



## NOMINATION APPLICATION FORM

### Section 1: Applicant Details:

**Name:** George Lewis Shillinger

**Date:** 22/11/2024 09:17:24

**Email address:** george@upwell.org

**Nominated position:** Board of Directors (3 x Positions)

**Professional affiliations:** Upwell Turtles, Executive Director and Co-Founder  
MigraMar, Founding Board member/Treasurer  
Serve on the IUCN Marine Turtle Specialist Group  
Member of LAUDOPO and ICAPO

**Country of residence:** United States of America

**Geographic area of work:** Global

### Section 2: Applicant Response:

**How would you describe your work with sea turtles?**

Sea turtle conservation non-profit founder and director  
Lead investigator  
Conservation planner  
Educator

Fundraiser

**How many years have you worked with sea turtles?**

I've worked with sea turtles for 23 years.

**Which Annual Sea Turtle Symposia, or Annual Workshops have you attended?**

42nd Annual Sea Turtle Symposium (Phuket, Thailand, 2024)  
41st Annual Sea Turtle Symposium (Cartagena, Colombia, 2023)  
40th Annual Symposium (Virtual and Perth, Australia, 2022)  
39th Annual Symposium (Charleston, USA, 2019)  
38th Annual Symposium (Kobe, Japan, 2018)  
36th Annual Symposium (Lima, Peru, 2016)  
35th Annual Symposium (Dalaman, Turkey, 2015)  
34th Annual Symposium (New Orleans, USA, 2014)  
31st Annual Symposium (San Diego, USA, 2011)  
30th Annual Symposium (Goa, India, 2010)  
29th Annual Symposium (Brisbane, Australia, 2009)  
28th Annual Symposium (Loreto, Mexico, 2008)  
26th Annual Symposium (Crete, Greece, 2006)  
24th Annual Symposium (San Jose, Costa Rica, 2004)

**Have you been involved with any Symposium activities?**

- I've served as a Co-Chair for the following sessions: In-Water Biology and Conservation, Management and Policy, and Education, Outreach, and Advocacy during several previous symposia.
- I've assisted with judging student presentations at various conferences.
- Regularly attend regional symposia (e.g. RETOMALA, LAUDOPO, RASTOMA, Asia, Oceania/Pacific) and specialist groups (IUCN Marine Turtle Specialist Group) meetings.
- I've assisted with judging student presentations at previous conferences.
- As a peripheral effort, Upwell Turtles will be hosting the 3rd Biennial West Coast Sea Turtle Symposium (WCSTS) in Monterey, California during November 2026. This symposium will draw from lessons learned and best practices established by the ISTS.

**What would you like the Nominating Committee, Board of Directors, and membership to know about you as a candidate for your nominated position? In**

**what ways would you like to contribute to the Symposium/ International Sea Turtle Society?**

I am committed to elevating the scope and impact of the Symposium/ International Sea Turtle Society within and beyond our existing community of stakeholders to further sea turtle research and conservation objectives. I hope to assist with identifying and generating resources to support the Symposium/ International Sea Turtle Society, through private and public funding sources, cause-related marketing and corporate partnerships, and in-kind contributions. I will work to increase engagement and participation of early career researchers and conservationists worldwide and will assist with developing scientific programs and expanding participation from sea turtle research and conservation community

**How do you envision using the Symposium to advance sea turtle biology and promote conservation?**

I will work to increase the scope and impact of the Symposium/ International Sea Turtle Society within and beyond our community of stakeholders to address sea turtle research gaps and conservation priorities and will leverage the profile and visibility of the Symposium as a vehicle for increasing awareness among stakeholders and decision makers about sea turtle conservation and management needs. I would like to help to develop and convene task forces of topical experts to provide advice or expertise on specific sea turtle conservation issues. We have the great opportunity to leverage the Symposium's reach and visibility to generate resources that will support and sustain the International Sea Turtle Society by expanding its membership, increasing its visibility and efficacy, and catalyzing research efforts in the context of conservation priorities and management needs.

**Why is the ISTS as an organization important to you, professionally and personally? What is your vision for the ISTS over the next 5 to 10 years?**

I have been involved with the ISTS for over twenty years and have developed many close and meaningful friendships and professional relationships within the ISTS community throughout my career. The ISTS has served as an amazing repository of sea turtle knowledge for me, and as a wonderful and congenial place to meet and connect with like-minded sea turtle researchers and conservationists. The ISTS is an umbrella organization, involving networks of sea turtle researchers and conservation practitioners. As such, it provides a necessary and appropriate global context for examining the myriad shared challenges facing sea turtle populations worldwide and for exploring potential opportunities to counter threats and advance the recovery and conservation of imperiled sea turtle populations.

My vision is to increase the scope and impact of the Symposium/ International Sea Turtle Society and its work to increase the field of knowledge about sea turtle biology and conservation and to achieve its vision of “insuring globally robust populations of sea turtles fulfilling their ecological roles within a healthy environment, in harmonious coexistence with all Peoples.” I would like to leverage the profile and visibility of the Symposium to increase awareness among stakeholders and decision makers about sea turtle conservation and management needs and to promote actions for achieving these objectives. By expanding the Symposium’s reach and visibility, I hope to generate increased resources for supporting and sustaining the International Sea Turtle Society and the Symposium for years to come.

**Please include a 250-word bio**

Dr. Shillinger is the Executive Director, co-founder and lead scientist for Upwell Turtles. He is also a founding board member and Treasurer for MigraMar. Dr. Shillinger develops scientific partnerships and leverages data to set conservation priorities, build support in key constituencies and advance protections for turtles at sea.

George has worked in international environmental conservation since 1986, and has extensive expertise using satellite and acoustic tags, remotely-sensed environmental datasets, and fisheries datasets, to track, interpret, and predict the movements and behaviors of sea turtles and other pelagic predators, including billfish, sharks, and tuna.

As a co-founder of the first-ever Great Turtle Race in 2007, he used satellite-tracking data to raise global awareness for critically endangered East Pacific leatherbacks. George also launched Upwell Turtles’ “Lost Years Initiative” which endeavors to refine the development of novel electronic tags for deployment on early-stage sea turtles, with the aim of addressing knowledge gaps in sea turtle ecology and conservation biology.

Through his role with Upwell, George has developed numerous international research partnerships on various themes (e.g. electronic tracking, in-water monitoring, population and species distribution modeling, health and body condition, biotelemetry, bycatch assessment and mitigation, and efforts aimed at recovery of highly imperiled sea turtle populations.

George holds a PhD in Marine Biology and an MS in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology from Stanford University, an MBA from the Yale University School of Management and a

BA in the Biological Basis of Behavior from the University of Pennsylvania.

**Photo:**

[https://drive.google.com/open?id=1a063LuLVb6SrV\\_zuzVWWy6hoUbXppMD1](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1a063LuLVb6SrV_zuzVWWy6hoUbXppMD1)

## **Section 3: Declaration**

**Circle your response to the below statements:**

**I am a current member of ISTS** Yes

**I have read and understand the ISTS by-laws and constitution** Yes

**I have read and understand the terms of reference for the position which I am nominating for:** Yes

**For Board of Directors nominees, I understand that the Annual Board Retreat is usually in the 3rd week of August:** Yes

**For Board of Directors nominees: Please read the following statement and add your initials below to confirm you understand the workload involved:**

***The Board is a working Board. All members of the Board are expected to carry the workload, share the responsibility of assigned tasks, and respond to written communications – this can typically be 40+ hours per year in addition to the Board meeting at the Symposium and the Board Retreat. If a Board member does not maintain their ISTS membership and demonstrate a high level of commitment to the ISTS as described in the Board members' TORs, they will be asked to resign from the Board. High level of commitment is defined as a Board member physically attending a minimum of three mid year retreats during their 4-year Board term, attending online Board meetings consistently, serving annually on multiple Committees, completing assigned tasks, and being responsive to online communications and requests.***

***The 2025 Board retreat is 10th to 15th August 2025 in Washington DC.***

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