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IAC BULLETIN

PUBLISHED BY THE PRO TEMPORE SECRETARIAT OF THE INTER-AMERICAN CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION OF SEA TURTLES (IAC)

Expropriations Ordered in Las Baulas <u>National Marine</u> Park



After almost 10 years of delays, the Constitutional Chamber of Costa Rica's Supreme Court of Justice ordered the Ministry of Environment and Energy (MINAE) to begin expropriating private lands within Las Baulas National Marine Park (PNMB) in Guanacaste. This decision follows a lawsuit filed by AIDA, the Center for Environmental Law and Natural Resources and Justice for Nature against the National Environmental Technical Secretary (SETENA), the Municipality of Santa Cruz, the Ministry of Finance, and MINAE for allegedly violating the constitutional right to a healthy and ecologically balanced environment by not protecting the Park and its leatherback nesting sites. This is a very important precedent in Costa Rica and the hemisphere, given that tourism development is proceeding at an unprecedented pace throughout the Americas. The Municipality and SETENA had issued construction permits within the park, ignoring the impacts that this development would have on leatherback turtles, a critically endangered species. With this decision, these permits are now invalid. Leatherbacks require particular nesting conditions that can be easily disturbed by the presence of human beings and construction lights. Hence, the development of tourist sites can severely affect the turtles' reproduction, and consequently, their survival. The PNMB was created for this purpose, since it is one of the most important nesting sites for this species in the Eastern Pacific. Costa Rica has an obligation to protect this species, which is considered common patrimony, in addition to being a tourist attraction and thus a valuable economic resource for the country. (www.aidaamericas.org)

The IAC Leatherback Resolution further establishes that Parties having leatherback nesting beaches in the Eastern Pacific must take pertinent conservation measures to protect these sites and their associated habitats.

UPCOMING MEETINGS & WORKSHOPS:

- WHMSI. The Third Conference of the Western Hemisphere Migratory Species Initiative (WHMSI) will take place in Paraguay from July 22nd-25th, 2008. The IAC is coordinating a thematic session on marine turtles in order to identify the necessary actions to be carried out by different sectors involved in sea turtle conservation in the Western Hemisphere.
- The Fifth IAC Scientific Committee Meeting.
 The meeting is scheduled to be held July 29th-August 1st, 2008 in Costa Rica. Agenda items include the analysis of IAC annual reports and incidental capture.
- The Fourth IAC Conference of the Parties. The COP4 will be held from November 4-7, 2008 in Honduras. One of the agenda's priority points is the nomination of the IAC Permanent Secretariat to fulfill the position as of January 1st, 2009. According to Resolution CIT-COPE1-2007-R1, focal points must present their candidates to the COP4 Chair. Each candidate must be proposed and backed by the country nominating him or her.
- IAC Training Workshop on Sea Turtle Conservation and Management Techniques. In order to promote necessary training in sea turtle conservation and management techniques in the Central American region, the IAC will hold a workshop the first week of September of this year in Tortuguero, Costa Rica.
- IAC Regional Hawksbill Workshop Update.
 The Secretariats of both the SPAW Protocol and
 the CITES Convention have joined the IAC in
 organizing this regional meeting for hawksbill
 conservation. A date has not yet been set for the
 workshop.

For more information on these events check out our website www.iacseaturtle.org or e-mail contact@iacseaturtle.org.

The First Eastern Pacific Hawksbill Workshop
will be held this year in El Salvador from July
15th-17th with the objective of updating the biological data on this species in the Eastern Pacific.
Another objective is to begin working on the
Conservation Plan and report on the zoning procedures in marine protected areas. For more
information write to gaos@propeninsula.org.

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Turtle Deaths in Uruguay

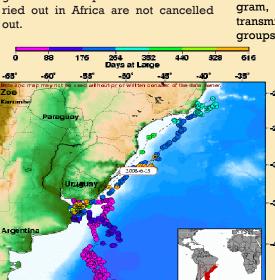
Karumbé

Karumbe's mission is to protected endangered sea turtle populations and their habitat, while promoting sustainable development of fishing communities, and search for alternatives to reduce the impact of fisheries activities on sea turtles. Karumbe uses research and environmental education as their main conservation tools, as well as collaboration with other national and international organizations and institutions.

www.karumbe.org

Zoe, the Leatherback turtle, has been transmitting
her movements for 17
months in the Atlantic
Ocean (Karumbé, 2008)
You may see day to day
maps or adopt one of these
turtles at:
www.seaturtle.org/

During the month of April this year, more than 40 leatherback turtles (Dermochelys coricea) were reported dead in La Plata River, the most important foraging site for this species in Uruguay. Evidence points to trawling and artisanal fisheries activities. Many groups, such as Karumbé, have been working several years to resolve these problems. These turtles come from as far away as Gabon, Africa where they are found nesting. Measures must be taken in order to protect them in their foraging grounds so that protection efforts carried out in Africa are not cancelled out.



GEBCO Topography

Karumbe, in conjunction with other international organizations, is developing a satellite tracking program to determine the routes that the leatherbacks travel from their foraging grounds to nesting sites in order to make appropriate management decisions for their protection. Zoe, a leatherback female, was incidentally captured by an entanglement net in the Rio de la Plata estuary. Local fishermen brought the turtle to the coast and contacted members of the Karumbé project to help save her. Argentina's sea turtle research and conservation program, PRICTMA, brought a satellite transmitter to deploy on Zoe. Both groups tagged the turtle an have been

monitoring her for a total of 17 months, in an important biational effort. However, once again Zoe is in the danger zone. We hope that this time she has more luck. For more information, or to support these efforts, visit www.karumbe.org.



Species Update . . .

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Distance Traveled: 16298 km

Good news for the Hawksbill turtle. El Salvador has reported important nesting and foraging sites for the hawksbill turtle, a critically endangered species. 120 hawksbill nests have been recorded in El Salvador, discovering one of the most important nesting sites in the Eastern Pacific. In this country, this species is found foraging at Los Cobanos Beach and in Bahia de Jiquilisco. It is also found searching for protection in the mangroves of San Sebastian Island. The upcoming workshop "The First Hawksbill Workshop in the Eastern Pacific", which will be

held in El Salvador from July 15th-17th, 2008, will focus on the importance of El Salvador in the conservation and protection of this species. Furthermore, it will incorporate the hawksbill in the Management Plan for Los Cobanos Natural Protected Area, the first Marine Protected Area created by the Government of El Salvador (Source: Fundación Zoológica de El Salvador).

Straight-line Distance: 1177 km

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