

2023 IMPACT REPORT



**TURTLE SURVIVAL
ALLIANCE**

We are devoted, curious,
passionate people leading
the charge to end tortoise
and freshwater turtle
extinctions worldwide.

OUR MISSION

To protect and restore wild populations of tortoises and freshwater turtles through science-based conservation, global leadership, and local stewardship.

OUR VISION

A planet where turtles thrive in the wild, and are respected and protected by all humans.

Ms. Chen Champapao (Project Coordinator, WCS Cambodia) and Mr. Nam Theara release an adult Southern River Terrapin (Batagur affinis) into the Sre Ambel River in Cambodia.



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*Served during 2022 - 2023



From left: A Dahl's Toad-headed Turtle (*Mesoclemmys dahlia*) peeps from one of the many wetlands we have created for this Critically Endangered species in La Carranchina Natural Reserve in Colombia; Rick Hudson holds a Bolson's Tortoise (*Gopherus flavomarginatus*) in New Mexico, U.S.A.

Passing the Torch

President Emeritus Rick Hudson Welcomes Marc Dupuis-Desormeaux in New Position of CEO & President

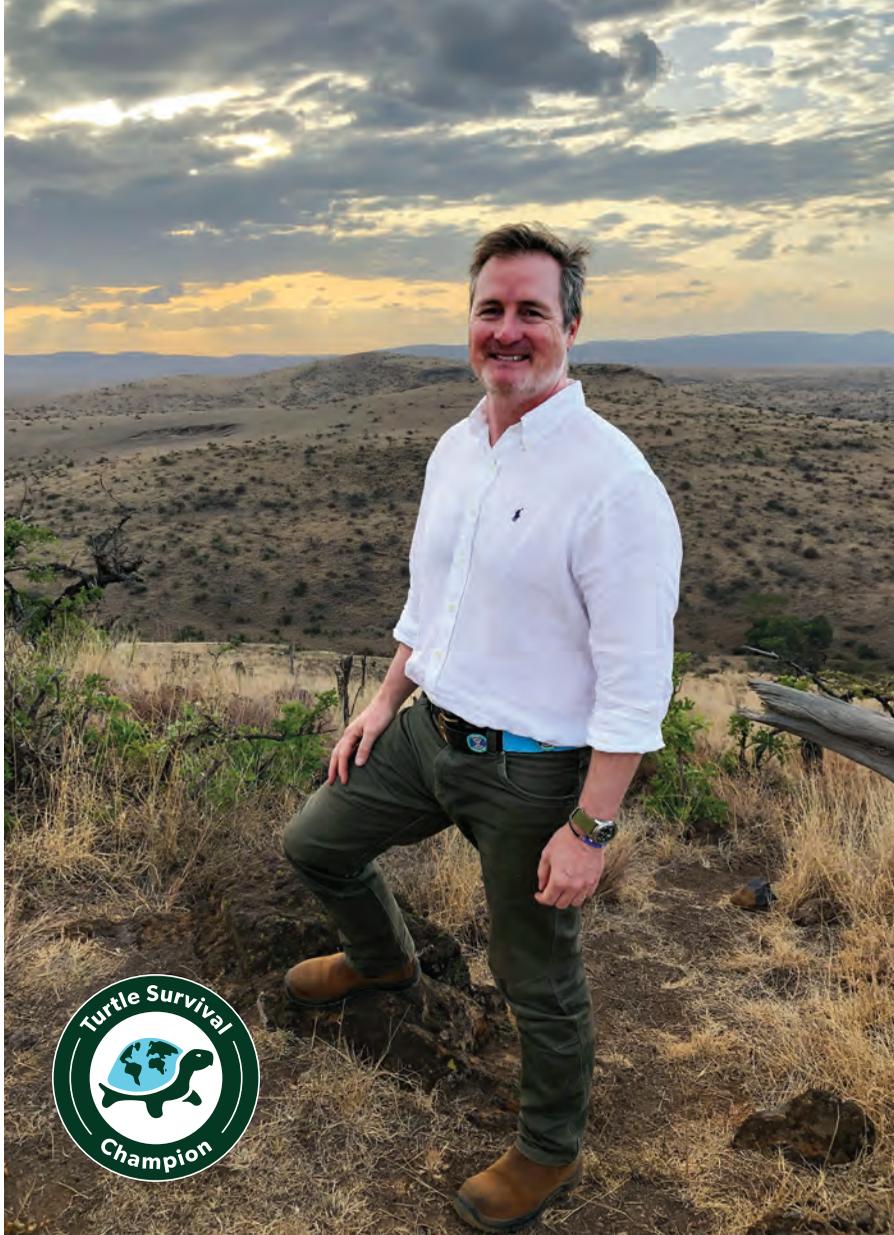
Facing one's imminent retirement creates a range of emotions because you are faced with walking away from the things that have become your identity. My 43 years with the Fort Worth Zoo (FWZ) have, of course, been the best of my life because they spanned my entire career in herpetology and conservation. I am deeply indebted to the leadership of the FWZ Director Mike Fouraker (an Alliance Board member) for sharing my vision and giving me the latitude to pursue my passion for conservation, specifically turtles and iguanas. Fortunately, I am not facing retirement with the same trepidation as many, because I leave both nonprofit groups that I worked to develop in good hands. That is especially true for Turtle Survival Alliance. At our annual symposium in August, I passed the torch to incoming President & CEO Marc Dupuis-Desormeaux, and I did so with excitement and anticipation for the future.

The Alliance is at a crucial juncture, as are the world's turtles and tortoises, and the next ten years will be critical in determining the future of both. If we are to rise to the occasion and take the necessary steps to save endangered

turtles, we will need to grow this organization substantially, both financially and in extending our global reach. I believe that Marc is the person to lead us to that next level and that he firmly believes that we must expand our field conservation and research programs, as well as our community engagement activities, because ultimately, this is where the battle to save turtles will be won.

In my new position as President Emeritus, I plan to remain involved with the Alliance in a fundraising capacity and help support all of our programs, and help deepen our relationships with our zoo partners. As those who know me will attest, I am deeply committed to our Madagascar projects with my heart and soul and intend to be there to support saving these iconic tortoises as I always have. Over to you, Marc.

Rick Hudson, President Emeritus



From left: Marc Dupuis-Desormeaux at the Lewa Wildlife Conservancy in Kenya, Africa; A Pancake Tortoise (*Malacochersus tornieri*) found at the Lewa Wildlife Conservancy, Kenya, Africa, where Marc and his colleagues there study these tortoises.

Q&A

Meet Marc Dupuis-Desormeaux

CEO and President of Turtle Survival Alliance

In 2023, Turtle Survival Alliance named its first ever CEO and President, Marc Dupuis-Desormeaux. With his professional skills and dedication to our mission, Marc has already proven himself to be a significant contributor to Turtle Survival Alliance through his active work on our Field Conservation Committee and Audit & Finance Committee. Marc is known for his influential field research in Canada and Kenya.

How does the mission of the Alliance resonate with you?

I envision Turtle Survival Alliance as the premier organization leading tortoise and freshwater turtle conservation. The Alliance is science-led and collaborates with many of the world's best researchers and organizations. It also invites young people and families into our tent through education, outreach, and volunteer opportunities. Finally,

I believe its approach to community involvement in conservation is the way forward, where everyone gains from protecting these iconic creatures and their unique habitats.

How do you plan to build off of the past successes of the organization in this new position?

My experience in Kenya has given me a road map. I had seen first-hand how having a partner like the Alliance could serve as the catalyst for conservation action in Kenya and in Canada, and its further potential worldwide. We started with a single partner, but having the Turtle Survival Alliance team at my side helped grow the partnership to seven community conservancies, four national agencies, two universities, as well as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and a number of generous grantors. This experience was transformative, and I look forward to scaling up our projects around the world.

What do you look forward to in your first year in this new leadership position?

In my first few months, I really want to listen. I am surrounded by people with deep knowledge of turtles, community engagement, and conservation. With my team and allies, we will be developing a strategy to grow our reach and fulfill our mission. 🐢



“

“Turtle Survival Alliance is a natural fit for me. For the past three years, I have worked in collaboration with the Alliance to progress a Pancake Tortoise initiative in central Kenya. That effort now includes seven community conservation areas where this Critically Endangered species was previously unknown and unheralded. Witnessing all we’ve accomplished there in such a short amount of time is a microcosm for all that I know we can accomplish around the world. The potential inspires me.”

-MARC DUPUIS-DESORMEAUX

Why Turtles, Why Now?

Of the 476 living types of turtles, tortoises, and terrapins, more than half are threatened with extinction.

To save turtles, we all play a role. Most species are subject to habitat destruction and fragmentation, increased predation, legal and illegal collection, incidental entanglement in fishing gear, road mortality, and climate change, to name a few. If we do not act now, we may lose many species in the foreseeable future. For a growing number of species, Turtle Survival Alliance provides their last chance for survival.

Our work often takes us to parts of the world where poverty is a constant strain on the people. It is vital that local communities participate in and benefit from conservation efforts. From Mexico to Madagascar, we're finding ways of helping turtles, tortoises, and people.



In the aftermath of a fire set by farmers to cultivate crops in Chiapas, Mexico, Eduardo Reyes Grajales [M.Sc./El Colegio de la Frontera Sur] collects the corpses of mud and musk turtles, searching for any surviving specimens.





Turtle Survival Alliance: By the Numbers

The data presented reflects 1 October 2022 to 30 September 2023



125+

Species & subspecies worked with



10,600+

Turtles released into the wild



14,750+

Hatchlings produced



17

Countries with Turtle Survival Alliance presence



575+

Volunteers & interns engaged



635+

Community members employed



10

Years of the Turtle Survival Center



275+

Annual Symposium attendees



48

Graduate researchers supported



27

Drink Beer. Save Turtles.® events held in 2023

Left: All over the world, biologists take important data on highly endangered turtles and tortoises in Turtle Survival Alliance programs, projects, and partnerships. Here, José Andriamampionina takes data on one of the 2,000 Radiated Tortoises we released into community protected forests in southern Madagascar in 2023.



TURTLE SURVIVAL ALLIANCE



In 2023, the Turtle Survival Center in Cross, SC, celebrated its tenth year of turtle conservation. Pictured: Indochinese Box Turtle (*Cuora galbinifrons*), see p.26

Where We Work

- Bangladesh
- Belize
- Brazil
- Cambodia
- Colombia
- Egypt
- India
- Indonesia
- Kenya
- Madagascar
- Malaysia
- Mexico
- Myanmar
- South Sudan
- Uganda
- United States
- Vietnam

What We Do

- Habitat Protection
- Conservation Breeding
- Education and Outreach
- Field Research and Monitoring
- Training and Capacity Building
- Head Start and Reintroduction
- Rescue and Rehabilitation
- Community Engagement
- Advocacy



In Mexico, numerous conservation and research projects are underway for this country which has the second greatest turtle diversity on Earth. Pictured: Mexican Spotted Wood Turtle (*Rhinoclemmys rubida*), see p.12.



In Cambodia, we work to restore the wild population of critically endangered Southern River Terrapins (*Batagur affinis*), see p. 20



In Madagascar, we work to reverse the downward population trends for all endemic Malagasy species of tortoises. Pictured: Radiated Tortoise (*Astrochelys radiata*), see p.16

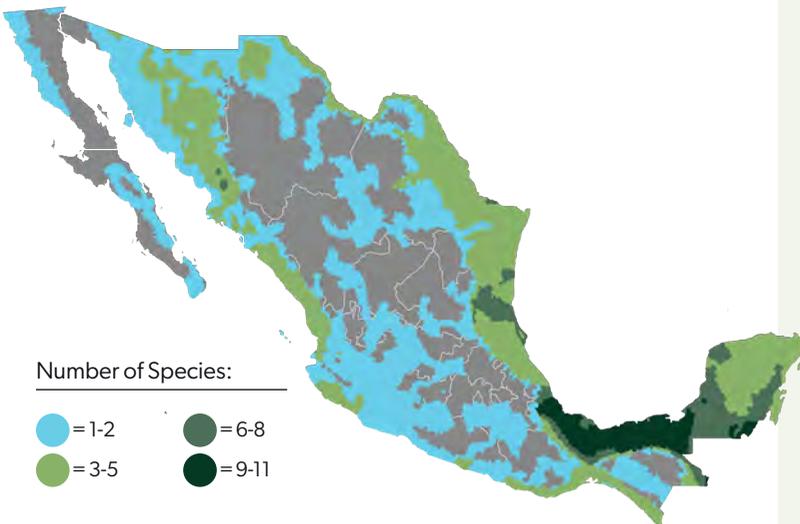
MEXICO

A Global Turtle Diversity Hotspot in Need of Conservation Actions

In recent years, Turtle Survival Alliance has quietly begun directing resources toward getting projects off the ground in Mexico. Why Mexico? Mexico is a turtle rich-country, with the second-highest diversity of turtles in the world (65 species and subspecies), just behind the United States (89 species and subspecies). Thirty-two species and subspecies are endemic, or found only in Mexico. About half are poorly known and lack basic published natural history data.

Sadly, many of Mexico’s turtle and tortoise species are under threat from habitat conversion, largely for cropland, livestock pastureland, logging operations, and tourism, and increasingly, poaching for the international pet trade. This is especially true for the Mexican box turtles (*Terrepene*) and some of the small and rare mud turtles (*Kinosternon*). In fact, the world’s smallest turtle, the Vallarta Mud Turtle (*Kinosternon vogti*), just recently described in 2018, is already considered Critically Endangered. This tiny turtle now only exists in remnant populations, in densely populated areas along Mexico’s west coast. Males sport a bright yellow patch on the snout, making them particularly desirable by collectors and heavily targeted for the high-end pet trade. There is an increasing urgency to establish captive breeding colonies for this species, and Turtle Survival Alliance is working with local partners to enact conservation measures before this species disappears. We are excited about these new partnerships and look forward to increased engagement in Mexico in the coming years. 🐢

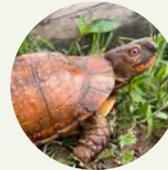
Species Richness



Turtle Extinction Crisis

Because of increasing concern for the extinction risk of turtles in Mexico, an IUCN Red List workshop was held in Mexico City in July 2023, attended by Alliance Board members Anders Rhodin and John Iverson, one of the leading authorities on Mexican mud turtles. The results were alarming. Numerous species will likely see their endangerment status uplisted to a greater threat level in 2024.

To get traction in Mexico, the Alliance partners with local conservation groups and students, in particular a group known as Estudiantes Conservando la Naturaleza, or Students Conserving Nature (SCN), managed by Alejandra Monsiváis and Taggart Butterfield. SCN has discovered important new natural history data for the following three priority species:



Spotted Box Turtle
(*Terrapene nelsoni*)

IUCN Red List Status: Data Deficient*



Yucatán Box Turtle
(*Terrapene yucatanana*)

IUCN Red List Status: Vulnerable*



Vallarta Mud Turtle
(*Kinosternon vogti*)

IUCN Red List Status: Critically Endangered

In Chiapas, Eduardo Reyes Grajales is surveying the status of the local turtles, including:



Central American River Turtle
(*Dermatemys mawii*)

IUCN Red List Status: Critically Endangered



Pacific Coast Musk Turtle
(*Staurotypus salvinii*)

IUCN Red List Status: Near Threatened*



Central Chiapas Mud Turtle
(*Kinosternon abaxillare*)

IUCN Red List Status: Vulnerable

*Likely to be uplisted in 2024



Amplifying Turtle Conservation in Chiapas

The remarkable diversity of Chiapas, in terms of climate, vegetation, topography, and aquatic systems, makes it particularly significant for turtles. This small state is home to 14 turtle species, approximately 30% of the continental turtle species distributed throughout Mexico. There also exists a high level of cultural diversity in Chiapas, making the development of effective wildlife management strategies, whether for utilization, study, or conservation, a significant challenge. It is our goal to safeguard and respect the knowledge, practices, and traditions of local communities, while encouraging conservation practices to protect the dwindling turtle population.

Because of this context, historical efforts to study the turtles distributed in this state have been limited, resulting in a scarcity of programs dedicated to the conservation of these turtle species. There is a pressing need to establish a comprehensive body of research aimed at studying and formulating effective conservation strategies for action in this region of Mexico. This effort should not only prioritize the protection of its biological diversity, but also the preservation of the biocultural richness that thrives within these communities to ensure comprehensive long-term conservation.

-EDUARDO REYES GRAJALES *(pictured)*



There is a pressing need to establish a comprehensive body of research aimed at studying and formulating effective conservation strategies for action in this region of Mexico.



A male Red-cheeked Mud Turtle (*Kinosternon scorpioides cruentatum*) in Chiapas, Mexico. This species, one of Mexico's 22 types of mud turtles, is one of many whose endangerment status is being reassessed.

Why Mexico?

Mexico by the Numbers

65

Species and subspecies

56

Freshwater and terrestrial turtles

4

Tortoises

2nd

In the World in Chelonian Species Richness

32

Endemic species and subspecies

10

Turtle Survival Alliance-supported study sites

Turtle Survival Alliance makes an impact for 20 priority species and subspecies of Mexican turtles and tortoises.





MADAGASCAR

Confiscation to Reintroduction: Returning Tortoises to the Wild

Madagascar is widely recognized as one of the world’s most important biodiversity hotspots. Preserving that biodiversity is one of the most pressing conservation challenges that we face today. With many unique species, most found nowhere else on Earth, protecting the unique flora and fauna of this megadiversity island nation is a high priority. Among them is the beautiful Radiated Tortoise (*Astrochelys radiata*). The Radiated Tortoise was one of the most abundant tortoises on Earth, but is now undergoing a catastrophic decline due to poaching. Adults are harvested for bushmeat consumption, and juveniles are collected for the illegal pet trade abroad, leaving wild populations highly depleted or nearly extinct. We could lose this iconic symbol of southern Madagascar’s spiny forest ecosystem if we are unable to control the illegal wildlife trade. Beginning in 2012, Turtle Survival Alliance, together with our Malagasy colleagues, began to confront the tortoise poaching crisis through awareness and improved enforcement. This resulted in the confiscation of a vast number of tortoises from the illegal wildlife trade, which reached a dramatic peak in 2018, placing ~15,000 new tortoises under the Alliance’s care in Madagascar. By 2019, this number reached ~26,000 tortoises, clearly an unsustainable number to manage, and we began implementing our Confiscation to Reintroduction Strategy. 🐢



Each icon represents a general location of Turtle Survival Alliance-Madagascar’s long-term care facilities, triage facilities, breeding centers, community forests, and national headquarters.



We identify sites where tortoises can be safely returned to the wild that have good forest habitat quality and engaged communities.



Once we select a safe site, turtles are moved to a soft-release enclosure for six months with the goal of creating site fidelity, or a tendency to remain close to the release site.



In 2022, the first group of tortoises were fully released into the community-protected forest and intensively monitored with GPS loggers and VHF trackers; 95% remained nearby.

2,000

Radiated Tortoises released into community-protected forests in 2023

20,000

Radiated Tortoises to be released in the next 5-7 years



From left: Tantely Rasoariamanana. Following transport by truck to the reintroduction site, tortoises are soaked in pans of water to encourage them to hydrate before their release into the dry spiny forest. Here, Tortoise Conservation Center tortoise keeper Avismasy is seen monitoring tortoises upon arrival.



MADAGASCAR

Empowering Communities

It has been said that the battle to save wildlife will be won or lost at the community level, and nowhere is that truer than in Madagascar with the Radiated Tortoise. The Radiated Tortoise ranges through spiny forests, a dry desert ecosystem that is sparsely populated, with a few towns scattered miles apart. Though protected by law, enforcement is largely absent and tortoise poaching is rampant. And though the two major tribes living here don't harm the tortoises, people from outside this region come here to take tortoises and tortoise meat. Tens of thousands of tortoises are removed annually, both adults and juveniles. The only thing standing between protecting tortoises and letting them be taken by poachers is the communities that manage the forests where the tortoises live.

The challenge that Turtle Survival Alliance faces is making communities understand that protecting tortoises can have benefits for the community. We first demonstrated this in 2012 when we built a school in a village that showed a strong protective tradition. Since then, we have built two more schools to improve community engagement. The Alliance manages two major tortoise conservation centers in the South, where we care for ~23,000 tortoises. Feeding this many tortoises requires a lot of vegetation; we depend on local communities to grow, collect, deliver and feed all these tortoises. Integrating our programs in the local economy strengthens the link between conservation and community.



From left: Radiated Tortoises are equipped with radio transmitters and GPS data loggers for monitoring upon their release, as demonstrated here by Vontsoa; Community member involvement in Madagascar is key to the future success of this species.

At the two sites where we have reintroduced 3,000 tortoises, we depend on incentivized and trained villagers to patrol the forests, monitor tortoises, and report poaching activity. In the coming years we plan to expand our community engagement activities in order to rebuild self-sustaining tortoise populations. Without strong and engaged local communities, the Radiated Tortoise is doomed to extinction. 🌱

Hery Lova Razafimamonjiraibe

Turtle Survival Alliance is pleased to announce the appointment of Hery Lova Razafimamonjiraibe as the first Deputy Director of our Madagascar program. Hery comes to us from Blue Ventures, the leading marine conservation group in Madagascar, and brings a background of experience in personnel and project management to this rapidly growing program. There are five endemic turtle species in Madagascar, but the majority of our resources are dedicated to getting the many Radiated Tortoises under our care back on the landscape within community managed forests or protected areas. Given the increasing threats to the other four species and the need for Alliance engagement, we must expand our senior management staff to meet those demands. Hery Lova joining our team represents a first major step in this direction, and we look forward to seeing this program grow with the administrative skills that he brings to the table.



CAMBODIA

A Long-term Commitment to Saving a Species

There are few creatures on Earth to which the old adage “slow and steady wins the race” applies to more than turtles—and their conservation. They are long-lived, slow-to-mature creatures with low reproductive output. Population increases typically occur over decades, especially now with so many man-made threats working against their survival. Thus, the goal of restoring once-great populations takes great perseverance. Such is the case for Turtle Survival Alliance, in collaboration with Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), in our work to recover the Southern River Terrapin in Cambodia. The Southern River Terrapin (*Batagur affinis*) is a large aquatic turtle once found in rivers throughout Southeast Asia. In Cambodia,

Southern River Terrapins were at one time so common that thousands of eggs were harvested each year from sandbanks along the Sre Ambel River. Decades of war and civil strife continued in the 20th century in Cambodia, and by the late 1990s, the Southern River Terrapin was presumed extinct in this country. However, fears of extinction proved ill-founded when a small remnant population was “rediscovered” by a WCS team in 2001. Through an aggressive conservation program, today, the wild population of terrapins in Cambodia is estimated to be around 100, and successful captive breeding efforts over the last three years rapidly contribute to this growing population. 🐢

17

Years Active

320

Wild-hatched eggs

147

Released headstarted subadults

156

Captive-bred offspring



When a clutch is laid, villagers place the eggs in anti-predator mesh cylinders.



Upon their hatching, we immediately transfer the baby turtles to a head start facility where they spend the next 5-7 years.



It will take many decades of diligent efforts to ensure that the iconic Southern River Terrapin returns to a self-sustaining population, but the future is bright for this charismatic species with the support of our community.



We are now producing viable hatchlings from this assurance colony. 2023 proved to be a banner year, resulting in over 122 hatchlings.



We involve local communities, religious leaders, and government officials in the many facets of the turtles' journeys back to the wild.



To date, we have released 147 subadult terrapins into the wild (Sre Ambel River). We track every released turtle to learn about their movements and survival.



The head start facility is located at the Reptile Conservation Center in Koh Kong. Here, the turtles grow and await their eventual release into the wild.



“If your life’s work can
be accomplished in
your lifetime, you’re not
thinking big enough.”

-WES JACKSON, ENVIRONMENTALIST

Every Turtle Survival Champion knows that the turtle they are interacting with, from a rewilded subadult Southern River Terrapin to a day-old hatchling Asian Giant Tortoise, will likely outlive them. The battle for the conservation of turtles is more than a lifelong commitment; it is a multi-generational endeavor. Turtle Survival Alliance works to ensure a long and secure future for these ancient creatures for the duration of their lives and those of their successors.

*Adult male Southern River
Terrapins (*Batagur affinis*)
express rich, dark pigmentation
during breeding season.*





Conservation Heroes: Protecting Turtles Worldwide



Searching for the Rarest of the Rare

Luca Luiselli • South Sudan & Uganda, Vietnam

For numerous turtle species, we count the number remaining in the wild not by the thousands but by the dozens—or less. I have found significant purpose in my professional life searching for remnant animals of once great populations, including the Nubian Flapshell Turtle (*Cyclanorbis elegans*) in South Sudan & Uganda and the Swinhoe's Softshell Turtle (*Rafetus swinhoei*) in Vietnam. Turtles this rare may blink out of existence in our lifetime without immediate conservation action. Finding these turtles is one major step toward preserving them, alongside habitat protection and community awareness.



Engaging Communities for Conservation

Pelf Nyok Chen • Malaysia

In 2011, we established the Turtle Conservation Society of Malaysia (TCS) to protect and restore the Southern River Terrapin (*Batagur affinis*) population in Terengganu, Malaysia. Since then, some of our achievements include securing and incubating 8,200 eggs from four riverbanks, conducting more than 150 turtle education programs reaching more than 15,000 students, and creating a program to empower women to be financially independent through work that benefits conservation. Conservation is a commitment that requires long-term persistence, dedication, and perseverance from all, but most importantly, the local community.

Turtle Survival Champions can be found fighting for turtle conservation all over the planet. Conservation efforts span from engaging communities, to exploring new habitats, to charting genetic maps, and more. Thanks to these champions of conservation, turtle conservation knows no geographical bounds.



The Search for Pancakes in Kenya

Dominic Maringa • Kenya

Kenya is widely recognized as one of the most critical African countries for the continent's biodiversity. The critically endangered Pancake Tortoise (*Malacochersus tornieri*) is among the priority wildlife that finds refuge in the Lewa Wildlife Conservancy. Propelled by the number of tortoise findings at Lewa and the surrounding communities' engagement, we have expanded our surveys to now include seven community conservancies. We began by surveying for, capturing, cataloging, and releasing these imperiled tortoises; now we are rapidly growing Kenya's awareness of their plight.

Genetics Charting the Course Worldwide

Natalia Gallego-García • Global

Genomics is transforming conservation with precise genetic insights that drive effective management. This field of study employs cutting-edge technologies to examine the entire genome, providing a comprehensive view of a species' genetic makeup. Genomics empowers conservationists to make data-driven decisions for imperiled species, contributing to decisions in population supplementation, rewilding strategies, captive management, and more. Genomics charts the successful future for endangered species around the world.



A Decade of Success

The Turtle Survival Center (TSC) was founded to support our mission of zero turtle extinctions worldwide. Since 2013, we have established scientifically managed populations of critically endangered species and provided involvement opportunities for turtle conservationists of all ages. A decade of research, breeding, and hatching has resulted in astonishing results:

950

Total hatchlings produced from 27 endangered species and subspecies

750

Current living chelonians residing at the TSC

530

Total turtle habitats among indoor & outdoor complexes

\$4.2M

Total raised for the Turtle Survival Center since its inception

4,200

Square feet of construction among three climate-controlled buildings



2013

- TSC breaks ground on new property
- Turtle Holding Building constructed
- Priority species moved onto property
- **First species hatch at the TSC, including the Vietnamese Pond Turtle (*Mauremys annamensis*) (pictured)**



2014

- Tortoise Barn is completed
- Vet clinic remodeled
- **Successful first hatchings of seven species, including the Yellow-margined Box Turtle (*Cuora flavomarginata*) (pictured)**

2015

- Hatchling Grow-out Room renovated
- Sulawesi Greenhouse completed
- Cuora Complex I completed
- **Successful first hatchings of two species, including the Bourret's Box Turtle (*Cuora bourreti*) (pictured)**



2017

- Chelonian Husbandry Internship Program launches
- TSC hosts tour for 2017 Annual Symposium
- **Successful first hatchings of three species, including the McCord's Box Turtle (*Cuora mccordi*) (pictured)**

2016

- Quarantine Building completed
- **Successful first hatchings of six species, including the Forsten's Tortoise (*Indotestudo forstenii*) (pictured)**



2018

- Cuora Complex II completed
- Successful first hatching of two species
- **Nine Southern Vietnam Box Turtles were hatched; this is believed to be the most captive bred offspring of this species produced at any one location in a single breeding season at the time. (pictured)**
- The Turtle Survival Center is recognized as an Accredited Related Facility of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums
- The TSC celebrates its fifth anniversary



2021

- Chelonian Husbandry Internship celebrates 5 years of Interns
- **50th Indochinese Box Turtle (*Cuora galbinifrons*) hatches at the TSC (pictured)**



2019

- Renovations for disinfection areas
- **Successful first hatchings of four species, including the Burmese Star Tortoise (*Geochelone platynota*) (pictured)**



2020

- Collection plan revised to focus on 23 priority species
- **Acquisition of the only known Flattened Musk Turtle (*Sternotherus depressus*) in the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) population (pictured)**



2022

- Individuals of three priority species incorporated into collection to increase genetic diversity
- **Successful first hatching of the Chinese Three-striped Box Turtle (*Cuora trifasciata*) (pictured)**



Staff Spotlights

2023

- Assurance Colony Expansion (ACE) building completed
- TSC hosts tour for 2023 Annual Symposium
- **Turtle Survival Alliance and the AZA Chelonian Advisory Group cosponsor the first Chelonian Biology, Conservation, and Management Course at the TSC (pictured)**



Cris Hagen

*Director,
Turtle Survival Center*

“The TSC serves as a facility to centralize our captive programs in order to realize our commitments to turtle conservation. After 10 years of operations, the Turtle Survival Center is a well-oiled machine, meeting and exceeding many of its captive management goals.”



Carol Alvarez, RMA

*Veterinary Keeper,
Turtle Survival Center*

“When I first started working at the TSC I was excited to do such meaningful work with critically endangered turtles. Now, I look back and am honored to have had a part in building a world class facility to properly maintain these turtles and give them an enriched life.”



Clinton Doak

*Assistant Curator,
Turtle Survival Center*

“At the TSC, we work in a multifaceted approach by providing ex situ conservation for chelonians through a carefully constructed living genetic bank, or ark, of many of the most endangered tortoises and freshwater turtles in the world.”

You can be a part of our future...



Find out more about how you can help by visiting turtlesurvival.org

Growing the Turtle Survival Center Program



Expanding Assurance Colonies.

As our success in propagating the most endangered turtles in the world grows, so does our need to expand our facilities to provide for their care and grow our colonies. It is critical to maintain significant, genetically diverse and healthy populations here at the Center.



Building the path home.

Building populations of these rare species here in South Carolina is not the end game. It is essential to build their pathway home. We work towards a long-term, comprehensive strategy to overcome the environmental, political, and biological challenges and restore viable populations in their native environments.



Protecting our native turtles.

We also work to preserve our turtles here at home. With the AZA SAFE: American Turtle Program, we are building a path to return turtles confiscated from illegal trade to the wild. Our work, in the natural environments of the TSC, will serve as a model to advance population restoration both here and abroad.

The grounds of the Turtle Survival Center encompass 51 acres, providing us with great future opportunities for expansion.



TURTLE SURVIVAL — CENTER — TURTLE SURVIVAL ALLIANCE



“We are thrilled with the substantial achievements of the Turtle Survival Center, which has become an irreplaceable breeding collection for species preservation and a hub for research and education. As the founding donors and ongoing supporters, we take pride in its expansion.”

- ALAN AND PATRICIA KOVAL FOUNDATION, FOUNDING DONOR AND LONG-TIME SUPPORTER OF THE TURTLE SURVIVAL CENTER

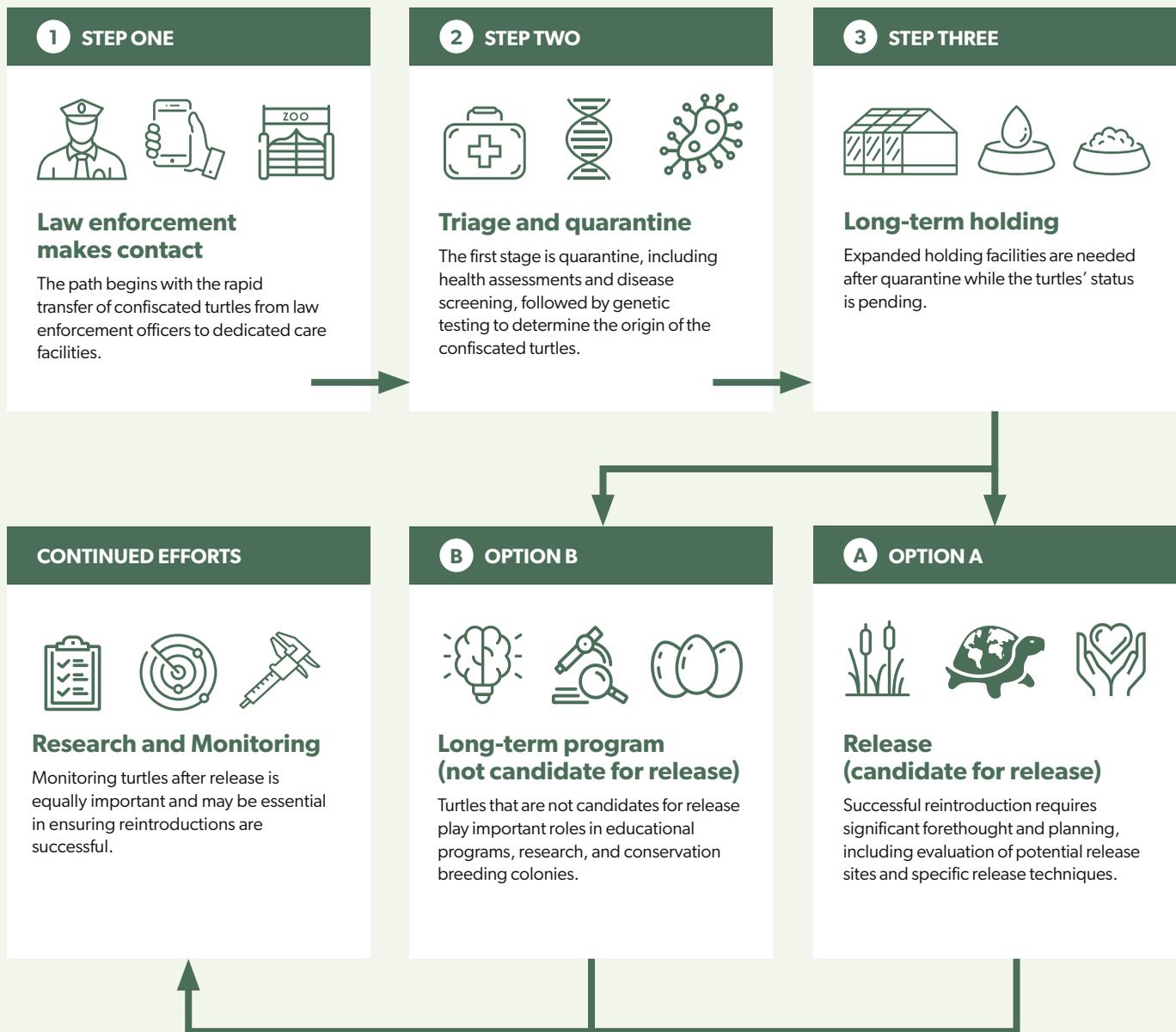
A consignment of
confiscated Eastern Box
Turtles (*Terrapene carolina*)
arrives at the New England
Aquarium, an AZA SAFE:
American Turtle Program
dedicated care facility.



The Path from Confiscation to Conservation

The international illegal trade in freshwater turtles is significantly impacting North American turtles. This is a complex multi-faceted problem that requires well-coordinated partnerships between wildlife agency biologists and law enforcement and NGOs such as the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. The collaboration between the AZA SAFE: American Turtle Program, housed with Turtle Survival Alliance, and the Collaborative to Combat the Illegal Trade

in Turtles, consisting of 180+ members, primarily representing state and federal biologists and law enforcement officers, brings these elements together. With this partnership, capacity to support law enforcement efforts is greatly expanded while the confiscated turtles receive the highest level of care on the path back to conservation programs to preserve and expand native turtle populations.



Zoo and Aquarium Partners Make the Difference

Since the inception of Turtle Survival Alliance, zoos & aquariums have been a cornerstone of our success, playing an important role in sustaining our operations and supporting our conservation programs. The Alliance maintains zoo and aquarium partners across the United States and abroad, who are well positioned to rapidly mobilize critical resources in support of our mission, headquartered in Charleston, South Carolina. The following zoos & aquariums have given \$5,000+, or significant in-kind giving, over the last three years. The bolded zoos have contributed \$25,000 or more, or significant in-kind support in the last three years.

The Association of Zoos & Aquariums (Silver Spring, Maryland)

Baton Rouge Zoo

Birmingham Zoo

Buffalo Zoo

Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden

Cleveland Metroparks Zoo

Columbus Zoo and Aquarium

Dallas Zoo

Detroit Zoo

Disney's Animal Kingdom

Fort Wayne Children's Zoo

Fort Worth Zoo

Fresno Chaffee Zoo

Indianapolis Zoo

Jacksonville Zoo

Milwaukee County Zoo

Mississippi Aquarium

Nashville Zoo at Grassmere

North Carolina Zoo

Oklahoma City Zoo & Botanical Garden

Riverbanks Zoo & Garden

Saint Louis Zoo

San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance

Santa Fe College Teaching Zoo

Sedgwick County Zoo

South Carolina Aquarium

Tennessee Aquarium

Topeka Zoo & Conservation Center

Toronto Zoo

Turtle Back Zoo (Zoological Society of New Jersey)

Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center

Virginia Safari Park (Zoofari Parks, LLC)

Virginia Zoo at Norfolk

Wildlife Conservation Society/Bronx Zoo

Woodland Park Zoo

Zoo Atlanta

Zoo Boise

Zoo Knoxville

Zoo New England



Saint Louis Zoo Boosts Health of Radiated Tortoises

In 2020, the Saint Louis Zoo became an important collaborator with Turtle Survival Alliance, partnering to advance health assessments and disease prevention methods of confiscated Radiated Tortoises (*Astrochelys radiata*) in Madagascar. Saint Louis Zoo has supported and partially staffed two field trips, one in 2020 and again in 2022, and a third trip is underway in October 2023. The Zoo's team of veterinarians, technicians, and molecular biologists have been studying infectious disease threats that may occur with the reintroduction of confiscated tortoises back into the wild.



**Turtle Survival Alliance
Headquarters**
Charleston, SC



Zoo Knoxville and AZA SAFE Champion Madagascar Program

Zoo Knoxville has a rich history of leadership in Malagasy tortoise conservation, with a longstanding partnership with Turtle Survival Alliance. The partnership gained momentum with the initiation of the AZA Radiated Tortoise SAFE program in 2017. Under the leadership of President & CEO Lisa New, conservation donations and support have quadrupled in the last decade, primarily through this program. The Zoo has not only provided funding but also sent staff to Madagascar over half a dozen times to assist in the care, health evaluation, and reintroduction of Radiated Tortoises into the wild.

Collette Konkel collects a
Common Snapping Turtle
(*Chelydra serpentina*) at
Manatee Springs State Park.
The North American Freshwater
Turtle Research Group offers
an immersive citizen science
experience for hundreds of
volunteers per year.



Community Connections



The NAFTRG experience is one of the most unique, where citizen scientists and their like-minded peers snorkel, kayak, and canoe crystalline waters to make a positive impact for turtle conservation.

Turtle Survival Alliance North American Freshwater Turtle Research Group (TSA-NAFTRG)

The NAFTRG program is your opportunity to get in the water, catch turtles, and contribute to citizen science. With 19 study sites spread across Florida, Texas, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Washington, and Belize, the opportunities are endless. This program has captured over 17,000 turtles representing 36 different types. Never caught a turtle before? Education, outreach, and training are the focus of these interactive turtle surveys. Come learn how to set traps, capture and process turtles, and contribute to meaningful scientific studies, all while meeting a family you didn't know you had.



*Eduardo Reyes Grajales teaches students at the Universidad de Ciencias y Artes de Chiapas how to take scientific data from a Painted Wood Turtle (*Rhinoclemmys pulcherrima*).*

Education & Outreach

Conservation programs are destined to fail if they do not include community engagement, education, and outreach. That is why the Alliance focuses attention on these pillars of conservation, because the battle to save species will be won or lost at the community level. Some of the tools we deploy are:

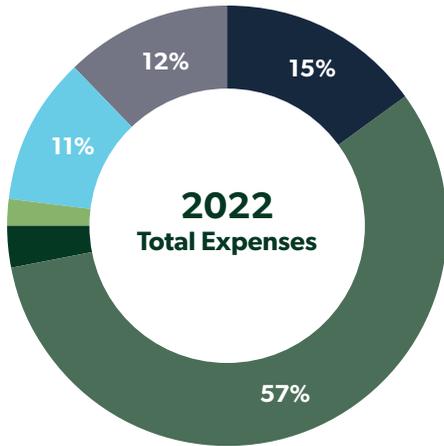
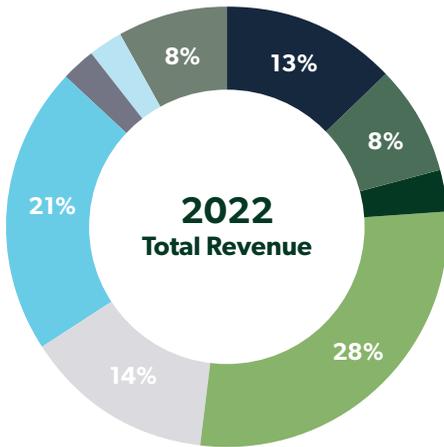
- Community events
- School programs and interactive workshops
- Building schools
- School program education packets
- National Awareness campaigns
- Law enforcement training
- Student training
- Internships
- Conferences & workshops
- Virtual learning

This past year, NAFTRG saw nearly 400 volunteers collect important scientific data on 28 types of turtles.



Belize Foundation for Research and Environmental Education (BFREE) Wildlife Fellow Barney Hall frees one of the 100 captive bred, headstarted Central American River Turtles released into a river in central Belize this year.

Financial Summary



2022 Total Revenue (\$2.6 Million)

Item	Amount	Percent
Individual Donations	\$342,075.00	13%
Foundations	\$225,564.00	8%
Major Gifts	\$70,000.00	3%
Corporate	\$735,353.00	28%
Government	\$373,668.00	14%
Board Restricted Fund - Operations	\$550,000.00	21%
Conference	\$67,651.00	2.5%
Memberships & Merchandise	\$67,385.00	2.5%
Other	\$199,560.00	8%
TOTAL	\$2,631,256.00	100%

2022 Total Expenses (\$2.8 Million)

Item	Amount	Percent
Turtle Survival Center	\$442,053.00	15%
Range Programs	\$1,647,979.00	57%
AZA SAFE	\$83,338.00	3%
Conference	\$53,199.00	2%
Management	\$320,590.00	11%
Fundraising	\$340,259.00	12%
Total Operating Expenses	\$2,887,418.00	100%

Consolidated Balance Sheet - Fiscal Year 2022

Assets	
Item	Amount
Cash & Cash Equivalents	\$828,926.00
Grants Receivables	\$432,829.00
Pledge Receivables	\$325,058.00
Inventory	\$18,598.00
Investments	\$13,425,267.00
Deposits	\$2,000.00
Cash surrendered Life Insurance	\$78,712.00
Depreciable Property & Equipment	\$1,035,546.00
Restricted Investments	\$137,559.00
TOTAL	\$16,284,495.00

Liabilities & Net Assets	
Item	Amount
Accounts Payable	\$73,435.00
Accrued Expenses	\$66,882.00
Deferred Revenue	\$34,736.00
Current Portion Long Term Debt	\$5,282.00
Long Term Debt	\$19,167.00
Total Liabilities	\$199,502.00

Net Assets	
Item	Amount
Undesignated	\$1,741,376.00
Board Designated	\$13,601,482.00
Donor Restricted	\$742,135.00
Total Net Assets	\$16,084,993.00
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	\$16,284,495.00

Thank You to Our Donors!

\$100,000+

Alan and Patricia Koval Foundation
Anonymous
Division of International Conservation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Gregory Family Charitable Fund
United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

\$50,000 - \$99,999

Columbus Zoo and Aquarium
Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF)
William Dennler/Dennler Family Fund

\$25,000 - \$49,999

AZA SAFE
Aktionsgemeinschaft Artenschutz e.V.
Mandai Nature
Tortuga Foundation

\$10,000 - \$24,999

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The Cynthia and George Mitchell Foundation
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Desert Tortoise Council, Inc.
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Fort Wayne Children's Zoo
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San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance
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TC Energy Foundation
Topeka Zoo and Conservation Center
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Zoo Med Laboratories, Inc.

\$5,000 - \$9,999

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Heather, Steven, and Grace Downey
Michael Dreslik
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Front cover: Red-cheeked Mud Turtle (*Kinosternon scorpioides cruentatum*)

Supporter Spotlights



DONOR SPOTLIGHT

Meredith Keen

"I enjoy telling others about Turtle Survival Alliance's valuable projects and achievements, and how it utilizes precious resources effectively to fulfill the organization's mission. I encourage others to support this organization that unites people around the world in conservation collaboration, based on a shared profound love and knowledge of the critical importance of nature."

CORPORATE PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

Disney Conservation Fund

For nearly two decades, the Disney Conservation Fund has been a steadfast supporter of Turtle Survival Alliance with funding and in-kind contributions totaling more than \$725,000. The ongoing collaboration between the Disney Conservation Fund and the Alliance stands as a testament to the enduring dedication both organizations have toward preserving our natural world. Together, they strive to pave the way for a sustainable future where endangered turtles and tortoises can thrive in their natural habitats.



FOUNDATION SPOTLIGHT

Felburn Foundation

The Felburn Foundation has provided unwavering support to Turtle Survival Alliance for almost a decade. With grants totaling over \$120,000, their generosity has played a crucial role in the development of the Turtle Survival Center and North American programs. Because of foundations like the Felburn Foundation, Turtle Survival Alliance can continue to restore turtle populations at home and abroad.



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Heidi Chiappetta

"Before moving to Charleston, I discovered Turtle Survival Alliance and became a member. Conservation is extraordinarily important and I'm specifically drawn to reptiles, turtles in particular, so the Alliance was a natural fit. I am so grateful for everything they do worldwide to assist with conservation and preservation of all of our turtle species. Meeting everyone involved with the Alliance and developing personal relationships has been extraordinarily fulfilling."

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS

Turtle Survival Alliance is proud to acknowledge the following organizations that make our work possible. The organizations listed here provide a range of services supporting our mission, including guidance, networking, strategic planning, funding, husbandry, rescue, animal management, marketing and public relations, field research, logistical and technical support, salaried positions, and other resources.

*Because of your support, critically endangered turtles like the Dahl's Toad-headed Turtle (*Mesoclemmys dahl*) have a chance at a future on Earth. In 2019, Turtle Survival Alliance, Rainforest Trust, and Wildlife Conservation Society purchased a tract of habitat in Colombia known since as La Carranchina Natural Reserve. In 2022-2023, we continued restoration of this sanctuary for the turtle, creating new wetlands for them to thrive, as well as bringing in new genetically valuable animals.*

To Save Turtles, We All Play a Role

Your support of Turtle Survival Alliance will help protect and restore wild populations of tortoises and freshwater turtles through science-based conservation, global leadership, and local stewardship.

Invest in our commitment to zero turtle extinctions in the 21st century and help us realize a planet where turtles thrive in the wild, and are respected and protected by all humans.



Find out more about how you can help by visiting
turtlesurvival.org



**TURTLE SURVIVAL
ALLIANCE**

turtlesurvival.org