

Project Update: December 2011

After 4 years of community process working on sea turtle conservation, environmental education and alternative activities, 2011 was a year to witness the results of all this effort.

Biologically, after 30 years of sea turtles eggs and female predation, every nest laid between the Mendihuaca River mouth and Guachaca River mouth, on Mendihuaca Beach, were protected from their ancient predators. The nests with appropriate beach conditions (erosion, sea force, etc) were laid *in situ* and those with adverse conditions were relocated to a safer place on the beach.

This first year of biological information on Mendihuaca Beach revealed interesting aspects of the beach-like incubation environment and put on the table many subjects to study during the coming nesting seasons. The fishermen are really proud about the process and during the 2012 season we will begin obtaining information that helps us to increase our understanding of the incubation process on this beach, looking to improve the emergency success *in situ* and *ex situ* nests.

The environmental education programme has had interesting results, showing the awareness obtained among the children. As a Christmas gift to them, we went to Mundo Marino, an Aquarium in Santa Marta City where the children were able to learn how many other people are working in conservation and how what they are learning this is important to the world. It was an amazing experience for them. As part of our community involvement strategy, during the Christmas season we shared with them doing season decorations and making the days different.

The alternative activities workshops will begin on January and February 2012. During the last months the Foundation team has been working with the adequacy and training, in order to obtain the nests results of these activities.

