

# Acting Globally

## SWOT SMALL GRANTS 2021

Since 2006, SWOT's small grants have helped field-based partners around the world to achieve their research and conservation goals. To date, 123 grants have been awarded to 102 applicants in more than 53 countries and territories for work addressing three key themes: (a) networking and capacity building, (b) science, and (c) education and outreach. The following are brief overviews of SWOT's 2021 grantees. Visit [www.SeaTurtleStatus.org/grants](http://www.SeaTurtleStatus.org/grants) for application instructions and a list of all past SWOT grantees.



TOP ROW: © Aroen Meubanja Community Group; © Abdel-Rahman El Mahdi; MIDDLE ROW: © Ocean Connectors; BOTTOM ROW: © Shritika S. Prakash; © CNRE (Centre National de Recherches sur l'Environnement)

### Abdel-Rahman El Mahdi (Sudan)

Since its designation as a marine protected area in 2004, Dungonab Bay and Mukkawar Island have been recognized as significant sea turtle habitats, but little research has been done. Abdel-Rahman El Mahdi will help to fill the data gaps that relate to nesting and foraging sea turtles and will use the information to recommend conservation and management efforts.

### Aroen Meubanja Community Group (Indonesia)

In collaboration with local communities, the Aroen Meubanja Community Group will conduct a comprehensive study about sea turtle ecology, distribution, population demographics, migration patterns, and habitat use in Sumatra. They will use the results to support a management strategy for leatherback conservation.

### Centro Mexicano de la Tortuga (Mexico)\*\*

Centro Mexicano de la Tortuga will use its SWOT grant to assist with the management of olive ridley arribada sites and to operate the regional rescue and rehabilitation center, which provides medical care and facilities for injured and sick turtles in the state of Oaxaca.

### Colola Proyecto de Tortugas (Mexico)\*\*

The Colola Proyecto de Tortugas will continue its vital nest protection and monitoring work, which has helped to dramatically increase the once-failing population of black (green) sea turtles and to unite the communities of Colola and Maruata, as well as others, around sea turtle conservation in the state of Michoacán.

### Comunidad Protectora de Tortugas de Osa (COPROT) (Costa Rica)\*

Costa Rica's Osa Peninsula provides nesting habitat for thousands of turtles annually. COPROT will combat the threat of ocean plastic pollution on turtle nesting beaches by expanding a community-based recycling center that aims to clean beaches and upcycle collected plastic debris.

### CNRE (Centre National de Recherches sur l'Environnement) (Madagascar)

To combat an increase in the illegal capture and sale of sea turtle products in the Boeny region of Madagascar, CNRE will convene community fishers, fish sellers, and market consumers to facilitate communication between stakeholders and law enforcement.

### Fundação Tartaruga Cabo Verde (Cabo Verde)\*\*\*

Fundação Tartaruga Cabo Verde will introduce children on the island of Boa Vista to the wonders of the ocean and to endangered sea turtles by leading swimming lessons integrated with environmental education.

### Mas Kagin Tapani Association (Papua New Guinea)

Papua New Guinea is home to globally important sea turtle nesting beaches. The Mas Kagin Tapani Association will work to conserve leatherbacks nesting near the village of Sarang by increasing awareness among local residents about the value of turtles, the threats they face, and methods to protect them while simultaneously benefiting local stakeholders.

### Ocean Connectors (Mexico)

Ocean Connectors works with youth in the underserved Pacific coastal communities of Nayarit, Mexico, to educate them about sea turtles and other migratory marine life, as well as to implement projects that inspire children to engage in waste reduction and litter abatement behaviors.

### Shritika S. Prakash of the University of the South Pacific (Fiji)

Ms. Prakash will train fisheries officers, marine biologists, wardens, rangers, conservation officers, village heads, and biology and marine science graduate students in how to conduct sea turtle monitoring and conservation work in remote areas of Fiji, where the nesting ecology of sea turtles is poorly documented.

\* Memorial donations made in honor of Marjorie Lee Kemp (1927–2021) allowed SWOT to award an additional grant to this education and outreach project that is led by a woman who is early in her career.

\*\* Donations from the Mast family, Russell Mittermeier (Re:wild), and Gail Evenari (Maiden Voyage Productions) supported these two important initiatives in Mexico.

\*\*\* SC Johnson generously donated SCUBAPRO snorkel gear to support this unique program in Cabo Verde.



## 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 two of the top global priorities for conservation of critically endangered sea turtle populations: eastern Pacific leatherbacks and Kemp's ridleys.



TOP ROW: © Campamento Tortuguero Ayotlicalli; © CIFAMAC (Centro de Investigación de Fauna Marina y Avistamiento de Cetáceos); MIDDLE ROW: © Palmarito Sea Turtle Rescue and the Mazunte Project; BOTTOM ROW: © The Gulf Center for Sea Turtle Research at Texas A&M University–Galveston; © Paso Pacífico

### The Leatherback Project (Ecuador)

The Leatherback Project will survey fishers at various ports in Ecuador to understand their relationships and beliefs around the ocean, marine wildlife, and conservation. The goals are to (a) improve the livelihoods of artisanal fishers, (b) increase marine wildlife populations (including leatherbacks), and (c) foster healthy relationships between fishers and governmental agencies.

### Campamento Tortuguero Ayotlicalli (Mexico)

Campamento Tortuguero Ayotlicalli will lead beach surveys, protect and tag animals, and organize community education and outreach activities adjacent to leatherback nesting beaches in Guerrero, Mexico.

### CIFAMAC (Centro de Investigación de Fauna Marina y Avistamiento de Cetáceos) (Chile)

CIFAMAC will conduct boat and drone surveys of Mejillones Bay, a newly discovered turtle foraging area on Chile's Atacama coast, and will generate valuable information about the distribution, behavior, habitat use, and demographics of leatherbacks.

### Gladys Porter Zoo and Rancho San José (Mexico)

Gladys Porter Zoo and Rancho San José will expand tagging operations on two major Kemp's ridley nesting beaches in Mexico—La Pesca and Tepehuajes—using state-of-the-art tags and tagging protocols to generate data needed to evaluate the survival status and recovery of Kemp's ridleys.

### The Gulf Center for Sea Turtle Research at Texas A&M University–Galveston (U.S.A.)

Texas Gulf waters are an important habitat for hawksbills, leatherbacks, loggerheads, greens, and Kemp's ridleys, all of which are vulnerable to cold-stunning during winter months. The Gulf Center for Sea Turtle Research will bring sea turtle awareness to the public and build a network of volunteers in Galveston, Texas, to quickly locate and respond to nesting, stranded, sick, injured, and deceased sea turtles.

### Palmarito Sea Turtle Rescue—The Mazunte Project (Mexico)

Along the coast of Oaxaca, Mexico, domestic and stray dogs pose a threat to sea turtle nests and hatchlings, including leatherbacks. The Mazunte Project will conduct mobile dog spay and neuter operations, plus education events designed to decrease canine predation of sea turtle eggs and hatchlings.

### Paso Pacífico (Nicaragua)

The Pacific beaches of southwestern Nicaragua provide vital nesting and foraging habitat for sea turtles, yet the turtles are often killed by fishing gear. Moreover, turtle eggs are illegally harvested. Paso Pacífico will train 100 Junior Rangers from eight low-income coastal communities and will empower them to encourage a change in behaviors around egg harvest. The program's goal is to improve the survival of leatherbacks.

### Sea Turtle, Inc. (U.S.A.)

The Rio Grande Valley is one of the most underserved regions in southern Texas, U.S.A., with more than a third of its families living in poverty. Most schools lack the resources to bring nature education programs to their students. Sea Turtle, Inc., will conduct outreach and education programs among students in Cameron and Willacy Counties to educate and engage children about the importance of protecting the Kemp's ridley sea turtles that nest in that region.

### Turtles Fly Too (U.S.A.)

Turtles Fly Too will continue to coordinate response teams and provide emergency air transport for endangered marine life, including Kemp's ridleys. This effort includes recruiting and training pilots, who contribute their aircraft, time, and expertise to move cold-stunned animals to rehabilitation facilities.