

Project Update: August 2015

August 2015 was pleasantly filled with an unexpected high amount of sea turtle nests. So many nests that the ASUPMATOMA field research station had to build a new hatchery. Also, due to the high quality of nests, the director of the station has agreed to mark nests found within the coastal dunes in place rather than relocating. This is exciting because now we can compare hatching success between the hatchery and in-situ nests.

Thanks to Todos Santos Eco Adventures, a local ecotourism group promoting sea turtle conservation, we welcomed two overnight tourism trips at the research station which generated almost US\$500 (£329) for sea turtle conservation; donations facilitated by the company.

While this is great news, our anticipated goal of working with ATV groups in finding solutions to conflicts at sea turtle nesting beaches has not been productive as hoped. Only one group has been working with us, but it is better than none. However, this group, Carisuva, has a very positive business influence with the government, owning that quality sometimes outweighs quantity. Together, we are planning to install beach signs to protect nesting beaches where ATV groups pass, which will hopefully provoke tourists to ask about the ethics of that specific activity. Also this group has asked us to help design a small museum on their property which is located behind the coastal dunes close to nesting areas. The museum allows us to include much more detailed interpretive signs, display sea turtle carapaces and skeletons, and really have an positive outreach impact on the tourism community and bring a conservation perspective to locals who are prone to poaching.



Left: Young girl visiting the field research station with Todos Santos Eco Adventures practicing her skills on the new interactive sea turtle life cycle board. Middle: Stephanie Rousso working as Wildlife Biologist for the Ecotourism group, Todos Santos Eco Adventures, giving a presentation to tourists explaining the anatomy of sea turtles, using a juvenile hawksbill carapace. Right: Tourist group playing the "species identification game" before patrolling for nesting females with Mexican biologists.