

theTurtleRoom  
Education. Conservation. Survival.

theTurtleRoom  
P.O. Box 521  
Lititz, PA 17543  
717-537-1308  
theturtleroom.org

Dear Friends,

It would be safe to say that 2020 has not gone how any of us expected. Yet, that did not stop conservation, education, and research from happening around the world, including at the TurtleRoom (tTR). In spite of the economic hardship many have faced during 2020, you, our loyal supporters, have continued to bless us with your generosity, allowing us to grow and expand our efforts and be prepared to do the same in 2021.

This is not to say there were not setbacks resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Our exciting new collaboration with African Chelonian Institute, Office Ivoirien des Parcs et Réserves, the Rare Species Conservatory Foundation, and the Abidjan Zoo to launch a new effort with *Kinixys homeana* (Home's Hinge-back Tortoise) in Azagny National Park, Cote D'Ivoire was delayed by a year. The Spring season of our Pennsylvania Wood Turtle Population Monitoring project was canceled and planned trips to scout for future conservation and research projects were also postponed. The first major fundraiser we were planning in June, 2020 had to be canceled.

Yet, in spite of these obstacles, we close 2020 on extremely solid footing, and have many successes of which to be proud. Your steady giving, along with a grant from the Turtle Conservancy, enabled the TurtleRoom to expand our Terrapin Conservation Initiative in New Jersey from one site to three. Even with coronavirus restrictions limiting volunteers, we were still able to tag many new terrapins, half at the new sites. Hatchling releases totaled nearly 1000. Our Pennsylvania Wood Turtle Population Monitoring project, in collaboration with the Turtle Survival Alliance, also added another site that shows great promise for a sizable population of Wood Turtles to monitor and from which to collect data.

In our Education Department, we began developing a project in partnership with a school in Connecticut where students would learn about the biology, husbandry, and conservation of turtles and tortoises. We hope that as this project finishes development post-pandemic, that it can serve as a model for other similar partnerships. The development of educational content continued to grow in 2020 with an increased flow of blog content, educational social media content, and more episodes of The Pondcast produced in a single year than ever before in its history. Both on our blog, through our "Kudos To..." series, and on social media, through our "Turtle Conservation Warrior" campaign, we celebrated individuals who have impacted our lives and the field of turtle conservation and education. Also brand new in 2020 was an audio-only podcast titled *Turtley Devoted*, which focuses on the peculiarities of a life dedicated to turtles and its impact on those around us. Our Education team also grew in 2020, and we expect that to reap dividends in 2021, with more online content created in a single year than ever before at the TurtleRoom.

Our Animal Husbandry Department had great success in 2020. We took one step closer to a successful hatching of *Leucocephalon yuwonoi* (Sulawesi Forest Turtle) with one egg that fully developed, but died just days before hatching. Successful hatches by the TurtleRoom and our individual Volunteer Staff member's personal efforts were recorded from more than 30 species, including: two more *Heosemys depressa* (Arakan Forest Turtle), two each *Sacalia belaei* (Beal's Eyed Turtle) and *Sacalia quadriocellata* (Four-eyed Turtle), three *Cuora mouhotii obsti* (Southern Keeled Box Turtle), three *Geoemyda japonica* (Ryukyu Black-breasted Leaf Turtle), three *Kinixys spekii* (Speke's Hinge-back Tortoise), four *Cuora pani* (Pan's Box Turtle), five *Cuora amboinensis kamaroma* (Malayan Box Turtle), five *Cuora galbinifrons* (Indochinese Box Turtle), five *Geoemyda spengleri* (Vietnamese Black-breasted Leaf Turtle), five *Rhinoclemmys melanosterna* (Colombian Wood Turtle), six *Astrochelys radiata* (Radiated Tortoise), six *Indotestudo forstenii* (Forsten's Tortoise), seven

*Indotestudo elongata* (Elongated Tortoise), seven *Malacochersus tornieri* (Pancake Tortoise), eight *Cuora flavomarginata* (Yellow-margined Box Turtle), eight *Geochelone platynota* (Burmese Star Tortoise), nine *Cuora bourreti* (Bourret's Box Turtle), nine *Kinixys homeana* (Home's Hinge-back Tortoise), twelve *Testudo graeca armeniaca* (Araxes Tortoise), 18 *Testudo kleinmanni* (Egyptian Tortoise), 28 *Terrapene coahuila* (Coahuilan Box Turtle), 100 *Testudo hermanni hermanni* (Western Hermann's Tortoise), and 103 *Glyptemys insculpta* (Wood Turtle).

New acquisitions included the transfer of four more male Coahuilan Box Turtles, bringing our total adult group to seven males and three females. We also received one female Sulawesi Forest Turtle on loan from our partner, the Turtle Survival Alliance. The biggest addition is another new partnership with the Turtle Survival Alliance, where we received a loan of three male and 20 female Pancake Tortoises at Garden State Tortoise. After they completed extensive testing and were determined to be free of various infections, these animals were placed in a habitat constructed to be as natural as possible. This habitat even includes a kopje, a rocky outcrop where these unique animals like to hide. This partnership and the story of these specific tortoises is highlighted in this year's Turtle Survival magazine, including a full spread image of their amazing habitat, as constructed by Chris Leone, our Director of Animal Husbandry.

While we don't yet know what impact the COVID-19 pandemic will play in 2021, theTurtleRoom is already planning for the development of new initiatives and new collaborations in all three of our departments: Education, Field Programs, and Animal Husbandry. Also in 2021, we will be celebrating our **10th anniversary** and we plan to celebrate our 10 years of positive impact on turtles and tortoises through the entire 2021 calendar year!

We are excited to continue to have you by our side as we move forward together to conserve these beloved shelled creatures. To find other ways you can get involved with theTurtleRoom, please visit <https://theturtleroom.org/get-involved>. For questions about anything related to theTurtleRoom or its education and conservation efforts, please contact our President and Executive Director at [steve.enders@theturtleroom.org](mailto:steve.enders@theturtleroom.org).

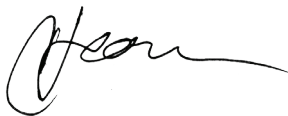
With gratitude and celebration,



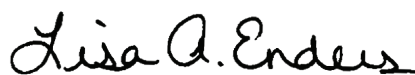
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