

Wanted: Environmental Heroes Who Will Make a Difference, While Having the Adventure of a Lifetime!

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TORTUGUERO, COSTA RICA -- On the Caribbean coast of Costa Rica exists a magical place called Tortuguero (translated as Land of the Turtles) where giant sea turtles lumber ashore to lay their eggs by moonlight and complete a circle of life going back more than 100 million years. You can visit this wonderfully natural area and help ensure the continued existence of its sea turtle inhabitants as a research volunteer in the longest running sea turtle research project in the world.



Once so abundant that early explorers described them as traveling in fleets, Caribbean sea turtles have been hunted nearly to extinction in the last few centuries for their meat and eggs. The black sand beach of Tortuguero is one of the last strongholds of these gentle creatures, and more green turtles nest there than anywhere else in the Western Hemisphere.

In addition to the green turtles, each year huge leatherback sea turtles lumber ashore in the darkness to lay their eggs. Nesting time is the only time they climb onto dry land, which makes seeing one a rare and wondrous experience. The effort required to drag themselves out of the water and onto the beach is tremendous considering these giants of the ocean can measure nearly ten feet in length and weigh up to 2,000 pounds. Known for their leather-like shells and gentle nature, leatherbacks are the largest and widest-ranging of the seven sea turtle species.

The Florida-based, non-profit Sea Turtle Conservancy (STC), which has been tagging and monitoring the nesting green turtles of Tortuguero for 40 years, and the nesting leatherbacks since 1995, collects data on these animals that helps form management and conservation plans to help save these magnificent creatures.

However, STC can't do it without help.



"That's where research volunteers come in," said Dan Evans, STC's Field Programs Coordinator. "We have miles of beach to cover and need people to help researchers with monitoring and recording data about the turtles. The

experiences people have with the turtles and the knowledge that they helped to save an endangered species is their lasting reward for helping continue the research.”

Besides field work with the turtles, volunteers are offered field trips, including guided hikes and boat tours, through the tropical rainforest of beautiful Tortuguero National Park. Turtle research is conducted at night, so days are free for exploring and enjoying the sights and sounds of the remote Caribbean coastal community.

No experience is necessary to participate in the program, but volunteers should be physically fit. The program fee, a portion of which is tax deductible, covers accommodations in San Jose, all in-country travel, meals and dormitory style lodging at STC’s Biological Field Station. Volunteers can come for one-, two- or three-week sessions from late March to mid-June for the Leatherback Turtle Season and from late June through October for the Green Turtle Season. STC also offers a Migrant Bird Research Program as well.

For information about becoming a research participant, please check out STC's [Adventurous Eco-Volunteer Research Participant Programs](#), or call STC at 1-800-678-7853 to request a brochure or check program dates. You can also email Dan Evans at drevans@conserveturtles.org

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The Sea Turtle Conservancy, formerly known as the Caribbean Conservation Corporation, is a not-for-profit, 501(c)3 organization based in Florida with offices and projects in several other locations. The Sea Turtle Conservancy is the oldest and most accomplished sea turtle organization in the world. Since its founding in 1959, the Sea Turtle Conservancy's work has greatly improved the survival outlook for several species of sea turtles. The Sea Turtle Conservancy has as its mission the protection of sea turtles and the habitats upon which they depend. To achieve its mission, the Sea Turtle Conservancy uses research, habitat protection, public education, community outreach, networking and advocacy as its basic tools. These tools are applied in both international and domestic programs focusing on geographic areas that are globally important to sea turtle survival. For more information, visit the STC website at www.conserveturtles.org or call (800) 678-7853.