

IMPACT REPORT

2023



ABOUT US

Students Conserving Nature is a non-profit established in 2020 dedicated to conserve Mexico's terrestrial and freshwater turtles through research, monitoring, restoration, and the participation of underserved students from local communities. At the same time, we aim to empower these students to develop their potential as productive citizens and stewards of their environment.

We aspire to live in a world where wild turtle populations thrive, and where young people from rural communities are allies in their conservation efforts and have opportunities for personal and professional development.



WHY DO WE DO WHAT WE DO?

➤ Because more than half of the turtle species in the world are threatened, and many of them are virtually unknown.

Because we have a great opportunity to contribute to their conservation in Mexico, as we rank second in global turtle species diversity.

➤ Because not only wildlife faces a challenging reality.

In Mexico, 30% of young people living in rural communities do not complete their high school studies due to lack of infrastructure and development opportunities in their communities, as well as economic limitations within their families.





OUR WORK

Get to know the permanent programs and special projects we are conducting to conserve turtles and to support the youth of Mexico.

TURTLE MONITORING AND CONSERVATION PROGRAM

We conduct long-term monitoring of populations of different species of terrestrial and freshwater turtles in the states of Sonora and Yucatan to identify their threats and propose conservation actions.



IMPACT

- 12 monitored species
- 300 terrestrial turtle surveys
- 130 freshwater turtle surveys
- 300 new sampled individuals



Left: Félix García, local leader in Sonora, equipping a Sierra box turtle (*Terrapene nelsoni*) with a radio transmitter. Right: Mario Uc, local leader in Yucatán, collecting data of a individual of furrowed wood turtle (*Rhinoclemmys areolata*) found in the field.

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

We support the studies of high and middle school students living in rural communities where we conduct long-term turtle population monitoring. Students receive a monthly scholarship throughout an academic year.

Once a week, the scholarship students take part in turtle monitoring or engage in other outdoor and indoor activities. These activities are design to help them develop valuable habits and skills for their future.



Left: Visit to the Uxmal archaeological site with the Yucatán scholarship students. Right: Turtle sampling with the Sonora scholarship students.



IMPACT

10 scholarship students

2 scholarship students graduated from highschool

Activities carried out with the students:

- Turtle monitoring
- Talks on productive activities: beekeeping, ecotourism, nursery work, forest management, organic fertilizers
- Visits to museums and archaeological sites
- Computer exercises
- Reading comprehension exercises

SPECIAL PROJECT: SAVING THE LAST POPULATIONS OF THE VALLARTA MUD TURTLE

The Vallarta Mud Turtle (*Kinosternon vogti*) stands among the most critically endangered turtle species globally, exclusive to the Ameca River Valley across Jalisco and Nayarit states, thriving solely in freshwater habitats.

We're working on a conservation plan with various stakeholders to prevent the extinction of the Puerto Vallarta Mud Turtle in the wild. Stakeholders include: the City of Puerto Vallarta, Centro Universitario de la Costa of University of Guadalajara, local landowners, and the community. This comprehensive strategy encompasses research, habitat protection and restoration, and environmental awareness efforts.

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40 localities sampled
135 turtles sampled
2 sampling events open to the public

Top left: Talk on conservation status at the Conabio facilities, Mexico City. Bottom left: Second community sampling of the Vallarta Mud Turtle at an urban lagoon. Right: Vallarta Mud Turtle in one of its habitats.



SPECIAL PROJECT: IN SEARCH OF THE BAJA CALIFORNIA SLIDER

Due to the lack of information about the Baja California Slider (*Trachemys nebulosa*), this year we began surveying its populations throughout its range in the states of Baja California Sur, Sonora, and Sinaloa.

At the outset of this project, we visited four locations in Baja California Sur and found the species in three of them, totalling 10 individuals recorded. We were also able to document some threats to their populations, such as the presence of invasive exotic turtle species and the construction of dams in the water bodies where they live.



Left: Measuring a Baja California Slider Turtle (*Trachemys nebulosa*) trapped during surveys. Top right: Baja California Slider Turtle. Bottom right: Red-eared Slider (*Trachemys elegans scripta*), an invasive exotic species recorded during the surveys.

SPECIAL PROJECT: IDENTIFICATION OF CONSERVATION PRIORITIES FOR THE YUCATAN BOX TURTLE



The Yucatan Box Turtle (*Terrapene yucatana*) inhabits the tropical forests of the Yucatan Peninsula and is a species threatened by the high demand in the illegal market and habitat loss. In September, we began a project aimed at assessing the conservation status of its populations across its habitat distribution.

We visited eight locations in search of it, but unfortunately did not locate it. However, we did record individuals that local people had as pets and collected valuable data. Additionally, we recorded specimens of seven other turtle species during the surveys.



Top left: Female Yucatan Box Turtle (*Terrapene yucatana*) kept at a house as a pet. Top right: Narrow-bridged musk turtle (*Claudius angustatus*). Bottom left: Scorpion Mud Turtle (*Kinosternon scorpioides*). Bottom right: Furrowed wood turtle (*Rhinoclemmys areolata*).

SPREADING THE LOVE FOR TURTLES

At Students Conserving Nature, we aim to promote an appreciation for turtles and communicate the importance of their conservation among the general population. Therefore, this year, we designed educational and informative materials and carried out awareness and outreach activities around turtles.

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We designed a brochure on the turtle species of the Yucatan state and distributed it to 200 elementary and middle school students.

We designed an informational card and a sticker of the Vallarta Mud Turtle and distributed to 650 citizens with the help of the cyclist club "BiciOn".

We were invited to a local radio program in Puerto Vallarta to talk about the conservation of the Vallarta Mud Turtle.



Top left: Brochure and stickers designed this year. Top right: Talk about the Vallarta Mud Turtle on a local radio station. Bottom left: Talk at a primary school in Calakmul, Campeche, on the turtles of the Yucatan Peninsula. Right: Distribution of stickers of the Puerto Vallarta Mud Turtle to cyclists.



SPECIAL PROJECT: EMPOWERING MEXICO'S CONSERVATION LEADERS

This year, we supported the Rufford Foundation in planning their first Learning Event in Mexico, scheduled for January 2024 in Calakmul, Campeche.

The Learning Event comprises workshops where young researchers and conservationists have the opportunity to acquire knowledge, exchange experiences and ideas among themselves and with experts, and build collaborative networks to enhance their conservation efforts.

In this Learning Event will participate 20 recipients of the Rufford Foundation's grants program and have conducted conservation projects in the Yucatan Peninsula or Chiapas.

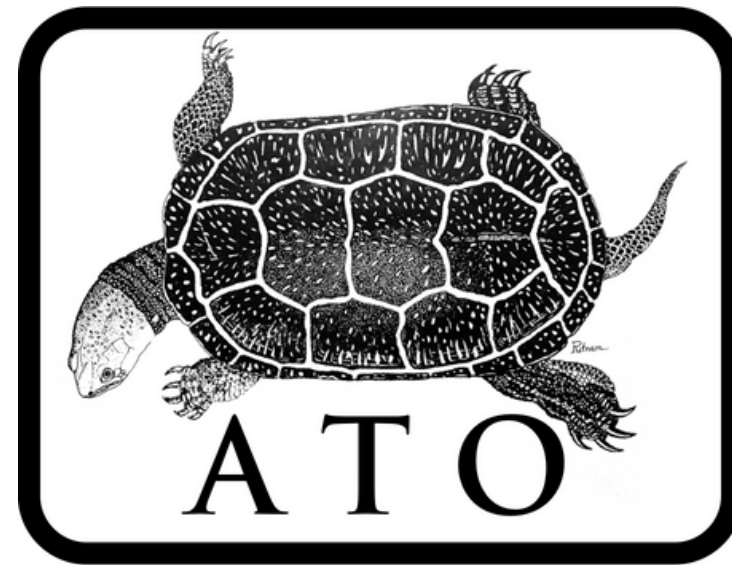


View of the Mayan forest from the archaeological site of Calakmul, Campeche. Photo credit: Carlos Delgado.

THIS YEAR WE RECEIVED SUPPORT FROM



TURTLE SURVIVAL
— ALLIANCE —



INTERESTED IN SUPPORTING OUR WORK?



We cannot exist without donations, please consider making a one time or recurring donation.

Your generous contribution will allow us to continue working to conserve Mexico's turtles and providing development opportunities to underserved students.

\$58 USD

Provides a student
1 month of scholarship

\$35 USD

Allows to conduct turtle
surveys for 1 day

\$696 USD

Provides a student
1 year of scholarship

\$190 USD

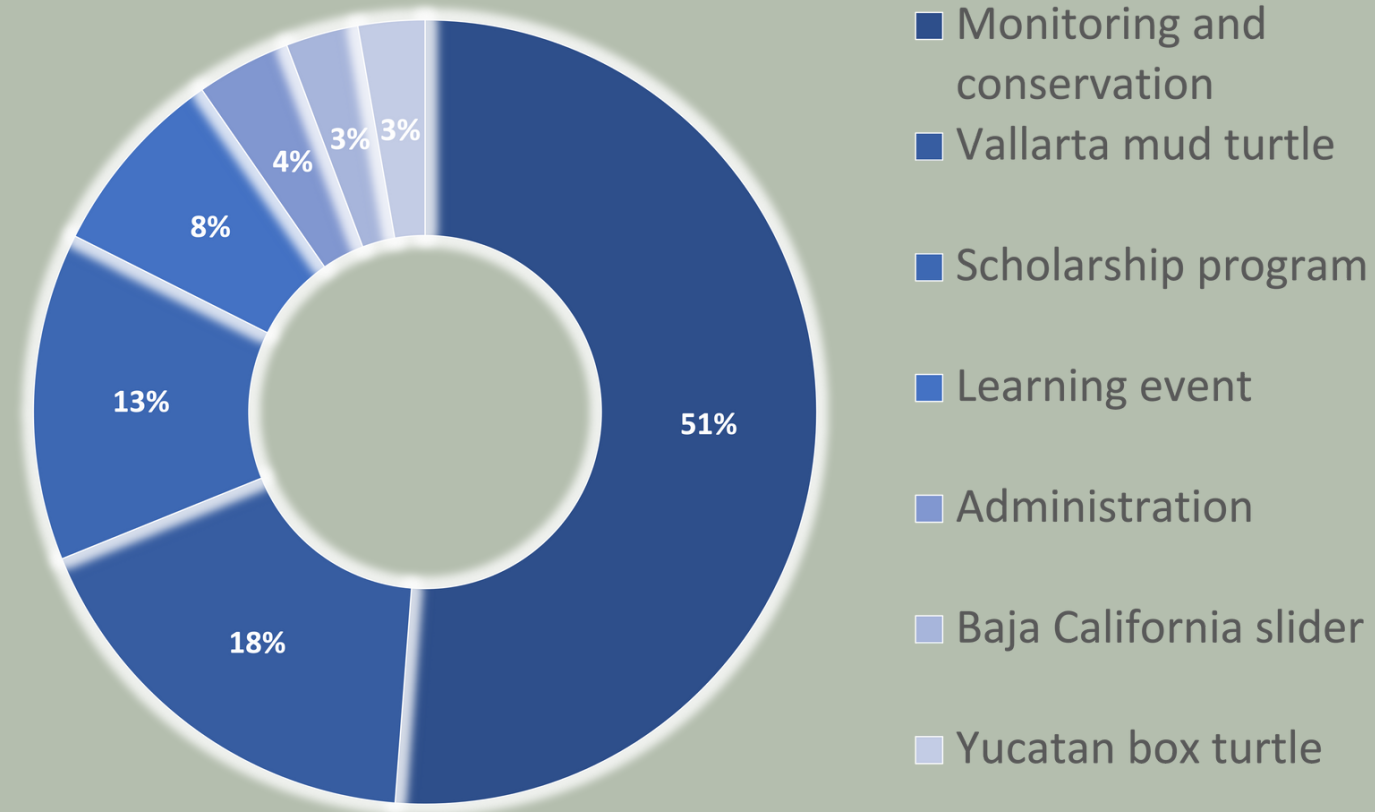
Provides a radiotransmitter
to track a turtle for 1 year

I want to support

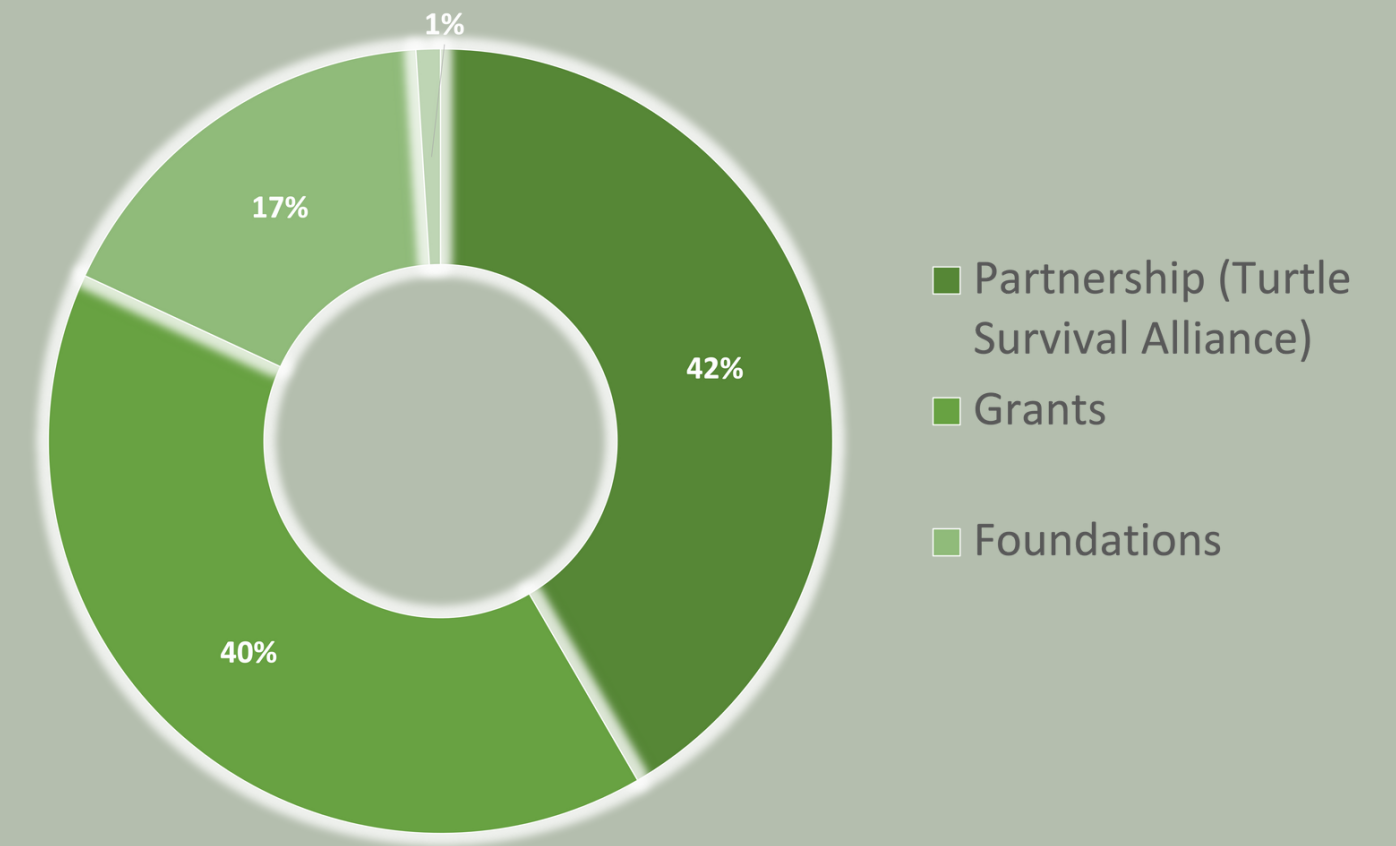


FINANCIAL REPORT

From January 1st to November 30th, 2023



Expenses: \$98,693.81 USD



Income: \$126,193.79 USD



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