



Tour de Turtles Frequently Asked Questions

What is Tour de Turtles?

Each year, Sea Turtle Conservancy hosts the annual Tour de Turtles 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 educational program to raise awareness about threats to sea turtle survival and to encourage positive stewardship of ocean and coastal habitats. Tour de Turtles tracks more than a dozen sea turtles, for approximately three months, as they leave their nesting beaches in search of foraging groups. Tour de Turtles competitors swim with the goal of being the first turtle to travel the furthest distance during the migration marathon. Audiences are 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 journeys. It all takes place online at a fun, interactive website dedicated to this event: www.tourdeturtles.org.



Sea Turtle Conservancy also created a secondary competition within the Tour de Turtles marathon known as the Causes Challenge. The public is invited to get involved by learning about threats to sea turtle survival, known as Causes. While only one turtle wins the marathon, another one might be able to garner the most support for its Cause. Tour de Turtles offers audiences a multimedia 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 are monitored using Platform Terminal Transmitters (PTT) that send signals via satellite to record their locations and the distances traveled. The data is then uploaded to interactive maps on the Tour de Turtles website. Because the turtles are released at different times, depending on the nesting season of each species, the distance traveled by each turtle are not counted until the last turtle is released. This ensures that each turtle has a fair opportunity to win the marathon. Each participating sea turtle will have a spot on the "leader board," which provides an overview of all the turtles' progress. The turtle to travel the furthest distance in three months is crowned winner of Tour de Turtles.





While one turtle will be declared the marathon winner, Tour de Turtles includes a second level of competition, the Causes Challenge, which has a direct impact on sea turtle conservation. Each turtle swims to raise awareness about a particular threat to sea turtle survival. In learning about each turtle and their Cause, fans of Tour de Turtles are invited to donate toward one or more turtle Cause. This support is measured with a “goal thermometer” associated with each turtle. The aim is to promote participation among audiences by encouraging financial support that will combat these threats to sea turtle.

How does this program benefit sea turtles?

Through education about sea turtles and the threats to their survival, Tour de Turtles empowers audiences to combat human-caused threats. Audiences are able to cheer on their favorite turtles by supporting their Causes and following their migrations. This level of community involvement and public support will have a 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 threats to the sea turtles. Along with community involvement and awareness, the scientific community also benefits from the data collected, as it identifies little-known migratory patterns for different species of sea turtles.

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 Causes, and see individual migration-tracking maps. Furthermore, people can participate by adopting the sea turtle competitors as part of the Causes Challenge. 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 Tour de Turtles website offers 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 Guide 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.