

IAC BULLETIN

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The IAC PT Secretariat is very grateful for all of the assistance received from numerous authorities, non-governmental organizations and individuals who have supported us over the past year in reaching our objective of sea turtle conservation.

As we reflect on the end of the year, it has been quite an exciting one with the ratification of Chile and Argentina currently presenting its ratification papers. With the ratification of Argentina, the IAC will become 15 Party Countries, a true testament to the strong interest in sea turtle conservation. This bulletin highlights numerous outreach activities, meetings, symposium, among others carried out by Party and Non-Party countries in favor of sea turtle conservation.

With that we would like to wish you a warm holiday season and best wishes for a prosperous new year and look forward to working with you in 2011 as the IAC celebrates its 10th Anniversary.

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IAC REACHES OUT IN 2010 • TRINIDAD • NICARAGUA • COLOMBIA • EL SALVADOR

In May of this year, the IAC began implementing the Marine Turtle Conservation Fund Grant for Capacity Building for the IAC. The goal of this project is to increase the scope of action of the IAC through harmonization of sea turtle conservation and protection efforts that focus on hawksbill turtles (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) at a regional level. Outreach to bring non party countries from the Wider Caribbean together to join regional conservation strategies, as well as to motivate IAC party countries to help in these outreach efforts is key to this project.

Since the project began, the PT Secretary accompanied by Dr. Scott Eckert from the IAC Consultative Committee visited **Trinidad and Tobago** where they meet with the Deputy Director of Fisheries Ms. Luana Martin and Mr. Anthony Ramnarine Director of Forestry Division. During this visit they also talked to the Turtle Village Trust and Nature Seekers that have been working with leatherbacks and the coastal communities with very positive results. In **Nicaragua** the PT Secretary met the vice president of INPESCA, Mr. Danilo Rosales, and different NGOs with Sea Turtle Conservation Programs, working mostly with hawksbills in the Pacific coast (Paso Pacifico, FFI), and participated, along with various members of the IAC Scientific Committee, in the **2nd ICAPO (Eastern Pacific Hawksbill Initiative)** meeting, which was held in Nicaragua in July of 2010. The event highlighted the importance of hawksbill populations in Pacific Coast of Nicaragua and El Salvador and the need for regional research efforts in this region. In **El Salvador**, the PT Secretariat is working with the MAREA program, organizing conference calls and meetings with the government authorities in El Salvador in order to reinstate the internal consultation process to explore the possibility of El Salvador joining the IAC.

In a very productive meeting, Mr. Carlos Castaño Uribe, Vice-Minister of the Environment of **Colombia**, offered his support to help Colombia ratify the IAC given the benefits that it will bring to sea turtle research and conservation initiatives in country and the region. In a meeting with Mr. Argiro Ramirez, from the Fisheries and Aquaculture Unit (INCODER), he also recognized the importance of the regional work and acknowledged the challenges that sea turtle bycatch presents and offered his support to work together for the adherence of Colombia to the IAC. During this visit, Conservation International and WWF offered their support to work with the Colombian government to help with the ratification process. The PT Secretariat also attended the **IV Regional Symposium on Sea Turtles of the South East Pacific** in Medellin, presenting a talk on the role of the Convention in strengthening Regional collaboration. The two day event offered ample time for networking and a variety of presentations on innovative research, focusing on hawksbills, fisheries interactions, among other topics.



IAC, Colombia's Vice Minister of Environment & Conservation Int'l.



IAC & INCODER Fisheries division, Colombia



IAC & Trinidad's Director of Forestry



ICAPO Meeting, Padre Ramos Estuary, Nicaragua



7th MEETING OF THE IAC SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

The 7th Meeting of the IAC Scientific Committee (SC) was held in Panama City, Panama, in September of 2010. We had a very dynamic meeting with 35 participants. Among the agenda items were: to follow up on recommendations from the 6th SC Meeting, analyze proposals from the intersessional working groups on annual reports and gillnets, analyze the 2010 IAC Annual Reports and review the document on reporting IAC exceptions. In summary, the SC made the following agreements and recommendations:

- 1) Approved the new IAC annual report format and instructions (CIT-CC7-2010-Doc.5), which includes follow-up on the IAC Resolution “Adaptation of sea turtle habitats to climate change”. Once the final edits to the New Annual Report Format are approved by the SC, the Committee recommends that the Parties use it to replace the current one by requesting that the topic be placed on the COP5.
- 2) The table CIT-CC6-2009-Doc.5-Rev.1 “State of Knowledge on Gillnet Fisheries with Sea Turtle Interactions”, will be sent to those countries that have not yet submitted it in order to characterize this fishery.
- 3) Comments made on the document CIT-CCE3-2010-Doc.006-Rev.1 “Draft Procedures for Cases Where Exceptions Exist” will be sent to the Consultative Committee.
- 4) Formed a working group to work on the Terms of Reference for the SC (Resolution COP2-2004-R2) in order to make recommendations on any clarifications needed and request that the COP includes this topic on the COP5 agenda.
- 5) Update the 2011-2012 Work Plan of the Scientific Committee (CIT-COP4-2009-Doc.2).
- 6) Prepare a multinational proposal for a regional program based on the hawksbill resolution CIT-COP3-2006 R-1 and current regional initiatives for this species (ICAPO) and include this topic as an agenda item for the next Scientific Committee meeting.
- 7) Comment on the document Manual for Sea Turtle Management and Conservation Techniques in Nesting Beaches in Central America (Basic Proposal).
- 8) Analyze the thirteen 2010 annual reports and prepare a report for COP5.
- 9) Jorge Zuzunaga, delegate of Peru, was elected as the new Chair and René Marquez, delegate of Mexico, as Vice-chair of the SC.
- 10) The SC sent a letter of appreciation for Dr. Jack Frazier for all his hard work and endeavors during his term as Chair of the IAC SC.
- 11) The SC recognized the hard work of the coordinators and participants of the inter-sessional working groups (gillnets and annual reports).

Full report on the 7th Meeting of IAC Scientific Committee is available on our website <http://www.iacseaturtle.org/English/comcien.asp>



MEETINGS IN PROGRESS:

CCE4. The 4th IAC Consultative Committee of Experts meeting is tentatively scheduled to be held in Brazil in February of 2011.

COP 5. The 5th IAC Conference of the Parties is scheduled to be held in Bonaire in June of 2011.

For more information on past and upcoming meetings please check out our website www.iacseaturtle.org

4th Conference on the Western Hemisphere for Migratory Species Initiative

The 4th Conference on Western Hemisphere for Migratory Species (WHMSI IV) Initiative was held in Miami from December 6-10 and made many important achievements, including presentations on regional initiatives relating to migratory species, the formal adoption of the document “Purpose and Organization” and the election of the new Steering Committee. A sub-committee was also formed to work with the IAC PT Secretariat on Coastal Marine issues related to sea turtles. The minutes of this meeting will be available at the beginning of next year. Our colleague Paul Hoejtes gave a presentation on WIDECAS and their projects in the Caribbean region and how they are collaborating with different regional initiatives. The participants elected a steering committee to help guide the deployment of the initiative and maintain communication with those interested between conferences. The committee is made up of six governmental representatives, representing each of the different geographic regions of the Americas – North America, Central America, South America, and the Caribbean as well as representatives from non-governmental conservation organizations and international conventions. The IAC makes up part of this Steering Committee and is encouraging other organizations that work with sea turtles to participate in this Initiative. One of the goals of WHMSI is to support countries in their compliance with any International Conventions they might be party to.



WHMSI IV, Miami 2011



ACTIVITIES WITHIN MOU CPPS- IAC: 2ND WORKSHOP ON STANDARDIZING SEA TURTLE DATA

The 2nd Workshop on standardizing sea turtle data was held in Guayaquil, Ecuador from November 18-20, 2010. The Chair of the IAC Scientific Committee, Mr. Jorge Zuzunaga, participated in this event. The workshop was organized by CPPS, the Smithsonian Institute and Conservation International and was a continuation of last year's standardization workshop. Its objectives were to agree on how to measure the key population parameters and define the basic information required to provide follow up on commitments obtained by the countries in the region under the framework of any International Conventions relating to sea turtle conservation and management they may be party to. The recommendations from this workshop will specifically be used to support the work of the IAC Scientific Committee in their evaluation of the IAC Annual Reports.

GOOD NEWS FOR SEA TURTLES:

The IAC is underway to sign an MOU with the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Convention at the COP5.

International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) –new measures to help reduce sea turtle mortality in ICCAT fisheries and to improve sea turtle bycatch data.

The measures require each country to collect and annually submit information on the interactions of its fleet with sea turtles in ICCAT fisheries; purse seine vessels to avoid encircling sea turtles to the extent practicable, release encircled or entangled sea turtles, including on FADs, when feasible; that pelagic longline fishing vessels carry and use sea turtle dehooking and disentanglement equipment and require that fishermen are trained in turtle safe-handling and release techniques; initiate a process to assess the harm caused to sea turtles by ICCAT fisheries and establish, if necessary, further protective measures. While clearly additional action is needed, this a good step for ICCAT.

KOBE II BYCATCH WORKSHOP

The workshop was held in Brisbane, Australia from June 23-25 and brought together representatives from each of the five tuna Regional Fishery Management Organizations (RFMOs) - ICCAT, WCPFC, IOTC, CCSBT, IATTC -, government officials, invited experts, as well as various IGOs and NGOs. The objectives of the meeting were: to consider ways of improving bycatch assessment; examine methods for tuna-RFMOs to contribute to bycatch education and mitigation; and to explore ways of improving cooperation and coordination across tuna-RFMOs. The discussion concentrated on five categories of bycatch, including sea turtles. In order to facilitate discussion on sea turtle bycatch, the IAC and IOSEA Secretariats prepared a background paper containing recommendations to reduce sea turtle bycatch in tuna fisheries. A clear need was identified for RFMOs to cooperate and collaborate more closely to be more effective and pool their expertise. In order to identify concrete steps forward, a series of recommendations were agreed to, as well as the terms of reference for a 'Bycatch Technical Working Group' made up of one representative from each of the tuna RFMOs to coordinate and support bycatch-related activities within existing RFMO ecosystem/bycatch working groups. The specific recommendations that were agreed at Kobe II were: exhort RFMOs to increase their efforts (i.e. in terms of standard setting, evaluation, assessment, research, enhanced reporting requirements, etc.) and to improve collaboration amongst themselves and with other concerned IGOs and to serve as a reference point for the respective RFMOs to consider and elaborate on in more detail. However, the more fundamental issues of Contracting Party compliance with existing resolutions and recommendations still need to be addressed.

IAC COUNTRIES IN THE SPOTLIGHT • PANAMA • PERU • BELIZE

Panama declares La Marinera Beach, a major *arribada* nesting site for olive ridleys (*Lepidochelys olivacea*), as a Reserve. La Marinera Beach was officially declared a reserve through Resolution N° 092 on August 12th, 2010 and published in the Official Gazette N° 26604-A on August 23rd, 2010.

Panama Celebrates First Sea Turtle Festival & Ocean Conservation – The Authority of Aquatic Resources of Panama (ARAP) participated in the First Scientific, Cultural and Folkloric Sea Turtle Festival, held in Armila, Comarca de Kuna Yala from May 21-23, 2010 with the objective of increasing awareness, environmental education and marine species conservation. A large number of nesting leatherbacks (*Dermochelys coriácea*) makes Armila beach as one of the largest populations of this species in the world. Therefore, at the end of the festival, the participants asked the General Congress of Kuna and ARAP to declare it as a leatherback sanctuary (see photo).

Peru –Peruvian NGO Helps to Reduce Sea Turtle Bycatch in Fisheries (Source: www.eco-index.org/eco-exchange/2010/november_10_01.html)

Belize – Bottom Trawling in Exclusive Economic Zone (Source: www.oceana.org)



Armila Beach, Panama

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