

# *Profiles*

Johath Laudino Santillán

Julio Cesar Solís Hernández hails from Playa del Carrizal in the state of Guerrero, Mexico. He is 29 years old and is among the first fishermen who decided to form the Grupo Tortuguero sea turtle conservation network in the Baja California peninsula. Their goal was to bring to create awareness in the various communities about the importance of the region as a feeding ground for sea turtles in the state. During a brief interview, Julio had this to say:

“I like to do the monitoring because I’m interested in protecting sea turtles and it’s something that we should all protect. Being such an ancient creature, it would not be fair that they be lost by the very hand of man.”

Additionally, it was Julio who began monitoring activities in the Bahía Magdalena-Almejas lagoon complex, under the guidance of Dr. Wallace J. Nichols in the summer of 2000. One of the most inspiring moments he had during his turtle work took place in the very summer of 2000, when they captured a 310 pound turtle, measuring well over 3 feet in length. “I’d never seen a turtle leap completely out of the water before, and there were three of us there who shared the experience, including my friend Victor Meza (*Beyby*) and Kat Water (*the little Cat*); in fact, we decided to name this turtle “the cat.”

-Julio, would you like to give us a message for the state of Baja California Sur?  
“I would like to tell everyone that we must learn to appreciate the riches that we have in this world, and that we must not exterminate them; in the case of sea turtles, we have to become more aware! Because when tomorrow comes, it will be a shame if we can only merely tell our children that there were once turtles here, without them having had the opportunity to know them.”

Currently, Julio resides in the community of Puerto San Carlos, Baja California Sur; it is a community rich in natural resources, having an incredibly rich bay, which is one of the most productive ecosystems in all of Mexico. 70% of the community are fishers, and unfortunately there is a severe lack of education, appreciation, and sensitivity to caring for and respecting what exists in their area.

Thank you Julio for this interview, and we hope you can reach your goals, and your dreams.