

2024 Leatherback Program at Tortuguero, Costa Rica Research Assistant Application Information

Project description: Conservation and monitoring of vulnerable leatherback turtles
Organization: Sea Turtle Conservancy (Formerly Caribbean Conservation Corporation)

Location: STC Field Station, Tortuguero, Costa Rica

Dates: **Group 1:** April 1 - May 18, 2024

Group 2: May 14 - June 30, 2024

These are hard dates and will not be changed. Please **do not apply** if your availability does not match dates for either group.

Application Deadline: [January 15, 2024](#)

Evaluation of applications will begin on January 16, 2024

Project summary:

Research and monitoring of sea turtles in Tortuguero, Costa Rica was initiated in the 1950's by legendary sea turtle researcher Dr. Archie Carr. Dr. Carr continued his work in Tortuguero until his passing away in 1987 and the Sea Turtle Conservancy (STC) continues the project, making it the longest ongoing sea turtle conservation and monitoring program in the world. In 1995, the STC began the Leatherback Program to study the area's little known Leatherbacks (*Dermochelys coriacea*). Each year from March - June the STC research team collects information about this vulnerable species. STC works closely with Costa Rican authorities, the Tortuguero community and other leatherback nesting beach monitoring groups. Information collected during the annual Leatherback Program plays a key role in developing effective management strategies for sea turtles in the area.

Work description:

Two research assistants (RAs) will be trained in sea turtle monitoring techniques by, and work under the supervision of, the STC Field Research Coordinator. The RA team will be made up of individuals from several countries from around the world, with an emphasis on Latin America and the Caribbean. Emphasis of the work conducted by RAs will be placed on increasing hatchling production. As such, the RAs main responsibilities will include nest translocation, monitoring and excavation. Track surveys will also be conducted to assess nesting activity.

Leatherback monitoring is carried out along 8 km (=5 miles) of nesting beach. Work activities include conducting morning surveys walking on soft sand and excellent physical condition is a requirement for the RA positions. RAs should expect to work from very early morning hours translocating nests to safe sites.

In addition to monitoring work, RAs are also responsible for working with the STC Education and Outreach Coordinator to develop and participate in various educational and awareness activities in the community of Tortuguero, and be required to assist in the STC Visitor Center to provide information about the work of STC to members of the public.

Information about Research Assistant Application

- **Research Assistantship (RA) positions are voluntary and selected RAs are expected to plan and finance their own travel to and from Tortuguero.**
- **Selected RAs will receive at no cost to them while at the STC Tortuguero Field Station for the duration of their time working:**
 - **Three hot meals and lodging**
 - **Room cleaning and laundry services**
 - **Internet (slow) access**
 - **Proper training and permits to work on the beach**

Although there are no strict requirements, good knowledge of English and Spanish, education in biology or related fields, previous fieldwork experience in the tropics, experience working/living in multicultural environments, experience working/living in isolated locations for extended periods, previous experience in environmental education and availability for the entire period of the program greatly improve your chances of being selected for a position.

STC alumni RAs have gone on to work for conservation organizations, universities and government agencies worldwide.

To apply, please fill out the Application Form (see following page) and send to Dr. Roldán A. Valverde at roldan@conserveturtles.org, together with:

- A cover letter explaining why you are interested in a Research Assistant position, details of any relevant experience and a statement of your level of proficiency in English and Spanish
- A CV or resume with other pertinent information
- Names and e-mail contact details of three professional referees

Your application should arrive no later than **January 15, 2024**. Short-listed candidates will be contacted approximately within two weeks of the application deadline. Please **do not phone or e-mail** to inquire about the status of your application. **Applicants that do not supply all requested materials will not be considered.**

**2024 Leatherback Program at Tortuguero, Costa Rica
Research Assistant Application Form**

<p align="center">FULL NAME</p>		<p align="center">AGE</p>	<p align="center">GENDER</p> <p align="center"> <input type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> F </p>
<p align="center">ADDRESS</p>			
<p align="center">TELEPHONE NUMBER (Indicate if WhatsApp)</p>			
<p align="center">E-MAIL</p>			
<p align="center">AVAILABILITY</p> <p align="center">Please indicate below for which group you would be available. If both, choose the one you would prefer.</p>			
<p align="center">GROUP 1 April 1 – May 18 2024</p>		<p align="center">Group 2 May 14 – June 30 2024</p>	