



# Editor's Note

## Returning to Our Natal Shores

Sea turtles are global citizens. And that is why the State of the World's Sea Turtles (SWOT) program has always been global as well: a global network of people, a global scale database, global outreach through *SWOT Report*, and global support to field projects through SWOT grants. But if it can be said that SWOT had a birthplace and nationality, it would certainly be Costa Rica.

The concept for the SWOT program was born on the beaches of Costa Rica in 2003, and SWOT was first introduced to the world community at the 24th Annual Sea Turtle Symposium in San José, Costa Rica, in 2004. The leatherback had been chosen as the symposium's mascot to draw attention to its plight on Costa Rica's Pacific coast, and Costa Rica's President Abel Pacheco opened the symposium with an impassioned speech underscoring the importance of his country for sea turtle research and conservation. That same day, SWOT's first call for data contributions was announced, which ultimately resulted in the publication of the first global-scale map of leatherback nesting sites in *SWOT Report*, vol. I (2006).

Now, after more than a decade of global-scale data aggregation, mapping, and priority setting that has touched all seven species on their nesting beaches and at sea in every sea turtle-harboring country on Earth, it is only fitting that SWOT returns to its roots with a centerpiece map highlighting Costa Rica's rich, varied, and superlative sea turtle bounty. This all-species map of sea turtle nesting in Costa Rica (pp. 22–23) distills a portion of our global database into a country-scale overview for the first time and marks a new era in which SWOT will work with national experts worldwide to present sea turtle biogeography in geopolitical terms. It is sovereign nations, after all, that hold the ultimate responsibility for managing their living resources, so country-scale maps such as this can be powerful tools to guide conservation.

In this issue, we also highlight the stories of SWOT team members in the Cayman Islands, Cyprus, Greece, Mexico, the Persian Gulf, and beyond who are working hard to assure a future for sea turtles. We examine trends in “hands-off technology,” we consider the “true value” of sea turtles, and we take a trip back in time with an engaging look at the history of the Kemp's ridley.

Most important, we celebrate this 10th anniversary of *SWOT Report* by recognizing our SWOT team community as a whole, including all the authors, data contributors, designers, mapmakers, data managers, artists, photographers, and donors who have made *SWOT Report* possible over the past decade.

Thank you all,



Roderic B. Mast