

ADAPTING TO SUCCESS



SEA TURTLE
CONSERVANCY

2011 Annual Report



www.conserveturtles.org

From Our Executive Director

The past year has been a tremendously challenging and successful period in Sea Turtle Conservancy's (STC) five-decades-long effort to study and protect sea turtles. The Gulf oil spill resulted in unprecedented levels of sea turtle deaths and habitat degradation. By law, BP is obligated to mitigate for damages inflicted upon wildlife. In 2011, STC worked with federal oversight agencies to ensure money earmarked for oil spill mitigation was directed toward the most effective projects to help sea turtles in Gulf Coast states. Toward that end, STC began conducting a major program to identify and retrofit problem beachfront lights that cause newly-emerged sea turtle hatchlings to become disoriented and wander away from the sea, where they are more vulnerable to predators, dehydration and death.

Thousands of sea turtles, mostly Kemp's ridley and green turtles, washed up dead along the U.S. Gulf coast in 2010 and 2011. Although it was tempting to blame the deaths on the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, credible evidence pointed to drowning in shrimp trawls and other types of commercial trawls as a major cause of this mortality. STC led a consortium of groups in a lawsuit to force the National Marine Fisheries Service and state fishing agencies to enforce laws designed to prevent this senseless killing of sea turtles. Meanwhile, laws and regulations put in place to protect Florida's healthy beaches have been under attack from a new brand of politics that puts short-term economic profit ahead of long-term conservation for people and wildlife. STC spent the year working to safeguard these hard-fought regulations that manage things like beach sand nourishment projects, sea wall construction and beachfront development.

Despite the challenge of being a voice for sea turtles when so many forces are trying to speed up the consumption of the natural world, there are a few recent accomplishments that give sea turtle enthusiasts a reason to celebrate. STC saw record-high levels of hawksbill nesting this year in Panama, as well as record levels of green turtle nesting in both Florida and Costa Rica. The story unfolding in the Archie Carr National Wildlife Refuge is nothing short of miraculous, and the well-documented successes at Tortuguero continue to inspire turtle conservationists around the world. STC's Tour de Turtles research and education program deployed more than a dozen turtles from around the Caribbean with satellite transmitters to track their movements. The program reached hundreds of thousands of people with fun and inspiring information about sea turtles and their threats. In addition, STC converted nearly 60 beachfront developments in Florida to the best available turtle-friendly lighting. Already we are seeing greatly reduced levels of hatchling disorientations at these properties, with some locations recording no disorientations for the first time ever.

With 2012 now underway, STC continues to face these and other challenges to sea turtle conservation, while capitalizing on the success achieved in the last fifty years. Together with our supporters, we are ensuring the long-term protection and recovery of sea turtles and their habitats!



Handwritten signature of David Godfrey.

David Godfrey
Executive Director

Staff

U.S. Staff

David Godfrey - Executive Director
Pat McCloskey - Contoller
Marydele Donnelly - Director of International Policy
Dan Evans - Technology & Research Specialist
Gary Appelton - Policy Coordinator
Chris Ann Keehner - Development Director
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Dr. Emma Harrison - Scientific Director
Catalina Gonzalez - Tortuguero Field Coordinator
Juan Daniel Guerrero - Education Coordinator
Randall Torres - Tortuguero Station Manager
Indira Torres - Tortuguero Visitor Center Coordinator
Maria Laura Castro - San José Office Assistant

Panama Staff

Cristina Ordoñez - Chiriquí Beach Field Coordinator
Genaro Castillo - Field Research Assistant

Programmatic Achievements

Research and Conservation Programs

Through the Tortuguero Sea Turtle Research & Conservation Program, STC recorded more than 33,500 green turtle nests in just the northern 5 miles of Tortuguero beach. On average, well over 100,000 green turtle nests are deposited annually along the full length of Tortuguero beach, making it by far the largest nesting colony of green turtles in the Western Hemisphere. Through its research and conservation program in Bocas del Toro, Panama, STC documented increases in both leatherback and green turtle nesting at several project beaches, including Chiriquí Beach, where nearly 6,000 leatherback nests (second highest on record) and more than 700 hawksbill nests (highest number on record) were recorded. Based on data collected by STC since 2003, Chiriquí Beach hosts the fourth largest nesting colony of leatherback turtles in the world and one of the largest colonies of hawksbills remaining in the Caribbean.

Since STC began conducting lighting retrofit projects in late 2010, problem lights at more than 50 properties in Florida have been converted using the latest turtle-friendly technology. Through this program, STC has restored to darkness over 22,000 linear feet (over 4 miles) of prime sea turtle nesting habitat. Hatchling disorientations at these properties have been reduced to near zero, saving an estimated 10,000 or more hatchlings each nesting season that otherwise would have been disoriented by lights at these properties.

To learn more about the migratory patterns of different sea turtle species, STC used satellite transmitters to follow the migrations of the following turtles in 2011: 2 leatherbacks from Chiriquí Beach, Panama; 1 leatherback from Puerto Rico; 1 leatherback from Suriname; 3 loggerheads from the Archie Carr Refuge in Florida; 2 adult green turtles from Tortuguero in Costa Rica; 1 juvenile green turtle from Bermuda; and 3 hawksbill sea turtles from Nevis. Data from this tracking research provides critical information about the migratory routes and destinations of these species, which helps STC and other groups direct conservation efforts where they will be most effective.



Education Programs

STC's most popular education program is the annual Tour de Turtles, an online education event that tracks the migrations of a dozen or more turtles being monitored by satellite. The event, which helps raise broad awareness about sea turtles and the threats they face, is staged as a "marathon" won by the turtle that travels the farthest

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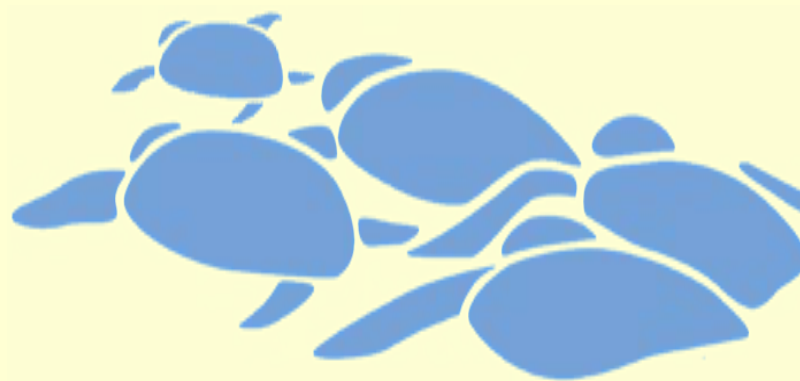
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Jordan Urstadt, Esq.



over the course of the three-month race. As each turtle is released with its satellite transmitter, STC hosts public kick-off events celebrating the start of the race. In 2011, more than 2,250 people attended sea turtle releases in Florida, Costa Rica and Nevis. In addition, more than 18,000 people from 115 countries logged on to the Tour de Turtles website in just three months. This includes nearly 1,000 new teachers who registered to use the free educational materials provided as part of the Tour de Turtles. In total, over 15,000 teachers are now registered to use STC's education materials in the classroom. Tour de Turtles was also featured in AAA Going Places Magazine, U.S. News & World Report Amazing Animals Magazine, and Scholastic's Science World Magazine.

In 2011, STC produced a high-definition film titled *Tortuguero: Epicenter of Sea Turtle Conservation* to raise awareness about the organization's history and role in sea turtle conservation. The film release was coordinated with the construction of a new theater at the Visitors Center located at STC's John H. Phipps Biological Research Station in Tortuguero, Costa Rica. Each year, more than 20,000 tourists stop by the Visitors Center to learn about Tortuguero's sea turtles, and now they can learn the story of STC and sea turtle conservation in a state-of-the-art facility with a captivating new video production.



Advocacy and Habitat Protection

STC was successful in its multi-year effort to stop the development of an experimental breakwater project along the coast of Singer Island in Florida, one of the highest density nesting beaches in the state. This important leatherback beach would have been degraded by the breakwaters, which have significant adverse impacts to nesting turtles, hatchlings leaving the beach, and to turtles that forage and migrate along that area of the coast. As a result of STC's efforts, the county commission abandoned the project and started analyzing other options to combat coastal erosion. This victory set an important precedent that is forcing coastal communities to seek alternative solutions to erosion control that do not rely primarily on hard structures to protect economically and environmentally important sandy beaches.

STC worked with several partners to produce two publications that provide action plans to recover Florida's sea turtle populations and protect coastal nesting habitat. First, STC partnered with the National Wildlife Federation to produce *Sea Turtle Homecoming: A Proactive Coastal Conservation Agenda for Florida*. This 50-page report and action plan focuses on policies, strategies and actions needed to ensure the long-term protection of Florida's nesting beaches and turtle populations. STC is also a member of the Florida Coastal and Ocean Coalition, which published *Florida's Coastal and Ocean Future: An Updated Blueprint For Economic And Environmental Leadership*. This report assesses Florida's most urgent coastal and marine challenges and provides specific recommendations for the public and elected officials on how best to resolve these pressing environmental issues.



STC spent a great deal of time in 2011 working to address impacts to sea turtles in the Gulf of Mexico, an area that has seen significant increases in turtle deaths linked to commercial fishing activities. The failure of the National Marine Fisheries Service to adequately protect sea turtles from the bottom longline fishery for reef fish and from the shrimp trawl fishery resulted in STC's involvement in two lawsuits. In July 2011, STC won a key legal victory in the bottom longline suit (*Sea Turtle Conservancy et al. versus Locke*). STC also scored a win for sea turtles with a court-approved agreement between conservation organizations and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) regarding its National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). According to the settlement, FEMA must comply with the Endangered Species Act, regarding the impacts of the NFIP, which subsidizes development in vital sea turtle habitat.

Membership

- Total Members - 6,738
- New Members - 3,300
- Renewals - 2,788

Tortuguero Research Station

- Museum Visitations - 23,529
- Field Researchers Trained - 28
- Eco-Volunteers - 126

Barrier Island Center

- Visitors - 233,480
- Turtle Walk Participants - 866
- Volunteer Hours - 3,976

Websites

- Page Views - 1,791,300
- Visits - 477,800
- Visitors - 339,219
- Avg. Daily Visitors - 1,694

E-Communications

- E-mail Subscribers - 10,500
- Facebook Fans - 7,800
- Twitter Followers - 1,700

Tour de Turtles Program

- Turtles Tracked - 15
- Release Countries - 6
- New Educators Registered - 688

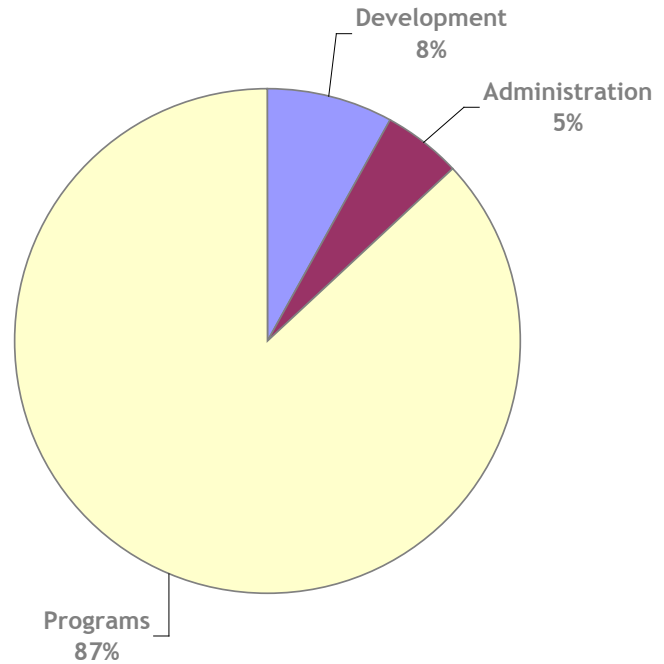
Sea Turtle Grants Program

- Total Awarded - \$306,748.29
- Education Grants - 6
- Research Grants - 3
- Conservation Grants - 10

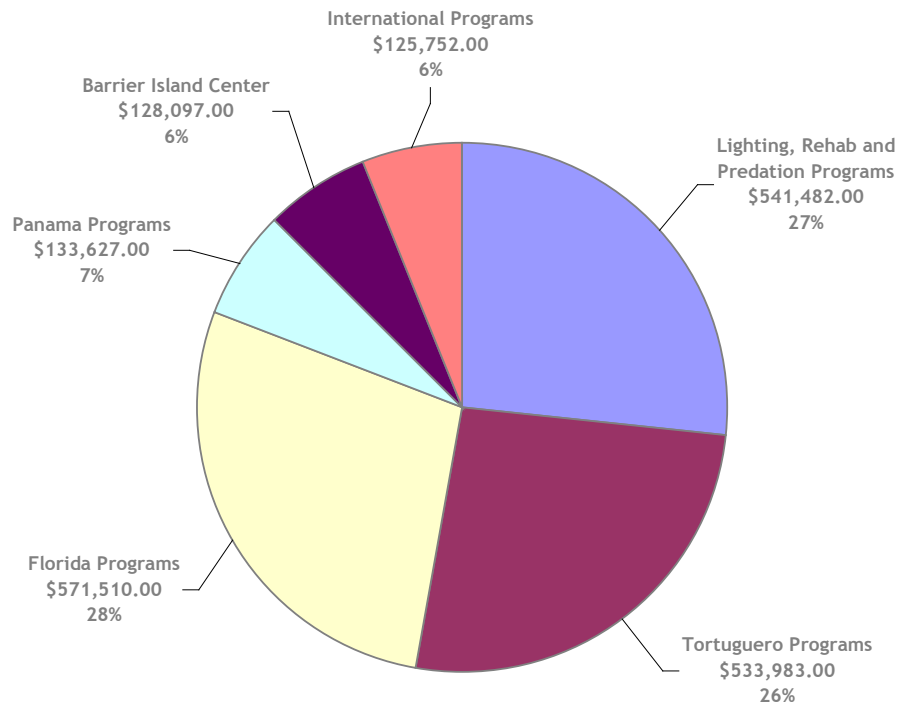


STC received a 4-star rating for the 7th consecutive year!

Total Expenses



Program Expenses Breakdown



Foundation and Corporate Support

Andrea Waitt Carlton Foundation
Appreciation of Earth & Animals
Casa Tortuga
Chemonics
Community Foundation for Brevard
Disney Worldwide Conservation Fund
Disney's Animal Kingdom
Disney's Vero Beach Resort
Dreamcatcher Fund
Ecole Travel
Edward John Noble Foundation
Elinor Patterson Baker Trust Fund
Elizabeth Ordway Dunn Foundation
Firedoll Foundation
Florida Department of Environmental
Protection
Foundation for International Aid
to Animals
Four Seasons Resort Nevis
Frank Cross Foundation
Fuller Foundation, Inc

Gainesville Community Foundation
Helen Clay Frick Foundation
Jelks Family Foundation
Kerzner International
Lemmon Foundation
Little Tikes
Loggerhead Apparel
Margaret A. Cargill Foundation
Marisla Foundation
Martin Foundation, Inc.
Miami Seaquarium
Michele & Agnese Cestone Foundation
Moore Charitable Foundation
Munson Foundation
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
National Wildlife Federation
Ocean Dunes HOA
Omidyar Network
Park Foundation
Patagonia
Project Ocean

Reef Safe Suncare
Ress Family Foundation
Rotary Club of Melbourne Beach
Sea Turtle Grants Program
Seedling Foundation
Shark Reef at Mandalay Bay
Smooth Running
Southeastern Honda
Sue Berman & Michael
Zamkow Foundation
Sun Hill Foundation
Surf Hardware International
The Secrets of Turtle Reef
Thomas P. Waters Foundation
Turtle Spotter Program
Uphill Foundation
US Fish & Wildlife Service
USFWS Marine Turtle Conservation
Foundation
Walmart
Western Carolina University

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Gladys Cofrin
Laura Forte
Henry Clay Frick, III

Manci & George Ohrstrom
Jeffrey Phipps
F. Peter Rose

Pearl Seidman

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Robert Braddock
Dayton Carr
Peggy & Tom Cavanaugh
Marty DiMarzio
Wesley & Margaret Forte
John Galbraith

Galveston Chapter of AAZK
Garden Group of St. John Island
Jenevra Georgini
Maureen Hackett
Olivia Humphrey
Tom Kubit
Charles Magal

Aubrey McClendon
Monique Miller
Nina Natelson
Maria Leonor Sardinha
Nicholas Tiller
J. Jordan Urstadt

Hawksbill Level (\$500 - \$999)

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Catherine Bettcher
Susanne Blackstock
Michael Bloom
Patricia Broderick
Michael Brown
Michael Bruyere, Esq.
Sing Chan
Coastal Wildlife Club
Michael Collins
William Conway
Will Cook
Praveen Dayalu
Patricia Delano
For The Environment, Inc.

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Donna Hodge
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Warren & Shirley Kraemer
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Carmel McGill
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