



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contacts: Rocio Johnson
(352) 373-6441 or Rocio@conserveturtles.org

High-Tech Sea Turtles Tracked Online as They Compete in Annual Migration Marathon

GAINESVILLE, FLA. - The survival of endangered sea turtles is closely linked to their successful completion of long-range migrations from nesting beaches to foraging grounds located up to thousands of miles away. More than a dozen high-tech sea turtles are being tracked online this fall as part of a research and education program conducted by the Sea Turtle Conservancy (STC). For many turtles, slow and steady may be just the ticket for survival and victory in the 4th Annual Tour de Turtles, a sea turtle migration marathon that kicks off August 15th online at www.tourdeturtles.org.

Tour de Turtles will follow 15 individual sea turtles, using satellite-tracking technology, as they leave their respective nesting sites and compete in a mock race to complete a "turtle" marathon. Tour de Turtles will be won by the turtle that swims the furthest during the three-month time period of this migration marathon - though STC is quick to point out that all sea turtles will be winners if people work together to improve conservation efforts on behalf of these amazing animals.

The focal point of the event is the marathon itself, which utilizes interactive online maps, videos and games to show the migratory movements and distances traveled by each of the participating turtles. Through this unique event, STC engages audiences and encourages everyone to learn more about sea turtle biology, threats and conservation efforts. Each participating turtle has unique qualities and migration behaviors that make them fascinating to watch. One never knows where the turtles might travel. For example, last year one Tour de Turtles contestants, a giant leatherback named "Dawn," swam right into the worst region of the Gulf oil spill.

"Tour de Turtles is an exciting fusion of science, education and conservation delivered in a fun online event that's free for all to access," said David Godfrey, STC Executive Director. "Watching the race unfold is fun for young and old audiences alike, and the whole purpose is to raise much-needed awareness about the issues affecting sea turtles."

In addition to competing in the marathon, each turtle will "race" to raise awareness about a particular "cause" or threat to sea turtle survival. The public is invited to support efforts to reduce sea turtle threats by sponsoring individual Tour de Turtles competitors or by supporting a turtle's cause. This secondary competition, known as the Causes Challenge, is designed to see which turtle can generate the most support and awareness for their Cause.

Tour de Turtles includes activities that the public and educators can use to learn more about sea turtle conservation. Educational materials, games, quizzes and lesson plans are specifically



designed to help teachers incorporate environmental education into classroom activities. All of these online resources are free to access. The program offers everyone an opportunity to get involved by cheering on these ancient mariners and helping make a difference in the survival of endangered sea turtles. Visit www.tourdeturtles.org to meet the turtles and follow the competition.

Tour de Turtles would not have been possible without the generous support of the following sponsors: Little Tikes Toys; Four Seasons Resort Nevis; Disney Animal Programs; Disney Worldwide Conservation Fund; Disney's Vero Beach Resort; Atlantis, Paradise Island; Casa Tortuga; MeGotta, Inc.; WWF; Grooveshark; Shark Reef Aquarium at Madaly Bay; Florida's Sea Turtle Specialty License Plate; NOAA; Florida Department of Environmental Protection; Project OCEAN; Community Foundation for Brevard; and the research teams at the University of Central Florida Sea Turtle Research Program, Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Resources, Amigos Tortugas Marinas and the Nevis Turtle Group.

About Sea Turtle Conservancy- an international nonprofit, Sea Turtle Conservancy is the world's oldest marine turtle research and conservation organization. Founded in 1959 to support the pioneering work of world-renowned ecologist and sea turtle expert, Dr. Archie Carr, the Florida-based organization is dedicated to ensuring the survival of sea turtles through research, education, advocacy and the protection of natural habitats upon which they depend.

To learn more about Tour de Turtles, please visit the press room:
<http://www.tourdeturtles.org/about.php#pi>.

For high-resolution images, please visit Galleon Photos at
<http://www.galleonphotos.com/Events/2011-Tour-de-Turtles/> and credit 'Galleon Photos, www.galleonphotos.com.'

###