

Primera Edición
2015



TICATOVE 2010-2015

TICA-NEWS

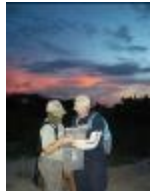
TICATOVE has been active in these past years

In October 2010, the 3rd Herpetology Symposium for Puerto Rico was celebrated in UPR-Arecibo. It was attended by Mike Barandiaran from the Vieques National Wildlife Refuge (VNWR) and Mitsuka Bermudez from TICATOVE, with a poster titled: **Vieques plays a significant role in the conservation of Green Sea Turtles (*Chelonia mydas*) in the Archipelago of Puerto Rico** and an oral presentation titled: **The Status of Sea Turtle Conservation in Vieques: An example in cooperation between Government Agencies and Non Government Organizations**. Also two members of TICATOVE: José L. Herrera and Francheska Ruiz presented their master's thesis work, which was about the herpetofauna of Vieques. At the symposium there was photo contest about conservation topics; it should be mentioned that Francheska won first place in the amphibian category and another TICATOVE member, Jean Paul Zegarra won in the biodiversity category.



DNER Recognizes our work

Early in 2011 TICATOVE was officially recognized by the DNER as a non-profit organization authorized to manage sea turtles in Vieques. As part of being recognized, we were issued a permit to help manage these species at the State level. In addition they assigned us funds to assist the managements of these species in Vieques. President Julián García, thanked the DNER and the USFWS for all the great support they have given to TICATOVE.



2011 Projects of Ecological Interest

Aside from the sea turtle conservation project, TICATOVE participated in a project for the reforestation and restoration of habitat in the area of La Chiva Beach. The work was done by Francheska Ruiz, Luz Quinoñes, Maricelis Santos, Moira Martinez, Nelimar Peterson, Sasha Burgos and Roberto Solis. This project was done thanks to an agreement with the Vieques National Wildlife Refuge (USFWS-VNWR) and the Federal Coastal Program (USFWS-ESCP). Additionally, a mongoose removal project was conducted in Playa Grande and Boca Quebrada (this last area is restricted to public access) sea turtles nest frequently in these areas. The members who participated were Luis Martínez, Nayla Rivera and Maricelis Santos, who were contracted by the VNWR for this project.



Playa Grande



Boca Quebrada



TICATOVE in California! First time at an International Symposium

On April of 2011, TICATOVE participated in the 31st International Sea Turtle Symposium, that took place in San Diego, California. At the symposium, we presented two scientific posters prepared by Mitsuka Bermudez (biologist and Vice President of TICATOVE) and Mike Barandiaran (biologist and Acting Wildlife Refuge Manager for the USFWS-VNWR): the first was about the high green sea turtle nesting activity in Vieques, during the past year (placing it has the fourth most active island in the Caribbean) and the second one was about the Government Agencies (USFWS-VNWR and DNER) working alongside TICATOVE (non-profit communi-

ty organization) for the conservation and protection of sea turtles in Vieques. The members who attended were: Julian Garcia President and Biologist of TICATOVE, Mitsuka Bermudez, Francheska Ruiz, Isha Alexander and Yashei Rosario.

It is important to note that of all the posters at the symposium, the ones presented by TICATOVE were the best received, because they had positive messages and outcomes from the cooperative work among the government agencies and the community. Even Carlos Diez, the Coordinator for the sea turtle project of Puerto Rico,

during his presentation highlighted the importance of a community based organization like TICATOVE for the conservation of sea turtles.



Picture of the group that assisted to the 31st International Sea Turtle Symposium held in California.

Training and involving volunteers in the Sea Turtle and Wildland Firefighting Programs 2011

In 2011, the Vieques National Wildlife Refuge (USFWS-VNWR), DNER and TICATOVE, conducted educational workshops to train volunteer members for the sea turtle program. This started with the saturation tagging for turtles at Playa Grande, during these night patrols six leatherbacks were tagged. Within the group of TICATOVE volunteers, a few graduated to become field leaders: Mitsuka Bermudez, Brenda Rosa, Maritza Bermudez, Isha Alexander, Yvette Santos, Francheska Ruiz and Ingrid Flores. The new field leaders also conducted educational workshops to train new and less experienced members, as to how to conduct diurnal monitoring.



After this and with the financial assistance provided by the VNWR, a group of 20 of our volunteers traveled to the Sandy Point National Wildlife Refuge in St Croix to assist and to train there for a period of 10 days. Isha Alexander was assigned to coordinate the various activities and training along side wildlife refuge manager, Mike Evans. This trip provided a valuable workshop and experience about various techniques for the management and conservation of sea turtles. Biologists Edgardo Belardo (DNER), Erick Bermudez (TICATOVE), Julian Garcia (TICATOVE) and Mike Barandiaran (USFWS) provided additional training workshops in Vieques.



Wildland Firefighter Martin Ramos (USFWS) trains and qualifies new wildland firefighters for the Vieques fire crew. The new TICATOVE firefighters are: Tito Ayala, Ura Connolly, Randall Bermudez, Moira Martinez, Xavier Prospero, Yvette Santos and Roberto Solis. The wildland fire crew in Vieques is made up of personnel from the USFWS, Puerto Rico Fire Fighters, Medical Emergencies and TICATOVE. The crew fight wildland fires in Vieques and other areas of the country.



Sea turtle activities throughout the year have been monitored in several beaches by the VNWR -TICATOVE-DRNA. By November of 2011, we had registered: 61 hawksbill nests, 62 green sea turtle nests and 155 leatherback nests.

Education 2011

TICATOVE has been very active and participated in a number of environmental education activities, such as:

Conservation Education in Culebra - **April**

National Day for Recreational Fishing - **June**

Vieques Carnival with an Environmental Message - **July**

International Day for Beach Clean-up (Playa Grande) - **September**

Environmental Fair at the Vieques Plaza - **October**

Educational Activity about bats in Vieques - **November**



1st Meeting of Sea Turtle Groups of Puerto Rico 2012

As a result of the success from our participation in the Sea Turtle International Symposium, an idea was born between C. Diez and M. Bermudez to organize a meeting of all the groups who work in sea turtle projects across the Puerto Rico Archipelago. This 1st Meeting of the Sea Turtle Groups of Puerto Rico took place in the central offices of the DNER on the 25th of February, 2012. Mitsuka Bermudez gave a presentation titled: TICATOVE –Friends of the Vieques National Wildlife Refuge, which was prepared by Mitsuka Bermudez and Mike Barandiaran. There was a



Representation of the turtle groups from PR Archipelago. United for the same cause, the conservation of the sea turtles

good representation from Vieques. Which included other TICATOVE members were: Maritza Bermudez, Sasha Burgos, and Ingrid Flores, personnel from the USFWS Mike Barandiaran & Susan Silander. As well as Edgardo Belardo from the DNER-Vieques. The presentations focused on how each or-

ganization conducts conservation work for sea turtles and in what areas of the Puerto Rican Archipelago. Among the organizations that attended, were: ATMAR from Maunabo, Chelonia Dorado, Chelonia Culebra, Grupo del Oeste y Vida Marina, Grupo de Tortugas del CEN, Yo Amo Al Tinglar from Arecibo, ATIPUR from San Juan, Sierra Club, TICATOVE - Vieques.

This meeting helped to demonstrate how cooperation among government agencies & community groups can do so much for the conservation of sea turtles.

2012 Night Patrols for Leatherback Saturation Tagging

We conducted the leatherback saturation tagging program during night patrols. This program is run by the Vieques National Wildlife Refuge (USFWS), with the cooperation of DNER and TICATOVE. The purpose of this program is to tag female leatherbacks that have not been previously registered. This way we can document and monitor nest-

ing and movement of Vieques leatherbacks across other nesting areas. The Saturation Tagging and Night Patrols were conducted in Playa Grande from mid April to mid June. Each night a team, consisting of a minimum of one field leader and two field assistants would carry out the patrols. We also had a number of volunteers who assisted and were a part of the

night patrols; all together there group had a total of 21 team members and 15 volunteers, who assisted on and off. We tagged 7 leatherbacks and we worked a total of 44 nests during this period of night patrols.



2012 Day Patrols for Sea Turtles

We conducted day patrols for sea turtles, starting in March and ending in the last days of November. We consistently covered a number of beaches, according to the species that nest in them. We had a great participation and hard work from members of TICATOVE.

The nesting numbers for the year were:

- 85 Leatherback nests
- 250 Hawksbill nests
- 262 Green Sea Turtle nests



Leatherback hatchlings that were rescued from a hatched nest.

2012 US Fish and Wildlife Service Friends Group Academy

The National Wildlife Refuge System has been around for more than a century and it is a net of habitats that benefit fauna and flora, provide outdoor experiences and works to preserve a healthy natural environment.

There are over 560 National Wildlife Refuges and 38 wetland management districts. These Wildlife Refuges provide habitats for more than 700 species of birds, 220 species of mammals, 250 species of amphibians and reptiles and more than 1,000 species of fish. There are more than 380 plants and/or animals that are threatened or endangered with the protected areas of the Wildlife Refuges. These protected and conservation areas for nature, extend from Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands in the Caribbean to Maine in the Northeast, across all states all the way to Alaska in the Northwest, across Hawaii, Guam and other island in the Pacific. This system protects 150 million acres of land and water, aside from 418 million acres of marine national monuments. In the Caribbean there are 9 National Wildlife Refuges. The USFWS System of National Wildlife Refuges is the most organized and primary system worldwide.

Every year, millions of migratory birds utilize wildlife refuges as resting and foraging areas, as part of their migrato-

ry routes from north to south and/or vice-versa. In the Caribbean many natural areas have been lost, which make conservation areas like the ones in Vieques, essential in this process.

The US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in the majority of its' wildlife refuges works with a "Friends Group". These groups are people from the community, who have established a group, that donate their time and their knowledge to help with the conservation mission of the Agency.

To assist these groups, the agency has developed a Friends Group Academy. Here they conduct workshops, seminars and classes to help get the communities involved in the conservation of natural resources. For Academy #5 which took place in 2012, they received many nominations from all the states and territories.

The group TICATOVE from Vieques



Above pictures: you can see some animals and animal parts that are protected and are part of the illegal wildlife trade. These items have been impounded by the USFWS and now are used for educational purposes.

was one of the ones selected at the national level. Mitsuka Bermudez, Vice President of TICATOVE, represented Vieques at this academy. This national forum was a great venue to highlight the good work being done by community members in Vieques.

On the left: Representatives from different Refuge Friends Groups of the US Fish and Wildlife Service .

2012 & 2013 we develop Green Art Summer Camps.

In 2012 and 2013 TICATOVE joined efforts with USFWS—Vieques NWR and with Taller Elohim to develop a pilot program for summer camps in Vieques. The main concept was environmental education and nature appreciation, through the use of art. The camps were for children from 5 to 12 years of age, they ran for three weeks and had a participation of 15 to 20 children. They participated in a series of workshops, such as conservation, recycling, origami, painting, drawing, sculpturing and they also received several visits from Chely (the Green sea turtle of Vieques). Vieques outfitters: Ecotours, Abe Snorkeling, Vieques Paddleboarding and Little Boat Sailing donated environmental excursions for the camp children and their families. Members of YCC (Youth Conservation Corps), youth of Taller Elohim and TICATOVE also helped out during these summer camps. The camps were organized and run by Sandra Ortiz (VNWR), Sandra Reyes (Taller Elohim) and Mitsuka Bermudez (TICATOVE). Based on this pilot program and for the future, we plan on expanding and organizing this type of activity for children from 5 to 14 years of age, in three groups according to their age.



2nd Meeting of Sea Turtle Groups of Puerto Rico 2013

The 2nd Meeting of the Sea Turtle Groups of Puerto Rico was held on March 2, 2013. The opening ceremony and the gathering was done at the Punta Tuna Lighthouse in Maunabo. On March 3rd, we were instructed on the Management and Research Techniques Protocols for Puerto Rico.

Participants were divided onto different tables and each one was assigned a discussion topic. These were related to situations that we encounter while working on a nesting activity.

Many sea turtle groups from across Puerto Rico participated: TICATOVE, Yo Amo El Tinglar, Tinglar Dorado, Chelonia, Grupo Tortuguero de Culebra, Grupo del Corredor Ecológico del

Noreste, Vida Marina, Proyecto de Yabu-coa, Proyecto de Palmas del Mar, Proyecto del Oeste, Arrecife pro Ciudad, ATI-PUR and CESAM.

The representatives from TICATOVE who attended were: Erick Bermudez

(TI), Sasha Burgos (CA), Francheska Ruiz (TO) and Mitsuka Bermudez (VE).



A recognition to Carlos Diez.



TICATOVE accepting the 2do Encuentro de Grupos Tortugueros de Puerto Rico poster and accepting to be the hosts on the next meeting.



2013 Night Patrols for Leatherback Saturation Tagging

We conducted the leatherback saturation tagging program during night patrols. This program is run by the Vieques National Wildlife Refuge (USFWS), with the cooperation of DNER and TICATOVE. This program is a continuation of the one started in 2012. During this year biologist Melissa Gydos conducted her research for her Master's thesis. Her thesis, consisted of two parts. The biological component focused on the effects of temperature in determining the sex of the hatch

lings in the nests. She did this part as a member of TICATOVE and a USFWS volunteer. For the 2nd part she focused on the social aspect of community participation in science projects. She did this as a member of the Vieques Conservation and Historical trust (VCHT). Aside from the 21 active members and 17 volunteers from TICATOVE, we also had the help from students from the University of Nebraska and the University of Southern Maine.

We tagged 5 leatherbacks and worked a total of 28 nests during our night patrols.



2013 Day Patrols for Sea Turtles

We conducted day patrols for sea turtles, starting in March and ending in the last days of November. During this year's day patrol we also had the assistance of volunteer members from the University of Southern Maine (USM). Dr. John Wise, his colleagues and students from this university, are working with the USFWS and TICATOVE collecting genetic material and cells to

identify individual turtles and also to assess for the presence or absence of toxins in sea turtles. USM also works with the VCHT in a lab they established to prepare the samples.

The nesting numbers for the year were:

- 86 Leatherback nests

- 160 Hawksbill nests
- 154 Green Sea Turtle nests



Leatherback track left on the beach on her visit to nest.

4th Puerto Rican Herpetology Symposium 2013

The Herpetology Symposiums of Puerto Rico (Herpetology is the study of all species of amphibians and reptiles) are varied and very well represented by a number of Herpetologists. This activity in 2013, that took place at the University of Puerto Rico in Arecibo, was attended by representatives of various sea turtle groups working in Puerto Rico Archipelago. This happened because the activity was dedicated to the sea turtle groups of Puerto Rico. Representatives from the different organizations received an award on behalf of their group. Our herpetologist Francheska Ruiz ("Coqui Girl") attended this activity and received the award on behalf of TICATOVE.



This Symposium was dedicated to all the Turtle Groups from Puerto Rico Archipelago



Here we see representatives from the groups ATMAR, Yo Amo El Tinglar, Chelonia Dorado and TICATOVE.

TICATOVE visitor's station and gift shop opens. Also we received the visit of Mr. Leatherback on 2013.

The visitor contact station and gift shop for TICATOVE, just opened. It is located in building 303 at the Vieques National Wildlife Refuge (VNWR). This building is next to the green house and on the road on the way to Caracas and La Chiva beaches. Here you can obtain information about the beaches, trails and other areas in the Vieques National Wildlife Refuge. Also get information about the various projects

and conservation programs that we are working on with the Vieques NWR. You will find local arts & crafts, snacks, ice, soft drinks and many other things.



We also received a visit from "Mr. Leatherback" a

leatherback who travels the world educating people. Here he is with Chely, our very own green sea turtle.



27th Symposium for Threatened and Endangered Species of Puerto Rico 2013

On the 21 and 22 of November, 2013, the DNER celebrated the 27th Symposium for Threatened and Endangered Species of Puerto Rico. There were 22 investigations and 36 scientific expositions dedicated to the threatened and endangered species of PR. The main presenters were Leopoldo Miranda Castro from USFWS and Doctor Rafael Joglar from the University of Puerto

Rico. Secretary Carmen Guerrero stated: "Here we have some of the best research centers in the planet and they come from all parts of the world to see what we are doing; people come to see how we are managing the forests and endangered species, but many times this type of news is not shared."

Once again, DNER dedicated an activity to the turtle groups of PR in which



TICATOVE representatives with the crested toad and Puerto Rican parrot

Mitsuka Bermudez received the recognition given to TICATOVE.



2014 Clean-up at Rompeolas...continuing the clean-ups of 2012, 2011 & 2010.

Black Beard Sports joined efforts with SCUBA Dogs, Vieques Municipality and members of TICATOVE in order to clean up the area of Rompeolas (Mosquito Pier) in Vieques. Members with a SCUBA diving certification and others with snorkel equipment also collected trash on the sea floor,

This beautiful area with a tranquil sea on the west and an active sea on the east, is a very important area due to its extensive sea grass prairies. In this area, green sea turtles and manatees forage. While at the end of the pier you can find and see hawksbill turtles, rays and many other marine species.

This area is also very popular for many local fishermen. Unfortunately a lot of the trash that people throw inland or at the sea, ends up on the sea floors of the Rompeolas.

This clean up is one of the many, we have done in Rompeolas and other areas of Vieques in the past five years, such as: Caracas, Playuela, la Chiva, Pata Prieta and Playa Grande.



TICATOVE Hosts the 3rd Meeting of Sea Turtle Groups of Puerto Rico 2014; Celebrated in Vieques.

From March 7th to the 9th, 2014, the 3rd Meeting for Sea Turtle Groups of Puerto Rico was held; TICATOVE was the host of this event. The opening ceremony, welcoming and gathering for this activity took place at the Vieques National Wildlife Refuge (USFWS)-VNWR) Visitor Center. With the sponsorship of the DNER, USFWS, Vieques Municipality, The Nature Conservancy, Sea Grant from Humacao and Black Beard Sports; the presentations and ceremonies took place at the Vieques Municipal Multiple Use Center. The opening was done by Elieser Nieves who represented DNER Secretary Carmen Guerrero, Susan Silander Project Leader for the Caribbean NWR Complex and the Honorable mayor of Vieques Victor Emeric. Three people who were in charge of the creation of the sea turtle project in Vieques, were honored: Edgardo Belardo Manager for the Puerto Mosquito DNER Reserve, Oscar Diaz Wildlife Refuge Manager for the USFWS-VNWR and Julian Garcia President and Founder of TICATOVE.

On March 9th the groups continued with training over the protocols for the management and conservation of sea turtles in Puerto Rico. There were also workshops done at Caracas Beach in Vieques. Many different sea turtle groups from Puerto Rico participated in this activity: TICATOVE, ATMAR, Yo Amo El Tinglar, Tinglar Dorado, Chelonia, Grupo Tortuguero de Culebra, Grupo del Corredor Ecológico del Noreste, Vida Marina, Proyecto de Yabucoa, Proyecto de Palmas del Mar, Proyecto del Oeste, Arrecife pro Ciudad, ATIPUR and CESAM.



Puerto Rico Protected Areas Symposium 2014

The US Fish and Wildlife Service was represented by the Vieques National Wildlife Refuge in this Symposium of Protected Areas of Puerto Rico. The Vieques NWR gave a presentation about the Conservation Areas and the Projects to Protect the Natural Resources of our Isla Nena. Part of the presentation focused on the cooperative work with the Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Resources (DNER) and other conservation partners, such as: TICATOVE, the Vieques Conservation and Historical Trust, The Puerto Rico Conservation Trust and the Ecological Park of the Ceiba. Our group presented a poster prepared by Mitsuka Bermudez and Mike Barandiaran, titled: *Vieques, Isla de Gran Biodiversidad y Áreas Protegidas*.



2014 Night Patrols for Leatherback Saturation Tagging

We conducted the leatherback saturation tagging program during night patrols. This program is run by the Vieques NWR (USFWS), with the cooperation of DNER and TICATOVE. As in previous years, this tagging program was done at Playa Grande. During this nocturnal program, we registered and tagged 6 new leatherback females (two of these returned to nest again on the same beach and during the same season). This year, we also registered and tagged a female hawksbill sea turtle.

Aside from the USFWS biologists and to help to carry out this project, TICATOVE had the support and work of 29 members. Among them we had Sandy Tucker (Peaches) as she has been named here.

Biologists from the University of Southern Maine and the Wise labs also participated on these night patrols. One of the observations was that Playa Grande had a greater accumulation of Sargasso seaweed than in previous years.



2014 Day Patrols for Sea Turtles

Day patrols for sea turtles continued in 2014. It began in March and continued until November (although in December we still had nests that had not hatched).

The DNER continued to support the Vieques program and TICATOVE in particular. The day patrols were conducted by USFWS – VNWR biologists, along with members from TICATOVE. The

biologists from the University of Southern Maine (USM) also returned to work with us and the Vieques Conservation and Historical Trust.

The nest numbers for this season were:

- 75 Leatherback nests
- 145 Hawksbill nests

- 287 Green Sea Turtle nests



Meeting of Sea Turtle Groups from Puerto Rico and WIDECAST Annual Meeting, Maunabo 2015

In March 2015, there was a meeting of the sea turtle groups from Puerto Rico, US Virgin Islands and from many other islands of the Wider Caribbean. This meeting was done in Maunabo, PR where the group ATMAR and the Municipality of Maunabo were the hosts. This was the annual meeting of WIDECAST (Wider Caribbean Sea Turtles Network) and was sponsored by the Department of Natural and Environmental Resources (DNER) and the USFWS.

The Secretary of DNER, Carmen Guerrero gave the entire group a warm welcome to Puerto Rico. She commented that she was very satisfied with the collaboration and work being done by the sea turtle groups of Puerto Rico. She added that in cooperation with oth-

er agencies, this work contributed to the efforts being done by WIDECAST and to the conservation of sea turtles in the Caribbean. Aside from the meeting and the presentation, there was also a poster session for the sea turtle groups to present.



DNER Secretary was present on the opening of the WIDECAST annual meeting

We presented a poster : *Vieques, a significant Caribbean Sea Turtle Nesting Site.*

Last but not least there was a forensic sci-



ence work shop to train law enforcement personnel and other participants on how to investigate and document cases of sea turtle mortality.

TICATOVE adopts Caracas Beach and sets up a kiosk for education and donations



Members of TICATOVE of all ages (from 3 years old to 70 years old) helped

painting and decorating TICATOVE's kiosk. It represents Vieques wildlife, natural areas and it's waters. This kiosk is a point of contact for the visitors, an extension of the gift shop and an area for education and environmental interpretation. It's being open only during the weekends on Caracas Beach.

Also, Caracas Beach has been adopted by TICATOVE to provide education, beach clean up and green area maintenance.



Sea Turtle Rescue Workshop 2015

TICATOVE organized a workshop for the rescue of sea turtles with the support of Carlos Diez from DNER, Black Beard Sports and Isla Nena SCUBA, at the office of USFWS - Vieques NWR. It was given by Loggerhead Marinelife Center from Florida State, under Project Shield. This Project focuses in providing the initial rescue on sea turtles affected primarily on recreational fishing areas.

The biologist Carlos Diez from DNER emphasized that sea turtles are protected species, therefore this type of work always need to be under the permits and protocols from DNER. That in Vieques, TICATOVE has this permit and represents DNER in this matter.

In the eventuality you see a sea turtle in danger, please call immediately to TICATOVE Hotline at 787-955-9310 or to

DNER-Vieques 787-741-8683.



June month of the DNER Recreational Fishing tournament in Rompeolas Vieques 2015

For over four years, the Department of Natural and Environmental Resources of Puerto Rico have been holding a shore recreational fishing tournament around all the Puerto Rico Archipelago. They have selected the area of Rompeolas in Vieques for this activity.

The recreational fishing activity is free of charge thanks to the cooperation of DNER, Vieques Municipality, Black Beard Sports and TICATOVE. The other educational component on this activity is a Rompeolas cleanup in land and sea. This cleanup is done by Vieques youth from Manta (from the Vieques Conservation and Historical Trust) and YCC (Youth Conservation Corp from the USFWS-VNWR).

Helping on the cleanup there is Black Beard Sports and the Vieques Municipality.

The cleanup part, has another educational component, which is that the participants of the tournament can see all the full garbage bags that were picked up at Rompeolas. This garbage is not only aesthetically displeasing,

it's also harmful for the environment.

In 2015, the tournament had more participants than previous years, registering over 70 participants and many other visitors.



2015 Night Patrols for Leatherback Saturation Tagging. Great impact from the sargasso sea weed.

We conducted the leatherback saturation tagging program during night patrols with lots of new volunteers for the program. Sadly the huge amount of sargasso sea weed that has been affecting extensive areas of the Caribbean, also affected the beaches of Vieques.

In particular Playa Grande, that is the selected beach to perform this patrol. The coast on this beach, as in many others in Vieques, had a huge accumulation of this sea weed. It's known that the sar-

gaso sea weed is a natural part of our ecosystem. But apparently due to effects from climate change and sea level rising, the currents that hold the sargasso patches in the Sea of Sargasso have not been able to contain them over the past decades. used to do.

The over accumulation of this sea weed creates adverse conditions for the nesting of the sea turtles. There were few leatherbacks that decided to nest in Playa Grande, and many of the nests on the

sargasso areas were lost because of beach erosion or water accumulation. Only two leatherbacks could be tagged and one hawksbill.



2015 Day Patrols for Sea Turtles

As in previous years, the day time sea turtle patrol took place from March to November.

The DNER continued to support the Vieques program and TICATOVE in particular. The day patrols were conducted by USFWS – VNWR biologists, along with members from TICATOVE. But as with the night patrol, the day patrol was also affected by the extensive accumulation

of sea weed at Vieques beaches.

The nesting numbers for this season are:

- 78 leatherback nests
- 130 hawksbill nests
- 139 green sea turtle nests





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**TICATOVE-Group de
Conservación de Vieques**



TICATOVE

Focuses on environmental education, scientific investigation and technical assistance to government, private and community organizations. We provide visitors to Vieques with information on the conservation of the flora & fauna of our beautiful little island. We work to educate, prepare and provide opportunities for the youth of Vieques to actively participate in conservation efforts. We provide training in the field of biology and as nature interpretative guides. This is part of an ongoing effort to assist in developing Eco - Tourism programs on the island. We are affiliated with the National Association for Interpretation (NAI).

"Man will understand the meaning of conservation, the day that he opens his eyes and realizes that his feet are on the Earth".

Julián García

President and Founder of TICATOVE

The mission of TICATOVE

Our primary mission is to protect and conserve Vieques' natural treasures through the promotion and development of conservation actions that show how human society and nature can and must be compatible.



What does TICATOVE mean?

The name TICATOVE comes from the two first letters of the sea turtle species (in Spanish) that nest in Vieques.

TI = TInglar - Leatherback

CA = CArey - Hawksbill

TO = TOrtuga - Turtle

VE = VErde - Green



*This TICA-NEWS is a cooperative work done between:
Erick Bermudez, Mitsuka Bermudez,
Kimberly Rosa and Mike Barandiaran.*