



Sea to Shore Alliance News SNAPSHOTS - Winter 2014

Greetings from Sea to Shore Alliance!

As the year draws to a close, I'm so proud to reflect on Sea to Shore Alliance's amazing achievements over the past 12 months. I hope you'll take a moment during this busy holiday season to enjoy this newsletter, highlighting our exciting efforts to conserve endangered species and threatened habitats. We are so grateful to our supporters for making our victories possible! You are a most welcome addition to our team - please continue to show your commitment to marine animals and coastal regions with a tax-deductible donation.



James "Buddy" Powell
Executive Director

Are you new to Sea to Shore Alliance? What better time to join our efforts than this joyous season of giving! Your support will increase Sea to Shore Alliance's ability to study, rescue, and conserve manatees in Florida, Belize, Cuba, and Africa; educate the public *and* invent superior technologies to ensure that a greater number of Florida sea turtle hatchlings reach the ocean; and safeguard North Atlantic right whales when they migrate into southeastern waters during calving season.

Despite our many achievements this year, much work remains to be done. Please help Sea to Shore Alliance continue achieving our victories on behalf of endangered species and habitats by becoming a part of our team! A gift of \$25, \$50, \$100, or anything you can offer will truly help us expand our efforts. Thank you for your generosity and best wishes for a lovely new year!

Happy Holidays,

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Holiday

Shopping

Do you do your Christmas shopping online? #supportS2S and select **Sea to ShoreAlliance** as your charity on [Amazon Smile](#) and [Ebay!](#)



Or shop at our new [S2S ONLINE STORE](#), featuring our one of a kind Wyland manatee design!

Sea to Shore Alliance is proud to announce that Jamal Galves, our Belize manatee conservation project coordinator, was recently awarded the 2014 Oceana Belize Ocean Hero Award. Jamal has been a self-proclaimed "manatee protector" since age eleven and today, is well on his way to becoming a manatee guru. His fondness for the endangered "sea cow" and frequent media appearances have helped put national attention on the urgency to protect manatees in Belize. We are extremely proud of Jamal and his hard work, dedication, and desire to help save manatees!



Jamal Galves (left) holding his Ocean Hero Award with Nicole Auil Gomez (right), an associate S2S research scientist in Belize, who presented the award to him at the ceremony.

It has been a record year for the Belize manatee project. In partnership with the Manatee Rehabilitation Centre in Belize City, S2S has rescued more manatees this past year than ever before and currently there are four animals in the rehab facility, which is the most the Centre has had at one time. Just in the past six months, Jamal and his dedicated team, which consists largely of local volunteers, have rescued four orphaned manatees in separate events: Mitch, Lucky, Khalees, and Rhamases. Presently, these four baby manatees are doing well while they recover and gain their strength back at Centre's facilities.



Khalees, one of the four young orphans recently rescued by S2S.

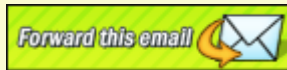
The most significant threat to manatees in Belize is boating



Quick Links

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accidents. Coinciding with an increase in the number of rescues, the highest number of stranded manatee reports was also recorded this year. A whopping 35 reports marked the most ever recorded for the Centre since its creation in 1990. This number is only predicted to rise as tourism continues to increase. S2S has been working to address this growing problem by installing "Manatee Area" warning signs in high-traffic boating areas off Belize City within the past two years. Public education and awareness is at an all-time high, with Jamal often speaking at various schools and town events.

Cuba Manatee Conservation

Why is Cuba so vital for manatee conservation?

- Cuba contains some of the most pristine and ideal but unprotected and threatened manatee habitat in the species' range! Our research in the country is informing the government about which regions warrant federal protection.

- In Cuba, manatees are hunted - for food! These marine mammals are often intentionally hunted or incidentally caught in nets by fishermen and harpooned. Their meat is then sold on Cuba's black market or brought home to the fisherman's family.

- Our recent studies revealed that manatees in Cuba and Belize share the same DNA, and that the Florida sub-species may have originated in Cuba! This means that Cuba may play an important genetic role in the species dispersal to other Caribbean islands - and even to Florida - by increasing genetic diversity.

Update from Anmari Alvarez Aleman, Associate Research Scientist- Cuba

- The Sea to Shore Alliance (S2S) Cuba manatee research team has collected approximately 60 genetic samples from manatees in various locations around Cuba in order to assess the genetic diversity of the country's population, which is largely unstudied. The samples are being compared to the highly documented Florida population as reference, as well as other manatee populations around the Atlantic. The work is being developed by the S2S associate Cuban biologist in conjunction with USGS laboratories.



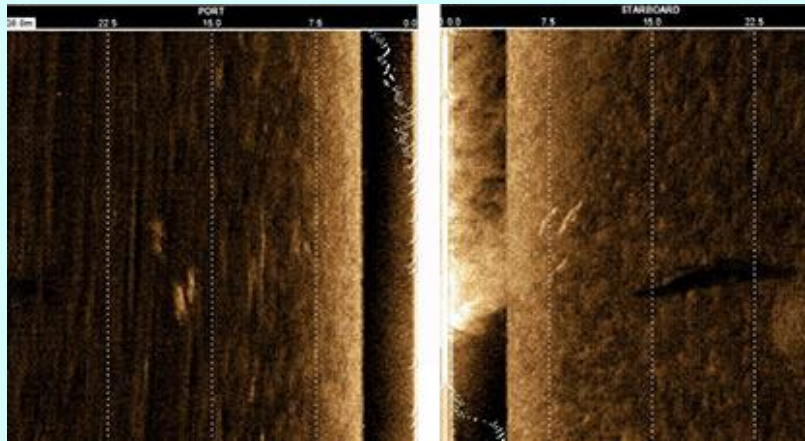
S2S associate Cuban biologist Anmari Alvarez Aleman analyzes genetic samples back in the lab.

- S2S is helping to raise public awareness about manatees in Cuba through numerous educational activities such as the Science Festival at the University of Havana (picture below). The ultimate goal of these education campaigns is to transform the manatee into a model species for the country's conservation programs.

- S2S Cuban biologists have documented a decrease in the number of manatee deaths in the Marine Protected Area of North Villa Clara, which is believed to be due in part to a recent ban on the use of trawl net fishing in the area.

- Manatee sightings have been increasing in Havana and the surrounding areas. Individuals have been spotted in various locations such as marinas, public beaches, dive sites, and rivers.

- A manatee monitoring program in Isla de la Juventud, a small island off the south coast of the main island, is testing side scan sonar technology to improve manatee detection in Cuba's dark-water mangrove areas.



Two side scan sonar images clearly show a group of three manatees detected in the waters of a Cuban mangrove.

Behind The Waves

Get to know our staff and board members

Each issue we'll be spotlighting a Sea to Shore Alliance staff or board member so you can learn more about who we are and what we do.

This month we're getting to know research scientist:

Cynthia Taylor.



Cynthia Taylor

Assistant Director/Research Scientist

📍 How did you first get involved with Sea to Shore Alliance?

I've worked with Buddy Powell (our executive director) for almost 15 years, first at the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and then at Wildlife Trust, another non-profit

conservation organization. The opportunity to work with Buddy again at a young, growing non-profit totally mission-driven and focused on coastal conservation was an exciting opportunity.

What led you to focus on the the endangered North Atlantic right whale?

My focus after graduating from college was the conservation of endangered marine mammals. I came to Florida when I had an opportunity to work with endangered manatees. While in Florida I learned of the plight of the highly endangered Northern right whale (at the time the North Atlantic and North Pacific right whales were still designated as one species). The prospect of studying the most endangered large whale in the world, right off the eastern seaboard, was something I couldn't pass up. I completed my master's research while conducting aerial surveys for North Atlantic right whales, and from that point on I was hooked. The need to find solutions to the problems that these animals face, and to document the young calves on the only known calving ground for the species, is a conservation challenge that requires long-term focus and commitment.

Aerial surveys? Sounds like you've done some incredible things!

What's your favorite part of the job?

That's a tough question. When I was younger I most certainly would have said the field work. Being in the field observing some of the most amazing animals on the planet is remarkable. Now, after 20+ years working in this area, I've come to enjoy the process of ensuring that the data we collect is analyzed and submitted to the agencies that can affect the most change with the information we provide. The ultimate goal of all those hours in the field is protection and conservation of vulnerable species. That can't happen if the information is sitting on a shelf somewhere. I also value the long-term relationships with colleagues who are working towards the same goals.

What project or accomplishment are you most proud of in your career to date?

Long-term monitoring of long-lived species can, in some ways, be discouraging. We spend years collecting data on the species, and connecting with individual animals in the field, but the overall goal is to conserve the species and to help the population grow and thrive. We can't do that simply by collecting data - we can't change the behavior of the species to help them protect themselves. The data has to be used by others (usually government managers) to change the behavior of humans to reduce the threat to each

vulnerable species. So after over a decade of conducting ship-strike mitigation right whale surveys in the Southeast and Mid-Atlantic, it was wonderful to see our data used by NOAA (the federal agency responsible for right whales) to establish a mandatory slow speed rule at ports along the eastern seaboard. That rule has now been in place for over five years and has been shown to be highly effective. We are slowly solving some of the problems these animals face, but the solution to other problems (like entanglement in fishing gear) continue to elude us, so the work must go on.

What do you like to do when you aren't working?

I have so many hobbies it's hard to find the time. I love historic preservation, and am currently focused on renovating our 150-year-old farmhouse. I love arts and crafts of all kinds, and have a particular obsession with folk art from around the world. I'm currently restoring a quilt my grandmother made 70 years ago, and I enjoy pottery, carpentry, and graphic design. I love books and reading, world travel and exploration, hiking and camping, gardening and landscaping, and animals of all kinds.

If you could have a super power, what would it be? Invisibility. Although it would be pretty cool to fly, too.

What is one thing you wish the public knew about right whales?

I wish the public were as aware of right whales as they are of other more well-known whales. Everyone knows what a humpback whale is, but the vast majority of people have not even heard of right whales. This is partly due to the low numbers and the slim chance of the public seeing a right whale in the wild, but that's exactly the reason the public should know about them and their plight! This is a species that is being directly affected by human activity (shipping and fishing), and we can do something about it.

How can someone get involved to protect the right whales?

Spreading the word about the plight of the North Atlantic right whale is important, and being aware of the rules in place to protect right whales is also critical. For example, it is illegal to get within 500 yards of a right whale, even if you're in a kayak or on a surfboard. We all have to work together to avoid harassment and encourage protection of the species. Finally, you can make a donation to an organization like Sea to Shore Alliance so that we can continue to work towards recovery and conservation of this remarkable species.

Santa Came Early!



The Entrepreneur: an 87 ft WestCoast Yacht

About six months ago, Sea to Shore Alliance started working with Action Donation Services, a company who facilitates the donation of boats, cars, RVs, and trucks to charities. Man do they work fast! We have already received two incredible donations: an 87 ft. WestCoast yacht previously commissioned by the Everly Brothers Band and a beautiful 74 ft. Hatteras.

The 87 ft. yacht, called the Entrepreneur, was donated to S2S in September. We are extremely excited about this yacht, which will be based in San Diego, California, and will be used for research, hosting events, and private chartering to generate more funding.

We received the second yacht donation in November: a 74 ft. Hatteras located in the Great Lakes. We are going to use this vessel to advance our research in Georgia on the critically endangered North Atlantic right whale. To get it from the Great Lakes to Georgia we had to move fast! The boat had to pass through the Erie Canal, before it closed for the season on November 19th. We were able to act quickly, stay one step ahead of the snowstorm, and the boat is currently in the Chesapeake Bay heading south!



Our beautiful 74 ft Hatteras

We are thrilled about these two donations and know they will make a huge difference in our ongoing education and research programs. Perhaps you have an unused boat, truck or RV and would like to donate it to #supportS2S! To learn more visit our [website](#) and go to "Donate" or visit www.actiondonation.org. You can also call Action Donation Services toll free at 866-2-GIVING (866-244-8464) and tell them the donation is for Sea to Shore Alliance!

Manatees and the Port Everglades Energy Center

The Florida Power and Light Corporation (FPL) is currently in the middle of a three year plan to replace the old oil-fired Port Everglades power plant with a new, state of the art one that uses clean, low-cost American natural gas. They demolished the old plant in July of last year and have already started construction on the new plant.

How is this relevant to Sea to Shore Alliance? Well, during this three-year transition period, the plant is no longer producing any warm water unless it is very cold. If that happens, FPL will operate special emergency water heaters to warm the water just for manatees. If you have ever been to a power plant in the winter you may have seen hundreds of manatees huddled together in the warm water. So what will the manatees at Port Everglades do during this three-year period? That is where S2S comes in! We have a contract with FPL to monitor how the manatees are adapting to the disappearance of their warm water source. For the past two years, S2S has been tagging the Port Everglades manatees with satellite trackers. We have found that some of the manatees are traveling to the Florida Keys or even as far away as Blue Springs on the St. Johns River (see map below).



This month S2S will attempt to tag four additional manatees and will continue monitoring those already tagged over the coming months. This information is being used by federal and state authorities to assess the overall impact of changes in the availability of warm water to manatees along the east coast of Florida. With the potential to influence the manatee's recovery in Florida, this research is crucial since the US Fish and Wildlife Service is considering downlisting manatees from endangered to threatened status.



Tagging a manatee at the Port Everglades Power Plant.

NESTS Program Expands Into Sarasota High Schools



S2S and the NESTS program's educational booth at a public festival.

Sharing Florida's beaches with sunbathers each summer are several species of imperiled sea turtles that travel to the region to nest and hatch their young. As the turtles make their way from the sea to the beach to find a place to nest, the difficulty of their journey is compounded by the rapidly increasing development along Florida's coastlines. Bright, artificial lights from houses, condos, hotels, and parking lots blind their way, litter entangles them, and beach chairs often block their way.

To protect sea turtles and build citizen stewards, the Neighbors Ensuring Sea Turtle Survival (NESTS) program was created to encourage the public to engage in simple activities that benefit sea turtles and their hatchlings. When someone volunteers to join the program they are given an eight question "checklist of actions" such as turning off lights at night during nesting season or picking up trash at the beach. The more actions completed, the more points earned and therefore a higher level of membership is achieved. These membership rewards have a dual benefit - motivating members to continue in their conservation efforts and generating community awareness.



NESTS program director Katelin Collins gives a presentation to a high

Sea to Shore Alliance garners school biology class participation for NESTS through attendance at wildlife-themed public events, and presenting educational talks at businesses, festivals, and now schools. This year the NESTS program was invited to give conservation themed "talks" to science classes at multiple Sarasota area high schools. Additionally, NESTS registered over 200 new members throughout the year. Already on our calendar for next year are plans to attend ten large wildlife festivals, with hopes of continuing to expand the program into the classroom setting. We are confident NESTS will have a busy and successful 2015!

Right Whale Festival



Cheryl Bonnes of NOAA Fisheries, our RWF volunteer coordinator, proudly displays our 2014 poster along with Randy Moore of Triple 3 Marketing, LLC our festival coordinator.

The 6th annual Right Whale Festival was a whale of a success this year! The festival took place on November 15th at the Sea Walk Pavilion at Jacksonville Beach. Sea to Shore Alliance co-hosts the festival each year in partnership with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA).

The festival celebrates the return of the endangered North Atlantic right whale to the coastal waters of Georgia and Florida and marks the beginning of their calving season, which typically runs from

December through March. There are only about 550 North Atlantic right whales left in the world, which makes raising awareness and protecting them extremely important. With live music, food trucks, and fun activities for all ages, the festival is a great way to inform and educate the public about the threats North Atlantic right whales still face.

Here are some of this year's festival highlights:

- More than 100 people participated in the 5K
- More than 200 people helped clean the beach, coordinated by Keep Jacksonville Beautiful
- All items donated to the festival silent auction were sold
- 23 festival sponsors; 16 new this year
- 53 organizations and vendors presented exhibits; 23 new this year
- 1st annual Right Whale Festival community art mural



Children put their touches on the festival's community art mural

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