



Sea Turtle Conservancy

(formerly Caribbean Conservation Corporation)

Green Sea Turtle Monitoring Program

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CCC Changes Its Name to Sea Turtle Conservancy

For more than 50 years, the nonprofit Caribbean Conservation Corporation has led global efforts to study and protect sea turtles and their habitats. Since its founding as the world's first sea turtle conservation group in 1959 by legendary biologist Dr. Archie Carr, CCC's unique name served it well and became recognized globally among marine scientists and sea turtle enthusiasts as the leading sea turtle conservation group. As the organization embarks on a new half century of successful sea turtle protection efforts around the world, it is

time to give the organization a name that properly reflects its global leadership role in the study and protection of these amazing animals. On June 16, a date recently established as World Sea Turtle Day in honor of Archie Carr's birthday, CCC will officially change its name to Sea Turtle Conservancy.



To honor the rich history of Sea Turtle Conservancy, the tribal turtle logo will remain an integral part of the organization and continue to feature the acronym "CCC" inside the turtle's shell.

Discover our Visitor's Centre

For 16 years the H. Clay Frick Visitor's Centre has been informing members of the public about the importance of conserving the region's wildlife, and the habitats on which they depend, to ensure their survival.

The visit to the Centre includes a short video that explains how we started our conservation initiatives in Tortuguero, the importance of marine turtles, and the investigation techniques we have used in our research program.

The entrance fee is just \$2, and this is a

valuable contribution towards the continuation of the oldest sea turtle monitoring and research program in the world. It also supports our environmental education program in the schools and high schools in the area, and the upkeep of our Biological Field Station.

In addition, at the Centre you can receive up to the minute information about the current turtle nesting and hopefully we can

answer any questions that you might have about sea turtles or our work here in Tortuguero.



Photo 1. STC Visitor Centre

Community Waste Management Course

On 15-16 July the STC organized a short course for the community of Tortuguero. Led by Dr Maria Elena Fournier, president of the Association Yiski, the course focused on solid waste and post-consumer liquid management.

Thirty people participated in the course (most of them were members of San Francisco community) and a representative from Tortuguero National Park, from CO-TERC and GVI, organizations researching sea turtles and other species in the area.

As part of the course there was a visit to the Tortuguero Recycling Centre, where participants observed

the separation of garbage: glass, plastic, paper/cardboard, aluminium, Tetra Pak and organic material, amongst others and separated. Dr Fournier also commented that the Recycling Centre in Tortuguero is one of the best developed in the country.



Photo 2. Dr Fournier giving the course



Photo 3. Visit to the Tortuguero Recycling Centre



Photo 4. Organic Garden Project with Tortuguero School Students

Organic Garden Project with Students from Tortuguero School

Every week the STC conducts talks for the Tortuguero School and High School, supervised by the Outreach and Education Coordinator Dagnia Nolasco.

During the week we work two days at Tortuguero High School, two days at Tortuguero School and one day at San Francisco School.

The current project for

students in the 2nd grade is the development of an organic vegetable garden. We are trying to instill in the youngest children a love of plants, with a focus on organic cultivation without the use of pesticides or other harmful chemicals.

This semester the students are receiving a series of talks about the care of plants and the

importance of environmentally friendly cultivation methods; they are also planting their own seeds, producing organic fertilizer and learning about the use of natural pesticides.



Photo 5. Painting the bins

High School Students Set the Example

An agreement established between the STC and Tortuguero High School is enabling us to start a series of workshops intended to teach the younger generation about conservation and respect for the natural environment.

The first project being undertaken by the students is a program to

separate the rubbish at Tortuguero High School. The STC provided the High School with garbage cans, gave talks to the students to raise awareness about the issues of waste management, and also organized a visit to the Recycling Centre in the village. Under the supervision of the STC

Education Coordinator, the students created a Powerpoint presentation to give to students in other classes, painted the garbage cans and also made informative signs for their correct use.



Photo 6. Trash cans set

Information from the 2010 Green Turtle Program

It has been a very busy few months since the start of the 2010 Green Turtle Program, and everyone at STC has been working hard on the beach. It looks as if 2010 may be a record year for green turtles; between June and August we have counted more than three times the number of nests this year than for the same time period in 2009. So with the peak of the season still to come, we get ready to say goodbye to the first group of Research Assistants and welcome the new group who just finished their training with Field Research Coordinator Clare Atkinson during night patrols with the hundreds of turtles that are nesting right now!

Since 7th June we have conducted nightly beach patrols in search of nesting turtles.

During the 751 hours of patrols we have encountered the following number of green turtles:

Newly tagged	453
Previously tagged	292
Renesters	91

We have also encountered three Hawksbill turtles!

Tortuguero beach has had some interesting visitors over the last few months. On 30 July we encountered a turtle with tag number MM457, which we knew was not from Tortuguero. It turns out this female was originally tagged in Bermuda in 1993 as part of a long-term in-water tagging project that STC is involved in with Drs Anne and Peter Meylan. This encounter is the only other sighting of this turtle since 1993, so she really was a very special visitor!

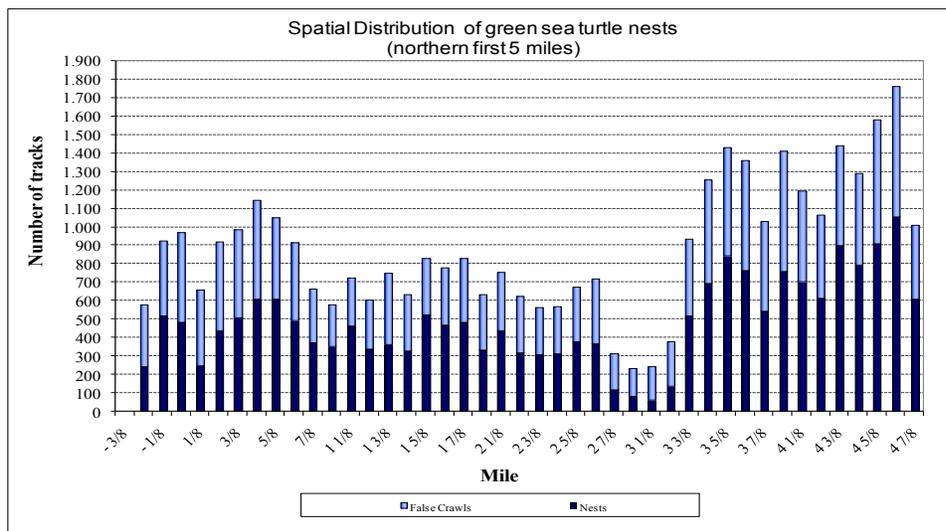
Many of our tagged turtles are encountered when they return to nest in Tortuguero. For example, female #59652 was originally tagged back in 1984; since then she has been seen nesting in 1988, 1991, 1995, 1998, 2001, 2004 and 2007!

Track Surveys of the First Five Miles of Beach

Each morning we conduct a track survey of the northern 5 miles of beach, counting all the tracks from the previous night. Due to the amount of nesting activity we are seeing this year, the surveys are taking much longer than usual! Since the start of daily surveys on 11 June we have recorded the following number of green turtle tracks and poached nests:

Nests	20450
False crawls	16589
Poached nests	98

The following graph shows the number of tracks in each 1/8 mile of beach. Mile 4 6/8 seems to be the favourite section of beach for turtles so far this year, with 1055 nests and 708 false crawls recorded:



SEA TURTLE



CONSERVANCY

John H. Phipps Biological Station
Telephone: 2709-8091
50 metres North of Tortuguero village

Did You Know?

One of the first references to sea turtles in Costa Rica can be found in one of the libros of the Dutchman Jan Huygen Van Linschoten, from 1596. Van Linschoten compiled information from Spanish and Portuguese navigators and also included a map of the region in his book.

Van Linschoten wrote about the area where Tortuguero exists today:

"...after Nicaragua the coast is ruthless and wild, with dense forests and mountains with no access, where horses can't reach and the people take about four months to travel the coast, and only with great difficulty and effort, and on its beaches you find lots of turtles, who lay their eggs in the sand, like the crocodiles..."

Visit our website: www.conserveturtles.org

Artificial Lights in Tortuguero: A Problem for Animals?

For millions of years plants and animals have evolved under a regular day/night cycle, where the light of the sun is replaced each night by the light of the stars, which is reflected in the moon and the planets. Many animals have still not been able to adapt themselves to the conditions created by artificial lights.

Hundreds of migratory birds die or diminish their energy reserves during their migrations as a result of their being disorientated by such lights. Bats, frogs, insects and other species also have similar problems. And in Tortuguero, in previous years, we have found disorientated turtles in the main street, and it is also known that there is less nesting in front of the village, possibly due in part to the lights.

For this reason STC recently collected over 200 signatures on a petition to the Costa Rican Electricity Institu-

te (ICE) asking them to place covers on the public lights. Happily, ICE responded positively to the petition, and have added covers and changed the intensity of the bulbs used in the public lights.

In addition, during April and May the STC discussed this topic with students from Tortuguero School and in August it will be the main theme

for the workshops at Tortuguero High School. It is hoped that we can raise awareness about this problem and get the students actively involved in searching for alternative solutions (covers, red bulbs, etc) to reduce the artificial lights that are visible from houses close to the beach.



Photo 7. A hatchling and desorientated hatchling tracks due to artificial lights.

Dagnia Nolasco
Outreach & Education Coordinator

Clare Atkinson
Research Coordinator