Dr. C. V. Rao  
Dean of Students Office  
P.O. Box 7  
St. George's University  
Upper True Blue Campus  
Grenada  
West Indies  

Sea Turtle Conservation and Turtle Watching Tours  

Dear Dr. Rao,  

As you may know, Ocean Spirits Inc. is a Grenadian non-profit environmental organisation that focuses primarily on sea turtle conservation. Since 1999, our primary mandate has been to work towards effective sea turtle and sea turtle habitat management and conservation, through the operation of research and monitoring, education and outreach and community involvement and development.  

A key component of this three-tiered approach is to provide access for a variety of interested parties to observe nesting sea turtles in order to illustrate to local communities alternative livelihood options in contrast to the traditional consumptive and unsustainable harvest of sea turtles and their eggs. Additionally, we have designed a number of bespoke access programmes such as the ongoing SGU Veterinarian programme that provides veterinarian students an opportunity to join one of our research teams in order to expose them to the challenges of working with exotic wildlife.  

All of this work has resulted in a growing awareness of Grenada’s significance to regional and global sea turtle populations and has been the catalyst behind an increased demand to observe these species in the wild. It is from this demand that we successfully developed turtle watching tours as an important tool in raising the profile of sea turtle conservation in Grenada.  

However, while turtle watching trips have been taking place in recent years, there have been a number of occasions whereby members of the public and students alike have arrived at the nesting beach outside of the normal tour structure, and hence outside of the legal parameters that governs interactions between members of the public and the turtles. For the majority of these occasions, we were able to accommodate most visitors, providing a safe and unobtrusive opportunity to observe nesting turtles. However, there remained a number of occasions whereby nesting turtles were adversely affected by individuals unwilling to cooperate with the research teams and the guidelines that governs all human/turtle interactions in Grenada. Our goal is to ensure that this does not  

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reoccur and is the reason why I am writing to you today. While we have seen and continue to encourage people to take an active interest in Grenada’s rich biological diversity, I hope you understand that one of our foremost priorities when balancing the need to develop awareness is to ensure that nesting turtles themselves are not disturbed at this critical stage of their life cycle.

As such, in collaboration with the Division of Fisheries, tour operators and local communities, we have developed a turtle watching tour structure to better manage the increased demand to observe these animals. This structure requires that all visitors wishing to see nesting turtles do so only through approved tour providers, all of whom abide by the legislative framework that governs any type of human interaction with nesting turtles. It also forms part of a broader policy effort to establish Levera beach as a protected zone during the nesting season, thereby minimizing the extent to which nesting turtles are disturbed. Finally, this new programme represents an exciting step forward in developing local environmental stewardship and community ownership, by redirecting 100% of profits generated by tours back into sea turtle conservation and the communities that have traditionally utilised them.

With this in mind, may I request that you ensure that all students are fully advised that in order to observe nesting turtles, they must first join an official Turtle Watching tour. Those persons arriving at the nesting site outside of the official tour structure will not be permitted to enter the nesting areas. In light of previous interest expressed by students, a special reduced price has been negotiated for all SGU students and I have taken the liberty of listing below the relevant contact details for any student(s) wishing to make further enquiries.

**Booking Manager:** Reece Sam  
**Telephone:** 435 5958 (Office), 456 6114 or 419 9339 (Cell)  
**Email:** tbuckmire@rareconservation.org

Please feel free to contact me should you require any further information concerning turtle watching tours or Ocean Spirits’ work and thank you in advance for your assistance with this matter.

Kind regards,

Carl Lloyd  
Programme Director  
Ocean Spirits Inc.

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