

## WORLD'S FIRST ORGANIC TEQUILA FOR SEA TURTLES —AND OTHER NEWS FROM THE 2008 ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM ON SEA TURTLE BIOLOGY AND CONSERVATION

### *A Tip Sheet for Journalists*

LORETO, Baja California Sur, Mexico – From January 19-26, 2008, over 1,000 sea turtle researchers and conservationists will gather to share the latest news and report their progress on sea turtle monitoring and conservation. Below is a sampling of the news and feature stories from the symposium.

#### **World's First Organic Tequila Releases Sea Turtle Limited Edition Bottle**

The first certified organic tequila, 4 Copas Tequila, is producing a limited edition sea turtle bottle in honor of the symposium and sea turtle conservation research. Proceeds will go to Seaturtle.org, a non-profit organization that provides a centralized resource for sea turtles around the world. Much of Seaturtle.org's work involves satellite tracking, a key method for scientists and the public to learn about sea turtles' movements and behavior.

#### **Grupo Tortuguero Celebrates 10 Years of Conservation Success in Baja**

10 years ago a collection of fishermen, scientists, conservationists and others formed Grupo Tortuguero, the first sea turtle conservation network in Northwest Mexico. Today, the network has grown into one of the strongest grassroots conservation movements in the world, serving as a model for other countries. In 2007, Grupo Tortuguero achieved notable success through creating an international exchange, bringing together local fishermen from Baja California with their Hawaiian and Japanese counterparts to share information on turtle-friendly fishing methods. In 2007, hundreds of turtles were saved while preserving traditional livelihoods.

#### **Symposium Attendees Follow LIVBLUE Mantra at Solar Powered, Sustainable Conference**

"Live like you love the ocean..." It's a simple philosophy, but challenging to execute at an international conference with 1,000 participants. Symposium attendees are taking on the LIVBLUE Challenge, an initiative to minimize the ecological impact of the event. Tactics include camping and home stays, using public transportation or walking, reducing waste, and sustainable organic/local eating choices. Even energy will be sustainably produced with a solar trailer for recharging attendees' laptops, cell phones and flashlights! LIVBLUE Awards will be given to travelers with the lowest carbon footprint, greatest distance traveled in an eco-friendly manner and most novel methods of footprint reduction. Expect some wild stories from conservation scientists who can "walk the talk"!

#### **Scientists Present Groundbreaking New Research**

Top scientists from around the world will be sharing the results of their research with colleagues, in an effort to improve sea turtle conservation worldwide. A few highlights:

- Urgent protection needed for Californias/Eastern Tropical Pacific: new tracking data on leatherback foraging off California, USA; bycatch reduction efforts in Baja California Sur; tracking the movements and behaviors of leatherbacks in the Eastern Pacific.
- Global warming: the past, present and future of sea turtles – new research from Australia on future global warming effects on sea turtles.
- Hawksbill sea turtles are ecologically extinct in the Eastern Pacific Ocean: A new review places them near the top of the list of the region's most endangered ocean animals.

INTERNATIONAL SEA TURTLE SOCIETY



### **SWOT Report —The State of the World's Sea Turtles (Vol. III), Published**

From Conservation International, the IUCN Marine Turtle Specialist Group and hundreds of contributing partners from around the world, this vital publication will be released January 22<sup>nd</sup>. Inside:

- Longest migration – the story of a leatherback sea turtle that was tracked swimming from Indonesia across the Pacific to Oregon, USA – a distance of 20,558 kilometers/ 12,774 miles over 647 days.
- Hawksbill turtles – a global overview with a new map showing routes of the Japanese *bekko* (tortoiseshell) trade, clues to the disappearance of hawksbill turtles in the Eastern Tropical Pacific and the most detailed global map of worldwide hawksbill nesting sites to-date.
- Plastic marine debris – an overview of how marine debris affects sea turtles and other marine species, and how individuals' everyday actions can help alleviate this rampant threat.
- Sea turtles, mythology and indigenous peoples—threading throughout the magazine, this theme ties the publication to the symposium, where local and indigenous peoples will be an important part of the presentations and activities.

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### **Ocean Conservancy Launches SEE Turtles Program**

On January 22<sup>nd</sup>, Ocean Conservancy will launch SEE Turtles. The typical ecotourism mantra has been to “leave no impact,” but SEE Turtles suggests that tourists should make an impact – a positive one – by aiding conservation. SEE Turtles program connects travelers to important sea turtle sites by steering vital economic activity to deserving communities to help them understand and benefit from the value of the wildlife in their local environment. In short, the sea turtles are worth more alive than dead. Ocean Conservancy will start the program in Baja California Sur, with plans to expand to Costa Rica, Trinidad and Tobago. Ocean Conservancy's role is to link tourists who are interested in sea turtles with partners at sites that have demonstrated conservation measures in their tour operations. Ocean Conservancy also offers a “top 10” list of ways to protect sea turtles while on vacation.

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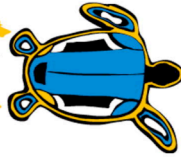
### **Native Oceans Theme Recognizes Importance of Indigenous Conservation**

Native peoples are often those living closest with the natural environment. With the deepest cultural ties to sea turtles and a direct need to coexist with them, native peoples are key to conservation success. Indigenous populations from around the world will participate in the symposium. The Seri (Comca'ak) Indians of Sonora, Mexico will share their special leatherback ceremony during the symposium.

### **Public Joins with Scientists to Make Sea Turtle Conservation a Global Movement**

There's been tremendous growth in the public's interest in sea turtles over the past decade, which has led to an explosion in sea turtle conservation efforts worldwide. Tourists are traveling to see turtles nesting on beaches at hotspots around the world, and volunteering in their backyards to patrol and protect these enigmatic creatures. The science is developing, and the public getting involved – through online networks, education in schools and the media.

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## EXPERTS

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## WEB RESOURCES

Symposium:	<a href="http://iconferences.seaturtle.org">iconferences.seaturtle.org</a>
Sea turtles:	<a href="http://www.seaturtle.org">www.seaturtle.org</a>
The International Sea Turtle Society:	<a href="http://www.seaturtle.org/ists">www.seaturtle.org/ists</a>
The State of the World's Sea Turtles (SWOT):	<a href="http://www.seaturtlestatus.org">www.seaturtlestatus.org</a>
LIVBLUE	<a href="http://www.livblue.org">www.livblue.org</a>
Grupo Tortuguero	<a href="http://www.grupotortuguero.org">www.grupotortuguero.org</a> and <a href="http://www.propeninsula.org">www.propeninsula.org</a>
Ocean Conservancy SEE Turtles program:	<a href="http://www.seeturtles.org">www.seeturtles.org</a>
4 Copas Organic Tequila	<a href="http://www.4copas.com">www.4copas.com</a>

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