

Acting Globally

SWOT Small Grants 2014

Since 2006, SWOT small grants have helped field-based partners around the world realize their research and conservation goals. To date, we have given 51 grants to partners in 37 countries. SWOT grants are awarded annually to projects in each of SWOT's three areas of focus: networking and capacity building, science, and education and outreach. The following are updates from each of our seven grantees in 2014. Visit www.SeaTurtleStatus.org to apply for a 2015 SWOT small grant!

INDONESIA

Alliance for Tompotika Conservation

The Alliance for Tompotika Conservation (AlTo), located in East Central Sulawesi, Indonesia, has worked with local communities since 2006 as it sponsors field-based conservation programs and awareness and outreach programs in local schools that work toward the conservation of the maleo bird and sea turtles. Recognizing the power of the arts as an effective medium for public education and outreach, AlTo will use the 2014 SWOT grant to produce the first traveling Tompotika Sea Turtle and Maleo Festival. This festival builds off a 2014 youth project with local high school students. It addresses a critical need for outreach to adults and members of the Tompotika public who live in rural areas, and it will carry a strong antipoaching and conservation message to their communities.



MEXICO

ProFaunaBaja

ProFaunaBaja is a society for scientists, students, and naturalists who share a common goal: to conserve biodiversity and vulnerable ecosystems in Baja California Sur, Mexico. The 2014 SWOT grant will be used to create a citizen science-monitoring project to facilitate the collection of in-water sea turtle spatial data from the hundreds of foreign boaters that arrive in the area annually. ProFaunaBaja will undertake capacity-building workshops for boaters and will pilot test the I-naturalist integrated mobile phone application for use by citizen science participants. The pilot study will be used to determine the design of a new mobile phone application that boaters can use to share sightings. Boaters will provide the date, species ID, age range, habitat substrate type, depth (using depth finders), approximate abundance, and GPS coordinates.

COLOMBIA

Fundación Tortugas del Mar

Cartagena de Indias, located on Colombia's Caribbean coast, is one of the largest tourist destinations in the Caribbean. The constant influx of both national and foreign tourists feeds a thriving long-term business in illegal tortoiseshell handicrafts. Fundación Tortugas del Mar will use the 2014 SWOT grant to help launch its "Turtle friendly tourism in Cartagena, Colombia" campaign. The campaign will work to raise awareness with both the local communities and tourists about the illegal tortoiseshell trade. The community outreach program will work to introduce conservation concepts through school activities, community briefings, and presentations. The environmental awareness campaign will reach out to tourists with fact sheets, posters, media events, and other promotional materials.



KENYA

Local Ocean Trust—Diani Turtle Watch

Diani, located on the southern Kenyan coast, is a prime nesting area for green turtles. Coastal development poses a serious and imminent threat to the continuity of this rookery. Since 2012, Local Ocean Trust (LOT), which is a sea turtle conservation organization based in Watamu, Kenya, has trained a team of local Kenyan men to monitor and protect nesting females and their nests in Diani. The Diani Turtle Watch is the first satellite program developed by LOT and is based on the team's work in Watamu. The 2014 SWOT grant will be used to provide further training to the Diani Turtle Watch team and to purchase basic equipment to facilitate monitoring and protection activities.



CHILE

University of Antofagasta

The presence of sea turtles in northern Chile has been registered for more than two centuries, but knowledge regarding their ecology is poor. Ricardo Andrés Sarmiento, a doctoral student at the University of Antofagasta in Chile, will use a 2014 SWOT grant to advance research and monitoring in two coastal bays in the Antofagasta region that are heavily influenced by upwelling and other features of the Humboldt Current System. The project will focus on completing abundance estimations and spatial and temporal distribution of turtles, as well as the relationship with some environmental variables. All data will be based on monthly visual surveys from artisanal fishermen. Stable isotope analysis will examine the consumption and proportions of neritic or pelagic foods that contribute to the turtles' diet.

BANGLADESH, INDIA, AND SRI LANKA

Asian University for Women

Dr. Andrea Phillott, a professor at the Asian University for Women, is conducting a project to gather data about management practices of sea turtle hatcheries in Bangladesh, India, and Sri Lanka to improve conservation practices. The 2014 SWOT grant will be used to implement on-the-ground research to learn more about hatchery operations. In-country assistants will seek to learn more about hatchery operations through in-person and telephone interviews and questionnaires with hatchery owners and managers. Results will inform the design of targeted awareness workshops and written resources to assist hatcheries in improving their operations with the goal of enhancing hatch success and hatching productivity.



FRANCE AND WORLDWIDE

Université Paris–Sud

All seven species of sea turtles exhibit temperature-dependent sex determination. Sex ratio depends on sand temperature where eggs are incubated, and sand temperature is itself dependent on many other factors. Dr. Marc Girondot and his team at the Université Paris–Sud will use a 2014 SWOT grant to build a global sand temperature database of all existing—both published and unpublished—records of sand and nest temperatures. This database will be used in a meta-analysis to make a prognosis of sand temperature on a global scale. The goal of the project is to create a model to predict nest temperatures and their effect on sea turtle sex ratios globally on the basis of actual sand temperatures and inferred influences of factors such as air and sea surface temperature and physical properties of beaches.