

# Acting Globally

## SWOT Small Grants 2012

Visit [www.SeaTurtleStatus.org](http://www.SeaTurtleStatus.org) to apply for a 2013 SWOT small grant!

Since 2006, SWOT small grants have helped field-based partners around the world realize their research and conservation goals. To date, we have given 43 grants to partners in 27 countries. SWOT grants are awarded annually to projects in each of SWOT's three areas of focus: networking and capacity building, science, and education and outreach. The following are updates from each of our six grantees in 2012.

### BANGLADESH

## Asian University for Women

A 2012 SWOT grant is being used to support a team of 16 students from the Asian University for Women in Chittagong, Bangladesh, to translate SWOT's "Minimum Data Standards for Nesting Beach Monitoring" into Bangla, Burmese, Khmer, Hindi, Malayalam, Sinhalese, Tamil, Urdu, and Vietnamese. Translations will be made available in electronic and printed form for use by nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), universities, and government agencies. Through these materials, the team, led by Dr. Andrea Phillott, hopes to increase regional awareness and understanding of sea turtle conservation issues and encourage the use of best practices for nesting beach monitoring throughout the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asian region.



Students of the Asian University for Women in Chittagong, Bangladesh, are translating sea turtle materials from English into several Southeast Asian languages for greater accessibility. © ANDREA PHILLOTT



Children gather for an educational presentation by project staff. © TE MANA O TE MOANA

### FRENCH POLYNESIA

## Te Mana o Te Moana

Te Mana o Te Moana has been working to protect sea turtles in French Polynesia since 2004, and its conservation education programs have reached over 39,000 children in the past eight years. Despite a 1990 ban on harvesting sea turtles, their research has found that fishermen in the region lack a basic understanding of the threats to sea turtles and the vulnerability of their nesting and reproductive habitats to fishing practices. Using its 2012 SWOT grant, Te Mana o Te Moana will collaborate with the La Rochelle Aquarium and the French Development Agency (AFD) to produce an educational book titled *Sea Turtles of French Polynesia*, which will cover basic sea turtle biology and ecology, field identification, threats to turtles, conservation and research actions, and sea turtles' cultural significance in French Polynesia.

### COLOMBIA

## Conservación Ambiente Colombia Foundation (CACF)

Located on the Caribbean coast of Colombia, CACF began as a conservation initiative run by community leaders in the village of El Lechugal, which previously poached nearly 100 percent of nesting turtles. CACF has collaborated with local government to help change the attitudes of local people by engaging them in sea turtle monitoring, environmental education, and community projects such as recycling. Using its SWOT grant, CACF plans to replicate this existing model in the neighboring community of Mulatos, which is visited by nesting hawksbills and leatherbacks. By facilitating these exchanges, CACF hopes to educate other communities in the region and to build local capacity for research and conservation.



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## SÃO TOMÉ AND PRÍNCIPE

### Association for the Research, Protection, and Conservation of Sea Turtles in Lusophone Countries (ATM)

Based on Príncipe Island off the coast of West Africa, ATM has identified wide data gaps and a need to establish a national strategy to conserve the country's imperiled sea turtle populations. Green, hawksbill, and leatherback turtles in São Tomé and Príncipe are subject to poaching for jewelry and meat, despite a 2009 ban on turtle products. With its 2012 SWOT grant, ATM will collaborate with a wide range of stakeholders to generate recommendations for best conservation practices at the national level. They will also establish a long-term monitoring program using SWOT minimum data standards and create a national database to inform future management decisions and conservation actions.

Turtle guard Hipólito Lima, from the organization Marapa in São Tomé, explains to fellow guards the importance of taking data correctly and having standardized protocols on both islands. © JOANA HANCOCK

## MADAGASCAR

### Blue Ventures

Blue Ventures' marine turtle research and conservation program has been operating in Madagascar since 2006, with research on an active, yet illegal, turtle fishery and a severely declining nesting population along the island's west coast. A 2012 SWOT grant will help Blue Ventures continue to monitor a nesting population in the remote Barren Isles. The first year of monitoring at Barren Isles revealed a small nesting population of turtles that is highly threatened by migrant fishers. Using an established team of community monitors, Blue Ventures aims to further assess the status of nesting as part of a larger program to create a locally managed marine area for the protection and sustainable management of the Barren Isles ecosystem.



A community nest monitoring team member inspects a sea turtle track in Madagascar. © BLUE VENTURES

## INDIA

### Maharaja Krishnakumarsinhji Bhavnagar University

A 2012 SWOT grant will be used to assess areas on the coast of the Gulf of Khambhat (Cambay) from Bhavnagar to Diu, India, a zone identified by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Marine Turtle Specialist Group as a critical data gap for sea turtles. The major threats to coastal ecosystems in this part of Gujarat have been rapid industrialization and urbanization, plus coastal plantations, sand mining, and problems related to factory effluents and domestic sewage in nearshore waters. The Gulf of Khambhat is likely an important migratory pathway for green turtles and is believed to also serve as foraging habitat for greens and other species. This survey, led by Dr. I. R. Gadhi, will provide important baseline information about these poorly known sea turtle populations.



Students collect trash along the beach in the Gulf of Khambhat, India. © I. R. GADHI