

Private Tourism Takes Marine Conservation to the Public



A baby hawksbill takes its inaugural swim off a beach in front of a villa at the Banyan Tree Maldives Vabbinfaru.
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At Banyan Tree Hotels and Resorts, every aspect of day-to-day operation is designed to help protect and preserve the planet. But this group of eco-properties has gone above and beyond its operations to develop a comprehensive marine conservation and education program—with a special emphasis on sea turtles at its Maldives and Seychelles resorts.

At the Banyan Tree Maldives Vabbinfaru and Angsana Ihuru resorts, a team of full-time marine biologists is hard at work building coral reefs, researching black-tip reef sharks (*Carcharhinus melanopterus*), and monitoring sea turtles. The resorts' Marine Lab hosts semi-weekly marine biology classes for Banyan Tree guests, who are also invited to participate in nesting and monitoring

studies of the hawksbill and green sea turtles that visit the resorts' shores.

Recognizing the importance of educating the local community on the value of marine conservation, Banyan Tree biologists conduct regular classes for local school children, giving them hands-on experiences at the Marine Lab and in sea turtle conservation activities. Reaching even beyond the local communities, an easy-to-read, illustrated children's book is distributed throughout the Maldives. It is a narrative told by a young green sea turtle about his history in the Banyan Tree Green Sea Turtle Head-Start Program, a program and facility currently in redevelopment after the December 2004 tsunami.

A sister resort, the Banyan Tree Seychelles, has joined hands with the Marine

Conservationists Say "Cheers" to this Company's Idea

Business executives may think it unfeasible for their companies to assist sea turtle or other wildlife conservation. But when creative, conservation-concerned minds went to work at the Portland Brewing Company in Portland, Oregon, U.S.A., the brewery came up with an innovative idea: a beer that generates funds and raises awareness for sea turtle conservation.

Sold throughout Hawaii, U.S.A., where locals and tourists recognize *honu* as the Hawaiian name for sea turtle, the brewery's Honu Beer has been a smash success since its introduction to the market in January 2004. A generous portion of each sale goes directly to the World Turtle Trust, a nonprofit organization based in Honolulu that aids sea turtle conservation and education projects across the globe.



Conservation Society of Seychelles to implement a Turtle Nesting and Beach Dynamics Observation Program, a three-year study to monitor the impact of sand movement, hotel development, and resort activities on hawksbill nesting behavior, with a view toward developing beach management practices that minimize negative impacts and learning how to increase the number of successful hawksbill hatches.

Resort guests are encouraged to participate in this program as well, and support has been rallied from the local community with such creative outreach activities as a hawksbill drawing competition for children and a World Environment Day march in the country's capital, Victoria, to raise public support for turtle conservation in Seychelles.