



Join Sea Turtle Conservancy's **Research Participant Program** and get hands on conservation and research experience in a tropical rainforest surrounding.

...and have the adventure



of a lifetime!

Sea Turtle Conservancy
4424 NW 13th St, Suite B-11
Gainesville, FL, 32609
1-800-678-7853
stc@conserveturtles.org
<http://www.conserveturtles.org>





Sea Turtle Conservancy, the world's oldest marine turtle research and conservation group, invites you to take a



walk on the wild side as a research participant in one of

our supervised research programs in Tortuguero, Costa Rica. These unique programs give

you the chance to get up close with magnificent sea turtles,



glorious tropical birds and other rainforest wildlife in their natural habitats while you assist in research and protection efforts.

SEA TURTLES

Sea turtles were once so abundant in the Earth's oceans that they were described as traveling in fleets. Today, all species of sea turtles are in danger of extinction. Sea Turtle Conservancy is committed to ensuring the survival of these gentle giants, but we can't do it without you. You can help turn the tide by joining the efforts of STC's sea turtle biologists on the black sand beach of Tortuguero, Costa Rica, and helping scientists unlock the remaining mysteries about Tortuguero's sea turtles. The vital data you help collect on the nesting turtles of Tortuguero will be your priceless legacy; your experiences with these remarkable creatures will be your lasting reward.

NEOTROPICAL BIRDS

Tortuguero, a small coastal village surrounded by a national park, wildlife refuge, managed coastal zone and other protected lands, is home to one of the richest bird faunas in Central America. Strategically located along a major migratory path, Tortuguero attracts warblers, flycatchers, raptors and other migratory birds, while resident species such as toucans, great green macaws, white-collared manakins and oropendolas abound in the forests and waterways of this lush tropical zone.

RESEARCH FACILITIES

Caribbean Conservation Corporation's J. H. Phipps Biological Field Station, on the beautiful and remote Caribbean Coast, adjacent to Tortuguero National Park, offers affordable, modern, private lodging for researchers and dormitory-style lodging for student groups and research participants. Study and explore Costa Rica's largest expanse of protected lowland forest systems. A diverse group of ecosystems including lowland rainforest, swamp forest, freshwater rivers, estuaries, and beach are all easily accessible.

Leatherback Turtle Program

Each Year During March - May

*Leatherback sea turtles (*Dermochelys coriacea*) need your help.*

Although they once traveled our oceans in vast numbers, they now face extinction. As part of STC's



research team you will help unlock the life mysteries of the mammoth leatherback turtle and provide the baseline data used in developing turtle conservation plans.

The largest and widest-ranging of the seven sea turtle species, leatherbacks are known for their leather-like shells and gentle nature. From March to May each year on the black sand beaches of Tortuguero, Costa Rica, huge leatherbacks lumber ashore in the darkness to lay their eggs. Nesting is the only time they climb onto dry land, which makes seeing one a rare and wondrous experience. The effort required to drag themselves out of the water and onto the beach is tremendous considering these giants of the ocean can measure nearly ten feet in length and weigh up to 2,000 pounds. Once far enough on shore, leatherbacks



excavate a nest and deposit about 80 billiard-ball sized eggs into the warm volcanic sand. After burying

the eggs and disguising the nest, the exhausted leatherback shuffles back to the welcome coolness of the sea. About 65 days later leatherback hatchlings, adorable miniatures of their mother, break through the sand to scurry headlong into the sea.

As a participant in STC's Leatherback Program you will witness the remarkable nesting process while helping scientists apply identification tags, make observations, take measurements and record data. Sea Turtle Conservancy initiated the Tortuguero Leatherback Program in 1995 to determine the extent to which leatherbacks use the beach for nesting, learn more about their life cycles, and develop management plans



to protect them. Tag return information is helping scientists understand the leatherback's migratory patterns. The presence of tagging teams on the beach is also a deterrent to poachers and egg collectors.

When not collecting data with scientists, you will be learning about Costa Rica's magnificent rainforests and wildlife during guided boat tours and hikes.



Green Turtle Program

Each Year During June - September

*Tortuguero Beach in Costa Rica draws the largest nesting population of green sea turtles (*Chelonia mydas*) in the Atlantic Ocean. Once present in vast numbers,*

today these gentle creatures are in danger of extinction.

Green turtles have

been hunted for centuries for their meat and eggs. Marine pollution, incidental capture in shrimp nets and destruction of nesting habitat are major threats to their existence.



Sea Turtle Conservancy, with the help of research participants, has conducted research and conservation efforts in Tortuguero for more than 40 years as part of the longest continuing sea turtle research program in the

world. The tagging program was begun by world renowned sea turtle biologist Dr. Archie Carr, founding director of Sea Turtle

Conservancy, who sounded the alarm for sea turtle conservation in his 1956 classic book, *The Windward Road*. Long-term tagging

at Tortuguero facilitates monitoring of the nesting population to evaluate its survival status and gather information on the natural





history and life cycle of the species.

It has been shown that the number of nests at Tortuguero has been slowly increasing over the past decades, likely due to the efforts of STC, research participants and the increased ecotourism value of the

turtles for the people of Tortuguero. As a participant you can ensure this trend continues by helping sea turtle biologists monitor the



green turtle nesting population. Participants join in the work during nightly four-hour shifts by helping measure nesting turtles, conducting egg counts, marking nests, recording data and conducting morning beach surveys. The presence of research teams on the beach is also a deterrent to poachers.

In addition, once nests begin to hatch, participants help evaluate nesting and hatching success during the afternoons.



Neotropical Bird Program

Each Year During Spring (March - June)
and Fall (August - November) Migrations



*On the
Caribbean
coast of
Costa
Rica lies a
magical
place
called
Tortuguero.*

While over 300 species of birds can be found in the Tortuguero region, its future as a thriving environment for birds is threatened by deforestation and development. Ornithologists are concerned for the survival of the many species that depend on increasingly fragmented natural habitats.

In an effort to help ensure the survival of neotropical and tropical birds, the non-profit Caribbean Conservation Corporation has launched a major study in partnership with scientists from the US Forest Service, Point Reyes Bird Observatory and Partners in Flight to collect data that will determine species diversity and abundance, and help assess the effects of habitat loss and disturbance. The data gathered from this long-term research will help formulate conservation plans, and will also alert policy makers about the need to conserve this unique area.

Project participants are needed to assist the scientists



with several important research tasks. Participants receive specific training in mist-netting, walking transects, and point-counts and will work in various settings, including the rainforest, rivers and canals, and near the beach. Highly trained ornithologists head up the work teams for each site. Whether you are a seasoned birder looking to add some rare species to your list, or a newcomer with a strong interest in conservation, you can be an integral part of our research team.

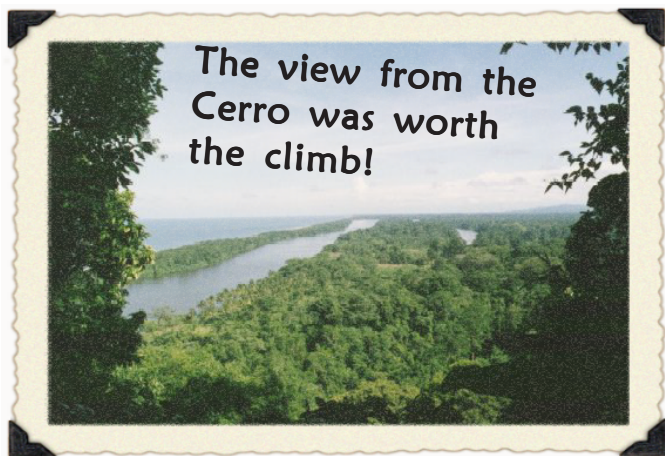


Field study goes from dawn until dusk, with a few



hours break during the warmer part of the day, when you may explore jungle nature trails, boat the intricate river systems or climb the remnants of a nearby ancient volcano. During evenings there will be workshops, time to explore the village of Tortuguero, write letters, exchange stories with new friends, do your own birding or simply relax

by the riverside at sunset and take in the surrounding tranquil beauty.



John H. Phipps Biological Field Station



Research Program Participants will stay at STC's John H. Phipps Biological Field Station, built in 1994 and located in a tropical rainforest setting just steps from the black sand beach. The station is located on the outskirts of the small village of Tortuguero on a low thin peninsula. The Tortuguero River runs parallel to the narrow strip of black sand beach and forms the inland limit of the station grounds.

Sleeping accommodations are dormitory style with 4 to 6 people per room. Screened rooms, modern plumbing, indoor showers, and potable water allow for a rustic yet comfortable stay. Caribbean meals, prepared by a local cook, are served with fresh fruit and vegetables at the station cafeteria.



The station also offers opportunities for private researchers or student groups to study any number of topics including insects, amphibians, bats, plants, or an entire ecosystem, such as lowland rainforest, swamp forest, estuar-

ies, freshwater rivers, and beach. A reference library, Internet access, boat transportation and local guides are also available.

With the addition

of the Landon T. Clay Scientists Residence, in 1999, researchers can now arrange for private lodgings. The residence includes two private bedrooms with desks, private bathrooms with shower, and a common living area. When not in use, the residence is available to participants. Please call STC for prices and availability.



While visiting Tortuguero you may desire to explore the area around the station, walk up to the river mouth, watch animals, try some nature photography, or learn to identify

new plants. During each program, a trip will be organized to explore nearby waterways, Tortuguero National Park trails or Tortuguero Cerro where you explore around the base of the hill..

Participants may also visit the village of Tortuguero and the nearby National Park. In the village you can find

refreshments at one of the local restaurants or browse the souvenir shops, making a pleasant afternoon diversion. While on your way over to the interpretive trail,



located just south of the village, visit the Tortuguero National Park headquarters. While hiking on the trail you'll be able to see monkeys, anteaters, lizards, amphibians, and an amazing array of insect life.



Frequently Asked Questions



Who can participate?

Our participants come from all walks of life and have a shared interest in helping to ensure a future for endangered and

threatened species. The **turtle work is strenuous**, requiring up to 6 miles of beach walking a night in a humid, tropical climate on soft sand. **Good health is a must for all participants.** Participants become honorary members of STC for the year following the research.

Will I have any free time?

Each day, you will have plenty of time to catch up on sleep, explore the small village of Tortuguero, exchange stories with new

friends, birdwatch, or simply relax by the riverside.

You may enjoy walking along the rainforest trails through

Tortuguero National Park, boating the area's intricate river systems or exploring the nearby remnants of an ancient volcano.



When are the sessions?

One- two- and three-week sessions are available, from Saturday to Sunday, with a three-week pro-

gram or optional extensions to your travel available. See insert for current program dates.

Leatherback Turtle: Departure dates are every Saturday from late March to mid May.



Green Turtle: Departure dates are every Saturday from late June to late September.

Bird: Departure dates are every Saturday in March, April and May for Spring migration; and August, September, October and November for Fall migration.

What is my share of the project costs?

The costs of running a field station and enabling scientists to conduct research are substantial. Some costs are covered by grants and funds secured by the STC, and some by the fees paid by participants. See the insert for current program costs. The fee will vary depending upon the program you select and your length of stay. A portion of the fee supports the research efforts of the STC and is tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law.



What is included in the cost:

- * First and last night hotel stay in San José;
- * Land and boat transport to Tortuguero;
- * All meals, lodging and training at the field station;
- * Return flight to San José by small plane.

What is not included in the cost:

- * Your round trip international air travel to and from Costa Rica;
- * Some meals in San José;



- * Items of a personal nature, such as laundry, phone calls and tips;
- * Airport departure taxes, passport fees or fees not listed in the brochure.

How can I join this project?

To ensure your place, call STC at 800-678-7853 for initial registration, confirmation of dates, and contact number for travel information. A \$200 deposit is required to secure your place in the program.

What do I need to bring to Tortuguero?

A passport valid through the date of return is required. Non-U.S. citizens should contact the Costa Rican Embassy for visa requirements. Life is very casual at the station. Cool clothes and comfortable walking shoes are key. Upon registering, you will be sent a Participant Manual and a Station Manual with packing and travel tips which also details life at the field station, the natural history of Tortuguero and program activities.

Standard Program Itinerary

Day 1, Saturday: Depart on your flight to San José, Costa Rica, where you will be met and taken to your hotel for an overnight stay.

Day 2, Sunday: You will be met at your hotel and transferred by bus and boat to your final destination: Tortuguero. Arrive at the Field Station in the afternoon. Your adventure begins!

Day 8 or Day 15, Saturday: Return to San José by air taxi and transfer to your hotel. You will arrive early so the day is free to explore the city of San José.

Day 9 or 16, Sunday: This morning you will be picked up at the hotel and taken to the airport for your homebound flight.

For more information, or to reserve space in a program, contact:

Tortuguero Program Coordinator,
Sea Turtle Conservancy
4424 NW 13th St., Suite B-11
Gainesville, FL 32609
1-800-678-7853
Fax: (352) 375-2449

For a “visual tour” of the research programs visit the STC web site at <http://www.conserveturtles.org>

Design & Layout by Dan Evans.

Photo credits: Laurie Penland,

Jan Schipper, Karen Furnwegger, Jeane Mortimer, James

McElroy, Sebastian Troëng, Peter Pritchard, Dan & Gayle Evans.



About STC

Sea Turtle Conservancy, formerly Caribbean Conservation Corporation, is a non-profit organization founded in 1959 that is dedicated to the conservation of marine and coastal wildlife through research, education, advocacy and protection of natural areas. STC was founded by Dr. Archie Carr, John H. Phipps, and Joshua B. Powers.



Responsibilities and Conditions

The Sea Turtle Conservancy (STC) and/or its agents assume no responsibility or liability in connection with the service of any vessel, carriage, aircraft, motor or other vehicle or conveyance that may be used wholly, or in part, in the performance of their duty to the passengers; neither will they be responsible for any act, error or omission, for any injury, including death, loss, accident, delay or irregularity that may be occasioned by reason of any defect in any vehicle or conveyance, or through neglect or default of any company or persons engaged in conveying the passenger; or for any hotel proprietor, or for any other person engaged in carrying out the purpose for which the tickets or coupons are issued.

STC, in its absolute discretion, reserves the right to alter any route or other arrangements; offer substitutes, or to completely cancel a session, should conditions necessitate. STC also reserves the right to decline, accept or retain any passenger as a member of the session. If declined, the full or an equitable amount will be refunded to the passenger, but this amount shall not exceed the amount paid by the passenger. No refund shall be made for any passenger during the operation of the tour.

Program costs include STC's charges for participation in the research program, plus costs for in-country transfers and travel, and accommodations. Until a program participant is registered with STC and has paid the required deposit, the travel portion of the Program Cost is subject to change. A deposit of \$200.00 per person is necessary to confirm booking. Final payment is due not later than 60 days prior to departure.

Cancellations and Refunds

A full refund, less a \$100 administrative fee, will be made if cancellation is received in writing no less than 60 days prior to departure. Cancellations between 60 and 15 days prior to departure will have a 25% fee imposed unless a replacement is found. If a written cancellation is received less than 14 days prior to departure, a credit, less \$100 administrative fee, is given towards a session at a later date.