



MEDIA RELEASE

ROYAL CARIBBEAN AND WWF BREAKTHROUGH IN FIGHT TO SAVE HAWKSBILL TURTLE FROM EXTINCTION

Sydney: 4 October 2019 – On World Animal Day, Royal Caribbean International marks a major milestone in its partnership with the World Wide Fund for Nature-Australia, focused on saving the endangered hawksbill turtle species from extinction.

A new DNA extraction test will offer scientists and conservationists vital information to track – and ultimately help end – the illegal trade of hawksbill turtle products. This is a significant breakthrough led by WWF Australia, Royal Caribbean the NOAA Fisheries' Southwest Fisheries Science Center (SWFSC), in California, USA.

The innovative project forms part of Royal Caribbean and WWF's five-year global partnership to ensure the long-term health of the oceans, supporting WWF's global oceans conservation work and raising awareness among the company's more than 5 million passengers about the importance of ocean conservation.

Turtle lovers and holidaymakers are encouraged to support Royal Caribbean and WWF's efforts and #thinkbeforeyoubuy while travelling overseas.

Hunted for their beautiful shells, the species is now listed as critically endangered by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), with the scientific community estimating as few as 6,700 breeding females remain in the Indian and Pacific Oceans.

Kathryn Valk, Director of Marketing and PR for RCL in Australia & New Zealand, said the company was proud to support action to help save the species.

"Our guests love diving into the natural environment of each of our many destinations, and in the South Pacific, spotting a hawksbill turtle while diving or snorkelling would be a true holiday highlight. But for the simple reason that hawksbill turtles are among the most beautiful sea creatures, they have been hunted and illegally traded to the verge of extinction,"

This novel DNA test and database is a significant achievement in our partnership with WWF, giving authorities and researchers vital information to protect the species. Our vision is for a future in which hawksbill turtles return to their former numbers to perform their crucial role in maintaining coral reefs."

Hawksbill turtles from different regions, or even some countries, are genetically distinct, and their DNA signatures can be used to identify different nesting areas. The new test will allow scientists and marine conservationists to identify which where tortoiseshell products have come from and pinpoint hawksbill turtle populations to allow for targeted conservation efforts.

The next step in the project is to build a more comprehensive genetic database of all hawksbill rookeries across Asia Pacific to help identify what populations there are in different locations to protect those most at risk from poaching. This kind of information is limited or currently unavailable and will provide vital information for wildlife managers and law enforcement to act on.

“This vital work is only possible through extensive partnerships with scientists, governments, universities, and communities living at the remote nesting sites around Asia Pacific. Their contributions will help play a key role in saving the species from extinction,” said Christine Madden Hof, Marine Species Project Manager WWF-Australia.

WWF-Australia announced the DNA test breakthrough at the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES CoP18) in Geneva, Switzerland last month.

CITES CoP saw further wins in the fight to protect hawksbills from illegal trade. Thanks to decisions made at the CoP, parties are now urged to work together to improve monitoring, detection and law enforcement activities relating to the illegal hawksbill turtle trade. This includes sampling wild turtle populations and seized shell products.

Learn more about Royal Caribbean’s partnership with WWF and their work to end the illegal turtle trade [here](#).

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About Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd.

Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. (NYSE: RCL) is a global cruise vacation company that controls and operates four global brands: Royal Caribbean International, Celebrity Cruises, Azamara and Silversea Cruises. We are also a 50 percent joint venture owner of the German brand TUI Cruises and a 49 percent shareholder in the Spanish brand Pullmantur Cruceros. Together, these brands operate a combined total of 63 ships with an additional 13 on order as of June 30, 2019. They operate diverse itineraries around the world that call on all seven continents. Additional information can be found on www.rclcorporate.com.

RCL Cruises offers three cruise brands in Australia and New Zealand: Royal Caribbean International, Celebrity Cruises and Azamara. In the 2019/2020 cruise season, Royal Caribbean International celebrates three years as NTIA’s Best Domestic and International Cruise Operator bringing a fleet of three incredible ships to the region, including Australia’s largest and most technologically advanced cruise ship, US\$1 billion Ovation of the Seas, Radiance of the Seas and the newly amplified Voyager of the Seas, all sailing from Sydney. Australia’s highest rated cruise ship, Celebrity Solstice, marks her eighth local season out of Sydney while Azamara’s boutique Azamara Journey will return for her fifth season exploring the best of the region. RCL Cruises Ltd Australasia commenced operation in 2008 as the Australian arm of global cruise company, Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd.

About WWF

WWF is one of the world's largest and most respected independent conservation organizations, with over 5 million supporters and a global network active in over 100

countries. WWF's mission is to stop the degradation of the earth's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by conserving the world's biological diversity, ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable, and promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption.