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NEWSLETTER OF THE SEA TURTLE RESTORATION PROJECT OF TURTLE ISLAND RESTORATION NETWORK SEATURTLES.ORG

Rare Pacific Loggerheads Get Full ESA Protection

AFTER A FOUR-YEAR BATTLE, the Sea Turtle Restoration Project has finally won enhanced and desperately needed protections for Pacific loggerhead sea turtles from the federal government. On September 16, the Obama Administration designated all Pacific loggerhead sea turtles as endangered under the Endangered Species Act in response to a legal petition by STRP.

With the unflagging support of our community of members and activists, STRP was able to persist with this difficult and unnecessarily lengthy campaign to achieve endangered status. STRP fought through years of delays by the National Marine Fisheries Service to push the agency to address the critical decline of the Pacific loggerhead.

A Bittersweet Victory

The change from threatened to endangered status for the Pacific loggerhead is a bittersweet victory. The ruling recognizes a difficult truth: Pacific loggerheads need increased protections immediately to reverse their decline toward extinction.

But, thankfully, the ruling also means that STRP now has more ammunition to stop the extinction of the Pacific loggerhead sea turtle. Already, the endangered status rule means that NMFS must immediately re-evaluate the deadly Hawaiian longline fishery, which is currently allowed to kill or harm 17 of the rare Pacific loggerhead sea turtles each year.

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STRP has won endangered status for Pacific loggerhead sea turtles and will utilize their new status to combat threats to their survival including deadly longline fishing, illegal poaching and ocean pollution.

PACIFIC “CRITICAL HABITAT” FOR LEATHERBACKS FINAL IN NOVEMBER



Years of tireless advocacy by the Sea Turtle Restoration Project to establish greater protections for endangered

Pacific leatherback sea turtles will be rewarded on November 15, 2011. That's the deadline for the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to designate large areas of the Pacific Ocean offshore of California, Oregon, and Washington as official critical habitat for the species. Doing so will provide increased protections for 70,600 square miles of coastal waters. Pacific leatherbacks migrate more than 6,000 miles to forage on brown sea nettle jellyfish here, in the rich California Current. STRP will continue to push NMFS to add vital migration corridors to the critical habitat area, and to address the impacts that are currently ignored by the proposed ruling, including commercial fishing.



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Letter from the Director

continued from cover

NO NUKES FOR ME!

SEA TURTLES swam into the Safe Energy movement in August, when we joined with grassroots organizations around the nation to show solidarity with the victims of Fukushima, Japan at the “Musicians for Safe Energy” (MUSE) concert at Shoreline Amphitheater. The giant earthquake and tsunami in March 2011 resulted in nuclear reactor meltdowns that released vast quantities of poisonous radiation into the air and sea.



The Fukushima meltdown has already contaminated more than 100,000 square miles of the Pacific Ocean with cesium-137 and strontium-90—causing radiation levels up to 300 times higher than normal in the marine ecosystem. One third of minke whales tested 650 km from Fukushima were found to contain cesium radiation, which is believed to have come from the compromised Fukushima nuclear reactors.

Sadly, we can expect accumulations of deadly radiation in the marine food chain to impact sea turtles, dolphins and a myriad of other marine species, and this may eventually affect the health of consumers.

Here in California, we are in the path of both the radiation emitted into the air, and the currents that are carrying the radioactive debris created by the Japanese tsunami—a grim reminder that the Golden State has four nuclear reactors operating on earthquake faults along the Pacific Ocean! With 100 operating nuclear reactors in the U.S., the recent unexpected 5.9 earthquake in Virginia reminds us that even in areas where earthquakes are rare, we are not immune.

Luckily, the Safe Energy movement is again on the rise, and it's time for Americans to demand that the U.S. join with Germany and Japan in phasing out nuclear power. We are happy to add the sea turtles' voice to that movement to keep all living things free from radiation poison.

For me, the MUSE concert featuring Bonnie Raitt and Crosby, Stills, and Nash was déjà vu. In the 1980s, I was active with the Conchshell Alliance in South Florida, fighting the “Turkey Point” nuclear power plant (yes, that's its real name) located on the edge of the Everglades and Florida Keys and I had the opportunity to table at that Bonnie Raitt MUSE concert in Key West with my girlfriend (now my wife). This time around, I got to meet more of the musicians whose music has inspired and nurtured my activism over the decades, including David Crosby, Stephen Stills and Graham Nash, and heard some of the younger musicians inspiring the current youth generation, including Tom Morello, Jonathan Wilson and Jason Mraz.

We are recruiting right now for a volunteer intern to be the voice of the turtle in this important movement. If that person is you, please get in touch!

TODD STEINER



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STRP will also demand that critical habitat be identified and designated for Pacific loggerheads, an important step toward achieving improved protections for key nesting beaches and migratory and feeding habitat in the ocean.

Populations of the rare sea turtle, which nests in Japan and forages off Mexico and Southern California, have declined by at least 80 percent over the last decade. Although loggerhead sea turtles have been listed as threatened since 1978, the new endangered listing recognizes that Pacific populations are nearing extinction. Deadly high-seas longline fisheries, illegal poaching and the radioactive debris offshore of Japanese nesting beaches all jeopardize these endangered sea turtles.

Atlantic Loggerheads Still Need Safeguards

Unfortunately, the government ignored the science and caved in to Washington D.C. lobbyists when it refused to also list Atlantic loggerheads that nest on Florida beaches as endangered. Florida beaches, which host the largest nesting population of loggerheads in the Northwest Atlantic, have seen an almost 40 percent decline in nesting since 1998, before small rebounds in recent years. Five of nine populations of loggerheads around the world were granted endangered protections. STRP will continue to fight to safeguard imperiled Atlantic loggerheads from increasing threats such as shrimp trawl fisheries.

For more information about our work to protect loggerhead sea turtles, visit www.seaturtles.org/loggerheads.



Gas Madness in Australia

IN THE WILD and sacred Kimberley, near the tiny tourist town of Broome, frontline resistance is now underway to stop California-based Chevron and other Big Oil companies from constructing a massive new natural gas refinery along flatback sea turtle nesting beaches on the coast of Northwest Australia.

Women, men, aboriginal elders, activists and artists are now blockading the access road to the construction site at

James Price Point, locking down on bulldozers illegally rolling in to clear the land. More than 30 people have been arrested and the oil companies' dirty work has been slowed.

A final decision on the gas project will be made soon by Australian Environment Minister Tony Burke. The unpopular and divisive fossil fuel project can still be stopped and ocean habitat for Australian flatbacks protected. Take action at www.seaturtles.org.

Clockwise from upper left: Australian flatback sea turtles nest and feed at unspoiled James Price Point which Big Oil projects threaten to destroy; Kimberley traditional owner Eddie Roe protests Big Oil's natural gas project; Activists Lauren and Naomi lock down as police arrive at the community blockade on the road to James Price Point.

Turtles and Mercury?

ONE OF THE GREATEST threats to sea turtles worldwide is industrial longline fishing, which targets large predatory swordfish and many tuna species. In pursuit of swordfish and tuna, longline fishermen massacre thousands of sea turtles every year, which is bad enough. But swordfish and tuna also contain high levels of mercury—a poison that ends up on your plate every time you consume these fish.

By informing fish eaters about the dangers of toxic levels of mercury in swordfish and tuna, the Got Mercury Campaign protects the health of mothers and children from mercury exposure, while also indirectly reducing the

demand for fish species caught by industrial longline fleets and helping sea turtles to thrive in their natural habitat.

Undercover Fish Testing Earns Emmy Award

Television news coverage of GotMercury.org's undercover fish testing in Los Angeles won a local Emmy Award for reporter Anna Garcia at the NBC television affiliate KTTV. The award-winning three-part news series exposed the dangerous mercury concentrations in tuna and swordfish purchased from sushi restaurants and fish counters in the region, taking honors in the category of Medical News Story—Multi Report.

GotMercury.org Petitions FDA for Stricter Standards

Gotmercury.org recently filed a legal petition asking the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to implement stricter

regulations to protect women, children and people who eat fish from mercury in seafood. The petition seeks a requirement that seafood sellers post warning signs about the danger of mercury in fish and seeks more stringent mercury limits in commercially caught fish.

The FDA has not updated its mercury-in-fish standards for decades, despite mounting evidence that eating mercury-laden fish such as swordfish, tuna and shark is a serious threat to public health.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the number-one source of mercury exposure in the U.S. is contaminated seafood. A recent study found that eating tuna, including canned, is responsible for more than one third of that exposure among Americans.

Read more at www.gotmercury.org and on our GotMercury Facebook Fan page!

Got Mercury?



A Project of Turtle Island Restoration Network



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Loggerhead sea turtles impacted by the BP oil spill will gain new protections from the Gulf of Mexico bottom longline fishery after STRP's court victory in July.

exploit legal loopholes.

Hundreds of dead sea turtles washed up on Gulf beaches this year, most of them critically endangered Kemp's ridleys. Biologists believe these turtles were killed in the nets of shrimpers who were not using Turtle Excluder Devices (TEDs). Shrimpers in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida have been exploiting legal loopholes to skirt federal turtle-protection laws.

In response, STRP demanded—and won—increased law enforcement by NMFS throughout the Gulf. *Law enforcement officers completed 265 TED inspections through July 20, more than 10 times the inspections averaged over the past three years. The observed TEDs compliance rate began rising to nearly 87%.*

Thank you to the thousands of activists and members who helped make it happen!

Making Gains for the Gulf of Mexico: Taking Action for Turtles!

OVER THE PAST SIX MONTHS, the Sea Turtle Restoration Project has gone to court, taken to the air and rung phones off the hooks of federal agencies and legislators to help sea turtles in the Gulf of Mexico.

As a result of the outcry of support from Sea Turtle Restoration Project members and activists, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is finally protecting sea turtles in the Gulf of Mexico from shady shrimpers who

New Leatherback Watch Program Flourishes



© SCOTT BENSON

A leatherback sea turtle comes up for air off the coast of California where a protected critical habitat zone is due to be finalized on November 15, after years of advocacy by STRP and its members.

THE LEATHERBACK WATCH PROGRAM is an all-volunteer project led by the Sea Turtle Restoration Project to engage marine researchers, whale watching businesses, and recreational boaters all along the West Coast to be on the lookout for critically endangered leatherback sea turtles. Our staff and interns record the sightings of these gentle giants and share the news over social networks. We are collecting amazing photos and videos and adding them to our website as they come in! See them at www.seaturtles.org/LBWatch.

We've received excited calls from sailors and charter operators reporting over a dozen leatherback sightings in July and August that stretch from Point Sur, California north to British

Columbia, Canada.

"Seeing this rare sea turtle was the highlight of our day and taking part in the voluntary Leatherback Watch Program transformed our lucky sighting into another data point in the ongoing conservation work of the Sea Turtle Restoration Project," said Captain Larry Twomey, calling from his yacht.

STRP will report each sighting, along with a witness attestation, GPS coordinates, and a photograph to federal scientists and international researchers for use in global conservation management efforts. The Leatherback Watch Program is an exciting addition that is directly connecting individuals with ways to see and help the largest and most endangered sea turtle species.



WYON

During 2011, 199 Kemp's ridley sea turtle nests were found on Texas beaches, more than any other year since records have been kept.

Kemp's Nest Count in Texas: Encouraging Trend!

DURING 2011, 199 Kemp's ridley sea turtle nests were found on Texas beaches, more than any other year since records have been kept. Twenty-five nests were found along the Upper Texas Coast showing an encouraging recovery from damage done by Hurricane Ike.

This increase in nests is mentioned in STRP's new documentary, "The Heartbreak Turtle Today," now available for broadcast by all PBS stations. If your local PBS station has not shown this fascinating story of the recovery of the world's most endangered sea turtle, please call them today and ask them to add "The Heartbreak Turtle Today" to their programming schedule.

Court Rules That Sea Turtles Need Stronger Protections After BP Oil Spill

STRP SCORED A VICTORY in court in July to gain new protections for imperiled sea turtles. The ruling demands that NMFS do more to protect sea turtles from death and injury in the Gulf of Mexico "bottom longline fishery," which operates just offshore of one of the top loggerhead nesting beaches in Florida.

IN JULY, STRP took to the Texas skies with conservation flight partner, LightHawk. Carole Allen, STRP's Gulf Office Director, worked with Kelley Tucker of Lighthawk to arrange the flight for the opening two days of the Texas shrimping season. Pilot Jeff Weiss of Houston flew above the Upper Texas Coast for several hundred miles. Fortunately, no boats were seen illegally shrimping before the official season.

Our vigilant oversight may well have encouraged the use of Turtle Excluder Devices (TEDs). Strandings totaled only two Kemp's ridleys of the 18 turtles



CAROLE ALLEN

Just before shrimping season opens, STRP's volunteer Heather Lewis and Carole Allen prepare for a flyover of the Gulf with conservation partner LightHawk.

found on the entire Upper Texas Coast in the first full month of the season.

New Ban on Longlines for Hawaiian False Killer Whales



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THANKS to our ongoing advocacy and support of legal actions for the protection of the endangered Hawaiian false killer whale, deadly longline fisheries will be excluded from large areas surrounding the Hawaiian Islands.

Longlines set thousands of hooks strung along miles and miles of fishing lines that indiscriminately kill endangered sea turtles, marine mammals such as the false killer whale, and seabirds.

Partnering with local conservation groups and other international marine advocacy groups, we are ensuring the Marine Mammal Protection Act is used effectively to increase protections for the dwindling population of false killer whales that live exclusively around the Hawaiian Islands.

This fishery had been allowed by NMFS to injure or kill over 700 loggerheads in 2011, and another 600 every three years after that. That's despite the fact that nesting loggerheads in Florida declined by nearly 40 percent over the past decade.

In response to our lawsuit, the U.S.

District Court ruled that NMFS broke the law when it failed to protect loggerhead sea turtles from the fishery, especially after the impacts of the BP oil spill. Now, STRP's goals are to hold the fishery to strict rules that protect sea turtles, and ultimately to close this fishery during peak nesting and migration seasons.

Shop at the Sea Turtle Store!

At the Sea Turtle Store, you can purchase T-shirts, hats, tote bags, jewelry, books and fine art, all featuring sea turtles! All net proceeds of sales benefit STRP. Some of these items have been donated to us by dedicated supporters so virtually all of the proceeds go directly to fund our programs.

Go to www.SeaTurtles.org/Shop to view and purchase all of our items. You may also purchase by phone or send us a check. Call 1-800-859-7283 for more information or to place an order. Use the enclosed envelope to pay by check or credit card.



Name _____

email _____

Address _____

STRP T-Shirt: Men's L, XL, Women's L	\$ 21	qty _____	total _____	grand total: _____
Pewter Keychain	\$ 8	qty _____	total _____	
Brass Pendant	\$17	qty _____	total _____	
Leatherback T-Shirt: Men's S, L, XL	\$21	qty _____	total _____	

all prices include shipping & handling

Mail to: SEA TURTLE RESTORATION PROJECT, P.O. Box 370, Forest Knolls, CA 94933

Win a Luxury Research Dive Trip to Cocos Island, Costa Rica



GEORGE DUFFIELD

Win the dive vacation of a lifetime! STRP is raffling off a spot aboard the luxurious working yacht MV Argo on our next Sea Turtle & Shark Research Dive Expedition, valued at \$5,940! (Seats are available for purchase—contact us for more information).

Raffle tickets are \$100 each and no more than 200 tickets will be sold. You'll be part of our research

team helping to tag sea turtles and sharks, collecting data that is being used to map their migration patterns through the Cocos/Galapagos Island swimway. This ongoing study will support our campaign to extend protections in this vital marine habitat. The sumptuous 130-foot-long Argo departs April 17, 2012, for a ten-day trip to stunning Cocos Island off the Pacific Coast of Costa Rica!

Every raffle ticket sold helps fund STRP's research in this important sea turtle habitat. For more information, visit www.seaturtles.org/raffle or call us at 800-859-7283 x101.

Donate Your Vehicle to STRP

Support sea turtle conservation by donating your vehicle to STRP, no matter where you are in the U.S. Your contribution may be tax deductible and you will be making a vital contribution to STRP, which receives 70-80% of the net proceeds, depending on the sale value of the vehicle.

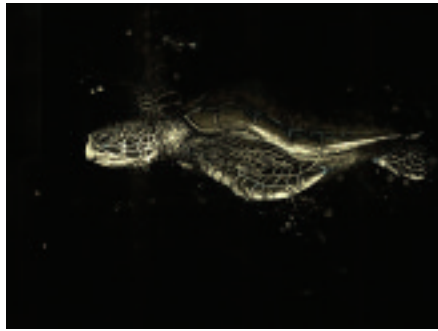
The process is simple. Just contact Donate For Charity online at www.donateforcharity.com or call 866-392-4483 and they will arrange to pick up your vehicle. They accept most cars, trucks, vans, fleet vehicles, trailers, boats and RVs that are 15 years or newer from any location in all 50 states.

Sea Turtle Art

Many outstanding artists who care about the ocean and about the fate of sea turtles have generously supported STRP through sales of their work. Their works can be purchased at www.seaturtles.org/shop and a portion (or all) of the sales are donated to STRP.



KRISTEN ASHTON—Kristen wanted to be a Marine Biologist growing up. Instead she became an artist whose exquisite paintings are inspired by her deep love for the ocean and all things in it. She uses vibrant color in layers using acrylic, oil pastel and pencil to create unique textures that reflect the magic and beauty of the ocean. Kristen grew up in the South of England and now lives with her family in Florida.



ALAN JAMES ROBINSON—Alan is the owner, designer, and illustrator for the award-winning Press of the Sea Turtle, which he established in 1979. He has also published 27 limited edition books, including *The Birds and Beasts of Shakespeare*. He donated his original artist proof etching, “Green Sea Turtle” to STRP and a copy of his unique folio, “Cheloniidae: Sea Turtles” is available for sale, with a portion of proceeds benefiting the project.



RICHARD DOWNS—Richard’s art-making combines contemporary aesthetics with the rich history of print-making. His “Sea Turtle” monotype, created for STRP, was included in the New York Society of Illustrators Museum Exhibition and he has won numerous other awards. Richard lives in Nevada City, CA with his wife and daughter, and teaches Illustration at the Dept. of Applied Art and Design at Sierra College.

Leave a Legacy for the Sea Turtles

By making a gift to the Sea Turtle Restoration Project in your will or other estate plans, you can make a significant contribution to protecting sea turtles and the oceans. The simplest way is to make a bequest to STRP through your will. STRP can accept gifts of real estate, vehicles and vessels, stocks and insurance policies as well as financial contributions.

A professional financial advisor who is experienced in charitable gifts can help you identify additional ways to structure your estate plans that may provide tax benefits, as well as help protect the earth’s oceans and wildlife.

Please email Erica Heimberg, Director of Development at Erica@tirn.net or call 1-800-859-SAVE (800-859-7283) for free estate planning materials or to request bequest language to include in your will. All information is completely confidential.



Welcome Andy!

The Sea Turtle Restoration Project and our parent nonprofit, Turtle Island Restoration Network (TIRN), are pleased to welcome Andy Harris, who joined the TIRN staff as Managing Director in August.

Andy has been associated with the organization for the past decade. He started as a creek walk volunteer for TIRN’s local salmon protection project in 2001 and was on hand for our rescue of the 10,000th fish from death in creeks that go dry in our Northern California watershed. From 2005 to 2011, he also served as a member of the TIRN board of directors.

A graduate of Williams College, Andy also holds master’s degrees in environmental law and policy (Vermont Law School) and marketing communication (Boston University). He brings 20 years of marketing, sales and communication strategy development experience for organizations ranging from small environmental non-profit groups to Fortune 500 companies, and five years managing renewable energy-related projects with a focus on California state greenhouse gas emissions regulation.

Andy lives with his wife Mary and two sons in Tiburon (that’s “shark” in Spanish!), California. He is committed to helping the organization grow and expand our work to protect sea turtles and the oceans around the globe.

Turtle Island Restoration Network
Sea Turtle Restoration Project
P.O. Box 370
Forest Knolls, CA 94933



Become a Sea Turtle STAR (Sea Turtle Activist Responder)

Help us take swift, sustained and innovative action by joining our STARs program and making a monthly donation to help sea turtles. You can make a difference for as little as \$5 a month and we'll thank you with an adorable pewter turtle keychain.

Donate \$20 a month or more, and we will thank you with the gorgeous coffee table book, "Sea Turtles" by James Spotila, with amazing photographs and natural history of sea turtles.

You can cancel or change the amount of your donation anytime. Use the enclosed envelope to join, or go online to www.seaturtles.org/STARs.



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ABOUT THE SEA TURTLE RESTORATION PROJECT

THE SEA TURTLE RESTORATION PROJECT is a project of Turtle Island Restoration Network, a nonprofit organization. STRP works to protect sea turtle populations in ways that meet the ecological needs of sea turtles and the needs of the local communities who share the beaches and waters with these endangered species.

We use a multi-faceted approach which includes grassroots action, multi-media campaigns, hands-on conservation projects, environmental action and litigation. We rely on tax-deductible donations from individuals, private foundations, and progressive companies, as well as the pro bono service of numerous supporters. We are grateful for our contributors' help and support, and welcome your input and assistance.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Todd Steiner, President; Carole Allen, Randall Arauz, Donna Howe, Steve Katz, Rick Misuraca, Wallace J. Nichols, Bob Rosenberg, Susan Sakmar, Debbie Sivas.

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Viva la Tortuga!

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A project of Turtle Island Restoration Network



Contact Us:

NORTH AMERICAN OFFICE
P.O. Box 370, Forest Knolls, CA 94933
phone 415-663-8590 or 800-859-7283
fax 415-663-9534
e-mail info@SeaTurtles.org
website www.SeaTurtles.org

CENTRAL AMERICAN OFFICE
Randall Arauz (Costa Rica)
phone 011-506-2241-5227
fax 011-506-2236-6017
e-mail rarauz@pretoma.org

GULF OF MEXICO OFFICE
Carole Allen (Houston)
phone/fax 281-444-6204
e-mail carole@SeaTurtles.org