



Tour de Turtles 2010 FAQ Sheet

What is Tour de Turtles?

This August, Sea Turtle Conservancy will launch the third annual **Tour de Turtles: A Sea Turtle Migration Marathon**, an online migration-tracking event. Participating sea turtles will be tracked via satellite as they race to be the first to complete a 2,620 kilometers (1,628 miles) journey that is estimated to last three months. Everyone is invited to meet the turtles competing in the marathon; track each turtles' progress; and learn about obstacles facing the turtles during their long journeys. It will all take place at a fun, interactive website dedicated to this event: www.tourdeturtles.org.

Tour de Turtles aims to increase awareness about different sea turtle species and the threats to their survival. Along with the main marathon, the turtles will be swimming to raise support for primary sea turtle threats. 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. Based on Sea Turtle Conservancy's successful 14-year-old Sea Turtle Migration-Tracking Education Program, 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 in Florida. This will ensure that the first turtles released don't get a head start in completing the marathon. Each participating sea turtle will have a spot on the "leader board," which will provide an overview of all the turtles' progress.



While one turtle will be declared the marathon winner, Tour de Turtles includes a second level of competition, the Causes Challenge, that 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 Causes. A donation meter for each turtle will monitor the pace at which people are supporting the various Causes. The turtle that generates the most support by the conclusion of the race will win the Causes Challenge. A target goal of \$2,500 has been set for each Cause.



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How will the winner be determined?

The first turtle to reach 2,620 km (1,628 miles) will win the marathon. Although there will be only one turtle crowned winner, Tour de Turtles doesn't end when the first sea turtle completes the marathon. The first turtle to complete the marathon may do so in less than three months, but the program will continue to follow the turtles' migratory patterns for up to two years.

How does this event benefit sea turtles?

Through education about sea turtles and the threats to their survival, the event will empower audiences with ways to help combat these 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 these human-caused 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 turtles' Causes, 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 Sea Turtle Conservancy website also provides 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 Manual 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.