

# Viva la Tortuga!

NEWSLETTER OF TURTLE ISLAND RESTORATION NETWORK

SEATURTLES.ORG

**T**URTLE ISLAND is increasingly working on climate change related issues. Our new report, 'Deadly Waters: The Threat of Climate Change and Rising Sea Levels to Sea Turtle Nesting Beaches,' is no exception. The report is available online for free to researchers, students, and the public. It looks at the impacts of climate change, chiefly sea level rise, on major sea turtle nesting beaches for all seven species of sea turtles.

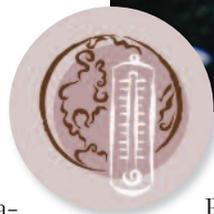
As sea levels rise due to climate change, our report finds that many important sea turtle nesting beaches could be washed away. As some species of turtles rely heavily on singular nesting beaches, the impact of a loss of even one nesting beach would be devastating.

Right now, six of the seven species of sea turtles are listed as endangered, threatened or vulnerable by the U.S. Endangered Species Act (ESA), national agencies, or international conservation bodies. The loss of key nesting habitat could be detrimental to all species of sea turtles if not urgently addressed.

Our report identifies major nesting beaches around the world that are at risk from climate change such as French Frigate Shoals in Hawaii where



## Climate Change & Sea Turtles



green sea turtles nest, and Padre Island National Seashore in Texas where Kemp's ridley sea turtles nest.

French Frigate Shoals, part of an atoll located in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands, are currently less than 6 feet above sea level. Rising sea levels reduce the beach area on these islands, and could eventually submerge them.

Right now 90 percent of the Hawaiian green sea turtles (locally known as honu) nest on the beaches of French Frigate Shoals. Fifty percent of those green turtles nest at East Island. The potential for the loss of this important nesting sites due to climate change is real.

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# Letter from the Director

## A WORLDWIDE MOVEMENT OF SCIENCE-BASED ACTIVISTS

I RECENTLY RETURNED FROM South Africa where I attended an international treaty conference known as the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). CITES controls international trade in endangered species products to promote greater protections for highly migratory endangered marine species, including two species of sharks and several species of rays. Joining me at the meeting was Turtle Island's International Policy Director Randall Arauz and Activist Regi Domingo, both based in Costa Rica.

I am delighted to report that together we were successful in getting all of these species placed on the Appendix that will control previously unregulated trade.

The meeting was held in Johannesburg, and was attended by government representatives from more than 180 nations and scores of environmental organizations from around the world. CITES is an international agreement between governments whose aim is to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival.

Historically, CITES has focused attention on terrestrial megafauna—such as lions, rhinoceros, and elephants, and although 5,600 animals and 30,000 plants are protected by the treaty, only 103 fish species have made the list prior to this meeting.

The need to add focus on marine fish species, in light of the crisis facing our oceans from overfishing, ocean acidification, and pollution is critical to the survival of our planet.

Specifically, Turtle Island worked to add silky sharks, thresher sharks, and several species of mobula rays (known as 'devil rays') on to Appendix II, which lists species that are not necessarily now threatened with extinction but that may become so unless trade is closely controlled. International trade in specimens of Appendix II species may be authorized if certain conditions are met, and will not be detrimental to the survival of the species in the wild.

It was an honor to represent the hundreds of thousands of Turtle Island supporters, and to work to protect species like silky and thresher sharks, and mobula rays that need international protections to survive the threats they face from overfishing and climate change. These magnificent animals migrate beyond national boundaries and into international waters, and their survival relies on cooperation of all the governments of the world.

Turtle Island Restoration Network, recognized as an international organization by the United Nations, participates at various international and regional treaty organizations including the Law of the Sea, Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission, IUCN World Conservation Congress, in addition to CITES and others. We will continue to attend these important meetings and fight for greater protections for marine wildlife.

*Sincerely,*



TODD STEINER, Executive Director  
Turtle Island Restoration Network

*continued from page 1*

Our report offers recommendations for scientists and policy makers about how to ensure that sea turtles thrive and remain a part of our marinescape. The ability of sea turtles to be resilient to climate change depends on sea turtle populations being robust and their habitat being protected. Please download your free copy of our report online at: [SeaTurtles.org/DeadlyWaters](http://SeaTurtles.org/DeadlyWaters).





a combined total of 4,957 miles (almost the distance from Galveston to Paris, France), spent 979 hours out looking for turtles and did 613 patrols on the Upper Texas Coast.

The first nest this year was found on North Padre Island on April 13th by another team of volunteers. Our team's first turtle sighting occurred on May 27th. This year, the total count of Kemp's ridley sea turtle nests on the entire Texas Coast was 185. This is up slightly from last year and is a trend we hope continues as Kemp's ridley sea turtles are one of the most endangered sea turtles in the world. Their survival is continually threatened by industrial fishing, oil spills, and climate change. Turtle Island is actively working to restore and protect these turtles in the Gulf of Mexico. Thank you to each of our turtle patrol volunteers for their time and effort, and to our members for supporting this critical effort.

## Summer Beach Monitoring in Texas

**I**N THE GULF OF MEXICO, Kemp's ridley sea turtles come ashore to nest from April to July. In 2014, Turtle Island began coordinating and training volunteers to help identify and protect nesting turtles as part of the Upper Texas Coast Nesting Beach Monitor Program.

Turtle Island's trained sea turtle patrol

teams walk along the Upper Texas Coast looking for sea turtles, crawl tracks, and disturbances in the dunes that would indicate a sea turtle left the water to look for a suitable place to lay eggs.

Our dedicated volunteers patrol about 70 miles of beach each day of the nesting season no matter the weather. This season our incredible volunteers walked

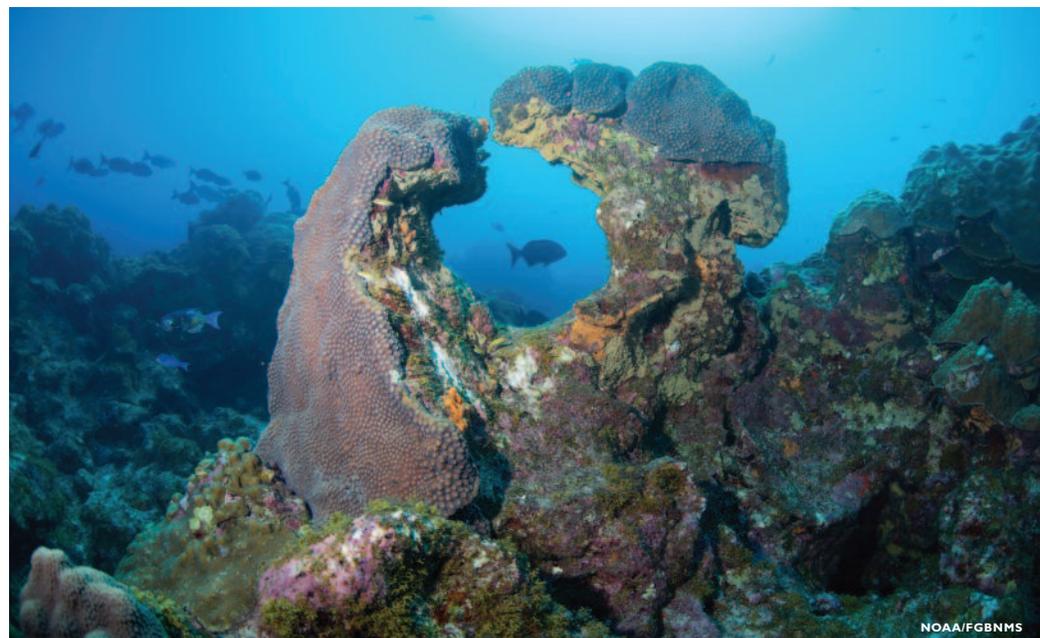
## Ocean Guardian Schools

**O**UR GULF OF MEXICO staff is collaborating with the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation, and the Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary (FGBNMS) staff on a Sea Turtle in the Sanctuary initiative.

This program will instruct students through in-class presentations on the FGBNMS, sea turtles, and solutions for reduction of marine debris in our ocean.

The initiative will also launch the first two Ocean Guardian Schools in the Gulf of Mexico!

An Ocean Guardian School makes a commitment to the protection and conservation of its local watersheds, the world's ocean, and special ocean areas, like national marine sanctuaries. The school makes this commitment by proposing and then implementing a school- or community-based conservation project according to NOAA.



*An underwater view of Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary.*

Two Galveston Independent School District schools have committed for the 2016–2017 school year. Elementary students will recycle plastic bottles and fishing line, while middle school students will create a community garden and rainwater collection system. Turtle Island is also working with two Ocean

Guardian Schools in California. One who will focus on restoring steelhead habitat, and the other will retrofit their new campus to be more ocean friendly through actions like installing rainwater catchment. Follow us at [Facebook.com/SeaTurtles.org](https://www.facebook.com/SeaTurtles.org) to get updates on these initiatives.



RODRIGO FRISCIONE, NAKAWE PROJECT

Costa Rica, Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala to support listing silky sharks on Appendix II of the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). Listing a species provides it with special protections globally. In the case of the silky shark, fishing nations would need to provide scientific evidence on the sustainability of their extraction for export. If that information is not provided, then the international trade of the species is barred.

Turtle Island worked with partner organizations in Central America to hand deliver the petitions to each nation's president.

This year the CITES wildlife conservation meeting was held in Johannesburg, South Africa. Our Executive Director Todd Steiner and International Policy Director Randall Arauz attended the meeting and spoke with world leaders, advocating for nations to support silky shark protection. Thanks to our advocacy, and that of our partners, silky sharks, thresher sharks, and rays were all listed on Appendix II of CITES, and will gain much needed protections globally!

## Silky Sharks Gain Global Protections

**T**URTLE ISLAND is working to create a marine protected swimway for migrating sharks and sea turtles in the Eastern Tropical Pacific. One of the ways we are working to do this is by studying and tracking the movements of turtles and sharks. Our research will be used to help governments, organizations, and marine protected areas managers understand the importance of protecting a corridor of the ocean, and understand the connec-

tion between island chains in this region.

Turtle Island believes that silky sharks, a highly-migratory species, should be globally protected and no longer targeted for its fins.

More than 15,000 of you signed on to our petition calling for global protections for silky sharks. The petition specifically called on the Presidents of

## New Data Proves Connectivity Between Las Gemelas Seamount and Cocos Island

**L**AS GEMELAS, Cocos Island, and the Galapagos Islands are all part of the same underwater mountain range in the Eastern Tropical Pacific. Turtle Island is studying how these areas are connected, and how sharks use these seamounts.

In May 2015, Turtle Island placed two acoustic receivers at Las Gemelas Seamount (located approximately 400 miles off the coast of Costa Rica, and 40 miles from Cocos Island National Park). These receivers 'ping' whenever a tagged shark swims by, and provide scientists with information on its movements.

In August 2016, Turtle Island recovered the receivers at Las Gemelas, and was delighted to find that a hammerhead shark tagged in Cocos Island had visited it, and then returned to Cocos Island. This indicated that Cocos hammerheads are also using the Las Gemelas Seamount, and that there is connectivity between the areas.

The receiver also indicated that a thresher shark, which had been tagged near the seamount, made two more brief visits to the same seamount in January and in May 2016. This data should be helpful in developing the regulations for Costa Rica's relatively

new Las Gemelas Seamount Management Area.



NESTOR E. RAGO ROMERO

## More Than Just a Gift

ONE OF TURTLE ISLAND'S core values centers around giving people the opportunity to take action for the sea turtles, sharks, dolphins, and the oceans. In addition to volunteering and sending emails to decision makers, our supporters also take action by making tax-deductible contributions to support our work.

We see making a gift to Turtle Island as more than a financial transaction. We see it as a deeper commitment to protecting animals, defending the oceans, and fighting against extinction.

We asked some of our most faithful supporters about why they choose Turtle Island and here is what some of them have said:

*"I choose Turtle Island Restoration Network because I feel like I am a small part of a team that makes a big difference, and it brings me joy to share in Turtle Island's victories along the way."* —DORIAN B.



*"I support Turtle Island monthly for all the good work they do in bringing awareness to the forefront of people's minds to help turtles everywhere to thrive."* —KANARA W.



*"I want to be a part of the big picture that is long-term conservation, so that is why I give."* —BRYONY A.



*"A sustained donation supports your efforts to create meaningful change for sea turtles and the ocean. And that's important to me!"* —PATRICIA W.



RODRIGO FRISCIONE, NAKAWE PROJECT

## Get to Know the Silky Shark

- ◆ Silky sharks (*Carcharhinus falciformis*) are named for their exceptionally smooth skin
- ◆ Female silky sharks are slightly larger than males
- ◆ The silky shark is classified as "Near Threatened" on the IUCN Red List
- ◆ They are active predators and love to eat mackerel, tuna, mullet, and squid
- ◆ A typical silky shark litter size is between 2 and 14 young, and they are believed to have a lifespan of about 23 years
- ◆ They can be found in the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian Oceans
- ◆ They prefer warm waters
- ◆ They can be lone hunters, or school with fellow sharks around the same size
- ◆ The silky shark is on the top three list of most important sharks in the global fin trade
- ◆ There are currently no international limits placed on catches of the silky shark, but Turtle Island is working to get limits in place to protect these pelagic sharks



*"I donate because I want to be a part of the preservation of something very important like the ocean, and what lives in it. The animals need to have protection just as we do."* —THERESA H.

To learn about giving opportunities and ways to bring your values to life, please visit [SeaTurtles.org/support-us](https://SeaTurtles.org/support-us)

# Shop at [SeaTurtles.org/Shop](http://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

## Help Save Marine Wildlife with a 2016 Charitable IRA Rollover

**T**URTLE ISLAND donors aged 70½ and older can support our work with a Charitable Individual Retirement Account (IRA) Rollover in 2016 and enjoy tax benefits while putting their contribution to work to save sea turtles, sharks, dolphins and other marine wildlife! The charitable IRA rollover (also called a qualified charitable distribution) 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 of any amount (up to \$100,000), 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.

## Wild Ocean Society Members—Marine Wildlife Protection Leaders

**T**AKE YOUR TURTLE ISLAND membership to the next level. Join our Wild Ocean Society by making a leadership gift of \$1,000 or more to lead the fight to protect sea turtles, sharks, dolphins and other marine wildlife species. Donors at each level enjoy recognition and exclusive benefits including up-to-the-moment information on Turtle Island's campaigns and current conservation issues, presentations, special gifts and much more. These tax-deductible contributions provide crucial support to develop effective hands-on conservation programs and hard-hitting policy change campaigns to ensure the survival of marine animals. Learn more at [SeaTurtles.org/MajorDonorCircle](http://SeaTurtles.org/MajorDonorCircle).

Please contact Development Director Erica Heimberg at [erica@tirn.net](mailto:erica@tirn.net) or 1-800-859-7283 to learn more about how you can support Turtle Island. Thank you!

## 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's 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!

## Special Recognition to our Ocean Heroes

THE FOLLOWING DONORS have made a gift to Turtle Island every year for at least 20 years:

Mr. David Hayes; Ethan Revsin; Ms. Rosalind D. Zachow; Wayne Persons; Daniel Silver MD; Norfleet and Yvonne Blaine; Brenda Jean Bailey DL; Ms. Sherron Kritzer; Roy O. Brady Jr. and; Laura L. Hawkins; Curt and Diane Fuhrmann; Guy Hagstette; Marnie Walker Gaede; Margaret and J. Alfred Broaddus; Peter and Margaret Reed; Ms. Latimer Kells; Bruce and Maricela Rasmussen; and Annette Varady

We thank you all, and all our caring members, for the trust you put in us to protect animals and fight against extinction. We could not do it without you.

If we accidentally did not include your name in this list, please contact us at [info@SeaTurtles.org](mailto:info@SeaTurtles.org) so we can personally thank you.

## Board Member Profiles

Turtle Island is pleased to introduce two new members to our board of directors—Alex Hearn and Brendan Cummings. Get to know our newest board members below.



**D**R. ALEX HEARN is Turtle Island's Ecuador Representative. Previously he worked as Turtle Island's Director of Conservation Science in early 2013. Before that he worked at the Charles Darwin Foundation in the Galapagos Islands and was Project Scientist in the Dept. of Wildlife Fish and Conservation Biology at UC Davis (2008-13). He is one of the founders of the

Migramar Network, and has played an active role in publishing the science generated to date and in applying the science to policy. Alex has a B.S. in Oceanography and Marine Biology, an M.S. in Marine Resource Development and Protection, and a PhD in Marine Biology.



**B**RENDAN CUMMINGS is Senior Counsel, Strategic Litigation Group Director and founder of the Ocean Program at the Center for Biological Diversity, where he has worked since 1988. A graduate of Berkeley's Boalt Hall School of Law, Brendan

has litigated dozens of Endangered Species Act cases, as well as cases under the Marine Mammal Protection Act, Clean Water Act and numerous other state and federal statutes.

## Join Turtle Island's Monthly Giving Program

JOIN US in defending sea turtles, whales, dolphins and sharks by making a monthly gift today. When you make a monthly gift to Turtle Island, you are helping to:

- ▶ Reduce plastic pollution at key nesting beaches,
- ▶ Save more than 60,000 baby sea turtle hatchlings every year,
- ▶ Win better protections for turtles, dolphins, and whales, and
- ▶ Teach more than 10,000 school children simple things they can do to save our oceans.

And much more. Donate just \$5 a month or more and we will thank you with a Turtle Island baseball cap made from 100% organic cotton. If you need help setting up your donation, or to change it, email us at [info@SeaTurtles.Org](mailto:info@SeaTurtles.Org) or call 1-800-859-7283 (US). Use the enclosed envelope to join, or go online to [SeaTurtles.org/Monthly](http://SeaTurtles.org/Monthly). Thank you!

## Meet the Interns

TURTLE ISLAND RESTORATION NETWORK is proud to help train the next generation of environmentalists through our internship program. Get to know our interns:

**ADRIENNE BOUVERON, Habitat Restoration & Development Intern**—B.A. Environmental Sociology, minor in Environmental Affairs, Colorado State University '13

**EMILY PERSICO, Habitat Restoration & Development Intern**—B.S. Environmental Science, University of Florida '16

**ELIZABETH BYRNE, Habitat Restoration & Nursery Intern**—B.A. Public Service, University of Calif. Davis '15

**ASHLEY MURRAY, Salmonid Monitoring Intern**—B.S. Environmental Science in progress, State University of New York-Plattsburgh



L to R:  
Adrienne Bouveron,  
Emily Persico,  
Elizabeth Byrne,  
Ashley Murray

Learn more about our internship program and please share with folks looking for opportunities to help us save the oceans at [SeaTurtles.org/Intern](http://SeaTurtles.org/Intern).

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



## About the Sea Turtle Restoration Project

### A Conservation Initiative of Turtle Island Restoration Network

**T**HE SEA TURTLE RESTORATION PROJECT was founded more than 25 years ago, and is a conservation initiative of Turtle Island, a leading advocate for the world's oceans and marine wildlife.

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).

### in this issue:

**Victory! Greater Protections Won for Silky Sharks, Thresher Sharks & Devil Rays**  
**The Impact of Climate Change on Sea Turtles**

**Volunteers Work to Save Kemp's Ridely Sea Turtles**

**Ocean Heroes**

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Brendan Cummings, Julie  
Owen Hanft, Dr. Alex Hearn,  
Debbie Sivas,  
Todd Steiner  
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## Viva la Tortuga!

Winter 2016-17

Newsletter of Turtle Island Restoration Network



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