*** - Archie's passion for the natural world shines through in this brilliant text that continues to inspire naturalists. **\$19.95**

**G. *A Naturalist in Florida--A Celebration of Eden*** - This volume is a compilation of essays written by Archie and edited after his death by his wife, Marjorie Carr. **\$19.50**



**K**

**H. *Sea Turtles*** by Jeff Ripple - This spectacularly illustrated book profiles all the species of sea turtles, including life history, navigation, natural predators, human-caused threats and conservation efforts around the world. Full of crisp, colorful photographs, this book should be on every turtle lover's coffee table! **\$19.95**

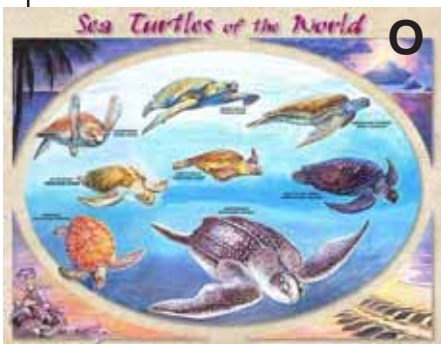
**I. *Into the Sea*** by Brenda Guiberson - This delightful children's book follows the life cycle of a sea turtle from hatchling to adulthood. Children are sure to enjoy the wonderful illustrations and the moving story of survival. Ages 5-8. **\$18.95**

**J. *One Tiny Turtle*** by Nicole Davis - The story of the life cycle of a loggerhead sea turtle draws readers into the mysteries of this reclusive deep-sea creature, while the illustrations bring the ocean world to life in all its beauty. Ages 5-8. **\$18.95**



**L**

**K. *Sea Turtles (Our Wild World)*** by Lorraine A. Jay - Teaches nature conservation and makes learning about animals fun. A durable softcover with color photos and illustrations. If a child wants to know about sea turtles, this is the book. Ages 8-12. **\$9.95**



**O**

**L. Plush Sea Turtle Toy** - This adorable plush sea turtle is a great soft toy or collectible. The perfect gift for children of all ages. 6" in length. **\$6.50**

**M. Loggerhead Plush Sea Turtle Toy** - A cute, soft plush loggerhead sea turtle from Smithsonian's Sea Turtle Journey series. Measures 12" in length. **\$16.95**

**N. Hanging Plush Sea Turtle** - A cute, soft plush sea turtle. With Velcro on its flippers, this stuffed toy can hang around your neck or over a door handle, just about anywhere! 17 inches. Available in Brown or Green (Please specify color on order sheet). **\$12.95**

**O. *Sea Turtles of the World*** - This poster by artist Deirdre Hyde is a new version of her original poster. The "Turtles of the World" poster is a colorful depiction of the species of sea turtles found world wide. **\$11.95**



**N**

**P. Tortuguero Sea Turtle Print** - A gorgeous painting by artist Dierdre Hyde featuring the lush colors of Costa Rica. **Signed \$49.95**



U

**Q. Tale of the Green Turtle** - This 27-minute video explores CCC's efforts to save the Caribbean green turtle. **\$14.95**

**R. Tortuguero: Land of the Turtles** - A 20-minute video that chronicles the importance of this famous rookery, and the history of Archie Carr and the CCC in this northern Caribbean region of Costa Rica. Available in English. **\$14.95**

**S. Sea Turtle License Plate** - Want a turtle plate for your car, but don't live in Florida? Get the Sea Turtle Survival League's mock license plate for the front of your car. **\$12.95**



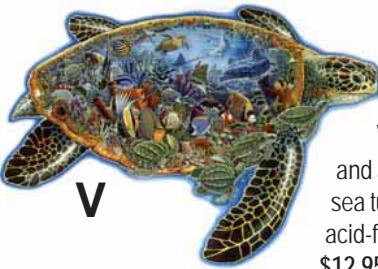
T



**T. Sea Turtle Tanga Nut Figurine** - Hand carved in Ecuador, providing economic incentives for the sustainable harvest of the tagua palm nut, commonly known as "vegetable ivory." Approximate Dimensions: 2 3/4" high, 3 1/2" long, 3" wide. **\$29.95**

**U. Green Turtle Hatchlings Jigsaw Puzzle** - 550 piece jigsaw. Size: 15-1/2" x 18". Not suitable for children under 3 years of age. **\$14.95**

W



V

**V. Garden of Sea Turtles Shaped Puzzle** - 1,000 piece, sea turtle shaped, jigsaw puzzle over 3 feet long. No straight edges--a great puzzle challenge! Recommended for ages 12 - up. **\$19.95**

**W. Holiday Sea Turtle Cards** - "May you have a Happy Holiday and a Joyous New Year" is printed on the inside. Features a leatherback sea turtle swimming through an ocean of stars. All cards are made of 100% acid-free recycled paper, measure 4 1/2" x 6 1/4", with envelopes, box of 10. **\$12.95**



X



**X. Sea Turtle PursePal** - A Sea Turtle PursePal is a unique fashion accessory that provides a place to hang your purse while dining. The sea turtle is a real symbol of perseverance! The silver finished sea turtle, seagrass and border are set in our golden wash background for beautiful contrast. The base & J hook are done in high polish golden finish. **\$38.00**



Y

**Y. CCC Logo Key Chain** - Our logo keychain features a non-twist connection and a spinning gold-tone replica of our distinctive sea turtle logo. **\$5.75**

**Z. Silver Leatherback** - Sterling silver leatherback sea turtle jewelry! Created by Wildthings in Massachusetts, this unique leatherback is available as a pendant on an 18" silver chain, a pair of dangle earrings, or on the ends of a bangle bracelet!. **Z - pendant & chain: \$24.95 (pictured); Z1 - hoop earrings: \$19.95; Z2 - bangle bracelet: \$30.95 (pictured)**



Z

**AA. Loggerhead Earrings** - A sterling silver loggerhead sea turtle. Created by Wildthings, this sea turtle jewelry is available as a pair of dangle earrings. **\$14.95**



AA

**BB. Green Turtle Pendant** - A sterling silver green sea turtle. Created by Wildthings, this 1 1/8" high sea turtle pendant is available on an 18" silver chain. **\$25.95**

**CC. Sea Turtle Bracelet** - A row of sterling silver green sea turtles. Created by Wildthings, these turtles will wrap around your wrist to form a bracelet. **\$29.95**



CC

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**Looking for a Holiday Gift that Makes a Difference?  
Want Somebody Else to Help Pull the Load?  
Adopt-A-Turtle and Let CCC  
Take Care of at Least One of Your**

**Holiday Gifts, While You Help Ensure a Future for Sea Turtles!**

This holiday season, surprise your friends and family with a gift that's both unique and meaningful. By "adopting" an **endangered sea turtle as a gift**, you and your loved ones will take pride in helping ensure the survival of some of the rarest creatures on the planet.

For a tax-deductible donation of \$25 or more (\$35 International), the **Sea Turtle Survival League (STSL)** will provide a personalized full-color adoption certificate, a sea turtle conservation guide, a colorful sticker, magnet, and a one-year subscription to the CCC/STSL newsletter, all in a beautiful color folder.



**\* New for the 2003 Holiday Season!** Tailor your gift to each person on your list by choosing from a variety of exciting new gift premiums (while supplies last). Visit CCC's website for pictures of the different premiums.\

**\$25 adoption level:** choose either our popular sea turtle pen or a collection of realistic toy sea turtle models.

**\$50 adoption level:** choose either our elegant logo keychain or a small plush sea turtle.

**\$100 adoption level:** choose either our logo t-shirt or a large plush hanging sea turtle.

\* STSL's Adopt-A-Turtle program offers the unique opportunity to adopt satellite-tracked turtles. This popular educational program uses satellite technology that allows anyone with computer access to follow their turtle's migratory movements on our website. Please visit our website to view a list of satellite turtles available for adoption

\* Proceeds support the oldest and most accomplished sea turtle research and conservation group in the world. CCC conducts ongoing research programs in Costa Rica, Bermuda and Panama; and carries out international education and advocacy programs.

To adopt a sea turtle for yourself, a friend, or a loved one call the **Caribbean Conservation Corporation at 800-678-7853** or visit our website at [www.cccturtle.org](http://www.cccturtle.org).



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