



Tour de Turtles 2011 FAQ Sheet



What is Tour de Turtles?

This August, Sea Turtle Conservancy will launch the fourth annual **Tour de Turtles: A Sea Turtle Migration Marathon**, an online migration-tracking event. Introduced in 2008, Tour de Turtles is an internet-based program that utilizes the satellite-tracked migration of sea turtles as the core component of an educational program aiming to raise awareness about threats to sea turtles and encourage positive stewardship of ocean and coastal habitats. Scheduled to begin in August 2011, Tour de Turtles will track 14 individual sea turtles, for approximately three months, as they leave their respective nesting beaches and race to complete a “turtle” marathon. The Tour de Turtles competitors will swim with the goal of being the first turtle to swim the furthest distance during the migration marathon. Everyone is invited to meet the turtles competing in the marathon; track each turtle’s progress; and learn about obstacles facing sea turtles during their long oceanic journey. It will all take place online at a fun, interactive website dedicated to this event: www.tourdeturtles.org.

Sea Turtle Conservancy has created a secondary competition within the Tour de Turtles marathon known as the Causes Challenge. The public will be able to get involved by supporting a turtle’s Cause. So while only one turtle will win the marathon, another one might be able to garner the most support for its Cause. Tour de Turtles offers audiences a multi-media experience using maps, interactive games, videos and more.

What are the logistics of the marathon?

After departing from some of the most important nesting sites in the Western Hemisphere, sea turtles will be monitored using Platform Terminal Transmitters (PTT) that send signals via satellite to record their locations and the distances travelled. The data is then uploaded to interactive maps on the Tour de Turtles website. Because the turtles will be released at different times, depending on the species, the distance traveled by each turtle will not be counted until the last turtle is released to ensure each turtle has a fair start. Each participating sea turtle will have a spot on the “leader board,” which will provide an overview of all the turtles’ progress. The turtle to travel the furthest distance will be crowned winner of Tour de Turtles.



While one turtle will be declared the marathon winner, Tour de Turtles includes a second level of competition, the Causes Challenge, which will have a direct impact on sea turtle conservation. Each turtle will be swimming to raise awareness about a particular threat to sea turtle survival. In learning about each turtle and their Cause, fans of Tour de Turtles will be invited to donate toward one or more turtle Cause. This support will be measured with a “goal thermometer”



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associated with each turtle. The aim is to promote participation among educators and the general public by encouraging financial support that will combat sea turtle threats.

How will the winner be determined?

Starting August 15th, 2011, Sea Turtle Conservancy will begin tracking the distance traveled by each turtle competitor. At the end of the three months, the turtle that traveled the furthest will earn the title of winner for the 2011 Tour de Turtles.

How does this program benefit sea turtles?

Through education about sea turtles and the threats to their survival, the Tour de Turtles will empower audiences to help combat human-caused threats. They will be able to cheer on their turtles by supporting their Causes and following their migrations. This level of community involvement and public support will have a significantly positive impact on sea turtle populations around the world. Using information gained through Tour de Turtles, the public will be better equipped to fight and eliminate threats to the sea turtles.

Along with community involvement and awareness, the scientific community will also benefit. All data collected will be applied to research about these endangered species and their little-known migratory patterns.

How to get involved with Tour de Turtles and Sea Turtle Conservancy?

From a biographical webpage for each swimmer, audiences can view photos, watch videos, learn about the turtle's Cause, see individual migration-tracking maps and hear periodic interviews with each marathoner.

Furthermore, people can participate by adopting a participating sea turtle to support a Cause. They can register to receive e-mail updates about the marathon and the turtle competitors to stay up-to-date on all the action. The Tour de Turtles website offers a variety of activities that are fun and educational, such as online games, quizzes and puzzles.

Tour de Turtles also provides a free Educator's Guide that teachers can use to incorporate sea turtles and conservation themes into lesson plans. The educators' section of the Tour de Turtles website includes downloadable activities that cover a range of subjects.