



Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles United States Annual Report 2015

IAC Annual Report General Instructions

Annex IV of the Convention text states that each Contracting Party shall hand in an Annual Report. To complete this Annual Report, Focal Points should consult with various stakeholders involved in sea turtle issues. If you have any questions regarding this Annual Report, please write to the PT Secretariat at secretario@iacseaturtle.org

Please note that the date to submit this Annual Report is **September 15th of 2015**.

Part I (General Information)

Please fill out the following tables. Add additional rows if necessary.

a. Focal Point

Institution	National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration/National Marine Fisheries Service
Name	Alexis T. Gutierrez
Date Annual Report submitted	13 September 2015

b. Agency or Institution responsible for preparing this report

Name of Agency or Institution	National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration/National Marine Fisheries Service
Name of the person responsible for completing this report	Alexis T. Gutierrez, Manjula Tiwari
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c. Others who participated in the preparation of this report

Name	Agency or Institution	E-mail
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Part II (Policy and Management)



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a. General description of activities carried out for the protection and conservation of sea turtles

In accordance with Articles IX and XVIII of the text of the Convention, each Party shall establish monitoring programs, policies and plans for implementation at a national level for the protection and conservation of sea turtles and their habitat.

As a result, the Party shall report on the action plans, management plan or other types of instruments, describing their location, the species considered and the actions implemented by governmental, non-governmental and private institutions related to sea turtles.

In addition to the above, please fill out the following tables and explain the level of progress in the comments column.

	YES/NO/ In Progress	Comments
Does your country have a national plan of action in accordance with Article XVIII?	Yes	All of the FWS/NMFS recovery plans for sea turtles can be found at http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/recovery/plans.htm#turtles
Does your country have policies and programs at local and regional levels in accordance with Article XVIII?	Yes	
Does your country have monitoring programs in accordance with Article IX?	Yes	

b. National legislation and international instruments related to sea turtles adopted in the preceding year

Describe any national regulations, international agreements and other legal instruments adopted during the preceding year (April 30, 2014-April 30, 2015) related to sea turtles and/or relevant activities. Provide a reference and attach the digital file for the legislation and its corresponding number. The laws adopting the international legislation should be included, when they exist.

The following regulatory actions have occurred between April 30, 2014-April 30, 2015:

February 9, 2015 – Amendment of Virginia pound net regulations



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This regulation requires the use of modified pound net leaders in off-shore Virginia pound nets year round to reduce sea turtles and bottlenose dolphin entanglement. More details can be found at <https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2015/02/09/2015-02607/taking-of-marine-mammals-incident-to-commercial-fishing-operations-bottlenose-dolphin-take>

March 19, 2015 – Annual Determination to Implement the Sea Turtle Observer Requirement

This regulation identifies U.S. fisheries operating within the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone that are requirement to take observers upon NOAA Fisheries’ request to monitor for sea turtle bycatch. More information can be found at <https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2015/03/19/2015-06341/2015-annual-determination-to-implement-the-sea-turtle-observer-requirement>

March 23, 2015 – Proposed Rule to List 11 Distinct Population Segments of Green Sea Turtles as Threatened or Endangered under the U.S. Endangered Species Act

This proposed regulation removes the range-wide listing and lists eight distinct population segments as threatened and three as endangered. More information can be found at <https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2015/03/23/2015-06136/endangered-and-threatened-species-identification-and-proposed-listing-of-eleven-distinct-population>

April 15, 2015 – Final Rule to align the Atlantic sea scallop deflector dredge requirements and the area for the sea turtle chain mat

This final rule adjusts the season and area regulations for the Atlantic sea scallop deflector dredge and sea turtle chain mat to make them consistent. The conservation benefit of both bycatch reduction devices is maintained while reducing the regulatory complexity of differing seasons and areas.

More information can be found at <https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2015/04/21/2015-09199/fisheries-of-the-northeastern-united-states-atlantic-sea-scallop-fishery-and-northeast-multispecies>

National Legislation		
Type and name of legal instrument (No.)	Description (Range of application)	Sanctions(s) Imposed
Endangered Species Act	Global	Prohibition of take of listed species unless exempted under Section 7 and Section 10 in U.S. waters
International Instruments		
Treaty, Convention, Agreements, Memorandum of Understanding		Year signed and/or ratified



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Indian Ocean Southeast Asian Marine Turtle MOU	2001

Note: If this is the first time a country is submitting this information, please include all pertinent national legislation and international instruments currently in force.

c. _ Actions for compliance with national and international legislation

c.1 IAC Resolutions

Fill in the following tables for each of the IAC Resolutions listed below. In the case that a Resolution does not apply to your country, please mark the box RESOLUTION DOES NOT APPLY, and if a specific question does not apply, please mark the column DOES NOT APPLY. If you need more space to describe these actions, please attach additional pages and note the resolution and question number to which you are responding.

Resolution CIT-COP7-2015-R2: Conservation of the Eastern Pacific Leatherback Turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*)

ACCORDING TO RESOLUTION CIT-COP7-2015-R2, REPORT WHETHER YOUR COUNTRY:

			RESOLUTION DOES NOT APPLY	
IS COMPLYING WITH THE FOLLOWING:	YES	NO	DESCRIBE ACTION (*)	DOES NOT APPLY
1a) Have you created conservation plans and long-term programs that can reverse the critical situation of the leatherback turtle in the Eastern Pacific?	X		Yes. We have a recovery plan for Pacific leatherbacks that includes Eastern Pacific leatherbacks. Further, we have recently launched the Spotlight Species initiative that highlights East Pacific Leatherbacks. We will also be issuing a five-year action plan for Pacific Leatherbacks at the end of 2015. More information can be found at http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/stories/2015/06/spotlight_pac_leatherback.html http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/species/turtles/leatherback.htm http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/recovery/turtle_leatherback_pacific.pdf	
1b) Are you implementing these conservation plans and monitoring programs?	Yes		Yes, the United States is taking action to minimize interactions with Leatherbacks in domestic fisheries by using gear modifications and, as necessary, time area closures. In addition, we are working closely with several countries in the ETP to try and reduce leatherback interactions trialing illuminated gillnets in coastal fisheries (e.g., Peru and Chile).	
2. Have you taken conservation measures to eliminate poaching of leatherback turtles?	Yes		Trade of sea turtles and their parts is illegal in the United States. The United States has also taken a very proactive approach to address wildlife trafficking for all species. In the spring of 2015, the Obama Administration released a plan to combat wildlife trafficking -- https://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2015/02/11/launching-plan-combat-wildlife-trafficking	



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3. If your country has leatherback turtle nesting beaches in the Eastern Pacific: Have you taken conservation measures to protect the nesting sites and their associated habitats?	N/A		N/A
4. Has your country adopted fishing techniques that reduce incidental capture and mortality of this species?	Yes	With respect to Western Pacific Leatherbacks, the United States taken significant measures to reduce fishery bycatch. The Hawaii shallow-set fishery is managed through 100% observer monitoring and the fishery closes if the annual limit of interaction with leatherbacks is reached. U.S. fishermen are required to use large circle hooks with whole finfish baits in longline fisheries known to interact with Leatherbacks in the Pacific and the Atlantic Ocean, as well as the Gulf of Mexico. Fishers are also provided safe-handling gear to increase turtles' chances of survival post-release. The US has also declared Critical Habitat for leatherback turtles along the US West Coast that can help to further limits anthropogenic impacts to leatherback turtles in the region.	

(*). Specify actions implemented, name of the project or relevant document, location, objective(s), institutions responsible, contact, financial or other support (optional), results (both positive and negative) and duration.

Resolution CIT-COP3-2006 R-1: Hawksbill turtle conservation (*Eretmochelys imbricata*)

ACCORDING TO RESOLUTION CIT-COP3-2006-R1, REPORT WHETHER YOUR COUNTRY:

IS COMPLYING WITH THE FOLLOWING:		RESOLUTION DOES NOT APPLY			DOES NOT APPLY
		YES	NO	DESCRIBE ACTION (*)	
1. Are you strengthening monitoring of the illegal use and trade of hawksbill turtles and their products?	X		Trade of sea turtles and their parts is illegal in the United States. The United States has also taken a very proactive approach to address wildlife trafficking for all species. In the spring of 2015, the Obama Administration released a plan to combat wildlife trafficking -- https://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2015/02/11/launching-plan-combat-wildlife-trafficking		
2. Are you enforcing pertinent hawksbill legislation?	X		Enforcement efforts at the state and national level are ongoing to enforce the ESA.		
3. Are activities being carried out in order to stop illegal trade of hawksbill products?			U.S. enforcement officers work to stop illegal trade of hawksbill products.		
4. Indicate if your country is strengthening the protection	X		Nesting beaches of the southeastern U.S. are a mixture of public and private lands. Public conservation lands include National Wildlife Refuges (NWR), National or State or County Parks, and military installations. In Florida, approximately 40% of nesting beaches have been identified as		



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of important nesting and foraging habitats by declaring protected areas and regulating anthropogenic activities that adversely impact these habitats.				<p>conservation lands; in Georgia, 71%; in South Carolina, 38%; in North Carolina, 47%; and in Alabama, 22%. The two major hawksbill nesting beaches in the U.S. Caribbean, Buck Island Reef National Monument, U.S. Virgin Islands, and Mona Island, Puerto Rico, are protected as a National Park and Commonwealth Protected Area, respectively.</p> <p>The most important leatherback nesting beaches in the U.S. Caribbean are Sandy Point, U.S. Virgin Islands (protected as a National Wildlife Refuge); Brava and Resaca Beaches, Culebra, Puerto Rico (protected as a Commonwealth Protected Area); Vieques Island, Puerto Rico (protected as a National Wildlife Refuge); Fajardo (Northeast Ecological Corridor) on the main island of Puerto Rico (mixed ownership, only partially protected); and Maunabo on the main island of Puerto Rico (beaches are in public domain, but uplands adjacent to the beaches are privately owned with the potential for future development).</p>	
b) Protection of feeding habitats				<p>Critical habitat has been designated for Caribbean hawksbill around Mona Island (Puerto Rico) since 1998. http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/fr63-46693.pdf http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/criticalhabitat/hawksbillturtle.pdf</p>	

(* Specify actions implemented, name of the project or relevant document, location, objective(s), institutions responsible, contact, financial or other support (optional), results (both positive and negative) and duration.

Resolution CIT-COP3-2006-R2: Reduction of the adverse impacts of fisheries on sea turtles

ACCORDING TO RESOLUTION CIT-COP3-2006-R2, REPORT WHETHER YOUR COUNTRY:

IS COMPLYING WITH THE FOLLOWING:	YES	NO	DESCRIBE ACTION (*)	DOES NOT APPLY
Adopted the "Guidelines to Reduce Sea Turtle Mortality induced by fisheries operations", of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), including:				
A. Research and monitoring of adverse impact of fisheries on sea turtles				
• Collect information by fishery	X			
• Observer programs	X		The National Marine Fisheries Service has National Observer Program that is composed of six regional observer programs. Each of the programs can be found at http://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/observer-home/programs/map/index	
• Research on sea turtle/fishery interactions	X		The United States has a very robust program to research bycatch reduction technologies. There are currently bycatch reduction technologies in place in the longline fisheries, otter trawl fisheries and some gillnet fisheries. A summary of some of the recent bycatch reduction projects that were funded can be found at http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/bycatch/bycatch_BREP.htm	
• Information on non-Party vessels	X		The United States has a very robust program to research bycatch reduction technologies. There are currently bycatch reduction technologies in place in the longline fisheries, otter trawl fisheries and some gillnet fisheries. More information	



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			can be found at http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/by_catch/bycatch_BREP.htm	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cooperation with non-Party states to obtain information 	X		The United States works collaboratively with several countries to better understand fisheries interactions with sea turtles. More information on our annual efforts can be found in the following report to the U.S. Congress -- http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/ia/iuu/msra_page/2015noaareptcongress.pdf	
B. Mitigation measures for the following fisheries:				
i. Long-line	X		The United States has sea turtle bycatch mitigation restrictions in all Federal pelagic and deep-set longline fisheries. These regulations can be found at http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/species/turtles/regulations.htm .	
ii. Gillnets	X		The United States has sea turtle bycatch mitigation requirements in many Federally managed gillnet fisheries including the Mid-Atlantic and the California Drift gillnet. Some states have adopted bycatch mitigation reduction requirements in their state fisheries in order to comply with the Endangered Species Act as well. More information on these requirements can be found at http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/species/turtles/regulations.htm http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/permits/permit16230_ncdmf.pdf	
iii. Trawling (e.g., 1. TEDs: specify legally approved TEDs, their dimensions, material, and target species for that fishery, 2. time-area closures: specify geographical area, time of closure and target species for that fishery, 3. tow times and/or 4. other measures)	X		The United States requires TEDs in shrimp otter trawls and summer flounder trawls in certain areas. https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2012/05/21/2012-12014/sea-turtle-conservation-shrimp-and-summer-flounder-trawling-requirements	
iv. Other fishing gear (indicate which one(s))	X		Poundnets and some dredges are also regulated to reduce sea turtle interactions. Please see http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/species/turtles/regulations.htm .	
v. Training programs for fisherman about best practices for safe handling and release of sea turtles incidentally	X		Fishermen operating in the pelagic longline fisheries in the Atlantic or the Pacific must take captains training on safe-handling and release techniques. More information can be found at http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/compliance/workshops/protected_species_workshop/index.html http://www.fpir.noaa.gov/SFD/SFD_psw_index.html	



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caught			
C. Socio-economic considerations			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support socio-economic activities that help mitigate adverse impacts of fisheries on sea turtles 		X	

(*) Specify actions implemented, name of the project or relevant document, location, objective(s), institutions responsible, contact, financial or other support (optional), results (both positive and negative) and duration.

c.2 National and International Mandates

List actions that are being carried out to comply with national and international mandates (Ex: inspections, confiscations, sanctions, etc.)

The United States regularly carries out the mandates of the Endangered Species Act, which prohibits all taking of listed species, unless permitted under the ESA. Through the implementation of regulations we are working to reduce sea turtle incidental capture and mortality in fisheries. The United States regulations can be found at <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/species/turtles/regulations.htm>. Further, the United States evaluates all Federal actions that may affect sea turtles through the Section 7 process of the Endangered Species Act, as well as the environmental review process required by the National Environmental Policy Act.

Both NOAA Fisheries and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have enforcement offices that monitor compliance with existing laws and develop cases against those violating the Endangered Species Act.

d. Application[submission] of exceptions established in the Convention

Describe in detail the exceptions allowed in accordance with article IV, item 3(a,b,d) and Annex IV of the text of the Convention, in accordance to the procedure established by the COP (Doc. CIT-COP5-2011-R2). Attach management program.

Not applicable to the United States

Part III (Research information)

a. Threats

*Indicate threats (Coastal development, incidental capture, direct use, contamination and pathogens, and climate change) by species, with information on the area and activities taken to control them in the following table. Lo = *Lepidochelys olivacea*; Lk = *Lepidochelys kempii*; Dc = *Dermochelys coriacea*; Ei = *Eretmochelys imbricata*; Cc = *Caretta caretta*; Cm = *Chelonia mydas*.*



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Species	Threat(s)		Actions
Lo	<input type="checkbox"/> Coastal development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Incidental capture <input type="checkbox"/> Direct use	<input type="checkbox"/> Contamination <input type="checkbox"/> Pathogens <input type="checkbox"/> Climate change	Through the Endangered Species Act regulations and Section 7 process, the United States works to mitigate the impact of fisheries on sea turtles.
Lk	<input type="checkbox"/> Coastal development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Incidental capture <input type="checkbox"/> Direct use	<input type="checkbox"/> Contamination <input type="checkbox"/> Pathogens <input type="checkbox"/> Climate change	Through the Endangered Species Act regulations and Section 7 process, the United States works to mitigate the impact of fisheries on sea turtles.
Dc	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Coastal development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Incidental capture <input type="checkbox"/> Direct use	<input type="checkbox"/> Contamination <input type="checkbox"/> Pathogens <input type="checkbox"/> Climate change	<p>Coastal Development --</p> <p>Through permit conditions, most direct construction-related impacts are avoided by requiring that non-emergency activities be performed outside of the nesting and hatching season. However, indirect effects also result from the post-construction presence of structures on the beach, and these impacts can only be minimized to the maximum extent practicable. Light management plans have been successfully developed and implemented in most developed coastal counties and communities in Florida to minimize these impacts. Light management plans have also been developed at coastal military installations in Florida. Light pollution issues adjacent to the leatherback nesting beach at Sandy Point, USVI, are still problematic but some efforts have been undertaken to resolve them.</p> <p>Nest protection programs vary but include 100% nest screening at Canaveral National Seashore; raccoon trapping and removal at Merritt Island NWR, Hobe Sound National NWR, and Archie Carr NWR; feral hog control at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station; coyote control in the Florida Panhandle; and mongoose trapping at Sandy Point NWR.</p> <p>Through the Endangered Species Act regulations and Section 7 process, the United States works to mitigate the impact of fisheries on sea turtles.</p>
Ei	<input type="checkbox"/> Coastal development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Incidental capture <input type="checkbox"/> Direct use	<input type="checkbox"/> Contamination <input type="checkbox"/> Pathogens <input type="checkbox"/> Climate change	<p>A fence has been constructed as a barrier to hogs at hawksbill nesting beaches on Mona Island, Puerto Rico. Rat control activities have been undertaken on Buck Island Reef National Monument in the USVI.</p> <p>Through the Endangered Species Act regulations and Section 7 process, the United States works to mitigate the impact of fisheries on sea turtles.</p>
Cm	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Coastal development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Incidental capture <input type="checkbox"/> Direct use	<input type="checkbox"/> Contamination <input type="checkbox"/> Pathogens <input type="checkbox"/> Climate change	Through permit conditions, most direct construction-related impacts are avoided by requiring that non-emergency activities be performed outside of the nesting and hatching season. However, indirect effects also result from the post-construction presence of structures on the beach, and these



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			<p>impacts can only be minimized to the maximum extent practicable. Light management plans have been successfully developed and implemented in most developed coastal counties and communities in Florida to minimize these impacts. Light management plans have also been developed at coastal military installations in Florida.</p> <p>Nest protection programs vary but include 100% nest screening at Canaveral National Seashore; raccoon trapping and removal at Merritt Island NWR, Hobe Sound National NWR, and Archie Carr NWR; and feral hog control at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station.</p> <p>Through the Endangered Species Act regulations and Section 7 process, the United States works to mitigate the impact of fisheries on sea turtles</p>
Cc	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Coastal development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Incidental capture <input type="checkbox"/> Direct use	<input type="checkbox"/> Contamination <input type="checkbox"/> Pathogens <input type="checkbox"/> Climate change	<p>Through permit conditions, most direct construction-related impacts are avoided by requiring that non-emergency activities be performed outside of the nesting and hatching season. However, indirect effects also result from the post-construction presence of structures on the beach, and these impacts can only be minimized to the maximum extent practicable. Light management plans have been successfully developed and implemented in most developed coastal counties and communities in Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina to minimize these impacts. Light management plans have also been developed at coastal military installations in Florida. The major nesting beach in South Carolina, Cape Romain NWR, is a barrier island without major light pollution issues. North Carolina has extensive areas of National Seashores that are protected from development.</p> <p>Nest protection programs vary but include 100% nest screening at Canaveral National Seashore; raccoon trapping and removal at Merritt Island NWR, Hobe Sound National NWR, and Archie Carr NWR; feral hog control at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station and at problem areas in Georgia; and coyote control in the Florida Panhandle.</p> <p>Through the Endangered Species Act regulations and Section 7 process, the United States works to mitigate the impact of fisheries on sea turtles.</p>

b. Research

Describe scientific research that is being carried out in the country relating to sea turtle population assessments including tagging, migration, and genetic studies, as well as those relating to conservation issues including habitat monitoring, fisheries interactions, disease,



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etc. Provide a list of references for the information used in this report and note how to obtain them when needed.

In addition to the above, please fill out the following table on the types of research being carried out in the country and with what specie(s).

Research	Species (Lo, Lk, Cm, Ei, Cc, Dc)
<i>Genetics</i>	<i>All</i>
<i>Tagging</i>	<i>All</i>
<i>Migration</i>	<i>All</i>
<i>Habitat monitoring</i>	<i>All</i>
<i>Fisheries interactions</i>	<i>All</i>
<i>Disease</i>	<i>All</i>

c. Other activities

Include information on: environmental education activities, programs to establish and manage protected areas, and cooperative activities with other Party countries.

From April 30, 2014- April 30, 2015, the United States government engaged in the following cooperative projects with other Party countries –

- **CHILE**

- Characterization of fishing gear that has an impact on the capture of leatherback turtles in artisanal fisheries in Chile. In partnership with the Inter-American Convention for the Conservation and Protection of Sea Turtles (IAC), this project will prepare a description of fishing gear used in artisanal fisheries in Chile and its operations; identify areas of greater interaction between these fisheries and leatherbacks; and train artisanal fishers to identify sea turtle species, to use safe handling and release techniques, and to improve data collection on sea turtle bycatch in gillnet operations. FWS: \$35,200 Leveraged Funds: \$13,698
- Pacifico Laud working with local fishers in central and northern Chile, the contractor shall continue work initiated in 2013, working with NMFS, to design/refine experiments that will test mid-frequency (10 kHz) pingers in the large mesh gillnet fishery targeting swordfish (experimental nets) and compare these with traditional nets (control nets). Using a paired testing methodology, the contractor will test whether the experimental nets reduce marine mammal catch rates. Similarly, the contractor will test use of LEDs in the fishery to determine whether the experimental nets reduce leatherback (and other sea turtle) catch rates. NMFS: \$43, 250



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- **COSTA RICA**

Conservation and research project of leatherback sea turtle nesting at the North Pacific of Costa Rica: Langosta, Nombre de Jesus, Zapotillal, Onda and Real Beaches. In partnership with Fundecodes, this project supports leatherback surveys and nest protection in Las Baulas National Park and on nearby secondary beaches. The East Pacific leatherback is the most critically endangered leatherback population in the world, and Las Baulas National Park hosts the most important remaining nesting populations in Costa Rica. In addition to Playa Langosta in Las Baulas National Park, this project extends nesting surveys and nest protection activities for leatherbacks to the secondary nesting sites of Playa Nombre de Jesus, Zapotilla, Onda and Real. Specific project activities include: training of local and international research assistants and volunteers to help conduct nesting surveys and nest protection activities; improving camp infrastructure; hatchery construction and operation; data collection and analysis; and environmental education and outreach, including local school field trips and a turtle festival. FWS: \$25,945 Leveraged Funds: \$2,624

- **ECUADOR**

Conserving East Pacific green turtles nesting in the Galapagos Archipelago. In partnership with the Charles Darwin Foundation, this project will support efforts to establish an integrated longterm conservation program for East Pacific green turtles at Galapagos National Park. The project will monitor population trends at primary nesting beaches and assess key threats to determine the appropriate management response from the National Park. In addition, this project will implement a community outreach program and field education programs with local school children, and work closely with Galapagos National Park to develop the capacity of the Park to assume greater responsibility for and expansion of the Park's sea turtle conservation program. FWS: \$25,344 Leveraged Funds: \$77,280

- **GUATEMALA**

Strengthening the conservation of sea turtles in Guatemala and assisting CONANP in meeting its commitments under the Inter-American Sea Turtle Convention. In partnership with the nongovernment organization, Asociación Rescate y Conservación de Vida Silvestre, this project will conduct sea turtle nest monitoring surveys at eight index beaches, strengthen hatchery management through capacity building workshops, organize a binational stranding workshop with El Salvador, and work with the Mexican National Commission for Protected Areas (CONANP) and the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles (IAC) to develop a sustainable management plan for olive ridley egg harvest to meet IAC exceptions requirements. FWS: \$23,000 Leveraged Funds: \$21,843

- **MEXICO**



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- Population recovery of black turtle of Michoacan, Mexico. In partnership with the Universidad Michoacana de San Nicolas de Hidalgo, this project will support work with Colola and Maruata communities to conduct conservation programs on the two most important nesting beaches in Mexico for the recovery of the East Pacific green turtle nesting population during the 2013-14 nesting season. FWS: \$23,000 Leveraged Funds: \$25,000
- Conservation and monitoring program of index sea turtle nesting beaches in the Yucatan Peninsula, Mexico. In partnership with Pronatura Peninsula de Yucatan, A.C., this project will conduct night patrols to survey and protect nesting hawksbill turtles along 81 km of nesting beaches at Celestun, El Cuyo and Holbox, which represent about 40% of hawksbill nesting in the Yucatan Peninsula. It will also conduct outreach and education programs with communities adjacent to these nesting beaches. FWS: \$22,000 Leveraged Funds: \$36,250
- Conservation of the Japanese nesting loggerhead turtle: mortality assessment and outreach at the Baja California Sur (BCS) Mexico juvenile foraging area. In partnership with The Ocean Foundation, this project supports daily sea turtle stranding surveys along 43 km of Playa San Lazaro, Baja California Sur throughout May to September and twice weekly during October-April. These baseline surveys in place since 2003 provide a critical element to monitor and assess loggerhead bycatch from fisheries operating within a key foraging ground for the North Pacific loggerhead population. They have been instrumental in alerting the conservation community and government authorities to mass loggerhead mortality events in 2012 and 2013, and bring focus and attention to resolving the serious bycatch problem. FWS: \$23,000 Leveraged Funds: \$45,540
- Transition from egg corrals back to the nesting beach: Evaluation of sex ratios, survival, and predation of hatchling Kemp's ridley sea turtles from arribadas at Rancho Nuevo, Mexico. In partnership with the University of Alabama at Birmingham, this project is designed to assess nest management strategies at the main Kemp's ridley nesting beach of Rancho Nuevo. This project will monitor and evaluate beach and nest temperatures in hatcheries and on the nesting beach; evaluate and compare hatchling sex ratios in hatcheries and in situ nests; evaluate predation of hatchlings from arribada nesting and solitary nesting; research the type and abundance of predators at Rancho Nuevo nesting beach; determine the emergence rate and survival rate to sea of hatchlings from arribada nests and solitary nests; and evaluate hatchling emergence times in hatcheries and in situ. FWS: \$18,989 Leveraged Funds: \$22,300
- Population restoration project for the Kemp's ridley sea turtle, on the coasts of Tamaulipas, Mexico. In partnership with the Gladys Porter Zoo, this award supports the Mexico-U.S. binational Kemp's ridley project by providing three All Terrain Vehicles (ATV's) and parts for



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patrolling and nest protection at key Kemp's ridley nesting beaches in the State of Tamualipas, Mexico. FWS: \$21,800 Leveraged Funds: \$21,800

- Conservation of the leatherback turtle in the Mexican Pacific 2014-2015. In partnership with Kutzari Asociación para el Estudio y Conservación de las Tortugas Marinas, this project operates turtle camps on the four primary leatherback nesting beaches in Mexico to provide nightly patrolling and protection of nesting females and nests, works with local communities to develop support for sea turtle conservation programs, and provides technical and logistical support for secondary leatherback nesting beaches. The East Pacific leatherback is the most critically endangered leatherback population in the world. FWS: \$73,305 Leveraged Funds: \$224,806
 - Population recovery of black turtle of Michoacan, Mexico. In partnership with the Universidad Michoacana de San Nicolas de Hidalgo, this project will support work with Colola and Maruata communities to conduct conservation programs on the two most important nesting beaches in Mexico for recovery of the East Pacific green turtle nesting population during the 2014-15 nesting season. FWS: \$22,000 Leveraged Funds: \$20,000
 - Ocean Discovery working with local fishers in Bahia de los Angeles, Baja California, Mexico, incorporated acoustic deterrent devices (ADDs) into gillnets (experimental nets) and compared these with traditional nets (control nets). Using a paired testing methodology, the contractor will test whether the experimental nets reduce sea turtle catch rates. NMFS: \$34,500
 - Field work in Mexico/ San Diego (US) -based NGO: \$35,000 to Ocean Discovery Institute. To develop bycatch reduction technologies, including electronic monitoring of gillnet fisheries.
 - Mexico (Baja) - \$61,702 to Ocean Discovery Institute for field work in Baja California MX to experimentally test gillnet mitigation measures in coastal gillnet fisheries to reduce sea turtle interactions and quantify effects on fish catch rates with the intent to export beneficial measures to commercial gillnet fisheries. With FY14 funds the project focused efforts on experimentally testing the effects of orange lightsticks on green turtle and target catch rates including non-target fish catch rates. These experiments resulted in a reduction of approximately 50% of turtle catch rates in nets treated with orange LEDs (significant; $p=.01$), with no significant change in target fish catch and a 35% percent reduction in non-target fish bycatch. This NGO has received a multi-yr grant award, and in the future with FY15 funding the project will continue acoustic deterrent trials and begin testing video surveillance monitoring (VMS) to trial different technologies and assess human observer versus technology (VMS) data accuracy.
- **PANAMA**
Hawksbill and leatherback turtle research and population recovery in Panama. In partnership with the Sea Turtle Conservancy, this project will support



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conservation efforts to restore the Chiriqui Beach nesting population of hawksbill turtles, which was historically the largest in the Caribbean. Monitoring activities will also be conducted to improve protection of the largest leatherback nesting population in the Western Caribbean. These efforts will include intensive monitoring and protection of hawksbill and leatherback nesting beaches with community monitors at six sites in Bocas del Toro Province using standardized protocols. In addition, this project will conduct environmental outreach activities and post informational signs about dog nest depredation in local communities. FWS: \$52,600 Leveraged Funds: \$203,375

- **PERU**

- ACOREMA will work to: 1) collect information and samples from stranded and by-caught leatherback turtles in coastal waters of central and northern Peru; 2) continue building a strong cooperative network with volunteer fishermen to report and release leatherback turtles through outreach activities; and 3) develop workshops and meetings with governmental agencies for planning sea turtle's conservation measures in key ports and integrate them into a National Action Plan. NMFS: \$10,000
- ProDelphinus to support field trials of gear mitigation measures proven beneficial under experimental conditions (i.e., results of Baja project described above) in operating gillnet fisheries of Peru to reduce sea turtle interactions and quantify effects of bycatch reduction technologies. With FY14 funds the project worked to: (1) quantify leatherback turtle interactions with small-scale gillnet fisheries in northern Peru using onboard observers, (2) conduct sea turtle bycatch mitigation trials (net illumination using green lightsticks) in small-scale gillnet fisheries, (3) assess leatherback movements using satellite telemetry, (4) collect tissue samples for genetic analysis to further clarify the proportions of individuals from eastern and western Pacific breeding stocks, and (5) raise awareness and encourage self reporting among gillnet fishermen to support the conservation of leatherback turtles. While previous experimental work showed a 65% reduction in turtle bycatch using green lightsticks, the project did not experience a significant reduction in green turtle bycatch in commercial gillnet fishing operations, but that net illumination did significantly reduce the catch of sea lions. Net illumination testing will continue in the future to increase sample size. Two leatherbacks were satellite tracked, and seven leatherback bycatch events were recorded from boats operating from the port of Salaverry, and fishermen in San Jose who participated with the project also self-reported 8 leatherback bycatch events, 7 of which were released alive. NMFS: \$59,730



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Part IV: Annexes

Table 1: Species Present

Place an X in the box when the species listed is present in the oceanographic basins of your country as established in Article III of the text of the Convention. Lo = *Lepidochelys olivacea*; Lk = *Lepidochelys kempii*; Dc = *Dermochelys coriacea*; Ei = *Eretmochelys imbricata*; Cm = *Chelonia mydas*; Cc = *Caretta caretta*.

Species	Pacific Ocean	Atlantic Ocean	Caribbean Sea
Lo	X	X	
Lk		X	
Dc	X	X	X
Ei	X	X	X
Cm	X	X	X
Cc	X	X	X

Table 2: Index nesting sites or beaches for sea turtle conservation

- a. This table is intended to report information on index nesting sites or beaches for each species. For beaches that have multiple species nesting, enter that beach under the list for the primary nesting species. When entering information on nesting site or beaches, information is to be entered for each species independently. Indicate the names of index nesting sites. On a separate sheet of paper, indicate the selection criteria used for identifying the index beach, for example, because it hosts a significant proportion of the overall nesting population within a region or other defined unit or genetic importance.
- b. Nesting season: Indicate the starting and finishing date of the nesting season.
- c. Monitoring period: Indicate the starting and finishing date of monitoring efforts.
- d. Survey frequency: Indicate the frequency with which the surveys are done (daily, weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, among others).
- e. Geographic location: Specify latitude and longitude in decimal degrees.
- f. Extension of beach monitored: Provide the total length (in Kilometers) of the nesting beach.
- g. Declared protection area: Indicate (yes or no) if the area is declared as some type of protected area.
- h. Annual nesting abundance: Provide information on the total number of females and/or clutches or nests deposited at the nesting site or beach in real numbers. Provide the exact count of females based on tagged or uniquely identified individuals. If the exact number of clutches is unknown provide total number of nests.
- i. Information from tagging program: Indicate if there have been any tagging activities at the nesting beach by using the letters of the type of tagging being done: flipper tagging (FT), passive integrated transponder (PIT) tagging, and satellite



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- telemetry (ST) programs. If possible, on a separate sheet or as attached reference provide greater detail about the type of tagging efforts conducted. Also provide satellite telemetry maps or flipper tag recovery information if available.*
- j. Tissue sampling: Indicate if there has been tissue sampling conducted at this site. This includes skin, blood, and other body tissues. On a separate sheet, or as attached references, describe these tissue sampling programs in greater detail. For example, were samples collected for genetic, contaminant, and/or stable isotope studies?*
 - k. Indicate what organization or entity is providing the data.*
 - l. When inserting new rows, please copy and paste the drop down menus when applicable.*



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Spp	Name of Index Nesting Site or Beach	Nesting season		Monitoring period		Survey Frequency	Geographic Location (Lat/Long) in Decimal Degrees				Extension of beach monitored (km)	Declared Protected Area (Yes/No)	Annual Nesting Abundance			Tagging Program (FT, ST, PIT)	Tissue Sampling (Yes/No)	Organization or entity providing data
		Start	Finish	Start	Finish		Latitude	Longitude	Female's Exact Count	Clutches Exact Count			Number of Nests					
Lo												Choose an item.				Choose an item.	Choose an item.	
												Choose an item.				Choose an item.	Choose an item.	
Lk	Texas* (North Padre Island and South Padre Island)	April 1	October 31	April 1	October 31	Daily				112.6	No			103	All of Above	Yes	NPS	
											Choose an item.				Choose an item.	Choose an item.		
Dc	Culebra Island, Puerto Rico	April 1	July 31	April 1	July 31	Daily				2.25	Yes			112	FT	No	PR DRNA	
	Vieques Island, Puerto Rico	April 1	July 31	April 1	July 31	Daily				29.11	Yes			73	None	No	PR DRNA	
Dc	Mainland Puerto Rico (Dorado, Luquillo-Fajardo & Maunabo beaches)	April 1	July 31	April 1	July 31	Daily				28.26	No			1,225	None	No	PR DRNA	



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Dc	Buck Island Reef National Monument, U.S. Virgin Islands Rico	July 1	October 31	July 1	October 31	Daily				1.5	Yes			3	FT and PIT	Yes	NPS
Dc	Sandy Point NWR, U.S. Virgin Islands	February 1	July 31	February 1	July 31	Daily				3	Yes			356	FT and PIT	Yes	NWR
Dc	Florida Index Beaches	March 1	July 31	March 1	July 31	Daily				1327	No			1,604	FT and PIT (in some areas)	Yes (2 beaches)	FWRI
Ei	Vieques Island, Puerto Rico	April 1	July 31	April 1	July 31	Daily	°	°		29.11	Yes			148	None	No	PR DRNA
	Mona Island, Puerto Rico	August 1	December 1	August 1	December 31	Daily	°	°	7		Yes			1,626	None	No	PR DRNA
Ei	Sandy Point NWR, U.S. Virgin Islands	February 1	July 31	February 1	July 31	Daily				3	Yes			87	FT and PIT	Yes	NWR
Ei	Hawaii (MHI)	May 1	October 31	May 1	October 31	Daily				14.4	No			57	None	No	FWS-PIFO
Cm	Vieques Island, Puerto Rico	April 1	July 31	April 1	July 31	Daily	°	°		29.11	Yes			275	None	No	PR-DRNA
	Buck Island	July 1	October 31	July 1	October 31	Daily	°	°		1.5	Yes			49	FT & PIT	Yes	National



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	Reef National Monument, U.S. Virgin Islands		r 31		31											Park	
Cm	Sandy Point NWR, U.S. Virgin Islands	June 1	October 31	June 1	October 31	Daily				3	Yes			577	FT and PIT	No	NWR
Cm	Florida Index Beaches	June 1	September 30	June 1	September 30	Daily				1318	No			5,895	All of above	No	FWRI
Cm	French Frigate Shoals (HI)	May 1	October 31	May 1	October 31	Survey of East Island				29	Yes			1,778	None	No	NMFS PIFSC
Cc	Florida Index Beaches	May 1	August 31	May 1	August 31	Daily		o	o	1318	No			86,870	All of Above	No	FWRI
	Georgia Index Beaches	May 1	August 31	May 1	August 31	Daily		o	o	164	No			1,201	FT	Yes	GA DNR
	South Carolina Index Beaches	May 1	August 31	May 1	August 31	Daily				303	No			2,086	None	No	SC DNR
	North Carolina	May 1	August 31	May 1	August 31	Daily				531	No			546	None	No	NC WC



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Table 3: Important foraging sites for sea turtle conservation

- a. *This table is intended to contain information for foraging sites being studied for each species. For marine habitats that have multiple species present, enter the specific site under the heading for the priority species at that site.*
- b. *Name and geographic location: Provide the name of the site and geographic location in decimal degrees in Lat/Long (one reference point).*
- c. *Area: Indicate the size of the study site (in Kilometers²).*
- d. *Declared protection area: Indicate if the area is declared as some type of protected area.*
- e. *Life stage: Indicate the life stage or stages found in the study area (juvenile, subadult or adult).*
- f. *Information from tagging program: Indicate if there have been any tagging activities at the in-water site by using the letters of the type of tagging being done: flipper tagging (FT), passive integrated transponder (PIT) tagging, and satellite telemetry (ST) programs. If possible, on a separate sheet, or as attached reference provide greater detail about the type of tagging efforts conducted. Also provide satellite telemetry maps or flipper tag recovery information if available.*
- g. *Tissue sampling: Indicate if there has been tissue sampling conducted at this site. This includes skin, blood, and other body tissues. On a separate sheet, or as attached references describe these tissue sampling programs in greater detail. For example, were samples collected for genetic, contaminant, and/or stable isotope studies?*
- h. *Indicate the organization or entity providing the data.*
- i. *When adding new rows, please copy and paste the drop down menus when applicable.*



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Species	Name of the Study Site	Geographic Location (Lat/Long) in Decimal Degrees			Area (Km ²)	Declared Protection Area (Yes/No)	Life Stages (Juvenile, Sub-adult, Adult)	Tagging Program (FT, ST, PIT)	Tissue Sampling (Yes/No)	Organization or entity providing data
		Latitude	Longitude							
Lo			°	°		Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	
			°	°		Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	
Lk			°	°		Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	
			°	°		Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	
Dc			°	°		Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	
			°	°		Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	
Ei			°	°		Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	
			°	°		Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	
Cm			°	°		Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	
			°	°		Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	
Cc			°	°		Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	
			°	°		Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	