

**Internship Program Sea Turtle Conservancy.**

**Tortuguero, Costa Rica.**

Field Research Coordinator: Msc. Ma. Jimena Gutiérrez-Lince

Special Project Coordinator: Msc. Jaime Restrepo

Sceintific Director: Roldán A. Valverde

The Sea Turtle Conservancy (STC), formerly known as the Caribbean Conservation Corporation, is the longest on-going sea turtle research and conservation organization in the world. The STC was founded in 1959 by the renowned sea turtle expert Dr. Archie Carr, with the objective of saving sea turtles from the imminent extinction they were facing, through a strict conservation program based on science.

For more than 60 years, STC’s research programs have generated great part of what is now known about sea turtles and the threats they face, therefore the organization applies the obtained knowledge to carry out one of the most successful sea turtle protection and recovery programs in the world. The scientific mission of STC is to produce the necessary information to conserve the sea turtle populations that use Tortuguero as a nesting beach, so they can fulfill their ecological roles in the wild.

In Costa Rica, the STC works in coordination with environmental authorities, Tortuguero’s community and other groups studying sea turtles in beaches elsewhere around the region. The information collected during the yearly sea turtle monitoring and conservation program plays a key role in the development of adequate management strategies in order to protect sea turtles around the area.

The findings of the work developed by STC in Tortuguero, Costa Rica were essential for the creation of Tortuguero National Park (TNP) in 1970 and the approval of a specific sea turtle protection law in 2002. Currently, TNP includes 30 km of protected beaches to ensure sea turtle nesting, the development and use of this area, as well as all aspects related to wildlife, are regulated by the Ministry of Environment and Energy (MINAE).

The STC internship program developed at the John H. Phipps biological station is designed for higher education students in biological and environmental sciences or similar fields, who seek to gain experience and knowledge about conservation programs for threaten species, as well as develop research and monitoring programs on topics regarding: climate change, anthropogenic threats, population ecology and environmental management.

**Program objectives**

* Extend the scope of our conservation efforts, providing new learning opportunities to young researchers.
* Expand the research program and develop mitigation strategies against the emerging threats affecting sea turtle populations.

**Research Fields**

* Sea turtle population ecology on nesting beaches

The monitoring data collected throughout the years at Tortuguero poses a great amount of information, which is necessary to analyze independently as well as correlate it on different scale in order to identify patterns and trends that help us to better understand the dynamics of the sea turtle populations studied at this rookery.

* Environmental management

Develop an evaluation and follow up process involving direct community work, looking for long-term solutions to different conservation problems that currently affects biodiversity and Tortuguero’s viability as a tourist destiny, come up with alternatives and management recommendations to generate a sustainable use of the natural resources to improve the tourist experience as it guaranties the conservation of the natural resources.

* Identification and monitoring of anthropogenic threats to nesting populations of sea turtles.

The interaction between human activities and wildlife populations may carry severe repercussions affecting the development of those populations. Thus, it is important to identify and evaluate the different variables directly related with human activities, which have direct consequences over the sea turtle populations nesting at Tortuguero.

* Identification and monitoring of climate change related threats affecting sea turtle populations on nesting beaches

Study and evaluate the effect of different environmental variables such as temperature, rainfall, tides, erosion phenomena and other vectors affecting the development of the sea turtle nesting populations at Tortuguero.

**Work conditions**

The main responsibilities for interns will include night patrols, early morning track surveys, monitoring and excavation of marked nests. Interns will be responsible to apply tags and measure turtles on the beach, record the nesting activity during the surveys and gather pertinent information. Besides contributing with the monitoring activities, each intern should develop a personal research project based on the different work fields established by the organization, otherwise interns might develop an independent project that contributes to the established conservation goals.

Sea turtle monitoring activities mainly take place along 8 km (5 miles) of the nesting beach. Interns most be prepared to work long hours, during day and night, often with little rest. Patrols on the beach include walking several kilometers on very soft sand in any kind of weather; therefore, an excellent physical condition is indispensable requirement for interns to be part of our program.

Tortuguero is one of the least accessible places in Costa Rica. Insects and other tropical animals might be harmful and advance medical treatments are not available locally. It is important to be careful when working on the field and during recreational activities.

**Interns Profile**

Higher education students, enrolled in biological or environmental sciences, veterinary medicine or similar careers.

Applicants must be over 18 years of age

Have good domain of the English language written and spoken. Some knowledge of Spanish is desirable.

Basic knowledge of Microsoft software and data management.

In order to work adequately at our station, considering the cohabitation and coexistence situation, it is required that applicants will possess qualities such as sociability, team work, initiative, adapt to unanticipated events, and most be responsible and independent.

The minimum time for an internship is 45 days.

**Requirements to apply to and internship**

Complete CV

Cover letter explaining the motivation, interest area of studies and experience of the applicant.

Two reference letters

Fill up the attached application form, establishing the tentative dates of the internship.

Medical insurance certificate.

**Internship costs**

The internship program incurs a fee of US$45/day. This fee covers 3 hot meals, a bed, room and laundry services, access to internet (slow), your research permit and training to work with our teams on the beach, as well as constant supervising and academic advice during the development of your personal research project.

**How to apply? Send an email with all the required information to:**

**Msc. Jaime Restrepo** ([jaime@conserveturtles.org](mailto:jaime@conserveturtles.org))

Special Project Coordinator

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|  | **Internship Program Sea Turtle Conservancy. Tortuguero, Costa Rica.**  **2020** | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Intern Name:** |  | | | | **Email:** | |  | | | | |
| **Passport N°:** |  | | | | **Nationality:** | |  | | | | |
| **Birth date:** |  | | | | **Gender:** | | **Male** | | | **Female** | |
| **Background / Studies:** |  | | | | **Affiliation:** | |  | | | | |
| **Internship period:** | **Start date:** |  | | **End date:** | |  | | | **Total days:** | |  |
| **Field of interest:** |  | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Languages:** |  | |  | | | | |  | | | |
| **Supervisor’s name:** |  | | | | **Contact information:** | |  | | | | |
| **Intern’s Signature:** |  | | | | | | | | | | |