

VELADOR

Science-Based Sea Turtle Conservation Since 1959

Issue 2, 2016

STC Kicks Off the 9th Annual Tour de Turtles



Celeste McWilliams

The 9th Annual Tour de Turtles is right around the corner! Officially kicking off on August 1st, this year's marathon migration promises to bring new fun, education and turtle friends.

Over the past nine years, STC has released dozens of turtles from nesting sites in Florida, Costa

Rica, Panama, Puerto Rico, Mexico and the West Indies. These turtles have provided invaluable data on migratory routes and foraging grounds for five sea turtle species in the Western Hemisphere. The public turtle releases conducted at the start of each year's Tour de Turtles annually

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Sea Turtle Conservancy hosts release of rehabilitated turtles.



STC partners with LunchSkins

STC Partners with LunchSkins Reusable Bags

There exists a well known estimate that only 1 in 1,000 sea turtle hatchlings will make it to adulthood. Sea turtles face a growing list of threats, from invasive species predation to loss of nesting habitat, which hinder their rate of survival. One threat gaining a lot of media attention is marine debris. As STC reported in a 2015 Velador article entitled “The Plastic Predicament”, plastics in the oceans cause problems for sea turtles for all kinds of reasons. The most visible is plastics being unknowingly ingested by sea turtles which mistake bags and other plastics for food. These plastics, especially plastic bags, end up in the digestive tracts of sea turtles and, almost certainly, end up killing them. When small pieces of plastic are eaten by filter feeders, such as jellyfish, they can inadvertently end up in sea turtles as part of the food chain. Chemicals in plastics have been known to disrupt hormones and can interfere with biological processes such as reproduction.

With the environmental costs of plastics rising, STC is proud to partner with LunchSkins reusable bags. By purchasing the exclusive sea turtle bag, consumers can help reduce their plastic footprint and a portion will be donated back to Sea Turtle Conservancy.



“LunchSkins and the Sea Turtle Conservancy are powerful allies in the fight to stop global plastic pollution that is devastating our oceans and sea life,” said Kirsten Quigley, Founder/CEO, LunchSkins. “We created LunchSkins reusable bags as a sustainable replacement for billions of throw away plastic bags that make their way into landfills and oceans every year. It’s not only sea life that suffers. Plastic pollution affect humans too, particularly harmful PVC (Polyvinyl chloride, a common plastic with health concerns recognized

by the Food & Drug Administration and the European Union’s REACH list). Just ONE LunchSkins reusable bag replaces 500 disposable baggies. It’s a small, everyday step that all of us can take to make a big difference for healthier oceans and the animals that live there.”

STC is extremely excited about this partnership and the opportunity to continue to educate the public about plastic marine debris and the risk facing sea turtles. These durable bags can be used for snacks, toiletries, bulk grocery items or anything else you may have once put in a small plastic zip-top bag. Our staff love putting our cell phones, keys and sunblock in them for a beach day! The sea turtle bag can be purchased at www.lunchskins.com. 

By Becca Gelwicks
Membership Coordinator

VELADOR {bel.a.dor}

In Caribbean cultures, **Velador** translates as “one who stands vigil” —referring to turtle hunters who waited at night for turtles to come ashore. Now STC claims this title for its newsletter, and around the world STC’s researchers and volunteers are replacing poachers as the new veladors. The **Velador** is published for Members and supporters of the nonprofit **Sea Turtle Conservancy**. STC is dedicated to the conservation of sea turtles through research, advocacy, education and protection of the habitats upon which they depend.

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... from cover

draw more than 5,000 people, and the online portion of the event has reached millions of avid turtle enthusiasts over the years.

This year, STC is putting satellite transmitters on a record 13 turtles and hosting live sea turtle release events in Florida, Tortuguero, and Nevis. Especially exciting is that STC is planning to release three green sea turtles in Cuba, which has never been done before. Another new release event will be near Clearwater, Florida as we tag and release a rehabilitated loggerhead with the Clearwater Marine Aquarium.

Take a look at the list of events below and mark your calendar so you don't miss any of the fun!

TORTUGUERO LIVE SEA TURTLE RELEASE

Dates: Saturday, July 9

Time: 9:00 a.m.

Location: STC's John H. Phipps Biological Field Station, Tortuguero, Costa Rica

Entrance: This event is free and open to the public.

NEVIS LIVE SEA TURTLE RELEASE

Dates: Sunday, July 17 & Monday, July 18

Time: 8:30 a.m. - 9 a.m.

Location: Four Seasons Resort on Pinney's Beach, Nevis

Entrance: This event is free and open to the public.

FLORIDA KEYS REHAB SEA TURTLE RELEASE

Date: Friday, July 22nd

Time: 10:30 am

Location: Sombrero Beach, Florida Keys

Entrance: This event is free and open to the public.



Ben Hicks

TOUR DE TURTLES KICK-OFF EVENT

Please join Sea Turtle Conservancy as we kick off Tour de Turtles with a celebration featuring hors d'oeuvres, refreshments, live music, and a silent auction to benefit sea turtle conservation and habitat protection in Brevard County. All proceeds from the event support sea turtle conservation efforts.

Date: Saturday, July 30th

Time: 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Location: Barrier Island Center 8385 S Hwy A1A, Melbourne Beach, FL

Entrance: Cost: \$20 in advance or \$35 at the door.

You can purchase advance tickets online at

www.conserveturtles.org

FLORIDA LIVE SEA TURTLE RELEASE

Date: Sunday, July 31st

Time: 7:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.

(Turtles will be released promptly at 8 a.m.)

Location: Barrier Island Center 8385 S Hwy A1A, Melbourne Beach, FL

Entrance: This event is free and open to the public.

Questions? Email us at stc@conserveturtles.org

We hope to see you there! 

Can't make the releases?

You can still join in on the fun:

* Adopt-A-Turtle

* Make a Swim-A-Thon Pledge

* Look at maps and play games

All at www.tourdeturtles.org

By Lexie Beach
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Turtle Release



Sea Turtle Conservancy and the Barrier Island Center hosted the release of two juvenile green turtles that were rehabilitated by the Brevard Zoo's Sea Turtle Rehabilitation Program. STC staff member Donna Lee Crawford answered a stranding call for one of the turtles which she later named "Mr. President." The turtle was lethargic and had a bite wound on his plastron. The second turtle, named "Chad" was found a month earlier and was lethargic and covered in barnacles.

Both turtles made full recoveries and were returned to the sea to much fanfare. A crowd of about 50 people got to see these endangered creatures up close before making their way back to the ocean. Releases such as this serve as a great educational opportunity; many in the crowd were unaware of the conservation work being done in their own backyard. STC was humbled to play a part in returning these two animals to the sea.

Because of the conservation work being done by STC, the Brevard Zoo and other stakeholders in Florida, Chad and Mr. President once again have the chance for long, healthy lives. We hope to see them again one day! 



"Mr. President" in a tank at the Brevard Zoo prior to being released.