

## TURTLE CONSERVATION FUND



TCF has supported nine projects representing over \$43,000 for conservation activities of the Critically Endangered Central American River Turtle (*Dermatemys mawii*) in Belize, Guatemala, and Mexico. PHOTO CREDIT: THOMAS RAINWATER.



# The Turtle Conservation Fund (TCF) Celebrates a Decade of Turtle Conservation

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**This year, the TCF** celebrates its tenth anniversary. It was formed in 2002 as a strategizing and funding coalition of leading turtle conservation organizations and individuals focused on ensuring the long-term survival of tortoises and freshwater turtles.

The first course of action that first year was to produce a global conservation action plan in partnership with the Turtle Survival Alliance, Tortoise and Freshwater Turtle Specialist

Group, Conservation International and several other affiliated partners. TCF's global turtle conservation impact continued the following year when it awarded its first grants. Since that time, awards have been given twice a year, with funding decisions made by the TCF's 27-member Board, which provides representatives from nine nations. Over the past ten years, TCF has received 385 grant proposals, of which 131 (34%) were funded. Total requests were US \$2,053,426,

with US \$620,162 (30%) awarded to projects in 38 nations. Grants ranged from US \$1,000 – 10,000, with an average of US \$4,734.

Grants have been awarded for an array of activities such as headstarting, field surveys, educational programming, status assessment workshops, captive breeding programs, trade monitoring, capacity building, community involvement, genetic analyses, population estimates, and much more. Many imperiled species have benefited from these grants.

For example, TCF-funded projects representing 23 (92%) of the Turtle Conservation Coalition's "Turtles in Trouble: The World's Top 25+ Most Endangered Tortoises and Freshwater Turtles – 2011." Of TCF's 56 Target Species (2011 list), projects representing 36 (64%) have been supported. Of the 68 taxa listed by IUCN as Critically Endangered (CR) or Endangered (EN), TCF has supported projects for 44 (65%). However, the Top 25, CR, EN and Target Species figures do not include support for facilities or projects that impact additional species.

The above TCF-supported projects exemplify the organization's holistic approach to turtle conservation, which involves both *ex situ* and *in situ* programs. Such efforts can only be possible through partnerships with the various organizations, institutions and individuals who create and conduct the supported projects. These partnerships form a coordinated, effective, global network with a mission to conserve the world's tortoises and freshwater turtles so that no species becomes extinct in our lifetime.

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