



## The PLC Sea Turtle Project: An Idea that Keeps Growing

We have already finished two years of work in the communities of Junquillal, Paraiso, and Pargos and we are celebrating this third renewed edition of "NotiBaula". Beginning with this edition, we are adding new columnists, all actors in the community effort to develop in harmony with nature.

The notes that we are presenting are a sample of the achievements made by residents, organized groups in Junquillal, and the PLC (the Pacific Leatherback Conservation Project), where the fact that community wellbeing and sea turtle conservation go hand in hand is evident. The work by the young people who patrol the beaches, the research done by students who stay in family homes, or the community work to keep the beach clean all contribute to the turtles recovering, bringing social and economic benefits to everyone. Convinced that the educational, recreational, and sports activities with the schools and communities or community events can be used to get to know each other, join together, and stick together, we want to keep betting on this line in the upcoming future. It is also our ambition to make this message reach other communities such as Venado, Lagarto, and Marbella, where threats still exist for the sea turtle nesting grounds.



### OPENING THE DOORS TO NATURE

An innovative way to teach ecology has been implemented in the schools in Junquillal, Pargos, and Paraiso. It has helped students open the doors of their classrooms to get to know the importance of the local environment.

Exploring the natural environment has served as a teacher. The children's curiosity and observational skills are the best tools for learning, especially when they are used in an open classroom setting: the forest, the beach, or simply in the school yard. These components are accessible to everyone and have helped people, both grownups and children, stimulate their sensitivity and develop the skills they need to take a critical look at the world around them.

During 2006, the students enthusiastically learned in a different way. They reflected part of what they learned at the School Science Fair where they presented part of their projects using the research cycle. The cycle consists of three simple steps: question, action, and reflection. A simple question opened the doors to research to them, different actions were taken in the field that helped them find the answers, and then reflection about their discoveries opened up their awareness. This is how this simple methodology is helping students learn about the environment.

Teaching and Learning about Beach Ecology in the School Yard (EPPPE) has helped the Baulas del Pacifico de Junquillal Conservation Project teach children, teachers, and the inhabitants in the neighboring communities to find out about or discover their environment so they can engage in proper natural resource management, including the sea turtles that come to their beaches to lay their eggs.

#### We continue opening the doors...

This year we will continue teaching in the schools, guiding children through EPPPE and developing environmental projects with education institutions such as recyclable material collection sites, reforestation in community spaces, and opening ecological teaching to other nearby communities.

Valerie Guthrie  
PLC Environmental educator

Lastly, we invite our neighbors and visitors to keep participating in the projects being furthered by the different organized groups that are acting in our communities. Harmonious, planned development is everybody's responsibility.

Gabriel Francia, MSc.  
PLC Coordinator



Children from Paraiso Learning on the beach

### A GOOD THING

#### Our youngest volunteers

Their little voices were heard saying "I want to help the turtles too." Never in our wildest dreams could we have imagined how strong they could be and the enthusiasm they would show day after day in the Leatherback season 2006-2007. These children have become guardians of nature, freeing hatchlings, cleaning up the beach, decorating our nursery, and learning more about sea turtle conservation.

We congratulate all the boys and girls who participated in the turtle protection activities. In this edition, we would like to highlight the work that three young men did -- Jafeth, Sebastián, and Dennis: our little Baula Boys of Junquillal. They helped to build and take care of the nursery. They took the temperatures of the nests and watered them to bring down the summer heat, ensuring that the eggs transferred by the patrol team would hatch. They also participated in the night patrols and had a chance to get to know our magnificent Leatherbacks.

Every morning, Sebastián and Dennis would tour the beach, playing a little while on the sand and then a little while in the sea. They say that they never forgot that the beach where they en-

joyed their vacation was where the charismatic sea turtles would come to lay their eggs. This helped them on several occasions to find baby turtles emerging from the nests and help them to survive the hot sand. They would then tell the Baula Boys what they had found.

Jafeth used his vacation time to patrol with the Baula Boys at night and to fine tune his senses to find turtle tracks, nests, and in the best case scenario, jmarking that great spot where they found "Big Baula." Sleep never got the best of him because his desire to protect the turtles and the good company of his older friends kept his spirits up.

We would like to thank these future Baula Boys for the good things they have done and their interest in finding out about how to conserve the sea turtles. We invite everyone to follow in their small footsteps and be direct participants in protecting the natural resources at Playa Junquillal.

Valerie Guthrie  
PLC Environmental educator



1. Jafeth, who is certainly not afraid of work, helped several days in building the nursery for the Leatherback nests.

2. Sebastián takes the olive ridley turtle eggs to move them to a safe place.

This table shows the olive ridley, leatherback and black turtle nests that have been relocated and protected by PLC team, within the 5.6 km of Junquillal beach (Estero, Honda, Centro and Blanca beaches), poached nests and hatchlings that emerged between December 2005 and April 2007. 9,932 baby turtles were born during this period. These are added to the 6,150 hatchlings born between January 2005 and November 2005.

After two and a half years working with the Junquillal community, we can say with great pride that we have released a total number of 16,082 baby turtles!

<sup>1</sup> Not confirmed nests: possible nests where eggs presence wasn't confirmed or false nests.

SPECIES	PERIOD	Protected nests in situ	Relocated nest	Poached Nests	Confirmed nestlings	Not confirmed nestlings <sup>1</sup>	Total possible nests	Number of hatchlings
OLIVE RIDLEY (Lepidochelys olivacea)	1st Dec 2005-15th Apr 2006	5	42	1	48	18	66	1214
	16th Apr 2006-31st Oct 2006	2	78	3	83	8	91	2935
	1st Nov 2006-30th Apr 2007	2	95	14	111	28	139	3951
BLACK (Chelonia mydas agassizi)	1st Dec 2005-15th Apr 2006	3	6	0	9	20	29	511
	16th Apr 2006-31st Oct 2006	1	6	0	7	6	13	445
	1st Nov 2006-30th Apr 2007	0	11	0	11	11	22	496
LEATHERBACK (Dermochelys coriacea)	1st Dec 2005-15th Apr 2006	2	5	0	7	19	26	227
	16th Apr 2006-31st Oct 2006	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	1st Nov 2006-30th Apr 2007	0	8	2	10	7	17	153

Fig 2: Total possible nests in different sectors and nesting seasons at Playa Junquillal.

SPECIE	SECTOR	Estero Beach			Honda Beach			Junquillal Centro Beach			Blanca Beach		
		Dec 05 Apr 06	Apr 06 Oct 06	Nov 06 Apr 07	Dec 05 Apr 06	Apr 06 Oct 06	Nov 06 Apr 07	Dec 05 Apr 06	Apr 06 Oct 06	Nov 06 Apr 07	Dec 05 Apr 06	Apr 06 Oct 06	Nov 06 Apr 07
OLIVE RIDLEY (Lepidochelys olivacea)		19	23	82	2	4	2	43	58	55	2	6	0
BLACK (Chelonia mydas agassizi)		9	7	10	0	0	0	0	1	1	20	5	11
LEATHERBACK (Dermochelys coriacea)		15	0	13	0	0	0	9	0	4	2	0	0



New born Leatherback turtles on their way to the sea at Junquillal beach.

## PERSONAGES

### Good-bye to a friend

The morning of May 19 brought us the sad news of the loss of our beloved friend and co-worker, María Adela Piña Vallejos. We are still upset about the fact that she was brutally murdered at her home in Lagartillo when she was about to begin her workday at her well-known café "El Mapache".

"Aunt Adela," as she was known by the children in Pargos, was a very strong active woman who loved to learn, plus she was a great defender of nature. With her always sunny disposition and her unquenchable desire to work for the community, she helped us from the beginning in setting up the environmental education program in her beloved school in Pargos, where she subsequently operated the establishment's dining facility.

She participated in the first PLC training workshops at the beginning of 2005 in the schools in Paraiso, Pargos, and Junquillal. We enjoyed Adela's company for a wonderful week there, where she instilled her enthusiasm for scientific work in parents, teachers, biologists, and MINAE employees.

Later, she was a friend who helped us for more than two years in getting our sea turtle conservation project up and running. Among the other things she helped us with, we remember her presence in the "Baula 2005" contest, where she served as the chaperone for the Lagartillo - Pargos team, which in the end turned out to be the champion of the day.

With Adela's departure, we have a very difficult gap to fill, that of a matriarch who showed us the path to follow by watching her set the example. From "Notibaula," which she helped build and distribute, we say to her: "dear friend, we are still walking with you."

Gabriel Francia, MSc.  
Coordinador CBP



1. Adela serving food in the dining area of the Pargos school (Nov. 2005).

2. Adela in Lagartillo sharing with us about her participation in the environmental education program in the Pargos school.

## STRENGTHENING OUR COMMUNITY IDENTITY

### Third community outing: destination Punta Islita

As part of PLC eco-tourism and in an attempt to find out about new options related to developing community tourism in Junquillal, we took a trip to Punta Islita in July 2006. Sixteen representatives from the Junquillal community traveled to explore the Identity Strengthening and Development Project in the communities of Islita, Corozalito, Pilas, and Pueblo Nuevo de Nandayure in the Province of Guanacaste.

During the trip, the participants found out how people in the Islita area manage their own successful companies while they strengthen their socio-cultural identity and offer original tourism products. They do so by ongoing work by the whole community to use the advice and training that the Hotel Punta Islita offers them.

In this beautiful place full of art and color, the people from Junquillal had the chance to see how a community that is culturally similar to their own community pushed for an exemplary development model. This model seeks to achieve community wellbeing, generating income for all the families and trying to maintain a healthy environment. Eco-friendly practices are stimulated, such as waste recycling and protecting the forests, while there are opportunities for education for children and adults, preparing citizens committed to the arts, the environment, and their community.

At the end of the visit, with a new outlook about the possibilities for community development in mind, a small workshop was used to provide a chance to discuss the new information and reflect on it. The people from Junquillal concluded that together they can begin to work toward prosperity for Junquillal, but that it was necessary for everyone to cooperate, where men and women can take care of the community's wellbeing without relying so much on outside help.

Valerie Guthrie  
PLC Environmental educator



The group of 17 people from Junquillal arrived at the town of Islita in 2006.

## I'M GOING TO SHARE AN EXPERIENCE WITH YOU...



Alejandra Parody Alés is a resident of Playa Negra (Pargos) and an art teacher who graduated in the Republic of Argentina. Alejandra is an energetic woman who

is always willing to help her community out with a coat of paint, her undeniable passion. In February 2007, she directed a project to paint a mural inside the Playa Junquillal school in collaboration with students from the United World College of Costa Rica located in Santa Ana, San José.

It all began when I met the people at Playa Junquillal involved with the work they were doing in the schools in Pargos, Paraiso, and Junquillal.

A week later, Gabriel called me to invite me to lead a group of young people from a school in

San José who wanted to paint a mural at the school in Junquillal. Since I am a teacher and art professor, I didn't think twice about saying: "You bet, I'd be delighted!" That's how this wonderful four-day experience began.

The group of young people belongs to the United World College of Costa Rica in Santa Ana, San José, and they are between 16 and 20 years old. When I met them and I saw how willing they were to work together and spend time with the people at the Junquillal school, I got excited. There were students in this group from Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, Mexico, Paraguay, Bolivia, Uruguay, Argentina, Estonia, and many other places around the world.

The mothers on the school board, who also prepared the children's meals, introduced us to the school and the area to be painted. The walls of a stairway! Actually, really nice. We painted the undersea world with its captivating denizens: of course, Leatherback turtles, fish, seaweed, and more.

During those days, what was once just a wall turned into a get-together where a tropical sea bottom world was born....

This experience will hopefully be repeated in other schools in Guanacaste.

Thank you for giving me this opportunity!

Alejandra Parody Alés  
Community of Pargos



Giovanna from Bolivia and Marielis from Nicaragua are concentrated on painting the details of the Junquillal sea bottom (Photo courtesy of Alejandra Parody Alés)

## WE CAN ALL WIN THROUGH ARTISANAL TOURISM

### Families becoming hosts and increasing their income

One of PLC's objectives is for the Junquillal residents to provide rural community tourism services. The two main services are: 1) marketing artisanal products related to the local culture and environment; and 2) establishing host families that can provide food and lodging.

To date, we have worked with three host families in the area. One of them was the Valverde Badilla family who hosted a charming young French woman, Gaëlle Ranard, for four months. In addition to receiving food and lodging in the bosom of a Costa Rican home, she had the chance to find out what ticos are like and to form very strong friendship bonds with her hosts.

Gaëlle's work was not limited to spending time with and getting to know the Costa Rican culture. Instead, she ran a diagnosis of the local and foreign community during those four months. One of her conclusions was that the community should work on strengthening local capacities and bring back many customs and traditions to reflect them in their artisanal and culinary products.

Visitors like Gaëlle diversify the sources of income in the homes. They also provide a sort of community wellbeing through their work. We invite you to participate in this process. If you would like to find out more about the benefits of being a host family, please contact with Valerie Guthrie at 8836-9798.

Valerie Guthrie  
PLC Environmental educator



Gaëlle in Junquillal.

## THE DEAL WITH THE "BAULA BOY"

Wilmar Gutiérrez Ordóñez, has been a member since day one of the emblematic PLC patrol team, known in Junquillal as the "Baula Boys." He is a student at the high school in Santa Cruz. During the 2006 rainy season, he won the "Wet Baula Boy" award for locating the most number of nests during the season. Just like the rest of the members of the patrol team, he combines his formal work during the day with his hard nighttime work in patrolling a stretch of almost 6 kilometers of beach at Junquillal. Among his hobbies, his passion for dancing salsa and merengue, surfing and Argentinean asado barbeque stand out.

My name is Wilmar Gutiérrez Ordóñez. I was born at Playa Junquillal, I am 20 years old and I am a member, along with six other guys, of the Junquillal Pacific Leatherback Conservation Project (PLC). Sea turtles have always been part of my life. I have been around them since I was a little boy. Back then I didn't know they were in danger of extinction. As a community tradition in the old days, we gathered the turtle eggs to eat them at home, but not to sell them!

I have seen how people in Junquillal have been changing, thanks to the conservation efforts by our project. Little by little we have been contributing our two cents to help the turtles and marine life. We have been able to release thousands of turtle hatchlings in the three species that come to our beach: Olive Ridley, Leatherback, and black turtles. Our dream is to one day be able to see dozens of turtles laying their eggs at night in this tropical paradise and for most visitors to leave here with a good impression of Junquillal.

For us, the most important species is the Leatherback, the biggest, the oldest and the most threaten sea turtle. Therefore, we have been doing everything possible to protect this beautiful sea creature. Although the government institutions do not give us much support, in Junquillal, we are moving forward and we will continue forward until we see our dreams come true. Our wish is for the inhabitants in our community to continue to support us and that the new generations will join our conservation project.

Wilmar Gutiérrez Ordóñez  
The PLC Patrol Team



1. Wilmar, very happy to see a huge Leatherback turtle!



2. The Baula Boys in action: measuring and weighing leatherback hatchlings at Playa Blanca.

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We would especially like to thank the communities of Junquillal, Pargos, and Paraiso and the people and organized groups that support this project through their time and personal involvement. Steve Gordy, Georgina and Gabriel Solórzano, Adriana Miranda, Lilly James, Asociación de Desarrollo de Junquillal, Comité de Seguridad de Junquillal, Escuela de Junquillal and the Parque Nacional Marino Las Baulas (ACT-MINAE).

Thank you all!

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## LET'S TALK ABOUT PLAYA JUNQUILLAL

The origins of Playa Junquillal go back to the beginning of the last century when the first inhabitants decided to make this beautiful corner of the world their home and the home of future generations. Unassuming hard-working people have forged the underpinnings for this community immersed at the moment in the normal problems of a town under development. People from many parts of the world are now residents of Playa Junquillal, a fascinating mixture of cultures and races. Together we have clearly and steadfastly brought up our needs and possible solutions to the different state institutions responsible for our development. For our community development we have created different organizations. The Association for Integral Development, as the local government, is our main representative. Its more important projects are:

- The construction of a sports complex, which implied developing and planning the largest community area, with a soccer field, a community hall, and a playground for children.
- Preparation of a regulatory plan, an urban planning effort for the whole Playa Junquillal area, envisioning moderate development to best ensure that natural resources are used sustainably so we can continue to enjoy a good quality of life.

We have a school board of directors and trustees to manage the school's interests. This year a school dining room will be built.

The Committee for Junquillal's "Ecological Blue Flag", organize us to manage and protect our natural resources in an integrated way. They promote the development of various programs including: basic sanitation, environmental education, and integrated community health. Their objectives include promoting proper solid and liquid waste management. Towards this goal their work plan for this year includes a recycling program for the protection of water and other natural resources.

The community work is intense and varied; we are working on many fronts. We have a Community Safety Committee, a Friends of the Park Committee, and an Animal Health Committee. We are growing quickly and we barely have time to plan for our future; however, we should not forget the importance that our community organizations have. They are the voice of the people and they work on projects of common interest. We cannot be indifferent to such a valuable effort. We need to stick together and support each other. We should not forget that indifference denotes a lack of solidarity. When solidarity is seeking to achieve a noble and just cause, it changes the world; it makes it better, more habitable, and more worthy.

Silvia Héctor  
Development Association Junquillal Beach

## WORKING TOGETHER AGAINST DENGUE

Continuing with their efforts to help the Junquillal community, the Baula Boys have been contributing to prevent dengue. We are dedicated to eliminating mosquito breeding grounds in the areas close to the Junquillal school.

Some 75 meters away from the school, there was a big pile of coconuts that store water and make it easy for the larva of the mosquito *Aedes aegypti* to grow. These mosquitoes can transmit the dengue virus through their bites. To eliminate the coconuts we decided to bury them in big trench-like holes. This way we eliminated the source of stagnant water and at the same time contributed to fertilize the soil.

The job took three full days -- the Baula Boys and students from the school participated and helped take samples of the water in the coconuts and the discarded containers. We saw mosquito larvae in all the samples, which we placed in a bottle covered with a fine screen. After a few days we saw that various species of adult mosquitoes had appeared in our experimental container.

We would like to take this opportunity to invite residents and visitors alike to help in the campaign against dengue and avoid leaving any sort of container outside that can store water. Let's use the trash containers that the Blue Flag Committee placed along our beaches so we can keep the dengue-carrying mosquito from reproducing.

Gabriel Francia, MSc.  
PLC Coordinator

### WE CAN DO IT TOGETHER!

According to the Ministry of Health of Costa Rica, each year close to 100,000,000 cases of dengue are reported in the planet's tropical zones. Four cases of this disease were reported in Junquillal in May.

The Junquillal Community Wellbeing group invites you to put into practice the urgent measures needed to combat the disease-carrying mosquito. **Let's get rid of the breeding grounds in many homes and stop throwing garbage into the street!**

Our community's quality depends on each individual's good attitude.

ELIZABETH CARRERA GUTIÉRREZ  
COMMUNITY WELL-BEING GROUP



The PLC Baula Boys begin digging the first trench to bury the coconuts.