



Enhancing Fishing Industry Awareness and Commitment to Conservation of Loggerhead Sea Turtles (*Caretta caretta*)

With support from the Government of Canada’s [Habitat Stewardship Program](#) (Prevention Stream), the Canadian Sea Turtle Network (CSTN) conducted a one-year project in 2014–2015 to improve relationships with members of the pelagic longline fleet and raise awareness about the importance of conserving Loggerhead Sea Turtles.

WHY THIS PROJECT IS IMPORTANT

In the Canadian waters of the Atlantic Ocean, unintentional capture in pelagic longline fisheries is considered the greatest threat to [Loggerhead Sea Turtles](#) (*Caretta caretta*). This species has been assessed by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada as Endangered but is not listed under the *Species at Risk Act*. Engagement of the fishing community to participate in the protection of Loggerhead Sea Turtles will raise awareness of the threats the pelagic longline fishery has on the species and allow seafood harvesters and environmental organizations to work collaboratively.

WHAT WAS DONE

CSTN hosted educational sessions in four Nova Scotian fishing communities (Sydney, Liverpool, Woods Harbour, and Yarmouth) to raise awareness of the common threats to Loggerhead Sea Turtles. These sessions allowed CSTN to establish relationships with pelagic longline fishers, who voluntarily agreed to help with the project and were willing to assist with the satellite tagging work.

As a result of these educational sessions, following the completion of the project three pelagic longline captains and their crew members (for a total of 11 participants) volunteered to receive training on satellite tagging techniques which led to the tagging of three Loggerhead Sea Turtles in the summer of 2015. The three turtles are the first to be monitored this way in Atlantic Canada waters, and are providing some of the first information on Loggerhead Sea Turtle movements in this region.



▲ Loggerhead Sea Turtle (*Caretta caretta*)

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THIS PROJECT

- Established positive and ongoing relationships with members of the pelagic longline fishery.
- Actively engaged the fishing community which has resulted in the attachment of the first-ever GPS satellite tags to track movements of three Loggerhead Sea Turtles in Canadian waters.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROJECT

CSTN developed positive and productive working relationships with the fishing community. This has resulted in the collection of valuable GPS tracking information which will support critical habitat assessment of the Loggerhead Sea Turtle.

INVESTMENT: 2014–2015

Habitat Stewardship Program Funds:	\$22,500
Partner Support Leveraged:	\$27,269
TOTAL:	\$49,769