

Project Update: February 2008

The Sea Turtle Community-based Conservation, Recovery, Research and Education Project on the Osa Peninsula is developing the night and daily patrols on Carate, Rio Oro and Pejeperro beaches, gathering scientific data from three different species of sea turtles (olive ridley, pacific green and leatherback). In addition, biologists carry out two research projects that pretend (i) to establish how the natural and non-natural depredation affects these sea turtle nesting colonies and (ii) to Asses different techniques that control in situ, this depredation activity.

Before the beginning of the season, we developed the first Workshop in Biology and Conservation of Sea Turtles with Emphasis in Nesting Beaches. During the five days of duration of course, biologists and local community were trained in various aspects of sea turtle biology and ecology, as well as systematic techniques in monitoring of nesting populations. Also, to count with staff from other similar projects, allowed to lay the foundations for a process of methodologic standardization, which is intended to start the next season.

On the other hand, a different way in that the communities can become involved in the conservation of sea turtles is through the implementation of socio-economic alternatives. Because the great experience of a group such as Widecast - Costa Rica, we decided to implement on the Osa one of their socio-economical projects that does not jeopardize the health of the sea turtle populations. For one week 14 women from the Osa Peninsula were trained in elaborating beautiful purses from supermarket's plastic bags recycled. During 40 hours of work they learned to develop different types of purses that are produced nowadays. This initiative projects that the group of weavers from Osa will recycle and reuse an average of 12000 standard sized supermarket plastic bags per month, with the hope that each weaver produces 12 purses per month. This will represent a group income estimated of \$180/weaver/month.