

A large tortoise, likely a Galapagos tortoise, is shown in profile, walking on a sandy beach. The tortoise has a large, patterned shell with shades of brown and tan. Its head is extended forward, and its thick, scaly legs are visible. The background is a blurred natural setting with green foliage and brown earth.

A BRIGHTER FUTURE **FOR TURTLES**

A strategic plan for
2025 and beyond



**TURTLE SURVIVAL
ALLIANCE**

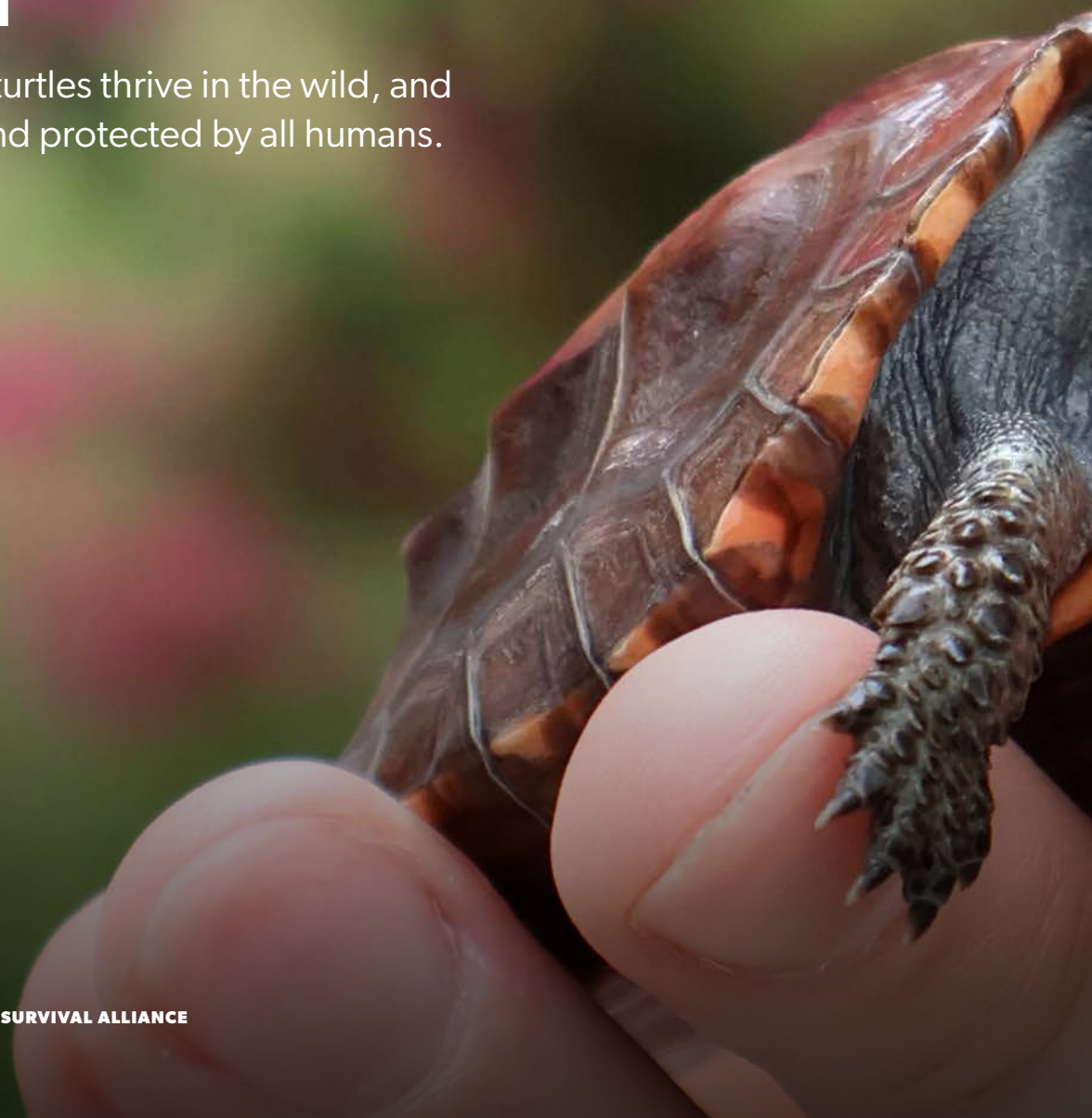
We are devoted, curious, passionate people leading the charge to prevent turtle extinctions worldwide.

OUR MISSION

To protect and restore wild populations of 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.



OUR VALUES

We are committed to:

- Zero Turtle Extinctions
- Community and Empowerment
- Excellence and Innovation

Guided by:

- Passion and Optimism
- Respect
- Stewardship



A juvenile **KEELED BOX TURTLE**
(*Cuora mouhotii*) hatched at the
Turtle Survival Center in 2022.
Photo by Chelsea Rinn

A Brighter Future for Turtles:

Our Five-Year Roadmap

Now, more than ever before, turtles around the world are under immense pressure from habitat loss, illegal wildlife trade, and the impact of climate change. More than half of the 357 species of turtles (including all tortoises, terrapins, sea, and freshwater turtles) are threatened with extinction. Of these, Turtle Survival Alliance (TSA) has prioritized over 150 species based on their level of endangerment, our understanding of their conservation needs, and the resources available to us.

We're thrilled to unveil our ambitious 5-year strategic plan, a roadmap that will steer our efforts toward a more secure future for turtles by 2030.

Grounded in three pillars—Species Protection, Community Engagement, and Best in Class practices—this plan outlines bold objectives that are essential to addressing the urgent threats facing turtles worldwide. We recognize the immense challenge ahead, but we're committed to taking decisive action to safeguard these iconic reptiles.

Our team invites you to join us in this work in whichever capacity best suits: as a program partner, volunteer, researcher, individual donor, or institutional funder. We know that we cannot succeed in building a sustainable platform for global turtle conservation without you.

We look forward to engaging
with you today and in the future. 🐢

Species Protection

Ensure the persistence
of wild turtle populations.

Community Engagement

Develop and strengthen
mission-driven relationships.

Best in Class

Be the gold standard for
impactful chelonian conservation.

A sampling of the many turtle species we protect worldwide:



DIAMONDBACK TERRAPIN (*Malaclemys terrapin*)

Our Volunteer Science program engages with partners, like Team Terrapin in North Florida, to conduct nesting surveys and supports long-term population monitoring efforts on Kiawah Island, South Carolina. These initiatives contribute to vital data collection and conservation actions for North American turtles. Photo by Shane Smith



EASTERN BOX TURTLE (*Terrapene carolina carolina*)

We partner with the AZA SAFE: American Turtle program to combat illegal trade, conduct genetic research, and facilitate repatriation and reintroduction efforts. Photo by Jordan Gray



INDOCHINESE BOX TURTLE (*Cuora galbinifrons*)

The critically endangered Indochinese Box Turtle has suffered significant population decline due to overcollection and habitat loss. Our Turtle Survival Center is actively working to preserve this species through breeding programs. In 2024, we celebrated a major milestone: our 100th Indochinese Box Turtle hatchling. Photo by Cris Hagen



PANCAKE TORTOISE (*Malacochersus tornieri*)

TSA, in partnership with the Lewa Wildlife Conservancy, National Museums of Kenya, and Kenya Wildlife Service, performs population surveys for Pancake Tortoises in northern Kenya and supports the development of a national species conservation plan. Photo by Clinton Doak



DAHL'S TOAD-HEADED TURTLE (*Mesoclemmys dahl*)

Together with the Wildlife Conservation Society and Rainforest Trust, TSA established La Carranchina Natural Reserve in Colombia. This Key Biodiversity Area safeguards a significant portion of the critically endangered species' genetic diversity. Our team is actively restoring habitats and monitoring turtles to secure their long-term survival. Photo by Natalia Gallego-García



VALLARTA MUD TURTLE (*Kinosternon vogti*)

This critically endangered turtle is also the smallest turtle in the world. We support Students Conserving Nature to protect this species and other threatened turtles in Mexico. Photo by Taggart Butterfield

RADIATED TORTOISE (*Astrochelys radiata*)

Endemic to Madagascar and classified as Critically Endangered, this species was once one of the most abundant tortoises in the world, but has undergone a catastrophic decline due to illegal trade. Through rescue, rehabilitation, and release, we are reintroducing 20,000 Radiated Tortoises into the wild over the next five years. Photo by Brett Bartek





Conservation Needs Index

The Chaco Tortoise (*Chelonoidis chilensis*), also seen on the cover, is often overlooked due to its wide range, yet it faces significant threats from habitat loss and the pet trade. A reassessment of its conservation status is urgently needed. TSA is developing the Conservation Needs Index (CNI) to better assess and prioritize species like the Chaco Tortoise. This proactive approach will enable us to address threats early while enhancing our Strategic Plan's effectiveness.

Photo by Darío Podestá

Species Protection

TSA implements species- and country-specific conservation initiatives to improve the long-term survival of turtles. Some of the management activities in our initiatives are:

- Nesting Site Surveillance
- Nest Protection *In Situ*
- Hatch and Release
- Headstarting
- Habitat Restoration
- Outreach and Education
- Community Engagement
- Law Enforcement Support
- Genetic Management
- Assurance and Breeding Colony Management
- Rewilding

Turtle Survival Center (TSC): Pioneering the Path to Rewilding

Carefully breeding endangered turtle species can play a critical role in supporting conservation efforts within these species' native range. At the TSC, we integrate our activities with field programs, as well as with those of our partner organizations and governments. Offspring from our breeding programs offer viable options for future wild population augmentation or reintroduction. To date, the TSC has produced over 1,000 hatchlings for conservation—a success rate few other organizations can match. 🐢



Rewilding Successes Alongside our Conservation Partners

We have successfully **rewilded over 5,000 of the 26,000 Radiated Tortoises** (*Astrochelys radiata*) in our care, all of which were rescued from illegal trafficking in Madagascar. This effort is part of our comprehensive Confiscation to Reintroduction Strategy, developed in partnership with the national government and local communities.

We have **hatched over 20,000 Burmese Star Tortoises** (*Geochelone platynota*), a species that was once on the brink of extinction, through our assurance colonies in Myanmar. Collaborating with the Myanmar Forest Department and the Myanmar Biodiversity Fund, **we have successfully reintroduced 3,800 tortoises** to protected wildlife sanctuaries as part of our long-term reintroduction strategy.

In collaboration with our conservation partners Tortugas del Sinú and WCS Colombia, we have **incubated, hatched, and released over 16,000 Magdalena River Turtles** (*Podocnemis lewyana*) in Colombia, averaging more than 1,000 turtles released into the wild each year. This initiative has significantly mitigated the impact of nesting beach flooding caused by a hydroelectric dam on the Sinú River.

Photos: (Top) Courtesy of TSA Madagascar; (Middle) By Brian Horne; (Bottom) By Jhonattan Vanegas

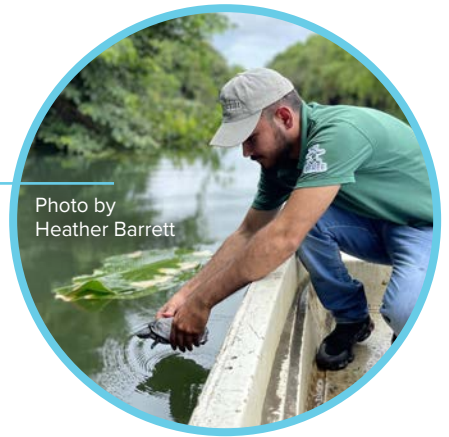


Photo by
Heather Barrett

We help establish stable, long-term conditions for all target species within their natural habitats. Our Species Conservation goals include:

Foster a deeper understanding of conversation needs for target species.

Number of species with Conservation Needs Index (CNI) assessment



2024:
40 Species

2027:
70 Species

2030:
100 Species

Implement conservation initiatives to reduce threats, stabilize, and increase wild populations.

Number of conservation initiatives implemented



2024:
65 Initiatives

2027:
75 Initiatives

2030:
90 Initiatives

Halt loss, safeguard, and restore the genetic diversity in wild and captive populations.

Number of species with TSA-led genetic analysis



2024:
12 Species

2027:
21 Species

2030:
34 Species

Release managed turtle species into the wild.

Number of species rewilded



2024:
18 Species

2027:
21 Species

2030:
24 Species

Conduct long-term monitoring to ensure populations continue to thrive.

Number of monitored sites



2024:
29 Sites

2027:
34 Sites

2030:
40 Sites

Community Engagement

We develop and nurture mission-driven partnerships with a global community of individuals and organizations who share our passion for turtle conservation. Our key Community Engagement goals are:



Partnerships for Conservation:



The illegal trade of turtles poses a significant threat to the survival of our North American species. TSA hosts the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) Saving Animals From Extinction (SAFE): American Turtle program, unifying field and zoo biologists, veterinarians, and regulators to restore turtle populations. This program focuses on habitat restoration, reintroductions, and combating illegal wildlife trade to ensure the survival of at-risk species.

Best in Class

At TSA, we strive to be the gold standard in everything we do. For us, this means:

Turtle Survival Alliance leads the way in science and innovation in turtle conservation. We prioritize science by investing in research that addresses critical knowledge gaps in chelonian biology, ecology, husbandry, and conservation. We support graduate students and collaborate with renowned researchers and institutions around the world.

We use data-driven decision making. Through partnerships, we collect and analyze data that help us make informed decisions about conservation strategies.

We promote evidence-based conservation and share knowledge. We host the Annual Symposium on the Conservation and Biology of Tortoises and Freshwater Turtles. This gathering helps us reflect upon current methodologies and protocols to improve outcomes for turtle conservation.

We build sustainable, long-lasting relationships with various conservation partners, including universities, colleges, and institutions devoted to using science to inform conservation. We collaborate with all levels of academic research. We play a key role in training researchers in field and husbandry methods.

We are guided by a team of consultant veterinarians who review and suggest improvements to our protocols. We also have a team of zoo and aquarium professionals that review our husbandry methodology. We synthesize this knowledge to offer an annual training program at the Turtle Survival Center that empowers professionals to implement cutting-edge conservation strategies.

We prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion in all aspects of our work. Our team actively seeks guidance from our peers to shape our policies and practices. This ensures that we remain at the forefront of DEI initiatives and create a truly inclusive organization. 🌱

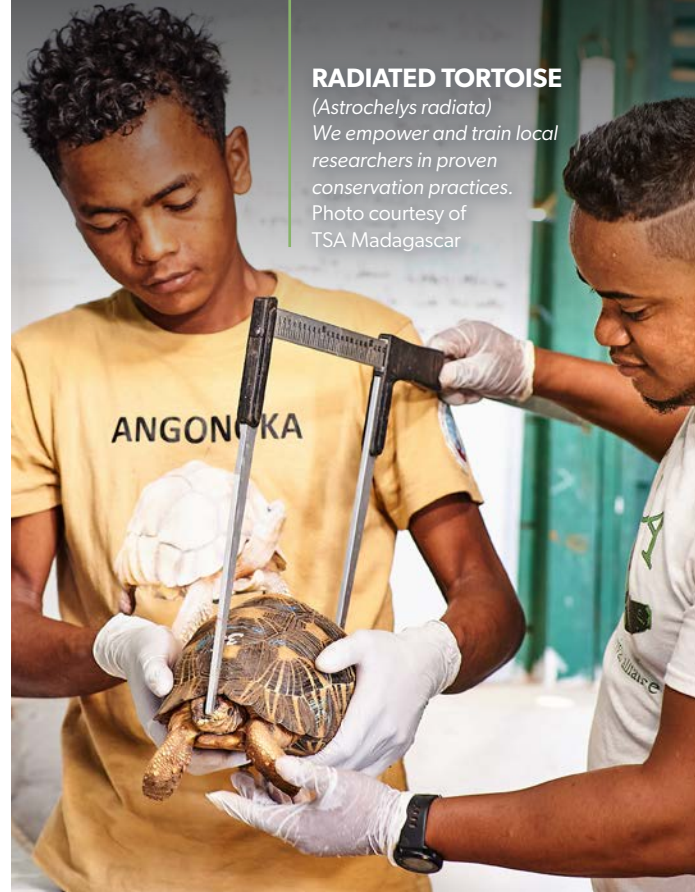
We contributed to the establishment of the world's first genetic-based Key Biodiversity Area to protect vital diversity for the endemic **DAHL'S TOAD-HEADED TURTLE** (*Mesoclemmys dahl*).
Photo by Daniël Nelson

RADIATED TORTOISE

(*Astrochelys radiata*)

We empower and train local researchers in proven conservation practices.

Photo courtesy of TSA Madagascar



Turtle Survival Alliance aims to lead in conservation genetics, setting new standards and practices that benefit the broader conservation community.

Genetic diversity is essential for species to adapt to a rapidly changing planet.

Populations with greater genetic diversity are more adaptable, have better long-term survival prospects, and are more resilient to challenges. Our Conservation Genetics Program leads innovation by monitoring and managing genetic diversity in wild populations and those under our care. Genetic data helps prioritize species for protection, assess population health by detecting inbreeding or harmful mutations, and predict responses to environmental changes. It also supports conservation planning by guiding rewilding efforts and informing breeding strategies to maximize genetic diversity. Furthermore, the program plays a pivotal role in the management of confiscations and in advancing taxonomy.

Your Urgent Support is Needed

Help us return 20,000 Radiated Tortoises to the wild in Madagascar

Due to several large confiscations, by 2021, TSA was responsible for the care of 26,000 critically endangered Radiated Tortoises. In caring for these tortoises, TSA has built an extensive network of conservation centers and worked closely with local communities to prepare for the tortoises' imminent return to the wild. Our tortoise conservation centers also provide care for three other critically endangered species: Ploughshare Tortoises (*Astrochelys yniphora*), Spider Tortoises (*Pyxis arachnoides*), and Flat-tailed Tortoises (*Pyxis planicauda*).

Our holding facilities have reached capacity and are in need of upgrading. We also require immediate funding and resources to improve animal care, staff training, and community involvement at the release sites.

We have already started returning these beautiful and important species to their native forests, but we need your help to complete the task. There are still 20,000 tortoises left to rewild to community protected forests over the next five years—the largest reintroduction of confiscated tortoises in history!

Photo courtesy of TSA Madagascar



\$2.5M USD
over 5 years is needed to

implement anti-illegal trade measures, employ community guardians, create alternative livelihoods to reduce the need for illegal trade, and establish monitoring systems. These efforts are essential to ensure the safety and well-being of the tortoises as they reintegrate into their ecosystems.

Turtle Survival Center – A Beacon of Hope for Turtles

**BOURRET'S BOX
TURTLE** (*Cuora bourreti*)
Photo by Rachael Harff



- Located on 60 acres in South Carolina, the TSC provides care for more than 800 turtles and tortoises, of 26 species, most of which are critically endangered.
- Fosters genetically healthy populations, contributing significantly to global species conservation and preservation.
- Has a long-term goal of returning some species to the wild, as appropriate.
- Maintains a "living ark" for species that currently have little to no chance of surviving in the wild.
- Conducts research in restoration ecology relevant to turtle health and reintroduction behavior.
- Offers training for interns and biologists specializing in turtle conservation.
- Operates an Education Center.

Need through 2026:

\$50K

Build a North American confiscated turtle facility

\$50K

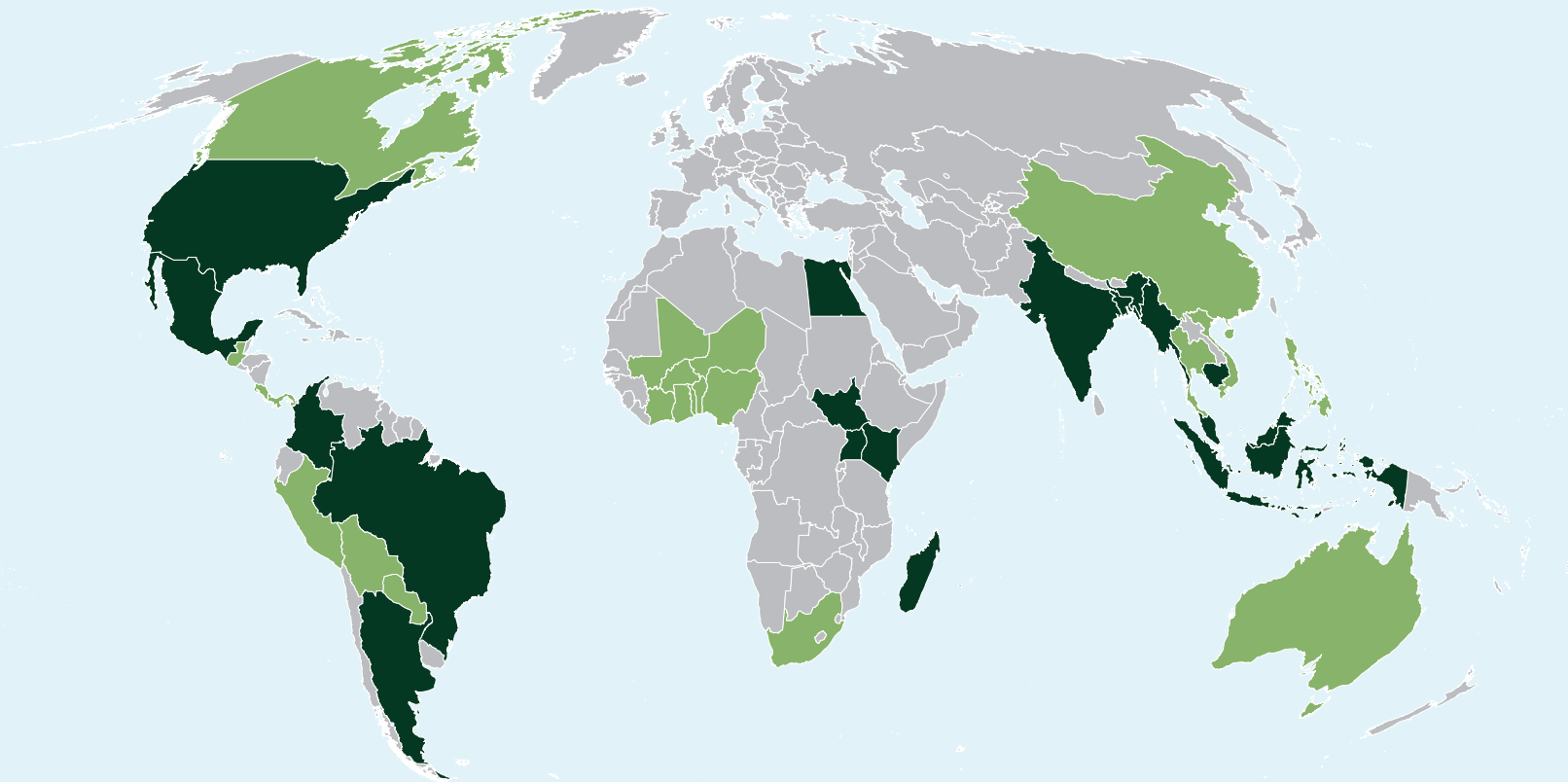
Expand the hatchling facility

\$300K

Expand outdoor facilities for Asian box turtles and tortoises

\$750K

Expand housing facility for tropical species (Greenhouse II)



Current Project Locations

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

Target Project Locations

- Australia
- Benin
- Bolivia
- Burkina Faso
- Canada
- China
- Costa Rica
- Côte d'Ivoire
- Ghana
- Guatemala
- Mali
- Niger
- Nigeria
- Panama
- Paraguay
- Peru
- Philippines
- South Africa
- Thailand
- Togo
- Vietnam



A few of our staff – Ratri, Marc, Nita Yawn (keeper) and Clint at the Turtle Survival Center.

Senior Staff

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ANDREW WALDE

Senior Director of Conservation & Science

Turtle Survival Alliance supports
biologists in their research on

CHACO TORTOISES

(*Chelonoidis chilensis*) in the southern
extent of their natural range in Patagonia.
See page 6. Photo by Dario Podestá

**Your support is
their survival.**



**TURTLE SURVIVAL
ALLIANCE**

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