

IAC INFORMATIVE BULLETIN

Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of sea turtles (IAC)

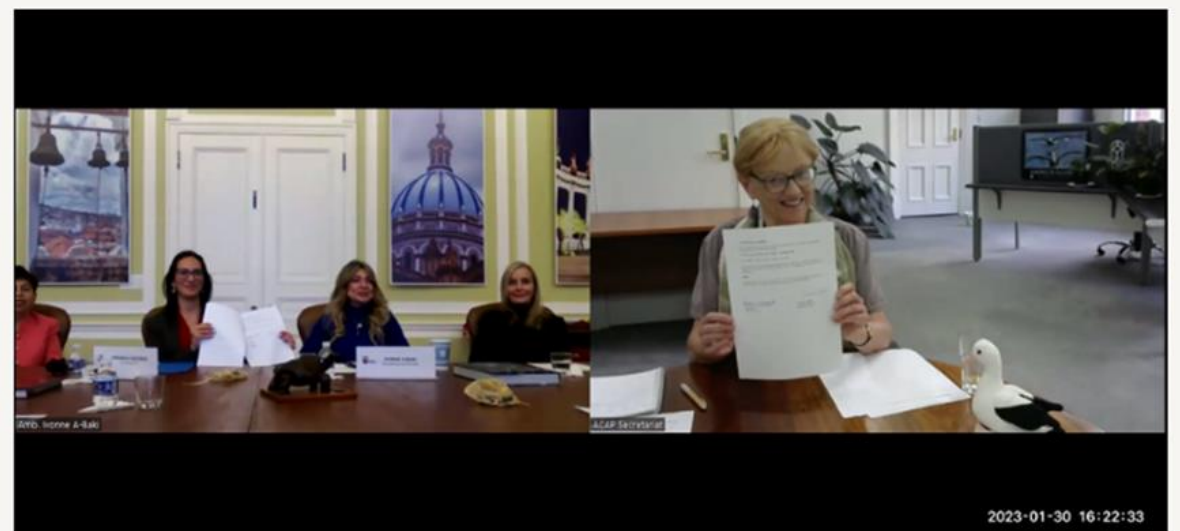
#1 ACAP and the IAC renew their Memorandum of Understanding to advance conservation of albatrosses and petrels, and sea-turtles

The Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP) and the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles (IAC) have renewed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) first signed in December 2016, reaffirming their commitment to cooperate in the conservation of albatrosses and petrels, and sea-turtles.

ACAP Executive Secretary, Dr Christine Bogle, and IAC Executive Secretary, Dr Verónica Cáceres Chamorro, signed the renewal at a hybrid ceremony hosted by the Ambassador of Ecuador, Ms. Ivonne A Baki, at the Embassy of Ecuador in Washington D.C. Ecuador is the current Chair of the IAC Conference of the Parties.

Speaking at the ceremony, Dr Bogle said, “ACAP is particularly pleased to renew this cooperation arrangement with a fellow intergovernmental conservation organization, given our shared objectives. Albatrosses and petrels face similar threats to those of sea turtles, meaning there is considerable scope for cooperation and information sharing.”

Accidental death resulting from interactions with fishing gear, especially during longline-fishing operations is a significant threat to albatrosses and petrels, and sea-turtles.



Right picture: Dr. Cristine Bogle of ACAP from Hobart, Australia presenting the signed MoU IAC-ACAP. Left photo: Dr. Veronica Cáceres Chamorro, IAC Secretary, together with HE Ambassador Ivonne A. Baki and Ecuadorian Goodwill Ambassador for Environmental Issues Mrs. Bo Derek, at the Embassy of Ecuador in Washington, DC on January 30th 2023.

In signing the MOU, the two organizations agreed to: consult, cooperate and collaborate with each other on areas of common interest that are directly or indirectly relevant to the conservation, including the protection and recovery of populations of albatrosses and petrels, and sea turtles.

Remarking on the significance of the renewal in facilitating its conservation objectives, Dr Verónica Cáceres Chamorro said, “The MoU will strengthen scientific research in bycatch mitigation methods. We will learn from our experiences to improve data collection regarding interactions with fisheries, and the implementation of best practices. This will provide valuable support to decision makers in our member countries.”

ACAP’s Advisory Committee Chair, Dr Mike Double commented on the important contribution of IAC and ACAP experts in progressing the conservation objectives of the MOU when participating as observers at each other’s meetings. He further noted scope to cooperate as observers in discussions at relevant meetings of Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs), where bycatch related measures are discussed.



View of the meeting from the Embassy of Ecuador in Washington, DC.

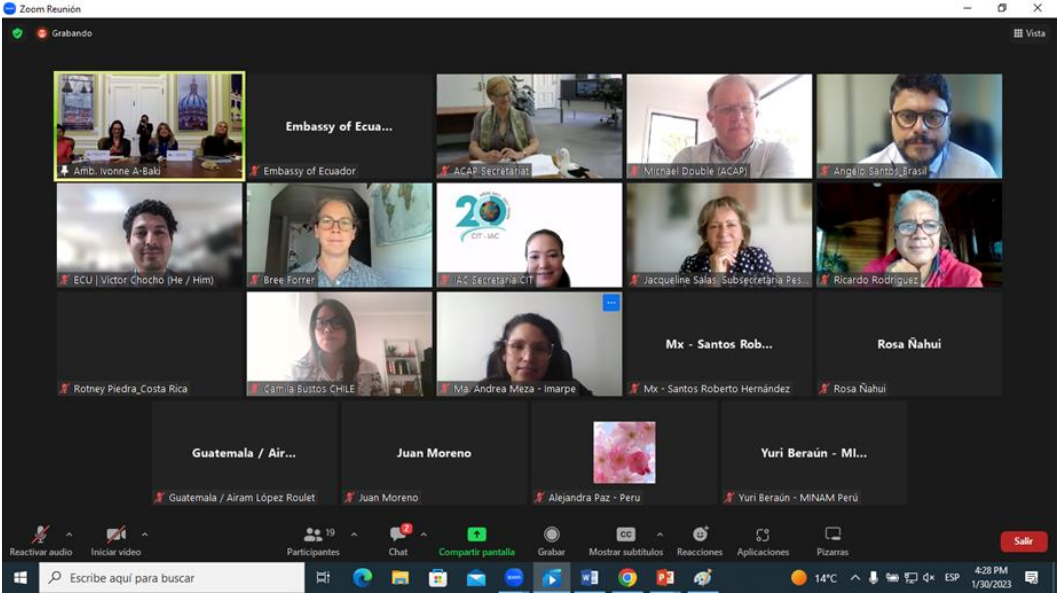
Ecuador’s Minister for the Environment, Mr Gustavo Manrique, who addressed the ceremony via a pre-recorded video, praised IAC and ACAP for their unwavering conservation work, stating, “Both initiatives have been an example of how to articulate consistent and efficient work to fight against one of the most pressing challenges the world faces today: the rapid loss of its biodiversity.”



Virtual participation of the Presidency of the IAC Conference of the Parties HE Gustavo Manrique Miranda, Minister of Environment and Water of Ecuador.

The IAC Secretariat and dignitaries from IAC member countries based in Washington D.C. attended the ceremony in person, whilst ACAP representatives and officials from IAC member countries of Brazil, Chile, Guatemala, Peru, Ecuador, Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, Mexico, and Argentina joined the ceremony via Zoom.

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Picture of virtual participants during the signing of the MOU .



Government of France presents the IAC Secretariat their official letter of intention to become a member to the Sea Turtle Convention.

On February 9th 2023 at the French Consulate in Vancouver, Canada the French Ambassador to Canada Mr. Michel Mirallet presented the letter to IAC Secretary. Mr. Mirallet said how important it is for the Government of France to be active participants with the territories of Martinique, Guadeloupe, French Guiana, Saint Barthelemy, Saint Martin, and Saint Pierre and Miquelon in regional sea turtle conservation in partnership with the IAC member countries. In attendance to the ceremony were representatives of Ministry of Ecological Transition and Cohesion of the Territories del Mar and the French Biodiversity Agency.

This is the result of a ten-year dialogue and negotiation carried out by the IAC Secretary with different governmental agencies in France. We have persevered and we now hope that ratification will happen soon.



Picture 1: Ambassador Michel Mirallet reads official letter from the French Government



Picture 2: Ceremony at French Consultate in Vancouver, Canada. Participants from Ministry of Ecological Transition and Cohesion of the Territories del Mar, the French Biodiversity Agency, and staff from the Consulate.

The participation of France in the IAC will strengthen the IAC mission and objective to save sea turtles from extinction, very soon with more member countries to achieve a bigger impact.

This meeting took place in the framework of the French Delegation and IAC participation at IMPAC-5 Canada.



Picture 3: French Corner en IMPAC-5 Canada

IAC and USFWS convened the workshop “ A strategy framework on the development of solutions to address the key threat of sea turtle trafficking and direct take in the Caribbean, Central and South America”

The Inter-American Convention for Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles (IAC) with support of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Marine Turtle Conservation Fund provided financial, logistical, and technical support to convene a one-day workshop

“A strategy framework on the development of solutions to address the key threat of sea turtle trafficking and direct take in the Caribbean, Central and South America”. The Workshop took place on March 20th 2023 in Cartagena – Colombia in the framework of the 41st International Sea Turtle Symposium (ISTS 41).

The workshop had 48 participants from 20 countries –Peru, Guatemala, Panama, Costa Rica, Mexico, United States, Honduras, Uruguay, Venezuela, Dominican Republic, Belice, Trinidad & Tobago, Jamaica, Colombia, Haiti, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Cuba, Australia and Malasya. The last nine countries are not - Parties to IAC and therefore this workshop was also an effective way for the IAC Secretariat to do outreach to new colleagues that will potentially help support their countries joining the IAC Convention.

Participants to the workshop represented sectors such as: University/Academia, Scientific, Government / Decision makers / Natural Resources Managers, Law enforcement, Non-Governmental Organizations, and coastal community leaders.

The workshop presented 3 main components:

- 1) Success stories in combatting sea turtle trafficking. The session included presentations of examples from the field (case studies). Six (6) speakers presenting experiences from Panama, United States, Costa Rica and Dominican Republic.

Presentations of countries challenges and activities to address illegal traffic– Eight (8) speakers from the following countries: Colombia, Belize, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Peru, Mexico, Trinidad & Tobago and Nicaragua.



Top picture: Groupal picture during the IAC-USFWS workshop in Cartagena, Colombia March 20th, 2023. Photo credit: el taller Marcos Cossio.

Bottom pictures: Brad Nahill from See Turtle and Didier Chacón from WIDECAS, sharing their experiences of combating the illegal trade of sea turtles to all participants from our workshop.

2) Discussion of Situation Model this session was facilitated by USFWS IAC Focal Point Ms. Ann Marie Lauritzen. This summarized the information from the previous presentations and showed a road map to build a strategy to address the threat of traffic and direct take of sea turtles that can be adapted by each country.

- 1) Special Session: Behavioral Change Interventions in Practice for Conservation. Designed and delivered by RARE Center for Behavior and Environment. The session provided a basic understanding of the principles of behavioral science with which to design environmental solutions. Workshop participants worked in teams and were given a booklet (Spanish and English) on applying the tools of behavior-centered design to promote protection and conservation of sea turtles. The content was geared towards those actively working on the issue of trafficking and direct use of sea turtles in Central and South America in an effort to provide knowledge and tools necessary for practitioners and agencies to adopt this behavioral change approach in their programs. After doing a hands-on team work with the guidelines in the booklet each team presented results to the plenary and final thoughts and conclusions of the session.



Pictures of different activities during the special session delivered by RARE.

41st International Sea Turtle Symposium , Cartagena-Colombia from March 18 to 25, 2023.

The 41st International Sea Turtle Symposium was held at the Hilton Hotel in the city of Cartagena, Colombia. During this important international event, 66 countries and 583 registered people participated, where the scientific community, students, non-governmental organizations and government entities interested in the conservation of sea turtles converged.

There were 420 abstracts, 157 oral presentations and 263 posters that updated the sea turtle community on scientific, technological and conservation advances.

Also, ISTS41 convened regional meetings and workshops gathering members from Africa, the Mediterranean, Oceania IOSEA, Retomala, Laud OPO and WIDECASST for their regional meetings; training of more than 650 people in the 12 different workshops that were held within the framework of the symposium, and a beautiful experience to reconnect with the entire turtle community after 2 years of absence due to the COVID pandemic.

The IAC Secretariat had the opportunity to attend this event and participated in some regional meetings within the framework of the symposium.



Top picture: IAC Delegates from United States, Ecuador, Panama, Belize and the IAC Secretary gathering for a photo during the International Symposium on Sea Turtles in Cartagena, Colombia.



Bottom picture: One of the many presentations offered to all attendees at the ISTS41

Meetings and collaboration opportunities for the IAC Secretariat, at the 41st International Sea Turtle Symposium (ISTS41).

The IAC Secretariat while attending ISTS41 participated in meetings seeking opportunities for new collaborations.

IAC Attends WIDECAST Annual Meeting 2023: On Sunday, March 19, 2023, Ms. Verónica Cáceres, IAC Secretary, was invited to be a speaker at the WIDECAST Annual Meeting. The IAC presented a summary of its activities, the new resolutions adopted at the 10th Conference of the Parties and the collaborative opportunities between IAC and WIDECAST members in topics such as: technical advice to prepare Resolutions for IAC COP11 – 2024, WIDECAST members help IAC promoting the Convention to increase member countries, participation of WIDECAST as observers at IAC meetings, WIDECAST Country Coordinators provide information for their countries IAC Annual Reports, contribute with information for IAC Technical Documents.



IAC Secretary attended WIDECAST Annual meeting

Meeting of IAC with Director of Biodiversity Government of Colombia: The IAC Secretary met with the Director of the Department of Biodiversity of the Ministry of the Environment of Colombia, Ms. Ximena Rojas, with the objective of continuing the dialogue between the IAC and the Government of Colombia, taking positive steps towards the future joining of Colombia as a member of the IAC.

Meeting with Organizations of Civil Society:

On March 23, 2023, the IAC held an introductory meeting with representatives of civil society and Red Panatortugas , Sea turtle Conservancy , together with the IAC delegate of Panama and the National Aeronaval Service of Panama. The objective was to facilitate dialogue and collaboration.

The meeting was an opportunity to recognize the valuable work that organizations of civil society carry out in data collection and their important contribution in the country's annual reports that IAC member countries submit to IAC , as well as reiterate the importance of maintaining collaborative work between the government, NGOs and law enforcement authorities to guarantee the security and success of the results in conservation projects at the national level.



IAC Secretary meeting with representatives from Sea Turtle Conservancy, Panatortugas, IAC Delegate and National Aeronaval Service from Panama

Sea Turtle Necropsy material donated by NOAA distributed at ISTS 41

The IAC Secretariat meet with partners attending ISTS Symposium in Cartagena and delivered USB memory sticks with the sea turtle Necropsy Course donated by Dr. Brian Stacey - NOAA, to members of the Laud OPO network, IAC Focal Points, veterinarians and students working directly with veterinarians who are carrying out necropsies, and are linked to universities or are members of a standings network in their countries.

The course can also be viewed online at [Online Sea Turtle Necropsy Lecture Series](https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/marine-life-distress/online-sea-turtle-necropsy-lecture-series) – directly via <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/marine-life-distress/online-sea-turtle-necropsy-lecture-series>



IAC Working Group Meetings

The IAC Working groups in the topics of Fisheries interactions with sea turtles, Exceptions, Northwest Atlantic Leatherback, and IAC-ACAP collaboration have been periodically meeting from the beginning of January 2023 to follow up with their work plans and to prepare documents to be presented at the IAC Consultative Committee and Scientific Committee Meetings of 2023.



IAC UPCOMING MEETINGS

16th Meeting of the Consultative Committee of Experts- April 25-26th, 2023. Virtual Meeting.



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