

Exhibit R-054

The Leatherback Trust,  
“Las Baulas Conservation Project,” *available at*  
[http://www.leatherback.org/las\\_baulas\\_conservation\\_project.html](http://www.leatherback.org/las_baulas_conservation_project.html)

July 9, 2014



# The Leatherback Trust

*"Their future is in our hands"*

5736 Kinlock Place, Fort Wayne, IN 46835



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## Welcome to the leatherback turtle conservation project at Parque Nacional Marino Las Baulas

**The Las Baulas (Spanish for Leatherback turtle) Project** in Costa Rica is dedicated to protecting and understanding the population of turtles nesting in the National Park so that the species may be saved. The project is run by Indiana Purdue Fort Wayne and Drexel Universities. The project takes place each year during the nesting season from late September to March. The Principal Investigators are Dr. Frank V. Paladino from Indiana Purdue University, Dr. James R. Spotila, Dr. Harold Avery and Dr. Pilar Santidrián Tomillo from Drexel University, Pennsylvania. Students, local community members and volunteers from the non-profit organization, Earthwatch, come to protect nesting turtles and collect vital information on nesting biology. This information is provided to MINAET and the general scientific community in order to develop the most effective strategies for management and conservation of the endangered population.

### Goals of the Project

**The Las Baulas National Park** on the Pacific coast of Costa Rica is one of the world's few remaining sites of significant leatherback turtle nesting activity. The numbers of these giant, marine reptiles are declining world-wide and they have disappeared completely from many historically important nesting areas. Various human activities including beachside development, poaching of eggs and accidental capture by fishing vessels have driven the species close to extinction. The broad aims of the project are:

- To identify the size and status of the nesting leatherback turtle population
- To protect nesting female turtles and their nests from poachers and predators
- To provide scientific information to the Costa Rican authorities to develop effective management and conservation strategies
- To improve understanding of leatherback biology through quality scientific research



These aims are achieved by;

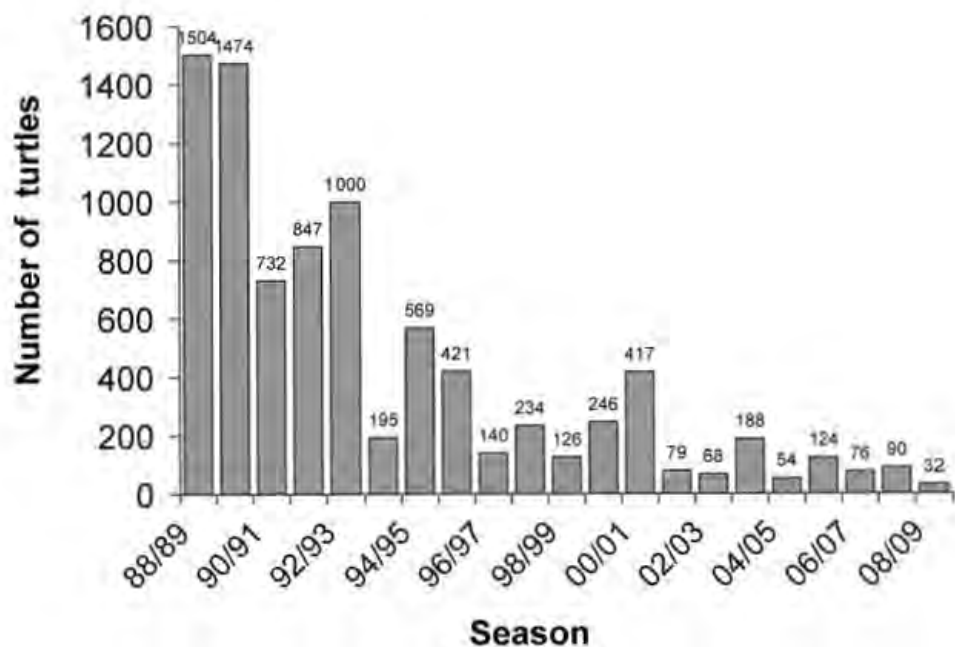
- Patrolling the nesting beach each night and identifying all turtles which nest
- Assisting park guards in control of tourists and other people on the beach
- Meeting with local and government National Park authorities and members of the local communities to distribute information and provide advice in conservation issues
- Undertaking a variety of research projects to investigate reproductive biology, population genetics, physiology and other important areas of biology




### A Brief History of the Project and the Park

Leatherback turtles have undoubtedly been nesting on the Pacific coast of Costa Rica for thousands or millions of years. During the 1980s it was realized that the beaches of Playa Grande, Playa Ventanas and Playa Langosta collectively hosted the largest remaining Pacific leatherback populations in Costa Rica. Biologists from Drexel University and Indiana Purdue University began to study the population and quickly discovered that it was declining rapidly.

The information which had been collected was presented to the Costa Rican government and collaborative work began to form the National Park. In 1994 Parque Nacional Las Baulas was declared with a permanent on-site director and team of park guards. As development of the region increased, the management of tourism in and around the park became an important responsibility for the director and staff. Currently the number of people who enter the beach at night to see the turtles is regulated and the park receives revenue from entry fees.

The number of leatherback turtles has declined by 90% since the late 1980s. However, the trend in the last seven years (shown in the graph below) is not typical of declining population but of a population that is stabilizing. Since effective beach protection started 10-15 years earlier, the new trend could result from the eradication of poaching when the Park was established.



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