

Newsletter #3

**SUPPORT
ENDANGERED
WILDLIFE ON GIVING
TUESDAY!**

<http://www.whoi.edu/give/turtlecam>



**TWO SEASONS AND
NINE TAGGED
TURTLES!**



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**HELPING ENTANGLED
LEATHERBACKS
THROUGH RESEARCH**

PROJECT TURTLECAM



UPDATE

Team TurtleCam had a fantastic 2017 field season! We tagged five leatherback turtles south of Cape Cod over a one month period, from late August to late September. This was also the first season we explored the north side of Cape Cod, spending three days in Cape Cod Bay. It was amazing how different the conditions were on the north side. Cape Cod Bay had a near-record number of leatherback entanglements this past season, with 13 confirmed reports in just two months. Our pilot, George Purmont (Pura Vida, Inc.) spotted one of these

Amy Kukulya puts Kara Dodge in the perfect position to tag an adult male leatherback turtle.

entanglements during our field work, so our team had the opportunity to rescue this turtle. Since we are collecting behavior data with TurtleCam to understand *how* and *why* leatherbacks become entangled, this encounter reinforced the importance and timeliness of our work. Our project, with your support, will have a direct impact on leatherback conservation. We now have data from nine leatherback turtles and we'll be sharing our results in peer reviewed papers, conferences and public presentations in the coming months, so stay tuned!!!



What we've accomplished to date:

- ▶ Tagged nine leatherbacks over two field seasons! Our continued thanks to the fishermen and mariners who report sea turtle sightings in the Cape Cod area to 1-888-SEA-TURT (www.seaturtlesightings.org). These reports are essential to our success, helping us hone in on leatherback 'hot spots'.
- ▶ Collected 30 hours of REMUS AUV TurtleCam footage and 25 hours of turtle-borne camera footage. We are currently analyzing this incredible wealth of data and working on an invited manuscript for *Frontiers in Marine Science*.
- ▶ So far, we've learned that leatherbacks...
 - Eat A LOT. One of our tagged turtles ate 123 jellyfish in just 2 hours. Imagine eating a jellyfish every minute!
 - Silhouette jellyfish by diving and then looking up towards the surface, using surface light to locate their prey just like white sharks.
 - Use the whole water column, eating jellyfish near the surface, at the bottom, and everywhere in between.
 - Prefer a mix of shoal and channel habitat where vessel traffic is concentrated, putting them at increased risk of boat strike.

Leatherback turtles share habitat with...



In Cape Cod Bay, we found leatherbacks sharing space with giant ocean sunfish (top), humpback whales (middle) and huge schools of peanut bunker (e.g., menhaden). Surprisingly, we didn't see a single jellyfish so what are they doing there?

Talks, news & other items:



▶ **TurtleCam** was featured in *Oceanus Magazine* - check out the full story with an awesome video and image gallery: <http://www.whoi.edu/oceanus/feature/track-a-sea-turtle>



▶ **Kara Dodge** reported the first results from TurtleCam at the 37th International Symposium on Sea Turtle Biology & Conservation in Las Vegas, NV. She also gave the keynote talk for the Mass Marine Educators Association annual meeting!

▶ NOAA Fisheries did a feature story on our **TurtleCam** research: http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/stories/2017/04/04_leatherback_camera.html

▶ TurtleCam and **Amy Kukulya** on Chronicle! <http://www.wcvb.com/article/tank-away-woods-hole/9589645>



▶ **Amy Kukulya** represented SharkCam/TurtleCam during Fleet Week! Check out her interview for Scientific American on their FB page: <https://www.facebook.com/ScientificAmerican/videos/10158674485345246/>

▶ **Kara Dodge** talked about saving sea turtles on NPR with our colleagues at Mass Audubon: <http://capeandislands.org/post/saving-sea-turtles#stream/o>

▶ We've also had the opportunity to talk with school groups ranging from high school to elementary. Great kids and great questions that leave us feeling inspired and optimistic for the future!

▶ Follow **Team TurtleCam's** exploits on **Facebook**, where one of our videos has almost 1 million views! <https://www.facebook.com/oceanrobotcam/>



▶ Next TurtleCam talk is at the Black Dog Winter Lecture Series on 7 Feb: <http://sailmv.com/sail-marthas-vineyard-winter-dinner-lecture-series/>

We are so thankful for
YOU, our wonderful
supporters!
Happy holidays to
all and thank you for
supporting innovative
research with real
conservation impact.

