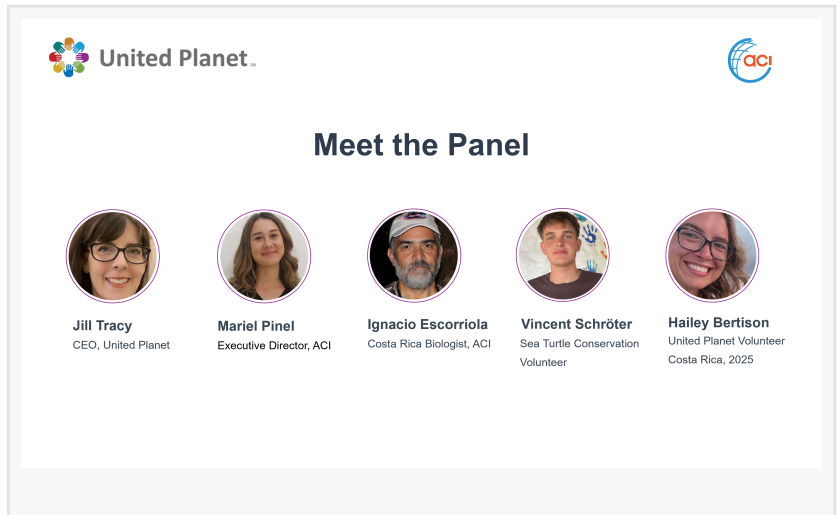


United Planet Hosts Global Webinar on Sea Turtle Conservation in Costa Rica

Global experts & volunteers share how partnerships and hands-on action are protecting endangered sea turtles and coastal ecosystems in Costa Rica

BOSTON, MA, UNITED STATES, March 3, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [United Planet](#) convened conservation leaders, volunteers, and global participants for a [live webinar](#) spotlighting sea turtle conservation efforts in Costa Rica. The event explored how community-led initiatives, scientific research, and international volunteers are working together to protect endangered sea turtles along the country's Pacific and Caribbean coasts.



“

It was the most amazing experience of my life. Seeing baby sea turtles hatch & knowing you are helping, even in a small way, feels incredibly meaningful. It truly felt like we were making an impact.”

Former United Planet volunteer Hailey Bertison

The session was led by United Planet CEO Jill Tracy, who opened the conversation by highlighting the organization's 25 year commitment to fostering cross cultural understanding through service. She emphasized that conservation work in Costa Rica represents both environmental protection and meaningful global engagement.

“Across Costa Rica's coastline, sea turtles are facing urgent and growing threats,” Tracy said. “But there is also hope. Through strong local partnerships and responsible volunteer engagement, we can help make a real difference in the life and habitat of these extraordinary species.”

The webinar featured biologist Ignacio Escorriola, who outlined the ecological importance of sea turtles as keystone species. He explained how turtles maintain healthy seagrass beds and coral reefs, helping sustain marine biodiversity. Costa Rica is home to five nesting species, including leatherback, olive ridley, green, hawksbill, and loggerhead turtles.

“They help us keep a delicate balance in the ecosystem,” Escorriola said. “When little sea turtles hatch, it is like a great grocery store opening on the beach. Many species depend on them. Protecting turtles means protecting an entire web of life.”

Mariel Pinel, Executive Director of Asociación Costarricense de Interculturalidad, United Planet’s long standing partner in Costa Rica, addressed the most pressing threats facing turtle populations, including plastic pollution, habitat loss, poaching, and rising temperatures linked to climate change.

“Females return to the same beach where they were born decades ago to lay their eggs. This is also when they are most vulnerable,” Pinel explained. “Protecting sea turtles also means protecting the entire ecosystem. When we safeguard nesting beaches, we are helping sustain coastal biodiversity and ocean health.”


The webinar also highlighted the hands-on role volunteers play in conservation efforts. Vincent Schröter, a long term volunteer from Germany, described conducting nightly beach patrols, relocating eggs to protected hatcheries, and monitoring nests from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m.

“It is a privilege for me to be here,” Schröter said. “During the season, we patrol the beach, search for tracks, collect eggs, and protect the hatchery through the night. Releasing hatchlings to the ocean is something you never forget.”



Former United Planet volunteer Hailey Bertison reflected on her four-week experience

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Five Sea Turtle Species Call Costa Rica Home



- 1 Leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*)**
The largest sea turtle species, critically endangered and weighing up to 2,000 pounds
- 2 Olive Ridley (*Lepidochelys olivacea*)**
Famous for mass nesting events called "arribadas" where thousands nest together.
- 3 Green Turtle (*Chelonia mydas*)**
Migratory adults play a crucial role in maintaining healthy seagrass beds.
- 4 Hawksbill (*Eretmochelys imbricata*)**
Coral reef specialists with beautiful patterned shells, critically endangered
- 5 Loggerhead (*Caretta caretta*)**
Less common visitors with powerful jaws for crushing shellfish



supporting conservation efforts in Montezuma.

“It was the most amazing experience of my life,” Bertison shared. “Seeing baby sea turtles hatch and knowing you are helping, even in a small way, feels incredibly meaningful. It truly felt like we were making an impact.”

Panelists emphasized that conservation in Costa Rica is driven by a community-led model that brings together local associations, government institutions, volunteers, and businesses. Education, strict safety protocols, and annual reporting to environmental authorities ensure accountability and measurable impact.

Escorriola noted that many conservation programs submit annual reports to Costa Rica’s Ministry of Environment and contribute to international scientific collaboration through global sea turtle networks and symposiums. Some nesting populations that were once near collapse have shown measurable recovery due to sustained protection efforts.



As the webinar concluded, Pinnell encouraged participants to take action in their own lives.

“The more we connect with the natural world, the more we learn to appreciate and respect it,” she said. “Volunteering is a powerful way to strengthen that connection and deepen our commitment to conservation.”

Founded in 2001, United Planet is an international nonprofit organization dedicated to fostering cross cultural understanding and global citizenship through meaningful volunteer programs, internships, youth exchanges, and experiential learning opportunities in more than 40 countries worldwide. Through strong local partnerships and community-led initiatives, the organization connects individuals and groups with projects that advance sustainable development while building lasting global relationships.

Building on this mission, United Planet invites individuals to continue the journey through its upcoming [10 Day Sea Turtle Conservation Social Quest in Costa Rica](#), where participants engage directly in hatchery support, beach patrols, environmental education, and cultural immersion alongside local partners.

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