

Acting Globally

SWOT SMALL GRANTS 2020

Since 2006, SWOT's small grants have helped field-based partners around the world to achieve their research and conservation goals. To date, 104 grants have been awarded to 88 applicants in more than 52 countries and territories for work addressing three key themes: (1) networking and capacity building, (2) science, and (3) education and outreach. The following are brief overviews of our 2020 grantees. Visit www.SeaTurtleStatus.org/grants for application instructions and a list of all past SWOT grantees.



African Chelonian Institute – SENEGAL

African Chelonian Institute will use its 2020 SWOT grant to host the inaugural “Senegal National Sea Turtle Days,” a three-day event that will be held in the coastal towns of Joal-Fadiouth and Palmarin to raise awareness about sea turtles and ocean pollution with special attention to plastic waste. This event will become an annual activity that will inspire community members to integrate ocean-friendly behaviors into their everyday lives.

Bio Conservation Society (BCSL) – SRI LANKA

The Kalpitiya peninsula in Sri Lanka provides essential habitat for a wide variety of marine species, including olive ridley sea turtles. The presence of sea turtles is known primarily through the high rates of incidental capture in the area. Despite this, no formal surveys have been done to estimate the number of turtles that nest on the 5 km (3.1 mi) of beach. BCSL will use its 2020 SWOT grant to conduct surveys to estimate the scale of olive ridley turtle nesting on the Kalpitiya peninsula, and will share the results via the SWOT database.

Czech University of Life Sciences Prague and Syiah Kuala University – INDONESIA

In Indonesia, the hunting of hawksbill turtles for tortoiseshell still occurs on a considerable scale (see pp. 34–35). A 2020 SWOT grant will help the project's researchers investigate the status of tortoiseshell trade at 12 carefully selected locations on Sumatra and its islands. Through fieldwork, market surveys, and interviews, the researchers hope to better understand the domestic trade, to promote the conservation of hawksbill turtles, and to propose conservation steps to reduce the tortoiseshell trade.

ecOceánica – PERU

In Cancas and Punta Mero, Peru, the accidental capture and mortality of sea turtles, especially hawksbills, is a pervasive problem in artisanal fisheries. ecOceánica will use its 2020 SWOT grant to reduce turtle bycatch and mortality by implementing bycatch reduction technology, creating partnerships with local communities, developing a sea turtle conservation strategy, and increasing public awareness and knowledge of environmental issues through place-based education and citizen science.

Ocean Connectors – MEXICO

Ocean Connectors students in San Diego, California, and Nayarit, Mexico, simultaneously learn about protecting sea turtles that connect them: the eastern Pacific green turtles that migrate between the San Diego Bay and the Revillagigedo Islands in Mexico. With their 2020 SWOT grant, Ocean Connectors will reach 800 students in Nayarit through the “Sea Turtle Discovery Program” to cultivate a future generation of passionate, globally aware, and empowered coastal residents who take active steps to enjoy and protect sea turtles and support ocean health.

The Solon Foundation – SIERRA LEONE

The Turtle Islands of Sierra Leone are home to diverse marine, bird, and reptile life and provide nesting habitat for five of the seven species of sea turtles. Local residents in the Turtle Islands continue to hunt turtles for their meat and to harvest their eggs for consumption. To combat this, The Solon Foundation will use its SWOT grant to lead sea turtle awareness training programs in the Turtle Islands that aim to reduce turtle consumption, monitor and protect nesting sites, and create policies in support of a National Marine Protected Area.

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AZA-SAFE GRANT RECIPIENTS

Since 2019, SWOT has partnered with the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) and its Sea Turtle SAFE (Saving Animals from Extinction) program to make additional grants available for projects related to the conservation of two of the top global priorities for sea turtle conservation—eastern Pacific leatherbacks and Kemp’s ridleys—throughout their respective ranges. The projects on these pages were awarded 2020 SWOT grants thanks to the AZA-SAFE program.



Marine Conservation without Borders – MEXICO

Marine Conservation without Borders (MCwB) collaborates with Indigenous communities worldwide to develop environmental science curricula that integrate Indigenous ecological knowledge with western science to help these two worlds collaborate to protect biodiversity. With its 2020 AZA-SAFE SWOT grant, MCwB will develop a middle school science curriculum on sea turtles for students in Quintana Roo, focusing on eastern Pacific leatherbacks and Kemp’s ridleys, written in Spanish and English and ethno-translated into Maya.

The Mazunte Project – MEXICO

Along the coast of Oaxaca, Mexico, both domestic and stray dogs pose a threat to the sea turtle nests and hatchlings, including critically endangered eastern Pacific leatherbacks. With their 2020 AZA-SAFE SWOT grant, the Mazunte Project will conduct mobile dog spay/neuter and education events along the Pacific coast of Oaxaca in order to decrease the canine predation of sea turtle eggs and hatchlings at these important nesting habitats.

Palmarito Sea Turtle Rescue, Inc. – MEXICO

The Campamento Tortuguero Palmarito was established in 2005 as a full-time effort to protect and conserve the sea turtle populations nesting on Palmarito Beach, including eastern Pacific leatherbacks. Palmarito Sea Turtle Rescue will use their 2020 AZA-SAFE SWOT grant to establish hatcheries and train local volunteers to patrol nesting beaches in Oaxaca, Mexico and to properly relocate and monitor eastern Pacific leatherback nests to protected hatcheries.

Patricia Huerta Rodriguez – MEXICO

The coast of Tamaulipas provides important nesting habitat for Kemp’s ridley turtles, yet it is also highly developed and therefore experiences high levels of traffic on its beaches and in its waters. This project will use a 2020 AZA-SAFE SWOT grant to address threats to Kemp’s ridleys in Tamaulipas by targeting various stakeholders with educational talks and printed materials that address key issues including pollution, the consumption of turtle eggs, bycatch reduction technology, and nesting beach protection.

Sea Turtle Recovery – USA

The number of stranded, cold-stunned sea turtles, especially critically endangered Kemp’s ridleys, found along New Jersey’s coastline has increased in recent years. Cold stunned turtles require immediate and specific care if they are to survive. In order to increase response efforts for affected turtles, a 2020 AZA-SAFE SWOT grant will help Sea Turtle Recovery build and train a team of locally based volunteers to properly handle and transport cold stunned turtles.

Universidad Veracruzana – MEXICO

The Veracruzano Coral Reef System National Marine Park (Parque Nacional Sistema Arrecifal Veracruzano) in Mexico, consists of six islands totaling 52,238 hectares (129,083 acres) that provide habitat for around 1,300 species of fauna, including Kemp’s ridley sea turtles. Veracruz is also the second most important trading port in the country, and the overlap of boats and marine life means that boats sometimes strike and kill turtles. Universidad Veracruzana will use its 2020 AZA-SAFE SWOT grant to lead an educational workshop in conjunction with park administration, local fishermen, and private tourist boats to help decrease sea turtle and boat interactions.

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