



For Immediate Release

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Start Your Flippers for 2010 Tour de Turtles: online adventure follows the journey of 10 sea turtles

GAINESVILLE, Fla. –Sea Turtle Conservancy kicked off the third annual Tour de Turtles, a sea turtle migration marathon unfolding online at www.tourdeturtles.org, on August 1st to a crowd of more than 600 people at the Archie Carr National Wildlife Refuge in Florida.

Sea turtle fans gathered on the beach to watch scientists attached a satellite transmitter to a 300-pound loggerhead sea turtle named Hope, one of the marathon's turtle competitors.

For three months, Tour de Turtles will follow 10 individual sea turtles, using satellite-tracking technology, as they travel from their nesting beaches to unknown feeding grounds with the goal of being the first turtle to reach the 2,620 km, or 1,628 mi, distance.

With as few as one out of 1,000 hatchlings surviving to adulthood, sea turtle conservation efforts must focus on combating human-caused threats through research and education. By tracking sea turtle migrations using satellites, scientists can learn more about these endangered reptiles and the best ways to ensure their protection.

“Atlantis, Paradise Island, Bahamas has been involved in sea turtle conservation initiatives for more than 15 years and we are pleased to partner with the Sea Turtle Conservancy to continue these efforts through Tour de Turtles,” said Michelle Liu, Vice President, Marine Aquarium Operations at Atlantis. “Our hundreds of thousands of guests and supporters will have another avenue to assist us in growing the awareness of sea turtles’ challenges.”

Similar to a human marathon, each turtle will race to increase awareness about a particular “Cause” or threat to sea turtle survival. Utilizing interactive online maps, videos and games, Tour de Turtles will focus on the biology and conservation of sea turtles and their habitats.

“Tour de Turtles is a wonderful opportunity to involve our guests and cast members in sea turtle conservation activities with the STC,” said Dr. Anne Savage at Disney’s Animal Programs.

“Whether it is teaching our guests visiting Disney’s Vero Beach Resort about the sea turtles nesting on the beach, rehabilitating sick and injured sea turtles, or supporting national and international sea turtle conservation efforts through the Disney Worldwide Conservation Fund, The Walt Disney Company is committed to helping to insure the survival of sea turtles and inspiring our guests to make a difference for wildlife.”





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From a dedicated webpage for each swimmer, audiences will be able to learn more about the competitors, the causes they are supporting, and hear mock interviews with the turtles. Each turtle's distance will be monitored on a regularly-updated Leader Board that will track the turtles' progress on the Tour de Turtles website.

In addition to watching the marathon, the public can support a competitor's Cause through online contributions. This secondary competition, known as the Causes Challenge, is designed to see which turtle can generate the most support and awareness.

Tour de Turtles offers everyone an opportunity to get involved. To start tracking these determined competitors, visit www.tourdeturtles.org. And don't forget, saving sea turtles is a marathon, not a sprint!

Tour de Turtles would not have been possible without the generous support of the following sponsors: Sea Turtle Conservancy; MeGotta, Inc.; Disney Animal Programs; Disney Worldwide Conservation Fund; Disney's Vero Beach Resort; Atlantis, Paradise Island resort; Casa Tortuga Foundation; Shark Reef Aquarium at Mandalay Bay; Arenas Del Pacifico in El Salvador; WWF; Florida's Sea Turtle Specialty License Plate; and the research teams at the University of Central Florida Sea Turtle Research Program and Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Resources.

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About Sea Turtle Conservancy: Sea Turtle Conservancy, formerly known as Caribbean Conservation Corporation, is the world's oldest sea turtle research and conservation group. An international nonprofit 501(c) 3 organization, STC was founded in 1959 by world-renowned sea turtle expert, Dr. Archie Carr, to save sea turtles from eminent extinction through rigorous science-based conservation. The Florida-based organization carries out worldwide programs to conserve and recover sea turtle populations through research, education, advocacy and protection of the natural habitats sea turtles depend on.

For Tour de Turtles media resources, please visit <http://tourdeturtles.org/about.html>.