



Post Fellowship Reporting - Project Summary

Report Title: Leatherback Sea Turtle Adventure **Name:** Katy Cook
Other Team Members: Robi Parker
Program: Oklahoma Program
Trip Dates: 06/05/2011 - 06/15/2011 **Location Visited:** Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago
Post Fellowship Reporting Template: PFR Template 01

Project Summary: We ventured to Trinidad, West Indies to learn about and work with Leatherback Sea Turtles through the Earthwatch organization. During our time there, we were able to work hands-on with the massive creatures. We also were able to work with experts and local volunteers to ensure the successful documentation needed for the project.

We worked each and every night on the Matura Beach. During our time on the beach, we would come across ten to twenty adult female turtles each night. When we found a turtle, we would collect data- length, width, GPS location, and environmental factors. After that we would check to see if they had the proper identification tags. If the tags were there, we would record the information, if they were not, then we would tag them. The two types of tags used were rear flipper tags (externally applied) and PIT microchip tag (internally applied). We also would excavate nests to ensure that all hatchlings were safely out of the nest!

During the days, we would explore the village of Matura, the town of Sangre Grande, and the Matura Forest. One of the highlights of the trip was going to the Caroni Swamp where we were able to watch the Scarlet Ibis roost by the hundreds after coming from Venezuela. We also went kayaking and attended a local soccer game. Each and every day we were able to enjoy a home-cooked Trinidadian meal prepared by our hosts.

The whole experience was a once in a life time opportunity. Several months later, I'm still in awe that I was actually able to do this!

Career Impact: *worked collaboratively with individuals from the United States, United Kingdom, and Trinidad
*learned how to properly tag female Leatherback Sea Turtles and collect data
*explored the local area to see how they support the conservation efforts
*learned scientific information about the turtles to bring back to the classroom

Classroom/Community Impact:*exchange of information regarding sea turtles
*evaluation of human and environmental impacts on sea turtles
*understanding of local involvement in protection of sea turtles
*explanation of how to help sea turtles from Oklahoma

Open Response: *created an interactive whiteboard presentation
*evaluating inherited traits of sea turtles
*mapping GPS locations
*sharing information and artifacts with other teachers

Quote: Each and every time I saw a Leatherback Sea Turtle I was in awe...from the tiniest hatchling to the massive adult, it was truly life-changing.

Photos:

Katy and a hatchling

Katy flipper tagging

Matura Beach

Leatherback closeup

Matura Sign

Katy and adult turtle

Hatchlings

Hatchling and ocean