



Four Seasons Nevis tags and releases first Green Sea Turtle

Sharing space with the Queen of England on the Eastern Caribbean currency, sea turtles hold a



precious place is Nevis history and culture. These magical marine creatures are among the island's most faithful visitors. In a mystery only Mother Nature can understand, their instincts trace them back to the beach where they were born decades earlier to nest their future hatchlings. In a puzzle that still intrigues scientists, the turtles often swim thousands of miles away to their feeding grounds in the seas.

To better understand the life cycles of turtles and how to protect them in both their land and sea habitats, two newly adopted sea turtles from the Caribbean island of

Nevis named Pinney and Neve are being tracked using state-of-the-art satellite telemetry. This research project is part of an inspirational public-private partnership between Four Seasons Resort Nevis, the nonprofit Sea Turtle Conservancy (STC) and the Nevis Turtle Group (NTG). The turtles are also participating in STC's annual Tour de Turtles - a free online education program that allows users to follow the oceanic migrations of sea turtles while learning about threats to their survival.

"Nevis's pristine shores and unspoiled environment have attracted residents and travellers to the island for centuries," says Andrew Humphries, regional vice president and general manager, Four Seasons Resort Nevis. "By collaborating with Sea Turtle Conservancy and Nevis Turtle Group, Four Seasons is joining the ongoing campaign to preserve the natural resources and fragile ecosystems of this beautiful destination, and beyond."

Pinney is a hawksbill turtle. Hawksbills are considered "critically endangered" around the world, yet they continue to nest in significant numbers in Nevis. Neve represents the first green turtle tagged as part of this partnership that first launched in 2004 as a learning program offered for both Nevis school children and younger guests visiting the Resort's Kids Club.

To date, the Resort has contributed more than USD 156,000 to Sea Turtle Conservancy to protect and preserve Caribbean sea turtle populations. The Nevis turtles themselves, through sponsored adoptions online, have raised another USD 12,174 towards the cause. Through these efforts, it is hoped that sea turtles will remain a treasured part of the island's culture and return to Nevis beaches for years to come for the enjoyment of future generations.

CONTINUES BELOW

According to David Godfrey, executive director of Sea Turtle Conservancy, the STC's Eastern Caribbean Tracking & Conservation Project has already revealed important information about the migratory behavior of these animals. Since its inception in 2006, the program has tracked the movements of nine adult female hawksbills named Nevis, Mango, Ginger, Calypso, Hibiscus, Sunshine, Coral, Paradise and Jewel. In July 2012, two more hi-tech turtles joined the Nevis fleet: Pinney and Neve. Each turtle was outfitted with a satellite transmitter, which sends signals to orbiting satellites each time the turtles surface to breathe. Follow these two turtles online: Pinney and Neve.

STC scientists then download information from the satellites, which includes detailed location data. This information is plotted on digital maps of the Caribbean showing the last known location of the animals. The research is helping scientists to learn where these turtles travel when they leave their nesting beaches. Understanding where and when they migrate helps direct conservation efforts that protect the turtles themselves and their important coastal and marine habitats.

At a local level, Nevis turtles are facing their own threats including the illegal poaching of eggs and harvesting of turtles from the nesting beach for meat and shells. The hawksbill, with its coveted tortoise shell used in the international accessories trade, faces even more risks on the road to survival. The green turtle is still consumed for meat across the Caribbean, and its eggs are considered a culinary delicacy.

“It is our responsibility as a community to respect the laws of nature, the cycles of life and the laws set forth by our government to not disturb the turtles during the closed nesting season,” says Lemuel Pemberton, founder and president of the Nevis Turtle Group. “We must work together to ensure children in Nevis and everywhere experience the awe of meeting these magnificent, mysterious creatures face to face on land or swimming free.”

As part of their commitment to increasing community awareness stewardship toward sea turtles in Nevis, Four Seasons and the Nevis Turtle Group host an annual turtle summer camp for local kids with educational assistance from Sea Turtle Conservancy.

Thousands of people around the world log on daily to STC's website to view regularly-updated maps showing the turtles' latest locations. Guests of Four Seasons Resort Nevis can join the campaign for awareness by signing up at the Concierge desk for a Nighttime Turtle Watch with the Nevis Turtle Group during nesting season. Younger guests can participate in the complimentary Kids for All Seasons weekly Sea Turtle Discovery Camp for children from ages three to nine. Visitors to Nevis or sea turtle fans anywhere can adopt a Nevis turtle with proceeds going to this ongoing campaign to support the preservation of wildlife. To sponsor a turtle, travellers may visit the Resort's Concierge, Kids Club or Gift Shop or turtle fans everywhere can sponsor a turtle online.