



## Tour de Turtles FAQ Sheet



### **What is Tour de Turtles?**

This August, Sea Turtle Conservancy (STC) will launch the ninth 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 education program aiming to raise awareness about threats to sea turtles and encourage positive stewardship of ocean and coastal habitats. Scheduled to officially begin on August 1, 2016, Tour de Turtles will track 13 individual sea turtles, for approximately three months, as they leave their respective nesting beaches and race to complete a “turtle marathon.” 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 all will take place at a fun, interactive website dedicated to this online event:

[www.tourdeturtles.org](http://www.tourdeturtles.org).

Tour de Turtles aims to increase awareness about different sea turtles species and the human threats to their survival. Along with the main marathon, the turtles will be swimming to raise support for a specific cause which includes each of the primary sea turtle threats. The public will be able to get involved by supporting their favorite turtle through an adoption or making a pledge for each mile they swim. They can choose their favorite turtle based on name, personality, species or cause. Tour de Turtles offers audiences a multi-media experience using videos, interactive games 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 will then be 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.

While one turtle will be declared the distance marathon winner, the Tour de Turtles includes a second level of competition known as the “People’s Choice” Award. Each turtle will be racing to raise awareness about a particular threat to sea turtle survival. In learning about each turtle and their cause, fans of the Tour de Turtles will be invited to donate toward one or more turtle. This support will be measured with a “goal thermometer” 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. The turtle that raises the most money will be declared the “People’s Choice” winner.

### **How will the winner be determined?**

Starting in August 2016, Sea Turtle Conservancy will begin tracking the distance traveled by each turtle competitor. After three months, the turtle that traveled the furthest will earn the title of winner of the Tour de Turtles race.



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### **How will this program benefit sea turtles?**

Through education about sea turtles and the threats to their survival, Tour de Turtles will empower audiences to help combat human-caused threats. The public 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 significantly positive impact on sea turtles populations around the globe. 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 greatly benefit from the data collected by applying it to research about these endangered species and their little-known migratory patterns, further enhancing the conservation benefits of the event.

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

From biographical web pages for each swimmer, audiences can view photos, watch videos, learn about the turtles' Causes, see individual migration-tracking maps, and read periodic updates from each marathoner.

Furthermore, people can participate by adopting a swimmer or making a pledge for each mile swam. They can register to receive e-mail updates about the marathon and the turtle competitors to stay up-to-date on all the action. There are also a variety of activities that are both 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 Web site includes free downloadable activities that cover a range of subjects. Educators also receive a discounted rate for turtle adoptions.

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