

VELADOR

Science-Based Sea Turtle Conservation Since 1959

Issue 3, 2019

Carmel McGill Scholarship Awarded to Support Student's Participation in Bermuda Turtle Project



Left: Scholarship recipient Evelyn Marichal holds a juvenile green turtle with Argentinian course participant Alan Rosenthal. Right: Participants of the In-Water Course gather around Evelyn as she explains the netting techniques for the day.

In September 2018, the world lost a passionate sea turtle advocate with the passing of long-time STC Board member Carmel McGill. To honor Carmel's amazing life and her dedication to the cause of protecting sea turtles, earlier this year Sea Turtle Conservancy established the Carmel McGill Scholarship to provide annual financial support to aspiring young women entering the field of sea turtle research and conservation. STC is honored to announce that the first recipient of the McGill Scholarship was Evelyn Marichal, an early-

career sea turtle biologist working in Cuba. The scholarship subsidized Evelyn's participation in the 23rd International In-Water Course on the Biology and Conservation of Marine Turtles, which took place this summer in Bermuda.

The In-Water Course is conducted each year as part of the Bermuda Turtle Project by Sea Turtle Conservancy and the Bermuda Zoological Society. Participants in the course come from around the

continued on page 2...

"Carmel McGill's family wishes to congratulate Evelyn on being recognized for her dedication and are looking forward to the talented individuals that will be given opportunities to make waves for the turtles, thanks to STC, in Ms. McGill's memory." - Maddie McGill, Carmel McGill's daughter.

... from cover

world and include primarily young biologists wanting to gain knowledge and experience in the techniques used to study sea turtles in their marine environment. Evelyn was selected by STC to receive the McGill Scholarship in part because her participation in the course helps expand the capacity for in-water turtle monitoring and conservation in Cuba, where STC has been conducting collaborative research since 2015. Evelyn also happens to be a very capable biologist with an infectious personality and a passion for sea turtles—traits that made her a fitting choice to be the first recipient of the McGill Scholarship.

This year's In-water Course was the first to be led by STC staff biologists Dr. Dan Evans and Rick Herren. Students were given specialized training in the techniques used to safely capture turtles in the water, as well as the methods used to tag, measure, weigh, collect genetic samples and satellite-track turtles. Other course instructors included Drs. Anne and Peter Meylan, Jennifer Gray and Dr. Gaëlle Roth DVM.



STC Biologist Rick Herren and Evelyn in Bermuda.

In addition to gaining practical field experience, Evelyn and the other students participated in discussions on sea turtle life history, feeding biology, physiology, reproduction, migration, conservation genetics, threats, conservation and management options.

Following her experience with the

In-Water Course, Evelyn returned to her position in Cuba with the Coastal Ecosystem Research Center, where she is applying her newly-gained knowledge toward future marine turtle conservation projects in the Jardines de la Reina archipelago and other areas in Cuba. STC is proud to have awarded the McGill Scholarship to Evelyn and looks forward to following her career and collaborating with her on future projects to benefit sea turtle conservation in Cuba.

For inquiries about the McGill Scholarship, including how you can contribute, please email STC Executive Director David Godfrey at david@conserveturtles.org. 

VELADOR {bel.a.dor}

In Caribbean cultures, **Velador** translates as “one who stands vigil” —referring to turtle hunters who waited at night for turtles to come ashore. STC claims this title for its newsletter, and around the world STC's researchers and volunteers are replacing poachers as the new veladors. The **Velador** is published for Members and supporters of the nonprofit **Sea Turtle Conservancy**. STC is dedicated to the conservation of sea turtles through research, advocacy, education and protection of the habitats upon which they depend.

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STC Awarded Top Responsible Costa Rica Eco Tour

Sea Turtle Conservancy is excited to announce its selection as a **2019 Top Responsible Costa Rica Eco Tour**! Curated by Terra Incognita – a social enterprise seeking to promote the best examples of ethical ecotourism worldwide – we’re part of a group of nearly 40 incredible tours across Costa Rica working to conserve the environment, support the well-being of local people and educate visitors and hosts.

“Costa Rica is often the first place that comes to mind when we hear the word ‘ecotourism,’ yet it can still be challenging for visitors to choose a responsible tour,” said Kristi Foster of Terra Incognita.



The list includes a transparent explanation of how all tours contribute to conservation, local communities and education, and is open to reviews from guests who’ve participated in the tours. Groups on the list are doing everything from cleaning up beaches and donating to community projects, to offsetting their carbon emissions and encouraging their guests to do the same. Some are actively contributing to conservation research, while others are empowering local conservation ambassadors through environmental education and capacity building.

STC offers several different eco-tour options in Costa Rica, as well as in Panama. The black sand beach of Tortuguero, Costa Rica, draws the largest nesting population of green turtles in the Western Hemisphere (and possibly the world). Take part in our Green Turtle Eco-Volunteer program to work with nesting turtles and assist our researchers in nightly beach patrols, morning nest surveys, and nest inventories.

Our newest Costa Rica eco-volunteer program, “Jaguars and Turtles in Tortuguero,” is conducted in partnership with Coastal Jaguar Conservation (CJC). Sea turtles play a major role in the survival, health and unique behavior of Tortuguero’s jaguar population. STC and CJC have been investigating this increasing predator-prey interaction and the overall dynamics of the Tortuguero jaguar population. Participants in this new eco-volunteer program will assist researchers with camera trap surveys and collecting data on marine turtles preyed by jaguars.



In Panama, you can now participate in a Leatherback Turtle Eco-Volunteer program at our project site on Soropta Beach. Participants will have the opportunity to work with nesting leatherback turtles weighing up to 1,000 lbs and measuring 5-6 feet in length!

If you’re interested in learning more about our Eco-Volunteer Programs, visit www.conserveturtles.org/get-involved-sea-turtle-experience or email drevans@conserveturtles.org. 🐢

Holiday Gift Guide

A.



B.



C.



D.



E.



A. 2019 Holiday Ornament - featuring Sea Turtle Conservancy's 60th Anniversary logo on a snowflake shaped ornament. Engraved on back. **\$9.95**

B. 2020 Sea Turtle Scenes Calendar - 11" x 17" (open) wall calendar features some of STC's favorite sea turtle scenes taken by talented photographers from around the world. **\$12.95**

C. STC Logo PopSocket - PopSockets stick flat to the back of your phone, tablet or case with a rinseable, repositionable gel. You can lower it for video chat or extend it fully to use as a media stand or photo and texting grip. PopSocket fits on any brand of phone. Available in white or black. **\$14.95**

D. STC Logo Reusable Tote Bag - Reduce your use of plastics with this handy bag, available in black or teal. Dimensions: 13" x 13" x 5". **\$7.50**

E. Vitruvian Sea Turtle T-shirt - Gildan softstyle ring spun charcoal t-shirts are made of 65% polyester and 35% cotton. Available in adult sizes only; choose between standard or ladies cut. **\$24.95**

Visit conserveturtles.org/shop to shop for these items and other great turtle gear!



F. Enamel Sea Turtle Pin- A cute and colorful die struck hard enamel turtle pin. Measures 1.25 in. Created by Jenipher Lyn. **\$9.99**

G. Loggerhead Sea Turtle Earrings - sterling silver loggerhead sea turtle dangle earrings. Created by Wildthings in Massachusetts. **\$24.95**

H. Sea Turtle Hatchling Notecards - Green, Loggerhead, Leatherback and Kemp's Ridley hatchlings on the front of the cards. Includes 8 assorted cards and matching envelopes. Printed on recycled and recyclable paper. These cards measure 3.5" X 5" and are blank on the inside. **\$14.95**

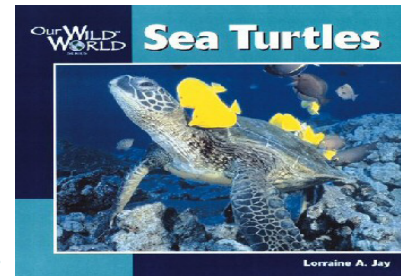
I. Green Sea Turtle Baseball Cap - this Eco Headwear soft baseball cap has an adjustable cloth strap and has a green sea turtle embroidered on the front and Sea Turtle Conservancy on the back. **\$24.95**

J. 2019 Tour de Turtles Shirt - 60/40 blend heather gray t-shirt available in adult sizes SM, MD, LG, and 2XL as well as youth sizes SM and MD. **\$24.95**

K. Sea Turtle Notecards - Loggerhead, Kemp's Ridley, Leatherback and Hawksbill turtles on the front of the cards. Includes 8 assorted cards and matching envelopes. Printed on recycled and recyclable paper. These cards measure 3.5" X 5" and are blank on the inside. **\$14.95**

Visit conserveturtles.org/shop to shop for these items and other great turtle gear!

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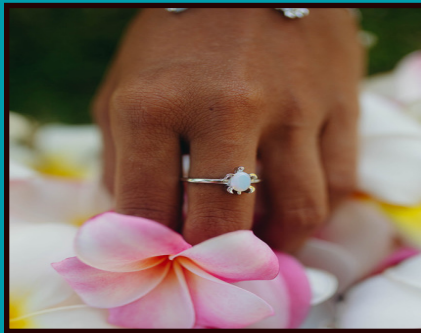
L. Replica Sea Turtle License Plate - mock version of Florida's sea turtle speciality plate for the front of your car. Metal, size of a standard American license plate. **\$12.95**

M. Sea Turtle Plushie - This 7 inch sea turtle stuffed animal is super soft and huggable! **\$10.95**

N. Our Wild World (Sea Turtles) - By Lorraine A. Jay, illustrated by John F. McGee. A durable softcover format that includes color photos and illustrations. Ideal for children 8-12. **\$9.95**

Cause-Related Partners

These companies are giving back to turtles by supporting STC's efforts when you shop on their website:



www.shophonu.com



www.lazyturtle.com



www.tortugasgear.com



Available on Amazon!



www.spreadpawsitivity.com



www.creations4wildlife.com

You can now order the STC special edition Certina watch online! The link to order is on STC's website at www.conserveturtles.org/shop



Certina Becomes Official Timepiece of STC

Special Edition STC 60th Anniversary Dive Watch Released

In recent years, Sea Turtle Conservancy has formed a number of important partnerships with companies committed to supporting the cause of sea turtle conservation. A new partnership with the



Swiss watchmaker, Certina, is particularly exciting because of our shared anniversary and the company's popularity with diving enthusiasts. While Certina has been making high-end timepieces since 1888, it was in 1959 that the company developed its renowned dive watch technology and adopted the sea turtle as its official logo. The year 1959 also happens to be the year STC was formally established as the world's first sea turtle conservation organization.

When STC and Certina learned of our shared origin dates and our joint connection to sea turtles, it only made sense for us to team up. STC is thrilled to be partners with such a forward-thinking and responsible corporation that is committed to helping protect our planet and sea turtles. In addition to Certina's direct financial support of STC's work and its annual sponsorship of the Tour de Turtles, the company has equipped STC's staff with reliable and durable watches for our work in the field.

STC's partnership with Certina was formed just in time to celebrate our 60th Anniversary. To commemorate this shared anniversary, Certina just released a special edition STC 60th Anniversary Dive Watch, which was designed using the teal color of our logo on the watch hands and also includes the STC logo engraved on the bottom of the watch. While the watch is not available through US retailers, STC has arranged for supporters to be able to purchase the watch through a Swiss retailer who will ship directly to the US or anywhere else. If you are interested in purchasing one of these limited-edition STC watches, you can find out more through our online gift shop at www.conserveturtles.org/shop.



Another way Certina is helping STC spread global awareness about our work is by sponsoring international events at which STC Executive Director David Godfrey has been invited to present.



In the past year, Certina has sponsored STC promotional events in England (at the London Aquarium), in China (at the Shanghai Aquarium) and in Lucerne, Switzerland. Through these events, STC has been able to spread the message of sea turtle conservation to new audiences and journalists. Photo to the left shows STC Executive Director David Godfrey being interviewed by a Chinese journalist.

STC's partnership with Certina is more than just symbolic. Since 2017 the company has directly supported STC's most popular research and education program – the Tour de Turtles. In addition, Certina is helping STC raise broad awareness about various threats to sea turtles by producing and distributing short issue-based videos that help us reach international audiences. Samples of these videos can be found at www.youtube.com/SeaTurtleChannel. 🐢

Giving Tuesday 2019

STC is hoping all of its supporters will participate in this year's Giving Tuesday Campaign, which seeks to raise funds for the critical work we are doing at Soroopta Beach, Panama to protect and recover leatherback sea turtles. Though not quite as famous as Black Friday or Cyber Monday, Giving Tuesday, which occurs the Tuesday after Thanksgiving (December 3 this year), is one day when everyone can join together to make a huge difference.

For Giving Tuesday last year, STC supporters raised \$40,000 for STC's in-water research program benefitting juvenile turtles in the Gulf of Mexico. The year before (2017), our supporters raised \$20,000 for the Tour de Turtles education program. STC has set its sights even higher this year, and we are confident we can reach our goal of \$50,000 thanks to generous pledges from STC's Board of Directors to match up to \$25,000 for every dollar donated.

STC asks for your help to support one of our most urgent conservation programs. Every dollar raised during the 2019 Giving Tuesday Campaign will support leatherback protection efforts at a critical nesting site in Panama. Soroopta is a remote, 8 km black-sand beach that sees between 500-800 leatherback nests each season, making it an important part of the 4th largest nesting colony in the world for this species. Unfortunately, the area's remoteness makes Soroopta highly vulnerable to illegal poaching. STC's presence on this beach has helped curb poaching, but it's still an ongoing issue.



By raising \$50K to support this project, STC will be able to secure additional beach monitors and also make needed improvements to the station used by STC's staff and volunteers. Our modest dormitories, kitchen and dining hall need repairs, as nature has taken its toll on the old wooden station inherited by STC. In addition, a dock leading from the river behind our station is in disrepair and must be extended to a higher elevation so it's not underwater during the rainy season.

STC's Soroopta station houses staff and Research Assistants who stay during nesting season to monitor and protect the turtles and their nests. Last year, STC also began accepting paying eco-volunteers who participate in 1-2 week programs, revenues from which

help support STC's work. In order to sustain our presence at Soroopta and provide a safe and secure base for staff and volunteers, we need to invest in station maintenance and upgrades. By raising \$50K, STC can make all the necessary repairs and also provide funds for research supplies, food and fuel for the program.



Help STC support our Panama programs by donating to the cause in one of three ways:

1. Online at conserveturtles.org/GivingTuesday
2. Call 352-373-6441
3. Mail a check with "Giving Tuesday" in the subject line. All checks received with "Giving Tuesday" in the subject line will count towards the campaign, even if received after Dec. 3.

Can we count you in for Giving Tuesday?

2019 Photo Diary



STC's new Carolina Skiff research vessel conducting work in Big Bend, FL



STC Biologist Dr. Dan Evans and program participant Kathy Albright apply a transmitter to a green turtle in Cuba



STC Lighting Specialists Stacey Gallagher & Natalia Bayona record a light meter reading on Navarre Beach



Green turtle "Sage" is released in Tortuguero as part of STC's Tour de Turtles program



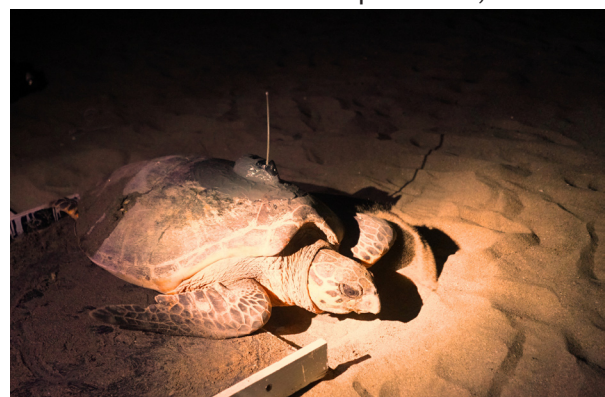
Loggerhead turtle "Phyllis" is released in the Archie Carr National Wildlife Refuge



A large group of eco-volunteers join STC staff at our research station on Soroopta Beach, Panama



Executive Director David Godfrey presents a turtle adoption kit to new STC partner JD.com in China



Hawksbill turtle "Patches" is tagged and released near the Four Seasons Resort in Nevis

Tour de Turtles Update

The Tour de Turtles marathon officially ended on October 31. So how did our 17 competitors fare? Read on to find out!

Hardshells:

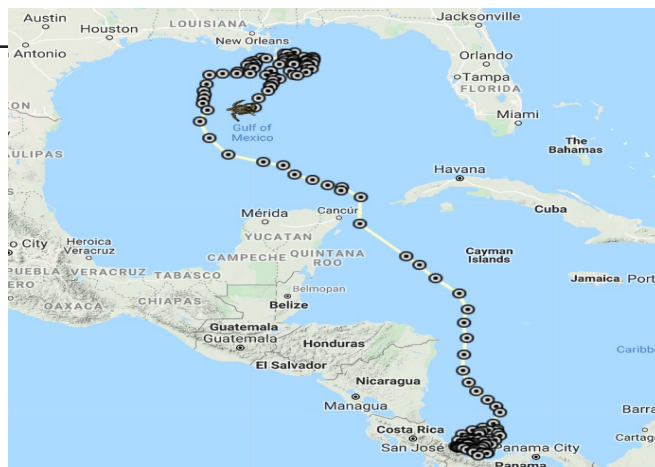
1st – Sheldon	11th – Patches
2nd – Ursula	12th – Sage
3rd – Lulu	13th – St. Thomas
4th – Phyllis	
5th – Bortie Too	Leatherbacks:
6th – Ariel	1st – Jujube
7th – Mei Mei	2nd – Shelly
8th – Sponge	3rd – Eve
9th – Alejandra	4th – Frankie
10th – Rosalita	

Green turtle Sheldon surely made her sponsors at The Greene Turtle proud and captured the crown for the hardshells, swimming 1,593 miles after nesting in Tortuguero. In late August and early September, Sheldon and another green turtle, Mei Mei, were spotted nesting again, almost in the exact same spot where they previously nested. Our team excavated Sheldon's nest in October and were ecstatic to see it had a very high success rate! We found 123 empty shells and lots of flipper tracks leading to the water!



Sheldon is released in Tortuguero, Costa Rica.

Meanwhile in the leatherback race, Jujube (Team Atlantis) crushed the competition and led the majority of the marathon. After nesting in Panama in May, she swam more than 1,000 miles, ending up in the Gulf of Mexico, off the coast of Louisiana.



Jujube's migration route

This region is an especially popular foraging area for leatherbacks, which is why fellow competitors Shelly and Frankie headed the same direction!

Hawksbills Patches and Sponge have both left the island of Nevis and started their migration. While Patches headed northwest to a known foraging spot near Puerto Rico, Sponge headed south, passing the islands of Dominica, Martinique and St. Lucia, heading towards Grenada. Out of all the hawksbill turtles STC has tracked, Sponge is only the second turtle to swim that far south!

In September, several of our turtles found themselves in the path of Hurricane Dorian. While hurricanes do not typically affect adult sea turtles, we were interested to see if the turtles would leave the area due to the storm. Because turtles are reptiles, they do need to come to the surface periodically to breathe, but it's suspected that many dive deep below the surface to weather the storms. We're happy to report that all turtles in the path of the storm are still tracking normally!

Even though the Tour de Turtles race has ended, you can continue to follow the turtles at: conserveturtles.org/sea-turtle-tracking.

Thank you to our turtle sponsors who made this possible: Anna Maria Island Turtle Watch, Waterline Resort, Bortell's, Disney's Conservation Fund, Disney's Animals, Science & Environment, Disney's Vero Beach Resort, Atlantis, The Greene Turtle, tarte cosmetics, The Turtle Hospital, Shark Reef, Four Seasons Resort Nevis, Certina, JD.com, Community Foundation for Brevard and honu. 🐢

Sponsor Spotlight

Honu Jewelry Sponsors Turtle in Tour de Turtles Marathon

Since 2017, honu has donated more than \$21,000 to STC through sales from their online store, www.shophonu.com, which sells ocean-inspired jewelry and accessories. This year, honu stepped up their support and sponsored a loggerhead turtle in STC's Tour de Turtles program. honu Founder Amy Buck and her husband, Danny, traveled all the way from the UK to Florida to meet their turtle, who they named Lulu, and watch her release! Read on for a special Q&A with Amy.



Q. Why did honu choose to participate in the Tour de Turtles this year?

Having partnered with STC for the last two years, we wanted to be able to further help their amazing work by sponsoring a loggerhead turtle. Our customers are hugely interested in helping to save sea turtles so it was also such a lovely way to involve them in the naming of the turtle and allowing them to see her release. Here in the UK, education around the issues sea turtles face is limited, and of course not many of our customers are able to see turtles close up! So Tour de Turtles was a great way to help educate and involve new people.

Q. How was your experience attending the Tour de Turtles release events?

It was a huge privilege to be able to meet with the brilliant people behind STC, and of course to be able to see the release of Lulu and Phyllis in person! Watching Lulu instinctively know her way towards the ocean was truly special and we were overwhelmed to witness it.



Amy & Danny Buck at Lulu's release in Florida

Q. What is your favorite thing about sea turtles?

The fact that sea turtles have been on this planet since before the dinosaurs is incredible. They are such a beautiful species and a symbol of survival, so for them to now be endangered due to climate change and human activity is such a tragedy. With enough effort from the whole world, we are hopeful that this will change.

Q. How did honu pick the name of its turtle competitor?

We wanted to involve our customers as much as we could and so we created a naming competition! Amongst the votes was "Lulu" which seemed a perfect fit, since our brand was created after a trip to Honolulu where we saw green sea turtles in the wild for the first time.

Q. How has it been following Lulu online?

Following Lulu has been a bit emotional! Shortly after she was released, Hurricane Dorian hit the exact spot that she had travelled to in the Bahamas. We tracked her daily in the hope that she would make it through and thankfully, she did!

Lulu was an early fan-favorite and won 1st place in the People's Choice Contest. She also finished

strong in the actual Tour de Turtles race, swimming 1,169 miles to take 3rd place. You can continue tracking Lulu online at conserveturtles.org/sea-turtle-tracking.

honu donates 10% of the sales revenue from every item to STC! Visit www.shophonu.com to check out their unique jewelry and accessories! 🐢

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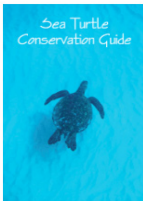


Turtle Adoptions Make a Great Holiday Gift!

Give the gift of sea turtle survival this holiday season! Sea turtle adoptions make a great, green holiday gift idea for the people in your life that want to make a positive impact on our world.

Adoption Kit

Includes Membership Stickers, Hatchling Magnet, Conservation Guide, Welcome Velador, Bookmark and personalized Adoption Certificate in a specialty designed Membership Folder.



With your tax-deductible donation of \$56 or more, you are making a direct difference in the lives of sea turtles!

Sea Turtle Conservancy will send gift recipients a special folder with a personalized adoption certificate, Sea Turtle Conservation Guide, window cling, sea turtle sticker, bookmark,

hatchling magnet, one-year subscription to STC's newsletter, and a gift of your choice (turtle plushie, ornament or jotter notebook). Please order by **Dec. 9, 2019** for free delivery by Christmas.

To adopt a turtle, visit conserveturtles.org/adopt-a-turtle