

Project Update: January 2019

In November 2018, I travelled to Jalisco, Mexico, which is the collaborative study site that was exchanged for the San Cosme Corridor in my original proposal. There I visited the Mayto Sea Turtle Research Center, a nest monitoring beach for olive ridley turtles for the past 13 years. In 2015, Israel, Angel and Dr Catherine Hart began receiving live juvenile hawksbill turtles surrendered by local artisan fishermen from the states of Nayarit and Jalisco. After meeting these biologists in 2017 at a sea turtle conference, they invited me to collaborate with my research on epifauna barnacles to help determine the recent geographic movements of the turtles. Thus far, they have collected barnacles from 39 of the 53 turtles examined and released (Photo 1). They showed me the habitats and we met a few of the participating fishermen. They continue to collect barnacles and I will be looking for a student intern in 2019 to help process the barnacles and funds to analyse for stable isotopes.

We continue to work with local artisanal fishermen and conduct outreach events (Photo 2) to encourage more participation for Sea Turtle Spotter. The most recent events resulted in over 50 new sail boaters and tourism industry workers (captains, guides, and business owners) trained on species identification and ways to report live sea turtle sightings at sea and dead washed-up turtles.

In December 2018, Dr Kristin Reed, operations director for Upwell, the organisation who has invited me to collaborate my research, announced that Upwell Board of Directors will be supporting my research and community outreach in Mexico with a full room and board stipend for me and four team members for 2019. This is a value of approximately £25,000 (\$32,000 USD). This funding also allows us to create a sustainable model of financing our research and outreach thus reducing our dependence on funds.



Left: Sea Turtle Spotter Outreach Workshop for sail boaters and tourism industry. Marina La Paz Baja California Sur Mexico. Right: Barnacles collected from juvenile hawksbills surrendered by artesanal fishermen. Mayto, Jalisco Mexico.