

## Trained and ready to go

Saturday, June 26<sup>th</sup> 2021, Sea Turtle Conservation Curaçao (STCC) held its annual volunteer training. This year it was a little later than usual due to Covid-19 and the consequential lockdowns and mobility restrictions. The aim of the training was to (re)familiarize volunteers with the organization, (further) educate them about sea turtles, their lifecycle, behavior and habitat, to train nest monitoring procedures, to brainstorm about current challenges and to provide a space to meet and interact with each other.

A total of nine volunteers participated in the training. The training was facilitated by Sabine Berendse, founder and president of the board of STCC. The group started out in STCC's education and information center, but due to noise disturbance the training was moved to the headquarters of Green Phenix, the plastic recycling facility to which STCC is closely linked. This gave the volunteers the opportunity to see where the plastic, they work so hard to recycle, is being processed.



Because both new and experienced volunteers partook in the training, the training was very broad. Starting with basic information about sea turtles, such as the different species and the most common ones in the waters around Curaçao, their life cycle and their value to the ecosystem. Continuing with information about STCC, focusing on the three main pillars (research, education and conservation) and the efforts of the new board to restructure the organization. Some time was made to discuss how to deal with persons illegally handling sea turtles, aggressive people, as well as interested onlookers during turtle rescues or monitoring activities.

The highlight of the training was the explanation of how to locate, read and register tracks of a nesting females and hatchlings. Even though this was pure theory, and the real lessons happen outside on the beach, the volunteers were excited. "With this training I am so much better equipped, I am ready to go and monitor the beaches" remarked a new volunteer.

By completing this training STCC's volunteers are more knowledgeable and better prepared for the weekly beach monitoring rounds.

