

# Viva la Tortuga!

NEWSLETTER OF TURTLE ISLAND RESTORATION NETWORK

SEATURTLES.ORG

## Your Calls Mattered — Global Response Resonates on Texas Plastic Bags

**O**N THE POLITICAL FRONT you, Turtle Island Restoration Network advocates, helped win a political round in Texas, and your efforts have global ramifications. State politicians tried to enact a law that would essentially eliminate an existing ban on plastic bags, which could have affected

oceans, globally. Sea turtles mistake plastic bags for jellyfish and eat them. Our social media campaign asked you

**“Wildlife ingest, or become entangled, in the plastic bags, and the result is often starvation or strangulation.”**

— Joanie Steinhaus, Turtle Island Campaign Director Gulf of Mexico

to phone Texas senators and voice your opposition to their plan. Your calls on the day of the vote overloaded their lines which is exactly what we had hoped would happen. Combined with testimony from Joanie Steinhaus, Turtle Island Campaign Director Gulf of Mexico, and others opposed to removing control from local jurisdiction on bag bans, we won the first round in our battle against plastic bags in Texas.

But our fight is not over. We must continue to voice our support for banning plastic bags locally and globally.

We also want to keep telling you, we appreciate your help, and that your actions do matter!



COURTESY OF TROY MAYNE



## Defending America's Wildlife



COURTESY OF ROLLING STONE

**W**E ARE AT A CROSSROAD in the United States in the fight to defend sea turtles, whales, dolphins, and all the ocean wildlife we love. After nearly a decade of increasing protections from the landmark Paris Climate agreement to the creation of the largest marine conservation area in the world we are now facing a political wind that does not prioritize the environment.

Turtle Island is actively fighting to save marine species and the oceans. Cornerstone laws and regulations

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## Letter from the Director

### TURTLE ISLAND BRACED TO RESIST NEW THREATS

#### DARK CLOUDS HANG OVER US

**S**PRING IS normally a time of renewal and hope. Yet dark clouds hang over us because of scary changes happening in Washington. Our hard-won battles to protect endangered species, our oceans, and counter climate change are all under severe threat.

The Trump administration is clearly bent on dismantling decades of environmental protection by eviscerating laws like the Endangered Species Act and the Marine Mammal Protection Act. Trump is using executive fiat to defund government agencies like the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration, the Environmental Protection Act, and the National Park Service.

Be assured Turtle Island will resist — in the courts, at public hearings, and in the streets. While the daunting currents we face have never been stronger, we have battled many administrations over the past 30 years, and along the way we have honed an effective conservation toolbox to counter the tumultuous times that lie ahead. We have hired another seasoned attorney to defend the oceans, and we are mobilizing right now to participate in the March for Science, the People's Climate March and other upcoming events. And in this note, we are unveiling a new RESIST! logo by our dear friend and member Barry Deutsch.

But we won't succeed without you! Our strength emanates from our ability to mobilize supporters like you to take action. We can't succeed without you. Now, more than ever, we need you to respond

to our action alerts, join us at marches, and contribute generously to our fundraising campaigns so our staff has the resources necessary to turn back the dangers emanating from the White House.

We are also working on exciting, Earth-healing actions to build resiliency and hope against the current threats Trump is raining down on the environment. Two specific projects come to mind:

One is our 10,000 Redwoods program, [10000redwoods.org](http://10000redwoods.org). We are currently planting tens of thousands of trees and shrubs to sequester carbon, fight climate change and improve the quality of inland water that flows into the ocean.

We are also working on sea turtle nesting beaches to increase survival of turtle eggs. Rising tides, increasing and more severe storms, and ever-warming temperatures interfere with the successful hatching of the eggs. We are also developing a program to re-create populations of nesting turtles on beaches that are less likely to be impacted by climate change.

Please join us in defending our oceans and endangered marine wildlife. We cannot succeed without you. Together, we can fight back against current threats and create the healthy and beautiful world we want to leave to our children and future generations.

*Sincerely,*



TODD STEINER, Executive Director  
Turtle Island Restoration Network

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form the basis for protecting endangered species like sea turtles and preventing their extinction. These tools are effective, compel science to be used in making decisions, and provide opportunities for public involvement.

Now, unprecedented efforts are underway by President Trump and an extreme faction of the Republican Party to:

- ◆ Weaken the Endangered Species Act, the bedrock law that protects sea turtles
- ◆ Reduce funding for the Environmental Protection Agency by 31%
- ◆ Defund programs focusing on addressing climate change and resulting sea level rise which threatens nesting beaches

Since the U.S. Presidential election, Turtle Island has mobilized our members to oppose the confirmations of EPA Director Scott Pruitt and newly confirmed Secretary of State Rex Tillerson; participated in local protests including the March for Science; and have opposed the federalization of the California driftnet fishery.

In addition to these campaigns, Turtle Island will work to strengthen state laws to counter erosion at the national level, defend the ESA from extreme attacks, and raise public awareness about the impacts of new executive orders and proposed legislation.

Join us in defending America's wildlife!







## Galveston Gleams with New Wall-Sized Turtle Mural

**I**N THE GULF OF MEXICO, Joanie Steinhaus, Turtle Island Campaign Director Gulf of Mexico and local artist Gabriel Prusmack created quite a buzz with a huge, wall-sized mural on the band shell at the McGuire Dent Recreation Center in Galveston, TX.

The stunning mural is highly visible to passing motorists and pedestrians. It includes the five species of sea turtles found in the Gulf of Mexico, the leatherback, loggerhead, hawksbill, green and Kemp's ridley, and Turtle Island's logo.

The mural was created to help raise awareness about the Flower Gardens Banks National Marine Sanctuary.

Support from the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation and the Hollings Trust made this project possible. Prusmack donated a portion of his time and Sherwin Williams donated paint to complete the effort.

As a permanent public art piece, the mural offers the potential of educating tens of thousands of residents and visitors about sea turtles and the sanctuary.

## Turtle Island Education: On Land and Sea

**T**WO OF TURTLE ISLAND'S major missions are to educate people about how they can help save marine wildlife, and how people can make the environment better.

These two goals came together recently when 150 elementary students visited an ocean-going research vessel in Galveston, Texas, and when dozens of Sir Francis Drake high school students visited Turtle Island headquarters to learn more about our land, stream, and ocean-based environmental work.

The Oppe Elementary school children visited Joanie Steinhaus, Turtle Island Campaign Director Gulf of Mexico. They had a rare opportunity to board and tour the ocean-going R/V MANTA. The MANTA is a working



**"This is the best field trip ever!"**

— Oppe student

research vessel that belongs to Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary.

The children learned about research underway at the Flower Garden National Marine Sanctuary, and the impact of plastic marine debris and non-point source pollution on endangered sea turtles.

**"The kids had a great time learning about the different ways people can help protect the ocean, beach, and wetland areas around us."**

— Nicole Morrow,  
Oppe second grade teacher

And they learned they could each have an impact on the amount of trash entering our oceans, through simple acts like saying no to a drinking straw, and using a reusable cup.

Back in California, the Marin students came to study ecological restoration and flood plain ecosystems.

The students used the field trip to learn about the economic value of ecosystem services. For example, one mile of floodplain will naturally filter as much water every year as a water treatment plant for a small city, like Monterey, CA.



**"Students literally got their hands dirty by digging up invasive plants and replacing them with native species."**

— Turtle Island Education Specialist  
Catie Clume

They walked along San Geronimo Creek to see ongoing restoration areas. Lagunitas Creek watershed has the largest remaining wild run of the endangered coho salmon in central California.

Turtle Island embraces these types of opportunities, ones that allow us to work with school children and teachers. We know we are helping to influence future generations and leaders. And we feel it is in everyone's best interest that today's children understand how their work and actions affect the communities they live in, as well as the entire world.



COURTESY HOUSTON CHRONICLE

## Sea Turtle Nesting Season

IT IS sea turtle nesting season across the Gulf of Mexico and along the Texas coast. On March 30, the earliest time in any season ever, one Kemp's ridley nest was documented at South Padre Island. Hundreds of turtles will come ashore over the nesting season.

As of this writing, we have 56 Kemp's ridley nests along the Texas coast. And we spotted a small arribada at Padre Island National Seashore.

Joanie Steinhaus, Turtle Island Restora-

tion Network Campaign Director, Gulf Coast, believes this may be because, "we had a very mild winter, and water temperatures hit 70 degrees early in the season. More sea turtles will start to come, rapidly."

Sea turtles are among the oldest creatures on earth and have been surviving for over 100 million years. These air-breathing reptiles are well suited for life in the ocean, spending their entire life at sea except when females come ashore to lay eggs.

Five of the seven species of sea turtles in the world are found in the Gulf of Mexico, the leatherback, loggerhead, hawksbill, green and Kemp's ridley.

Texas' state sea turtle, the Kemp's ridley, nests between April and mid-July every one to three years. Females reach sexual maturity around 10 to 12 years of age. Turtle Island Gulf of Mexico conducts

nest patrols during an entire nesting season. Volunteers patrol the beach every morning, looking for turtle tracks and nesting turtles.

### 2018 Nesting Season Patrols: Want to help us count sea turtle nests next year?

We patrol over 72 miles of beach.

In addition to looking for evidence of nesting turtles, our volunteers find stranded turtles, injured birds, dolphins and other coastal wildlife.

One major consideration, volunteers must attend an onsite training course in either February or March.

For more information email Theresa at [turtlepatrol@tirn.net](mailto:turtlepatrol@tirn.net)

## Monthly Donors are Among Turtle Island's Most Dedicated Supporters

ONE OF OUR monthly donors from Hawaii, Kanara Woodford, shares her passion for the oceans and why she supports Turtle Island.

*What are your first memories of the ocean?*

I feel like I was born in the ocean. I was born and raised in Hawaii, growing up across the street from the ocean in Kihei on Maui. Even as babies, my brother and I were always at the beach exploring the exposed reef, picking up empty shells, eating seaweed, not to mention a little sand!

*What are your favorite ocean animals?*

My favorite ocean creatures are Honu — Hawaiian green sea turtles — dolphins and whales. But it is not fair to limit my love of the sea wildlife to just these amazing creatures. I love puffer fish and how they show curiosity and character.



I recall encountering a baby squid once, in hip deep water off Kamaole Beach #1. It was a calm day and I was enjoying the beauty around me when I looked down and saw this little squid, maybe three inches long, right next to me. It looked at me, and I reached out with my hand to connect when it squirted a tiny bit of ink and disappeared.

I've been fortunate to swim with sea turtles, careful to keep my hands to myself, yet making eye contact. I swam with Hawaiian Spinner Dolphins in the bays off the Big Island, and emerged from those experiences feeling something profound had happened.

*Why do you support efforts to protect the oceans?*

If not now, when? If not me, who? I feel so strongly about the immediate, pressing need to reverse the damages we have done to our greatest resource. It's almost overwhelming. I pick up trash every time I walk the beach and try not to get angry about how we are mistreating our oceans. I hope I'm setting an example for those who observe me. We need to do this now, hoping it's not too late.

*What do you like about Turtle Island?*

I receive numerous requests from organizations of all sorts, asking for donations to various causes. Many of them are amazing and do help their particular choice of preservation. When I first heard of Turtle Island, it felt right to me to support you. It was an intuitive response and one I'm glad I followed.

Monthly giving is a great, convenient, and uplifting way to support Turtle Island. Join Kanara and other caring supporters by becoming a monthly donor today.



## Protect the Human Rights of Fishermen on Hawaiian Industrial Fishing Vessels — Support HB 438

**T**HIS BILL IS necessary to provide more oversight of the commercial fishing industry, and to help prevent human rights abuses. The bill would require fishing boat owners who want a commercial license in Hawaii to provide state officials with a copy of employment contracts held with every fisherman onboard. This would have to be provided before a license is granted.

This oversight is necessary because a recent investigation found hundreds of

foreign fishermen confined to boats, with some living in subpar conditions. The Associated Press investigated conditions in Hawaii fisheries and found about 140 fishing boats based in Honolulu were crewed by hundreds of men from impoverished Southeast Asian and Pacific Island nations. Some men are paid as little as 70 cents an hour, some suffered running sores from bed bugs, and others sometimes lacked sufficient food.

Without those contracts, there is no way

for state officials to check whether fishermen are getting what they were promised or if an investigation should be launched about possible human trafficking.

To support oversight of these commercial fisheries, and to send a digital, prewritten letter, go to [SeaTurtles.org/take-action/action-alerts](http://SeaTurtles.org/take-action/action-alerts).

Help make sure those fisheries are not taking advantage of workers!

## New Logos, Graphics, Looking Good

**A**S TODD STEINER unveiled in his Director's Note, Turtle Island has new graphic designs and logos to add to its palette. Three in all.

Turtle Island member Barry Deutsch created our new RESIST! logo, signifying our continuing commitment to

fight for the rights of all marine life. He also created a new logo for Turtle Island's 10,000 Redwoods project, our drive to grow and plant thousands of new redwood trees to help reduce the world's carbon footprint.

And member Steven Lyons' graphic, WE ARE ALL IMMIGRANTS, takes

a powerful stand in these tough, and anti-conservation, political times.

You will soon see more of these new, great designs in upcoming communications in social media, print, our eNewsletters, and our websites. So if you are not getting our emails, visit [SeaTurtles.org](http://SeaTurtles.org) and sign up.





# Shop at SeaTurtles.org/Shop

## Adopt a Nest of Sea Turtle Hatchlings

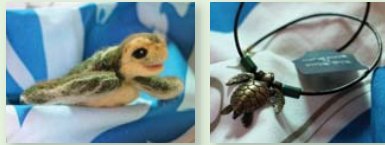
### Adopt-a-Nest Package Includes:

- Personalized adoption certificate
- Sea turtle window decal
- Sea turtle fact sheets
- *Viva La Tortuga!* newsletter
- Optional Antique Brass Pendant or Felted Wool Hatchling

**Regular Nest—\$45**

**Special Nest with Antique Brass Pendant—\$60**

**Special Nest with Felted Wool Hatchling—\$75**



When you order online, you can download a gift certificate immediately to give to your loved one so they know their Adopt-a-Nest package is on the way. Order online at [SeaTurtles.org/Adopt](http://SeaTurtles.org/Adopt).

The Turtle Island store offers a selection of high quality, eco-friendly clothing, jewelry, books and fine art. Your purchases help fund Turtle Island's campaigns to save endangered sea turtles, salmon, sharks, and other marine wildlife species worldwide.



**Glass Turtle Pendant \$45**



**Turtle Magnet Set \$18**



**Silver Charm Bracelet \$30**

## Expedition to Cocos Island



**T**HIS SUMMER, Turtle Island will continue our diver-assisted research project at Cocos Island National Marine Park in Costa Rica, where schools of endangered hammerhead sharks swim, Galapagos sharks bask at cleaning stations, and many other species of large ocean animals enjoy a safe haven. Are you a scuba diver? Be a part of Turtle Island's efforts to tag and track sharks to understand their migratory routes, and shape conservation policy in the region.

Our research is getting results. Turtle Island's satellite and acoustical tags have revealed the first evidence that sharks and sea turtles migrate through unprotected waters between island preserves. We are using this data to establish protected swimways to and from Cocos Island's ocean oasis.

Conducting research at a remote location like Cocos requires large, specially equipped vessels, and is expensive. To make this crucial work possible, we engage scuba divers as citizen-scientist assistants. Divers pay for a share of the research expedition's cost and assist censusing sharks, taking photographs, and recording data.

This is hands-on environmental action at its best!

**Join this crucial effort from August 4-14, 2017 for the conservation experience of a lifetime.**

Because you are volunteering your efforts, some of your costs may be tax-deductible.

Learn more about this unique conservation diving experience at [www.seaturtles.org/expeditions](http://www.seaturtles.org/expeditions) and join us!

## Help Save Marine Wildlife with a 2017 Charitable IRA Rollover

**T**URTLE ISLAND donors aged 70½ and older can support our work with a Charitable Individual Retirement Account (IRA) Rollover in 2017. Enjoy tax benefits while putting your contribution to work to save sea turtles, sharks, dolphins and other marine wildlife!

The charitable IRA rollover (also called a qualified charitable distribution) of any amount up to \$100,000 is excluded from your taxable income when you make the rollover directly to a charitable organization. The transfer still counts towards your required minimum IRA distribution. By choosing to provide a Charitable IRA Rollover to Turtle Island Restoration Network you will provide crucial resources without incurring income tax from the distribution, allowing us to use 100% of your distribution to protect and restore ocean wildlife species. Please check with your tax advisor for details and rules that may affect your specific situation.



## My Life as an Intern BY ELIZABETH VILLANO



**“It is still breathtaking to think about the monstrous potential these saplings have as they mature.” — Elizabeth Villano**

I believe in the power of environmental education and good stewardship to move our society into a better future, for the planet and the people on it.

Turtle Island has given me a platform to harness my enthusiasm with restoration work and education. This internship gives me a way to combine my passion about public health with stewardship for the environment. I am hopeful my generation will come together and work together worldwide to implement these ideals.

I’m thinking of all of this as my boss and I are crouched over a redwood sprout. Its burgeoning form reminds me of the many students I have helped seed redwoods, as well as the educational aspect of our project: Reclaiming floodplains in northern Marin County.

Want to do similar good work? Want to help? Turtle Island is always looking for volunteers, people to adopt a redwood tree, and yes, like me, to be an intern. For more information, go to [SeaTurtles.org/about/careers-internships](http://SeaTurtles.org/about/careers-internships).

**M**Y JOURNEY WAS not a smooth or straight path to the Turtle Island internship I have today. I graduated from Brandeis University with a B.S. in Health, Science, Society, and Policy (HSSP) with a public health degree. While I enjoyed my time learning about public health, I found myself thinking about the environmental components of health; how we think about the environment as a contagious disease.

According to the World Health Organization, an estimated 12.6 million deaths each year are attributed to unhealthy environments from air pollution, to chemical leaks, to poor water quality, to natural disasters. While many of these deaths are outside of the United States,

## Leave a Legacy for Ocean Wildlife

**W**HEN YOU MAKE plans to leave a generous contribution to Turtle Island Restoration Network through a bequest in your will, or other estate gift, you are creating a legacy of hope for marine wildlife! Your gift will help ensure that sea turtles, dolphins, sharks and other irreplaceable species receive the protection and care that they need, far into the future.

It is simple to plan a bequest to Turtle Island Restoration Network. Visit [SeaTurtles.org/BequestGift](http://SeaTurtles.org/BequestGift) for instructions and language you can use to include the organization in your

will, add a simple codicil to your existing will, or plan other ways to give through your estate.

Always check with your professional advisor regarding financial plans. An advisor may be able to help identify tax benefits through additional charitable giving vehicles that also benefit ocean wildlife and habitats. Your information is always confidential. Thank you!

Please contact Development Director Erica Heimberg at [erica@tirn.net](mailto:erica@tirn.net) or 1-800-859-7283 ext. 105 to discuss your plans or for more information.

## Turtle Island’s Strong Finances Earn Top Four-Star Rating

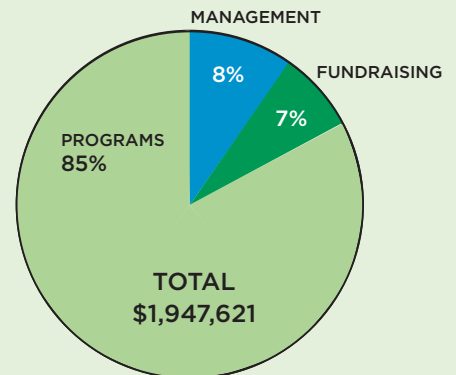


**F**OR THE SECOND year in a row, Turtle Island has earned the top, four-star rating from Charity Navigator. Charity Navigator is highly respected for its data-driven analysis of the nonprofit sector. This rating demonstrates that Turtle Island exceeds nonprofit standards for financial efficiency and transparency. Only 22% of the charities evaluated by Charity Navigator have received at least two consecutive four-star evaluations.

Non-profits only earn a four-star rating if they excel in assuring the vast majority of their funds go to programs and not bureaucracy, their finances are all in order, and they demonstrate a superior level of accountability and transparency.

Our work depends on the support of caring, committed individual donors like you. You can support Turtle Island with a high level of peace of mind that we use our resources wisely, efficiently and effectively as judged by the independent Charity Navigator, the nation’s largest and most-utilized evaluator of charities.

### Turtle Island 2015-16 Expenditure Breakdown





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## About Turtle Island Restoration Network

**T**URTLE ISLAND RESTORATION NETWORK, a leading advocate for the world's oceans and marine wildlife, was founded in 1989 and was originally called the Sea Turtle Restoration Project. Over the years, we have expanded our work to protect marine mammals including whales, dolphins, monk seals and dugongs, as well as sharks, salmon, and seabirds.

Our work is based on science, fueled by people who care, and effective at catalyzing long-lasting positive change that protects the likes of green sea turtles and steelhead trout.

Our mission is to mobilize people in local communities around the world to protect marine wildlife and the oceans and inland watersheds that sustain them.

We accomplish our mission through grassroots empowerment, consumer action, strategic litigation, hands-on restoration, environmental education, and by promoting sustainable local, national and international marine policies. Learn more at [SeaTurtles.org](http://SeaTurtles.org).

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## Viva la Tortuga!

Spring/Summer 2017  
Newsletter of Turtle Island Restoration Network



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