



# Tortuga Squad: Kids Saving Sea Turtles in Costa Rica

*Cathleen Burnham*

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***Tortuga Squad: Kids Saving Sea Turtles in Costa Rica* is a photodocumentary book by journalist and writer Cathleen Burnham, the second in her WAKA (World Association of Kids and Animals) series of books for young readers that feature kids around the world involved in wild animal rescue and conservation projects.**

In *Tortuga Squad*, we meet a group of youngsters in Costa Rica who patrol the beaches of Parismina Island, on the Caribbean coast of Costa Rica, to help protect mother sea turtles and their eggs from poachers and animal predators. The young volunteers watch for sea turtles coming ashore to lay their eggs.

It's a dangerous place for turtles. Here, as in many places in the Caribbean, the local villagers have traditionally eaten turtle meat and eggs as part of their diet. But many turtle species have become close to extinction. Poaching eggs and killing sea turtles for meat is now illegal. But some people still do it.

So the turtles need extra help. This is where the kids come in. *Tortuga* means turtle in Spanish, and Tortuga Squad is the name the kids gave themselves because they help save turtles. They patrol the beach during hatching season, and have helped to build a guarded hatchery to protect eggs until they hatch. Then, the kids gather to help escort the tiny baby turtles across the sands to the ocean waters.

Cathleen Burnham visited the island with her husband and her own children as volunteers to help the local conservation program. With the local village kids, she put together this story of the activities of the Tortuga Squad, an inspiring example of real-life children around the globe active in grassroots projects to save Earth's endangered wild animals.

There is a free teacher's guide available at the WAKA series website: [WAKABooks.org](http://WAKABooks.org).

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