

# Sea turtle watching ecotourism project being started

*Would bolster the coastal economy from Bahía Magdalena to Punta Abreojos and would generate two tourism seasons*

*By Esmeralda Balcázar Tapia*

With the goal of presenting a project in favor of sea turtle watching in the Pacific Ocean, particularly in the town of Puerto Adolfo López Mateos, education coordinator for the Grupo Tortuguero of Baja California Sur David Maldonado visited the municipality of Comondú. The goal was to present the mayor with the research work that has been done over the last 4 years concerning the sea turtles that either are born or arrive in the state. He mentioned that in order to confirm these results many turtles have been fitted with satellite transmitters by which they can be tracked, many of them having been proven to travel all the way to Japan and back in order to feed and breed in the waters of the Pacific. The research has been utilized to construct an important database with information on turtle behavior, birth rates and population.

Therefore Puerto Adolfo López Mateos has been proposed as the first site in Latin-America to offer sea turtle watching services. In addition they would continue to contribute to the knowledge and research on these chelonians' behavior, and with the participation and support of local authorities to promote tourism in the area, they would also provide an economic alternative to the region from Bahía Magdalena to Punta Abreojos by creating 2 turtle watching tourist seasons – one in the summer and the other during the winter months.

The objective of the project would be focused mainly on watching for the loggerhead turtle, although there is the possibility that there may also be hawksbill and leatherback turtle watching.

Furthermore, it was indicated that on August 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of the present year, Puerto Adolfo López Mateos will hold its 4<sup>th</sup> annual sea turtle festival, and that on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of July Grupo Tortuguero members will attend an important central American meeting on sea turtles in Guatemala, where they will spread the word about this important ecotourism project being established in Baja California Sur.

***Caption: Representatives of the Grupo Tortuguero to carry out a turtle watching program in Comondú.***