

Acting Globally SWOT Small Grants 2016

Since 2006, SWOT small grants have helped field-based partners around the world realize their research and conservation goals. To date, we have given 65 grants (including the ones that follow) to 56 partners in more than 47 countries. SWOT grants are awarded annually to projects in each of SWOT's three areas of focus: (a) networking and capacity building, (b) science, and (c) education and outreach. The following are updates from each of our seven grantees in 2016. Visit www.SeaTurtleStatus.org to apply for a 2017 SWOT small grant!

CABO VERDE Fundação Maio Biodiversidade

Cabo Verde is home to the third largest loggerhead rookery in the world, and Maio Island hosts the second most important nesting population in the archipelago. Despite Fundação Maio Biodiversidade's successful community-based sea turtle protection and monitoring program, a high rate of poaching and egg harvesting by locals remains. A 2016 SWOT grant will be used to train six local community members to monitor beaches and to act as ambassadors in communicating with their communities about sea turtle conservation. Hatchling releases will be conducted with local school-children, community leaders and fishers, and members of a high school ecology club.



GHANA Wildseas

Wildseas has worked with artisanal fishermen since 2011 to secure the release of sea turtles captured by fishers in the Gulf of Guinea. Fisheries bycatch is the single largest threat to the four sea turtle species that occur in the area. A 2016 SWOT grant will be used to expand the organization's Safe Release Program, which increases fisher awareness of sea turtle conservation and bycatch release methods. More than 700 adult turtles have already been successfully released through the program. The Safe Release Program will expand to the Shama fishing port, where an estimated 150 adult turtles are captured annually. Educational meetings will be held with the chief fishermen and with local boat owners to explain the project's objectives and benefits and to inform them of their crucial role in ensuring the program's success.

PHILIPPINES Wildlife Friendly Enterprise Network

The Wildlife Friendly Enterprise Network (WFEN) will use its 2016 SWOT grant to develop onsite and online materials for the launch of its Sea Turtle Friendly program at various hotel properties in the Philippines. The new program aims to engage the hospitality industry in on-the-ground sea turtle conservation by certifying and highlighting businesses that have adopted expert-recommended best practices for sea turtle conservation. The materials produced with the SWOT grant will be targeted to tourists visiting hotels certified as Sea Turtle Friendly, and will highlight the sea turtle species found in the area, the hotel's efforts to support conservation, and the ways tourists can support sea turtle conservation during and beyond their stay. Materials will be tailored individually to each property and its guests and will be distributed online, onsite, and in-room at hotel properties.



CAMEROON Association Camerounaise de Biologie Marine (ACBM)

Cameroon is an important foraging and nesting area for four species of sea turtles. In partnership with the Regional Sea Turtle Conservation Network of Central Africa (Rastoma), ACBM uses its beach-monitoring program to promote alternative incomes for people who earn their living in the sea turtle bushmeat trade. ACBM's 2016 SWOT grant will support the organization's 2016/2017 nest-monitoring program in southern Cameroon. Through the program, government and educational institutions will conduct field surveys with the help of local community volunteers. Data and observations will help to inform the creation of a national marine park and to strengthen the SWOT database and maps for the region.

GRENADA Ocean Spirits

Grenada is home to a large concentration of nesting leatherbacks, which Ocean Spirits has been working to protect since 1999. In addition to making nightly patrols, Ocean Spirits conducts educational programs for local community members. A 2016 SWOT grant will build on the organization's existing education and public awareness projects and will help to launch a Sea Turtle Junior Ranger Program, which will select and empower 14 children from communities near key leatherback nesting sites. The program will include classroom and field-based activities, such as rainforest tours, nest excavations, hatchling releases, and nightly beach surveys. At the end of the nesting season, students will have the opportunity to share their experience with local community members.



MADAGASCAR Association CEDTM – Kélonia

The Anosy region of Madagascar is home to some of the few remaining loggerhead nesting sites in the country, from which eggs are still harvested for consumption by locals with few economic alternatives. Using a 2016 SWOT grant, Association CEDTM – Kélonia will work closely with communities along this important coastline to raise awareness of sea turtle conservation and to implement nest protection. A known and respected local leader will coordinate the project, and villagers who participate will be paid twice the market price for each egg that hatches. Monitoring data will be collected and shared to further inform loggerhead sea turtle conservation in the area.

SENEGAL African Chelonian Institute

All four sea turtle species occurring in Senegalese waters have a high mortality rate because of fishery pressures. The African Chelonian Institute (ACI) is working to better document the problem and its impact on turtles. ACI and IUCN Senegal conducted intensive beach surveys along a 184-kilometer (114-mile) stretch of the Senegalese coastline, documenting all strandings, performing necropsies, and sampling genetics from carcasses, and searching for signs of fishery interaction or other human-induced hazards. ACI used its 2016 SWOT grant to fund part of its continued efforts to conduct monthly beach surveys for one year to better inform stranding, nesting, and sighting data. The information collected will serve to initiate discussions with government agencies and fishers to explore possible methods to reduce fishery bycatch mortality.

