

# SWOT Report in Action

When *SWOT Report, Volume I* was published in early 2006, the SWOT Team quickly realized that its job had only begun. The task was upon the team to get *SWOT Report* into the hands of those people around the world who can make a difference—positive or negative—in sea turtle conservation. This broad audience includes scientists, conservationists, journalists, fishers, policymakers, coastal community members, and consumers at large.

To help SWOT’s conservation partners spread the word about the state of the world’s sea turtles, the SWOT Team launched its first annual Outreach Grants competition. Each of the five projects selected was granted US\$1,000 to carry out a proposed outreach project using *SWOT Report* to raise awareness and inspire action to benefit sea turtle conservation in their area of the world. The five recipients of the first *SWOT Report* Outreach Grants competition were the following.



## Conservation Society of Sierra Leone

Using the *SWOT Report* Outreach Grant funds, Edward Aruna at the Conservation Society of Sierra Leone designed an education and sensitization workshop around *SWOT Report*, using it as a curriculum to look at the worldwide status of sea turtles and Sierra Leone’s place within that global view. Among the 55 attendees were university professors and students, police, secondary school teachers, officials from the ministry of tourism and ministry of environment, non-governmental organization representatives, coastal community members, harbor masters, and journalists who covered the story in the next day’s news. Presentations based on specific articles from *SWOT Report* helped participants examine conservation activities in other areas of the world and review the current state of sea turtle conservation in Sierra Leone. Before ending the workshop, the participants resolved to become a network of people who will continue to spread the word about sea turtle conservation in Sierra Leone and to support conservation activities in the future.

Fifty-five participants attended the workshop in Sierra Leone. © EDWARD ARUNA / CONSERVATION SOCIETY OF SIERRA LEONE

## Banggi Environmental Awareness Centre

The Banggi Environmental Awareness Centre, established by WWF-Malaysia in 2003, is located in the proposed Tun Mustapha Park in the Kudat-Banggi region of Sabah, a one million-hectare marine park supporting large populations of green and hawksbill turtles. WWF-Malaysia staff coordinated a series of awareness events during the fasting month of Ramadan to promote sea turtle protection within the park. Each evening’s event consisted of a presentation based on *SWOT Report* content, followed by activities such as constructing sea turtle models from recycled materials, cleaning up the beach, and children creating and performing a play based on local sea turtle folklore. WWF-Malaysia and Sabah Parks plan to visit 60 villages over the next six months to build support for the Tun Mustapha Park and to maintain the enthusiasm generated during the month of awareness activities.

Children create a leatherback turtle out of recycled materials as they learn about the significance of this animal. © WWF-MALAYSIA



## Guyana Marine Turtle Conservation Society

Recognizing the importance of education at the community level, the Guyana Marine Turtle Conservation Society (GMTCS) used *SWOT Report* content to develop “Save Our Natural Heritage” sea turtle posters to increase awareness amongst coastal fisheries responsible for sea turtle bycatch. GMTCS Project Coordinator Michelle Kalamandeen visited communities throughout Guyana and worked with media to raise awareness using *SWOT Report* and the posters. On November 16, 2006, the campaign was presented during the Biodiversity Seminar held at Centre for the Study of Biological Diversity, University of Guyana, attended by staff and students from the University, representatives from the Environmental Protection Agency–Guyana, non-governmental organization staff, coastal community members, and one member of Parliament. With the support of the Ministry of Fisheries, GMTCS is continuing the campaign by conducting community workshops on sea turtle conservation and training fisherman in sea turtle–friendly fishing techniques.

Youths in Guyana’s Waramuri community learn to appreciate the importance of sea turtles along their coastlines and around the world. © MICHELLE KALAMANDEEN / GUYANA MARINE TURTLE CONSERVATION SOCIETY



## MarineLife Alliance

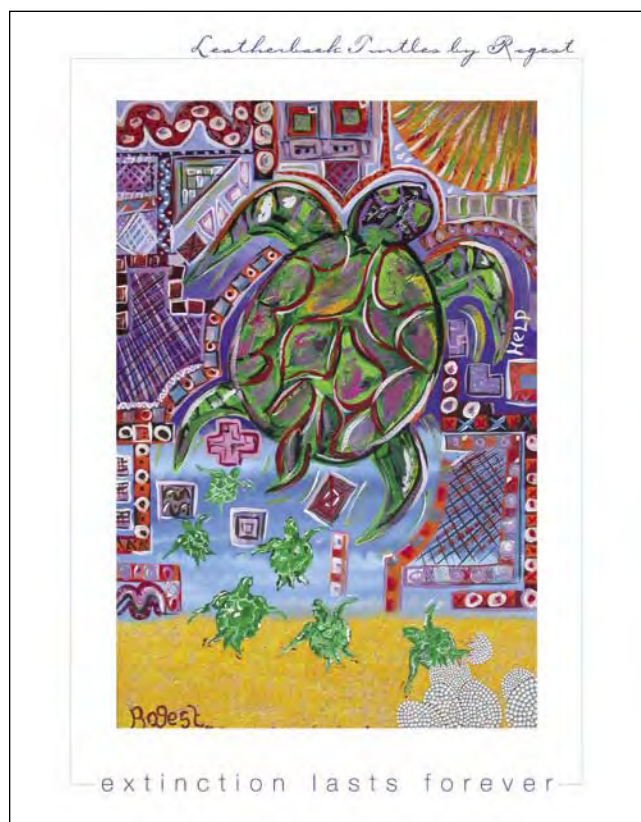
The sea turtle awareness campaign initiated by MarineLife Alliance in Bangladesh encourages sea turtle conservation around Cox's Bazar, the tourism capital of the country and the nexus of 120 kilometers of threatened sea turtle nesting beach. Thus far, coordinated by Zahirul Islam at MarineLife Alliance, school awareness programs have been implemented in two schools in Cox's Bazar, with more than 50 students in each school studying the biological and ecological roles of sea turtles and the importance of conserving turtles. Brochures and posters derived from information in *SWOT Report* are provided to teachers in the schools to facilitate continued sea turtle education. Future plans for the campaign include sea turtle awareness festivals to be held in Cox's Bazar and on nearby St. Martin Island, at which informational displays and large-print *SWOT Report*-based publications will be distributed.

Members of the Cox's Bazar community gather to discuss how to conserve the sea turtles that nest on their beaches. © MARINELIFE ALLIANCE

## Universiti Malaysia Terengganu

Universiti Malaysia Terengganu's Turtle Research and Rehabilitation Group, popularly known as SEATRU, conducts a marine turtle conservation program in Chagar Hutang on Redang Island, a primary nesting beach for green turtles in peninsular Malaysia's state of Terengganu and popular tourist locale. To increase the understanding and appreciation of local sea turtle populations, Eng-Heng Chan and Pelf-Nyok Chen of SEATRU used *SWOT Report* content, along with local information, to develop 19 educational posters. During the beach's seasonal closure from October to April, the posters are being used in a traveling exhibition; after April 2007, the posters will be permanently housed in the new Chagar Hutang Turtle Gallery, which is expected to be a popular attraction for students, tourists, SCUBA divers, and journalists who visit the island.

This longhouse now houses the Turtle Gallery with exhibits designed from *SWOT Report, Vol. 1* to showcase sea turtles, their global and local population status, and threats to their survival. © KUSTEM



## The Art of Conservation

“I travel all over the world, and people just love sea turtles,” says environmentalist and artist Ron G. Steven, also known as Rogest, who focuses his great talent on the creatures of the ocean and on raising awareness for their conservation. Ron derives his inspiration from years of experience as a SCUBA instructor. He transforms memories from his thousands of dives into colorful, Aboriginal-style dot paintings that have been used to promote environmental causes across many countries. Truly dedicated to the conservation of the ocean and its inhabitants, he offers free use of his artwork to environmental groups.

Currently, Ron is working in the Cayman Islands to develop a turtle release program with a local dive operator that would allow interested people to adopt sea turtles for release. A promotional packet given to each patron will include Rogest artwork, as well as other materials about the adopted turtle. In a recent Cayman Islands outreach effort, Ron led a workshop for children on the art of painting sea creatures. The children's works were sold at auction to local businesses to raise money for the Cayman Islands' sea turtle tracking program. Ron encourages those he meets to “think locally and act locally.” For more information, visit [www.rogest.com](http://www.rogest.com).