



Tel: 224-4552

BELIZE TURTLE WATCH



Protecting Turtles Today for Tomorrow

ecomar

"Conservation through Education"

Call/Text: 671-3483

Project Overview

ECOMAR has partnered with the Belize Fisheries Department, GCFI, PACT and WWF to promote the Belize Turtle Watch Project whose goal is to determine if climate change will have an impact on sea turtles in Belize. Many complimentary activities are being undertaken during 2011 which engage biologists, marine guides and concerned coastal residents to get involved and participate in program. Training programs are an integral part of the program and include workshops and site visits by ECOMAR volunteers studying sea turtle abundance.

Adopt A Beach or Reef



The turtles we are seeing today may be the last if we don't give them our support starting now! Stand up for sea turtles and protect their habitat at sea and the beaches where they visit every three years to nest. Adopt a Beach or Reef today and get started "Protecting Turtles Today, for Tomorrow." Belize has hundreds of miles of sandy beach and by the end of 2011 our goal is to have 50% adopted. If you frequent regular dive or snorkel sites please submit your observations online at our website! A group of recent graduates from St. John's College in Belize City are volunteering with ECOMAR and are spearheading the Adopt A Beach

Program as we try to get organizations, resorts, and individuals to adopt a portion of the approximately 100 miles of sandy beaches in Belize so that they can monitor them for nesting turtles and their hatchlings 60 days later. Representatives from ECOMAR will be contacting you soon for your support in the 2011 Sea Turtle Census!

2011 Sea Turtle Census

SEA TURTLE CENSUS 2011
YEAR OF THE TURTLE
REPORT ALL
In-Water Observations
Nesting Beach Observations
Stranded Sea Turtles

BELIZE TURTLE WATCH
 Protecting Turtles Today for Tomorrow

GREEN
HAWKSBILL
LEATHERBACK
LOGGERHEAD
OLIVE RIDLEY

BELIZE FISHERIES DEPARTMENT
 Tel: 224-4552

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PACT
 Protected Areas Conservation Trust

WWF

Fisheries regulations prohibit harvest and harassment of ALL sea turtles

We need YOUR help in gathering baseline data on sea turtles that forage and nest in Belize so that changes over time, especially those caused by climate change, can be measured. Please submit your sea turtle observations online at ECOMAR's website under "submit Report" and include pictures when possible.

www.ecomarbelize.org Tel: 223-3022

In order to determine abundance and what impacts sea turtles the 2011 Belize Sea Turtle Census was created so all persons that reside or work on the coast of Belize can report their observations of sea turtles. Part of the census includes reaching out to stakeholders that explore the reef, like marine guides and tourists, and to coastal property owners located near sandy beaches

where turtles may nest. From March through June 2011, a University of Exeter student came to Belize to volunteer with ECOMAR to launch the In-Water Observation Program, which she used for her Master's thesis. ECOMAR volunteers are following up with the groundwork laid and will soon be calling on you for your support in this initiative.

Sea Turtle Workshop

The 2011 Belize Sea Turtle Workshop which was held from June 6-9, 2011 where 27 participants from Belize and Mexico represented 12



Isaias Majil, MPA Manager with the Belize Fisheries Department, leads necropsy of adult loggerhead.

organizations. The workshop included a two day theory session in Belize City and a two day field exercise at Turtle Shores, Belize's nesting beach that possesses the greatest number of nesting hawksbill sea turtles. Participants were immersed in sea turtle biology and conservation, conducted necropsies and learned how to locate and relocate turtle

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nests. It was a great opportunity for biologists from throughout Belize to network with their colleagues. A reunion is being planned for the end of the nesting season.



2011 Belize Sea Turtle Workshop Participants at Turtle Shores

Strandings & Threats

Another aspect of the Belize Turtle Watch Project is to have all stranded sea turtles reported so they can be rehabilitated if alive, and to identify cause of injury so threats can be minimized.

SandWatch & Beach Characterization

The Sandwatch program was introduced by Dr. Marianne Fish from WWF during the 2011 Belize Sea Turtle Training Workshop. Participants used two methods to characterize the beach at Turtle Shores and now have the knowledge and tools to measure the beaches in their protected areas. Characterizing beaches twice a year and after storms will assist in measuring impacts from climate change on Belize's shorelines and impacts on nesting sea turtles.



Jamie Myvett, Celso Cawich and Samuel Novelo measuring the beach profile at Turtle Shores.

In-Water Snorkel Surveys

Participants of the 2011 Sea Turtle Training Workshop will also conduct in-water assessments of sea turtles that forage within their MPAs and local fishermen will be recruited and trained to assist researchers, thereby providing an alternative livelihood for them should they become interested in marine research. The In-Water Snorkeling Surveys will be conducted in areas of the MPAs of

other areas that have been identified as supporting sea turtles. Each turtle observed will be recorded and captures will be attempted and when successful the turtles will be brought to a vessel where they will be measured, tagged and released.

Questionnaires

Questionnaires will also be used to measure anecdotal information on sea turtles and climate change. There will be specific questionnaires for fishermen, marine guides, resort owners and tourists to assess current knowledge, sea turtle abundance, threats to sea turtles and changes in shorelines.

2011 Annual Report

In the latter part of 2011 ECOMAR and partners will compile all information gathered on sea turtle activity and beach profiles. The 2011 report on sea turtles in Belize that will essentially be an update to the Belize Sea Turtle Recovery Action Plan (STRAP) that was prepared almost 20 years ago in 1992. The annual report will more closely resemble the State of the World's Sea Turtles (SWOT) but will focus only on Belize. The 2011 Belize Sea Turtle Census will include information on the current status of sea turtles and will identify threats, ways to mitigate threats, and will establish or renew objectives of the Belize Sea Turtle Conservation Network members for the next 5 to 10 years.

REPORT ALL

In-Water Observations
Nesting Beach Observations
Stranded Sea Turtles

Reporting YOUR Observations Is Easy!

Online @ www.ecomarbelize.org
Via email linda@ecomarbelize.org
Call or Text 671-3483

For more details on the Belize Turtle Watch Program please contact Linda Searle at ECOMAR at 671-3483 or 223-3022 or linda@ecomarbelize.org or visit www.ecomarbelize.org/turtle_watch.

The Belize Turtle Watch Project is made possible by donations from the following organizations!

