

World Turtle Day® International Shellebration is May 23

Theme "Shellebrate!" Asks Everyone to Love and Save Turtles

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- American Tortoise Rescue (ATR), a nonprofit organization established in 1990 for the protection of all species of [turtles](#) and tortoises, is "shellebrating" its 22nd international [World Turtle Day](#)® on May



23. ATR created and launched WorldTurtleDay.org to increase respect for and knowledge about one of the world's oldest creatures. Now observed around the globe, turtle and tortoise lovers show their appreciation of the special day by taking "shellfies" and "shellebrating" with events

and shares on social media. Millions of turtle lovers in the U.S., Canada, the UK, Borneo, India, Australia, Greece and many other countries worldwide now observe the day with thousands of educational events, parties, fundraisers and more.

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*Susan Tellem, Executive
Director, American Tortoise
Rescue*

Susan Tellem, RN, BSN, co-founded the ATR sanctuary with her husband, Marshall Thompson, 32 years ago. Together, they have rescued and rehomed more than 4,000 turtles and tortoises and provided education help to thousands. This year's "[Shellebrate](#)" theme encourages a worldwide

audience to see turtles as more than just rocks with legs. "These sentient beings are amazing creatures that outlasted dinosaurs and live 25, 50, 100 years or more," Tellem said. They feel happiness and pain, show a true sense of humor, as well as affection. Turtles have personalities just like dogs and cats. "When they are allowed to live wild in a safe environment at the sanctuary, they search for food, do funny things like walking backwards or honking, and most important, have relationships with other turtles, sometimes procreating," she added.

Sadly, these gentle animals survived 200 million years, yet they are rapidly disappearing as a result of smuggling, habitat destruction, climate change, the cruel pet trade, and live exotic food markets domestically and internationally. About 61 percent of turtles worldwide are threatened

or already extinct. According to experts, turtles are the most threatened of the major groups of vertebrates, more so than birds, mammals, and fish. Tellem says this is why education is so important in every country globally so that turtles can be treasured, not smuggled, sold or eliminated. "Ideally, all turtles should live in the wild, but realistically this is not always possible. Too many are sold at pet stores, by street vendors, or used as prizes at carnivals and other events. Thankfully, there are many more rescues and sanctuaries now, as well as loving homes," Tellem says. "These turtles can safely live out their long lives."



Bunkle is American Tortoise Rescue's Mascot and First Rescued Turtle in 1990s.

Follow @WorldTurtleDay on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to find tips for fun things to do and have the opportunity to score cool turtle items during giveaways. "Even though we can't meet in person," Tellem says, "We can show our love of these beautiful creatures by enjoying experiences together through social media."

Some of the highlights to help make World Turtle Day special include:

- Join the party at home or at work. ATR created a World Turtle Day Party Pack that can be accessed for free here <http://bit.ly/1YwebJR>.
- Join thousands of fans who are posting shellfies, videos, and photos in honor of World Turtle Day.
- Follow @WorldTurtleDay on Twitter. Every year, thousands of people help the day trend by tweeting #worldturtleday and their own photos to spread the good word about turtles.
- Subscribe to our YouTube for the latest turtle and tortoise videos and ideas at www.youtube.com/americanortrescue.

Authentic World Turtle Day® shirts are available for sale only through American Tortoise Rescue. Click here to order from the Bonfire store where you can also donate to the sanctuary. <https://www.bonfire.com/store/american-tortoise-rescue/>.

Suggested tweets:

- #Shellebrate and protect turtles and tortoises on #WorldTurtleDay May 23
- Free #WorldTurtleDay ® Party Pack <http://bit.ly/2qdo4EI>

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Note: Please feel free to use the logo.

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