

GEA Spring 2007 Update



photo: Jack Swenson • bajaphotos.com

“For most of the wild things on Earth, the future must depend upon the conscience of mankind.”

—DR. ARCHIE CARR, father of modern marine turtle biology and conservation

The "Wonderful World of Whales" Program

"We have been following whales since 1982," states Fernando Arcas, Executive Director of GEA. We did it for fun in those early years, taking some photos and videos for family enjoyment."

When GEA was created in 1995, Fernando, along with visiting researchers and GEA volunteers started a program for whale identification, specifically the Blue Whales, that visit Loreto each year during the months of January, February and March. It was discovered that these giants are individuals, easily identifiable and possessing very specific pigmentation and markings. The other whales that visit the Loreto region each year which include Fin Whales, Humpback Whales, Sperm Whales, Pilot Whales, Orcas and Bottlenose Dolphins are more similar among individuals making their identification difficult.

During February and March, Fernando and the GEA volunteers take students to see the whales as part of GEA's youth education programs. GEA also engages in eco-tourism for locals and visitors to promote knowledge and love for the protection of these incredible creatures.

The funds raised through GEA's "Wonderful World of Whales" Program and other eco-tourism programs are used to



Pictured from left to right: Linda Kinninger, Kama Dean, Fernando Arcas and Wallace J. Nichols welcome participants to the 2007 Turtle Symposium in Loreto, B.C.S.

support GEA's numerous conservation and educational programs. At GEA's Visitors Center, visitors can enjoy lectures and videos and learn more about Loreto's magnificent cetaceans and the Sea of Cortez' abundant marine life. During whale watching trips, visitors will learn about the natural history of the whales and often become part of the program which includes photo identification and the study of their behavioral patterns.

Reservations for whale watching with GEA in Loreto during February and March can be made by calling the GEA Visitor's Center in Loreto at 011-52 (613) 135-0086, or by emailing Fernando Arcas at antaresgea@prodigy.net.mx. If you need assistance with hotel accommodations, airport transfers and rental cars while in Loreto, GEA is pleased to recommend Rosa Campos - rosacampos01@hotmail.com ■

GEA SPONSORS 2008 MEETING OF GRUPO TORTUGUERO

The 10th Annual Meeting of the Grupo Tortuguero will be held in Loreto, January 20-27, 2008, in conjunction with the annual International Sea Turtle Symposium. This meeting will be the most important meeting in the history of Grupo Tortuguero and a landmark event for the community of Loreto.

The combined meeting will join together the world's foremost authorities on sea turtle biology and conservation with Baja California's community conservation leaders in what will be an incredible opportunity for sharing, learning and planning the next decade of turtle-saving on the peninsula. The theme of the 2008 conference is "Native Oceans" and will celebrate and bring together the world's sea turtle cultures, such as the Seri Indians (Comcaac) of Sonora.

HOW TO HELP: Join Amigos de GEA » www.geantares.org.mx/amigos_de_gea.html