



# Editor's Note

## Navigating the Conservation Obstacle Course

Like a hurdler running a race, conservationists need to maintain a clear vision of what lies ahead, an understanding of the barriers that litter our path, and a strategy for getting past them effectively to stay the course to the finish line.

We created the SWOT Program in 2004 in an effort to remove *just one* of the key barriers to effective conservation of sea turtles and their habitats—the absence of a current, comprehensive, global perspective of sea turtle distribution and status that would help to prioritize and focus global conservation actions. As SWOT heads into its 10th year, we are proud to be well on our way to clearing that first hurdle. Along the winding road toward our goal, we have encountered a multitude of other unforeseen obstacles that our SWOT Team—now 1,200 strong—has ably cleared; yet unsurprisingly, with each passing day new challenges emerge requiring our keen attention.

In this eighth volume of *SWOT Report* we have called upon SWOT team experts to share their wisdom about how to successfully leap some of the most common barriers that confront sea turtle conservationists everywhere. Herein we discuss the age-old challenges of fundraising; of understanding the movements of turtles when they elude our ability to directly observe them; and that most important challenge, persuading others to join and support our worthy cause, the topic of our special feature article.

Strangely, though the survival of the human species relies directly on a healthy planet Earth that includes sea turtles and their ocean habitats, governments, lawmakers, businesses, and people *still need persuading* that their behaviors must change in relation to nature. Persuasion can take myriad forms, from political lobbying to artistic stunts like the one depicted on our cover undertaken by the International Fund for Animal Welfare in Bournemouth, United Kingdom. Many helpful hints and strategies are found in these pages, and among them are references to “social responsibility,” “ethical obligation,” and my personal favorite, “passion.” Passion is the high-octane ingredient that keeps our global community fueled to wake up each day to confront the next obstacle along our conservation path.

So, be passionate and “be lively!”—as I learned from these young Indian conservationists at an event titled *Turtle's Health Is the Ocean's Wealth*. Like hurdlers, we will keep pushing forward, leaping the obstacles one by one, while keeping our strength and stamina intact until the finish line.



THIS PAGE: Children bearing placards at an event in Chennai, India, in January 2007 show their support for sea turtle conservation at an event titled *Turtles' Health Is the Ocean's Wealth*. © RODERIC B. MAST AT LEFT: A green turtle hatchling makes its way to sea on Santa Cruz Island, Galapagos Islands, Ecuador. © PETE OXFORD

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