

Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles (IAC)



## News Bulletin No. 43

April-December 2021



**THIS YEAR, THE INTER-AMERICAN CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION OF SEA TURTLES (IAC) CELEBRATES ITS 20TH ANNIVERSARY SINCE THE TREATY WAS RATIFIED BY 8 NATIONS IN 2001.**

In 1994, recognizing the regional nature of the threats to sea turtle survival, the nations of the western hemisphere began a collaborative effort to negotiate an agreement for the future of these species, and within the framework of the Latin American Organization for Fisheries Development (OLDEPESCA in Spanish) was born an initiative to negotiate a Convention for the Protection of Sea Turtles.

The Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles (“IAC”) came into force in 2001, with the ratification of eight countries committed to implement coordinated measures between nations, multilateral conservation and protection actions, and to oversight the implementation of a regional agenda with the goal to recover the populations of the six sea turtle species included in the treaty.

Twenty years later and with sixteen countries the IAC has strengthen its actions as an intergovernmental treaty which provides the legal framework for countries in the Americas to take actions in benefit of sea turtles by implementing Resolutions adopted by the countries with the aim to mitigate the threats that sea turtles face. This has resulted in numerous local conservation actions with a regional impact, that IAC Parties annually report to the Convention.

The anniversary logo was created with the support of the Government of Panama, based on the existing Convention logo, and is intended to increase the visibility of the Convention this and the next year within the framework of the 10th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to be held in two parts, the virtual COP10-I, 2021 on June 30th, 2021, and the COP10-II in Panama in 2022.

The IAC Secretariat recognizes the work of the IAC Parties, the Scientific and Consultative Committee, the organizations that IAC has Memorandum of Understanding with, the scientific community, NGO’s, and the fishing sector which efforts have been critical to achieve the goals of the IAC in two decades. We thank and appreciate their commitment with the IAC’s goals, to benefit the conservation of sea turtle’s populations shared by the IAC countries in the decades to come!

*Verónica Cáceres Chamorro*  
IAC Secretary

THE SOUTH PACIFIC PERMANENT COMMISSION (CPPS) AND THE IAC CELEBRATED SEA TURTLES

# Sea turtles are ambassadors of the ocean, and they connect us.

The IAC and the CPPS join forces and reiterate their commitment to their conservation.



*Eretmochelys imbricata*  
Latin American Sea Turtles (LAST) Costa Rica



## MONTH IN JUNE 2021

On the occasion of world sea turtle day on June 16<sup>th</sup> and within the framework of their memorandum of understanding, the South Pacific Permanent Commission (CPPS in Spanish) and the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles celebrated sea turtle month in June 2021.

The CPPS Regional Southeastern Pacific Action Plan Technical Coordination and the IAC Secretariat organized the activi-

ties scheduled, including a series of talks on actions to record climate change impact on sea turtles; the conservation of the leatherback in the Southeastern Pacific; management and governance for sea turtle conservation; and community participation in sea turtle handling and release. Other outreach material and posts in social media were shared, as well. The talks are available on the CPPS [Facebook](#) page. This collaboration shows the commitment of the CPPS and the IAC, member countries to joint efforts for sea turtle conservation in the Americas.

## The IAC celebrates its 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and World Sea Turtle Day together with CPPS Action Plan for the Conservation of the Marine Environment with the Workshop “Actions to Record the Impact of Climate Change on Sea Turtles”

To celebrate World Sea Turtle Day on June 16, 2021, the IAC and the South Pacific Permanent Commission Action Plan for the Conservation of the Marine Environment organized the Workshop “Actions to Record the Impact of Climate Change on Sea Turtles”. This is within the framework of the IAC Resolution [“Adaptation of sea turtle habitats to climate change”](#) which is a call to “strengthen, identify, and implement corrective measures relating to adaptation to climate change within management plans, regulatory plans, and protection and conservation programs for sea turtles and their habitat.”

The workshop highlighted actions implemented by the IAC countries to

monitor environmental parameters such as the impact of temperature on the incubation and the hatchlings sex determination in nesting beaches.

The IAC Scientific Committee Working Group on Climate Change advises the countries participating in a pilot project designed to monitor the impacts of climate change on nesting beaches, and have produced two technical documents [“Mitigation strategies to reduce the impact of climate change on nesting beaches”](#) and another one to monitor temperature.

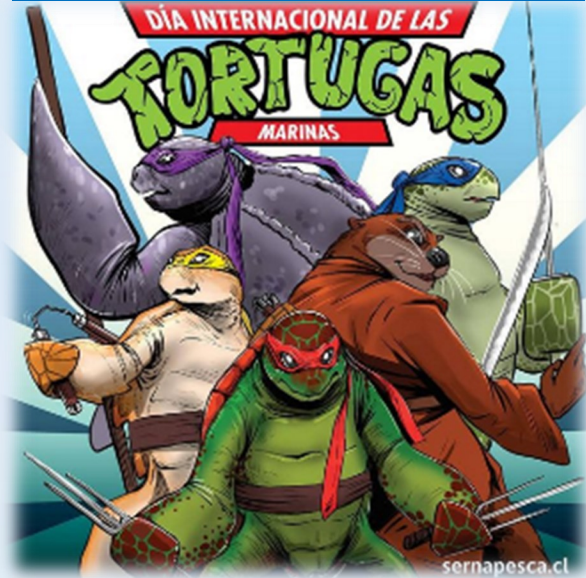
The workshop main talks presented by Dr. Jeffrey Seminoff, M.Sc. Marcela Sanchez, and Dr. Maria del Pilar San-

tidrian, presented research conducted in the United States, Mexico, and Costa Rica, respectively.

The IAC Climate Change Working group designed the workshop to share their work and collect recommendations for the document on Best Practices to Monitor Sand Temperature on Index Beaches, that is available on the IAC website [www.iacseaturtle.org](http://www.iacseaturtle.org). We thank the contributions from the workshop participants to improve this document.

WORLD SEA TURTLE DAY CELEBRATION IN THE IAC COUNTRIES

Chile



Dominican Republic



Panama

A vertical poster for an event. At the top, it says 'ES HOY, ES HOY...' with 'I Liberación Abierta al público' below it. The poster features logos for 'Playa Moín Centro Recreacional', 'APM TERMINALS', 'LAST', and 'República de Panamá'. The text reads: 'Les damos la bienvenida al Proyecto de Conservación de Tortugas Marinas en Playa Moín'. It also includes contact information: 'Reservaciones (+506)8995-5810 con Krizia Cantón' and 'Cupos limitados debido al aforo'. The bottom of the poster has illustrations of sea turtles and coral.

16 de junio de 2021  
Día Mundial de las  
**Tortugas  
Marinas**



   **@MiAmbientePMA**  
@IAC\_SeaTurtles @ComisionPermanentedelPacíficoSur

Costa Rica



Ecuador

## 8<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP FOR OUTREACH TO COUNTRIES WITHIN THE RANGE OF THE NORTHWEST ATLANTIC LEATHERBACK (*DERMOCHELYS CORIACEA*) IN OCEANS DAY (JUNE 8)

The 8<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Working Group for outreach to countries in the range of the Northwest Atlantic leatherback was held in World Ocean's Day, on June 8, 2021. The group includes representatives from WWF, WIDECAS, SeaLife Law Canada, the French Guiana Sea Turtle Network, and the IAC Secretariat.

This group has met every two months for the last year and a half to coordinate sea turtle conservation actions with countries that are not members of the IAC such as Canada, France, Suriname, Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago, and so that eventually, can join the Convention. On Ocean's Day, 2021, we recognize the efforts and dedication of this group committed with the protection of sea turtles and the oceans they inhabit.

Within the achievements of the group, is the document prepared by representatives of WWF-Canada and Sea Life Law ["Northwest Atlantic Leatherback Turtles \(\*Dermochelys coriacea\*\): A Summary of Current Conservation Status, Challenges, and Opportunities"](#) available on the IAC website.



Picture IAC

World Oceans Day  
June 8



## THE TENTH CONFERENCE OF PARTIES (COP10) IN THE 20<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE INTER-AMERICAN CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION OF SEA TURTLES (2001-2021)

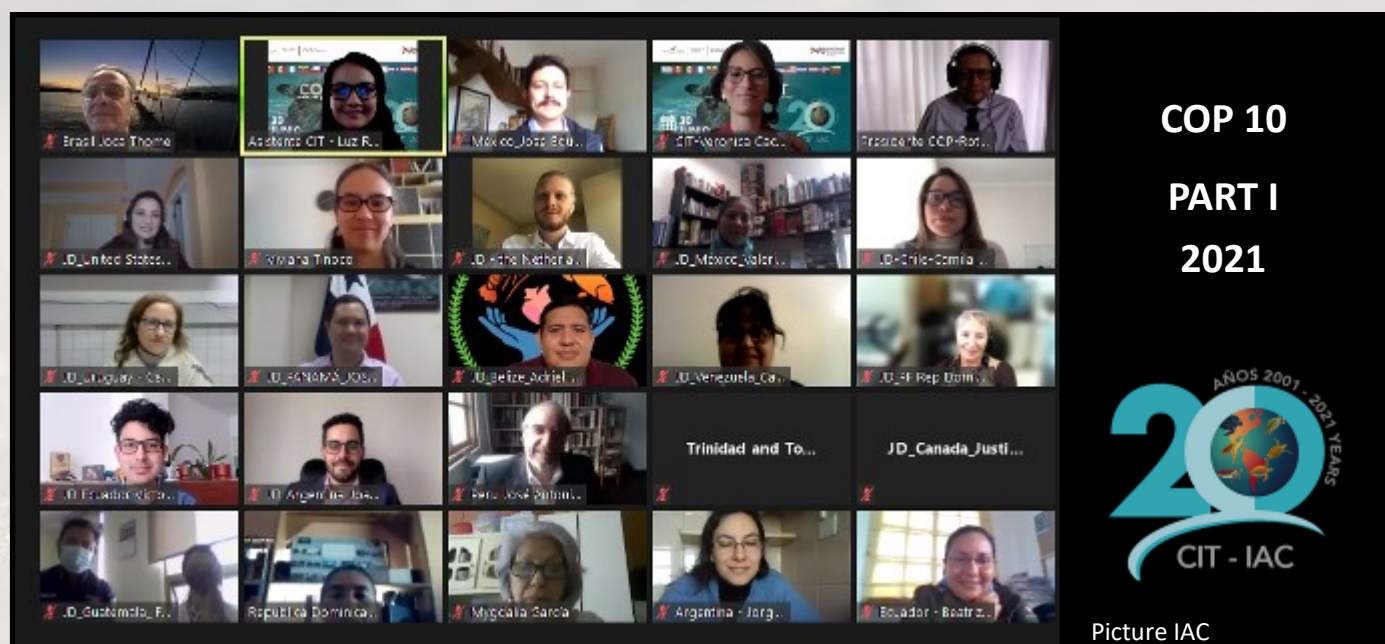
Representatives from fifteen of the sixteen countries of the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles (IAC) met virtually on June 30, 2021, for their first part of the 10th Conference of Parties (COP10-I) on the 20th anniversary of the Convention.

Sixty (60) delegates from Argentina, Belize, Brazil, the Caribbean Netherlands, Chile, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, Peru, the United States, Uruguay, and Venezuela, and observers from the governments of Canada and Trinidad and Tobago attended the meeting.

In the opening remarks, the COP10 Chair, and Costa Rica's Focal Point, Mr. Rotney Piedra Chacón, high-

lighted that although the IAC has made great progress in the conservation of sea turtles across the region in the last 20 years, which has been possible thanks to the efforts and commitment of each of the countries and their strategic partners. Mr. Piedra said "There are still great challenges, including stabilizing sea turtle populations; solving administrative issues of the IAC; and maintaining the engagement with countries that are not IAC members through diplomatic channels, to urge them to consider acceding to the Convention."

The IAC Secretary, Ms. Verónica Cáceres, presented the activities carried out by IAC Parties



to comply with the Resolutions that guide their actions, which include the resolutions for the [conservation of the Northwest Atlantic leatherback, the Eastern Pacific leatherback, the hawksbill, the loggerhead, adaptation of sea turtle habitats to climate change, reduction of the adverse impacts of fisheries](#), and the exceptions for subsistence in [Costa Rica, Guatemala, and Panama](#).

COP10.I approved updates to the resolutions on the

IAC finances and the Secretariat. COP10-I agreed to remove the *Pro Tempore* modifier from the Secretariat title, which will hereafter be the IAC Secretariat, and the location of IAC Secretariat office was extended to continue to be hosted at the US Fish and Wildlife Service HQ in Virginia.

The second part of the COP10 –II is planned to be held in person in June 2022 in Panama.

# 13<sup>th</sup> Hawksbill Turtle Field Monitoring Coiba Island (Panama, Pacific)

563 captures and 433 recaptures, close to 1000 individuals sampled



## Sea Turtle Hatcheries Improvement in Isla Cañas (Panama)



## National Campaign for Sea Turtle Protection and Conservation (Panama)

**Campaña Nacional de Protección y Conservación de Tortugas Marinas**

**Infracción directa**

Decreto Ejecutivo N°5 del 1 de febrero de 2017. Tenencia o posesión, para fines comerciales y/o de consumo, de productos o subproductos de tortugas marinas (huevos, carne, productos confeccionados de carey, entre otros), violando las disposiciones vigentes.

**MULTA B./2,000.00**

Denuncia o reporta a la línea gratuita **311**

REPÚBLICA DE PANAMÁ MINISTERIO DE AMBIENTE

**CAMPAÑA NACIONAL DE PROTECCIÓN Y CONSERVACIÓN DE TORTUGAS MARINAS**

**ZONA DE ANIDACIÓN DE TORTUGAS MARINAS**

Las tortugas marinas son animales ancestrales, que sirven preferentemente los ser vitales en los ecosistemas del mundo. En estas épocas del año, las hembras gravídas, cubren tierra firme para excavar y depositar sus huevos en las arenas cubiertas de las playas de anidación. El proceso de anidación puede ser afectado por diversas factores por ejemplo, la deforestación, las luces, la extracción de arena, los caminos y la construcción, el ruido, las actividades recreativas, entre otras, que afectan a las actividades reproductivas.

Las tortugas marinas juegan un papel muy importante en el mundo marino. Entre otras cosas ayudan a mantener la diversidad de especies en las áreas de coral, son además indicadores de la salud de los ecosistemas. Son más fáciles de estudiar en las playas de anidación que en el mar, por lo que se conocen muy poco sobre sus poblaciones de distribución fuera del ámbito de anidación, de su abundancia relativa y comportamientos.

**¿Qué hacer si usted se encuentra una tortuga marina?**

Si usted se encuentra en la playa y observa una hembra anidando, un nido, tortugas recién nacidas y/o alguna tortuga muerta, siga las siguientes instrucciones:

**TORTUGA ANIDANDO**

- No hacer ruido, evitar caminar sobre ella.
- Mantenerse a distancia y evitar tocar la tortuga, ni tocar el nido.
- No hacer fotografías ni videos, ni usar flash.
- No hacer ruido ni hablar fuerte.
- No hacer ruido ni hablar fuerte.
- No hacer ruido ni hablar fuerte.

**TORTUGA RECIÉN NACIDAS / NIDOS**

- Si se encuentran tortugas recién nacidas o nidos, no tocarlos ni moverlos.
- Si se encuentran tortugas recién nacidas o nidos, no tocarlos ni moverlos.
- Si se encuentran tortugas recién nacidas o nidos, no tocarlos ni moverlos.

**OSD INFRACCIONES**

- Infracción de la Ley de Protección y Conservación de las Tortugas Marinas.
- Infracción de la Ley de Protección y Conservación de las Tortugas Marinas.
- Infracción de la Ley de Protección y Conservación de las Tortugas Marinas.

**TORTUGAS ENFERMAS O MUERTAS**

- Si se encuentran tortugas enfermas o muertas, no tocarlas ni moverlas.
- Si se encuentran tortugas enfermas o muertas, no tocarlas ni moverlas.
- Si se encuentran tortugas enfermas o muertas, no tocarlas ni moverlas.

**REPORTA A LA LÍNEA GRATUITA 311**

REPÚBLICA DE PANAMÁ MINISTERIO DE AMBIENTE

## HAWKSBILL MONITORING IN GOLFO DULCE (COSTA RICA, PACIFIC)



Images of hawksbill turtles (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) in Golfo Dulce, Costa Rica

“It is difficult to find male sea turtle during this kind of monitoring as they are scarce, and this one the first one captured in 2021. Given their rarity, it is difficult to determine the number of males because most of the available information is for females in nesting beaches”

Didiher Chacón – Delegate from Costa Rica to the IAC Scientific Committee.





## PROTECTION OF LEATHERBACK TURTLES NESTS IN MOIN (COSTA RICA, CARIBBEAN)



Between 2015 and 2020 the Moin Beach Sea Turtle Conservation Project has released 78 000 hatchlings of *Dermochelys coriacea* in the Costa Rican Caribbean. In 2021, the project has protected 38, 000 eggs, with a potential of releasing 25, 000 hatchlings.



ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND PROTECTION OF NESTS IN PUERTO CABUYAL (ECUADOR)



Protection activities conducted by a group of children from Puerto Cabuyal, a small fishing community in the coast of Manabi (Ecuador).



### New Marine Reserve in Manabí—Ecuador Marine Reserve Puerto Cabuyal-Punta San Clemente

The Ministry of Environment in Ecuador announced on November 26th 2021 the creation of a new Marine Reserve Puerto Cabuyal-Punta San Clemente. The reserve is 130.427 ha from Punta Ballena to Punta San Clemente in Sucre. It is a very diverse area rich in different ecosystems coral reef, and sea turtle nesting beaches. Ecuador has eight Marine reserves.

The local community proposed the idea for this reserve to the local authorities as they noticed the detrimental impact of industrial fisheries in this area. This is the result of a process involving many stakeholders with a team including Ministry of Environment, CI- Ecuador, INABIO among others.

The new Marine Reserve aims to protect and conserve the biodiversity and increase the income and benefits of the artisanal fisheries in the area.

## RECOMMENDED PUBLICATIONS

1. Seminoff, J. A., Komoroske, L. M., Amorocho, D., Arauz, R., Chacón Chaverrí, D., de Paz, N., Dutton, P., Donoso, M., Heidemeyer, M., Hoeffler, G., Todd Jones, T., Kelez, S., Lemons, G., Rodríguez-Barón, J., Sampson, L., Santos Baca, L., Steiner, T., Vejar Rubio, M., Zárate, P., Zavala-Norzagaray, A & Popp, B. N. (2021). **Large scale patterns of green turtle trophic ecology in the eastern Pacific Ocean.** *Ecosphere*, 12(6), e03479. [Read Here](#)
2. Evans, D. R., Valverde, R. A., Ordoñez, C., & Carthy, R. R. (2021). **Identification of the Gulf of Mexico as an important high use habitat for leatherback turtles from Central America.** *Ecosphere*, 12(8), e03722. [Read here](#)

## PREPARATION OF THE IAC 18th SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE MEETING

### PREPARATION MEETINGS FOR THE 18<sup>TH</sup> SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

The IAC Scientific Committee has six working groups focused on: fisheries, exceptions, nesting index beaches, loggerhead turtles (*Caretta caretta*), leatherback turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*) and Climate Change. The groups are formed according to priorities that require immediate attention, with the participation of the delegates from the Convention's 16 countries according to their interests, expertise, and the distribution of the six species protected by the IAC.

In preparation for the next Scientific Committee meeting (CC18) in November 2021, the working groups have been meeting since July to prepare resolution proposals and recommendations to the IAC Parties to be presented at COP10-II. Six meetings have been held. The members of the WG with the support of the IAC Secretariat, are constantly exchanging information via email and other videoconferences.

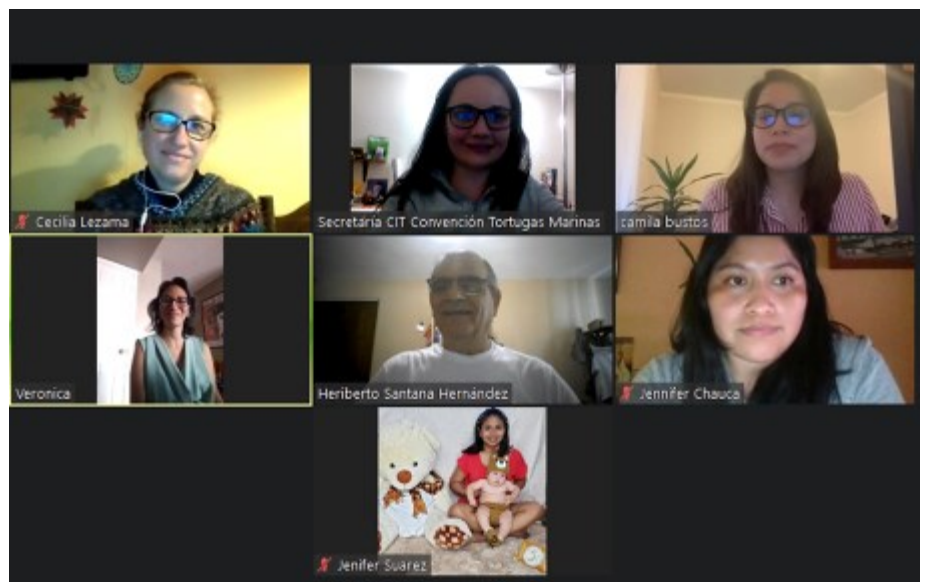


### Working Group *Caretta caretta*



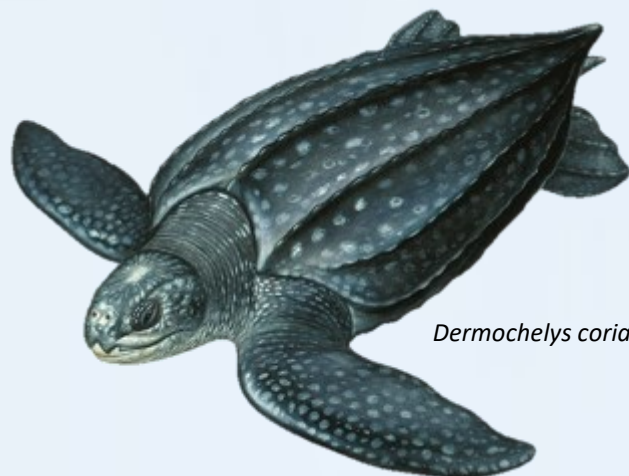
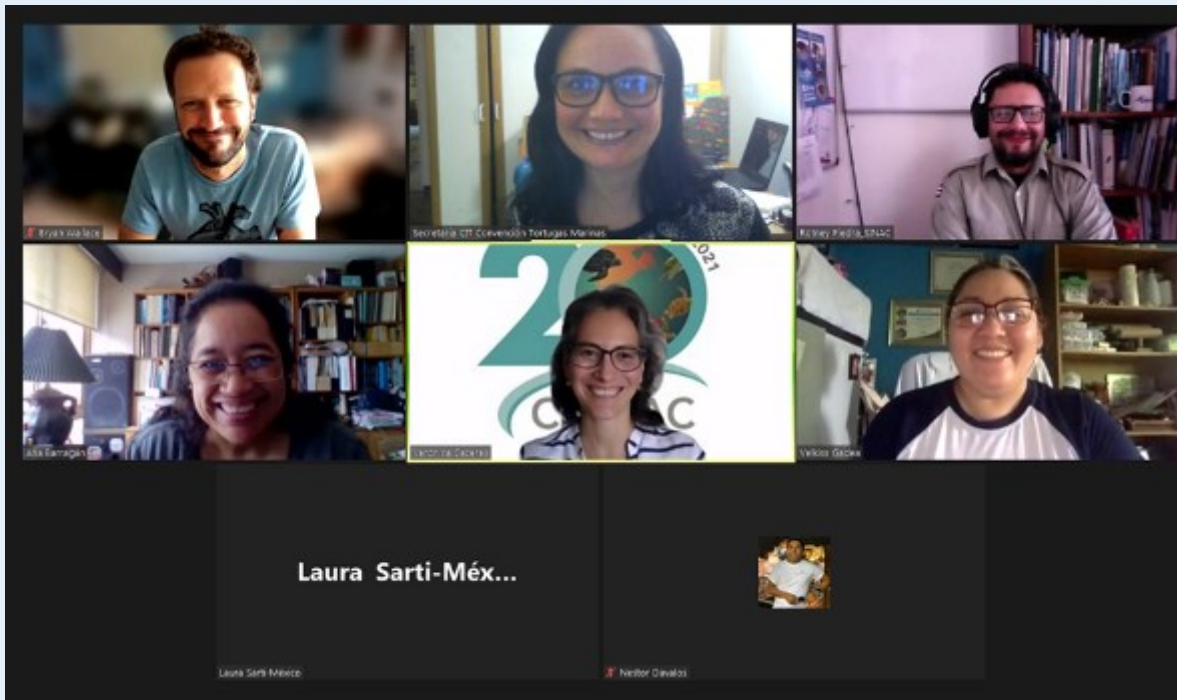
*Caretta caretta*

### Working Group Fisheries August 18



The Eastern Pacific Leatherback Network is in the process of updating its Regional Action Plan to Reverse the Eastern Pacific Leatherback Decline which is 10 years old in 2021. As a member of the Network, the IAC was invited to coordinate the Political Incidence worktable with the participation of the IAC Secretariat, the IAC COP Chair, and other members of the network interested in strengthening the Network incidence in political matters that contribute to the conservation of the critically endangered Eastern Pacific leatherback turtle.

To meet the objective of updating this subject, a survey was conducted to establish the items that required an update and on August 24th the new priority activities that could be included in the Action Plan were discussed in a virtual workshop organized by the IAC Secretariat. This way, the IAC continues supporting the work of this important initiative that during the last 10 years have made enormous efforts to avoid the disappearance of this iconic species in the Pacific Ocean.



*Dermochelys coriacea*



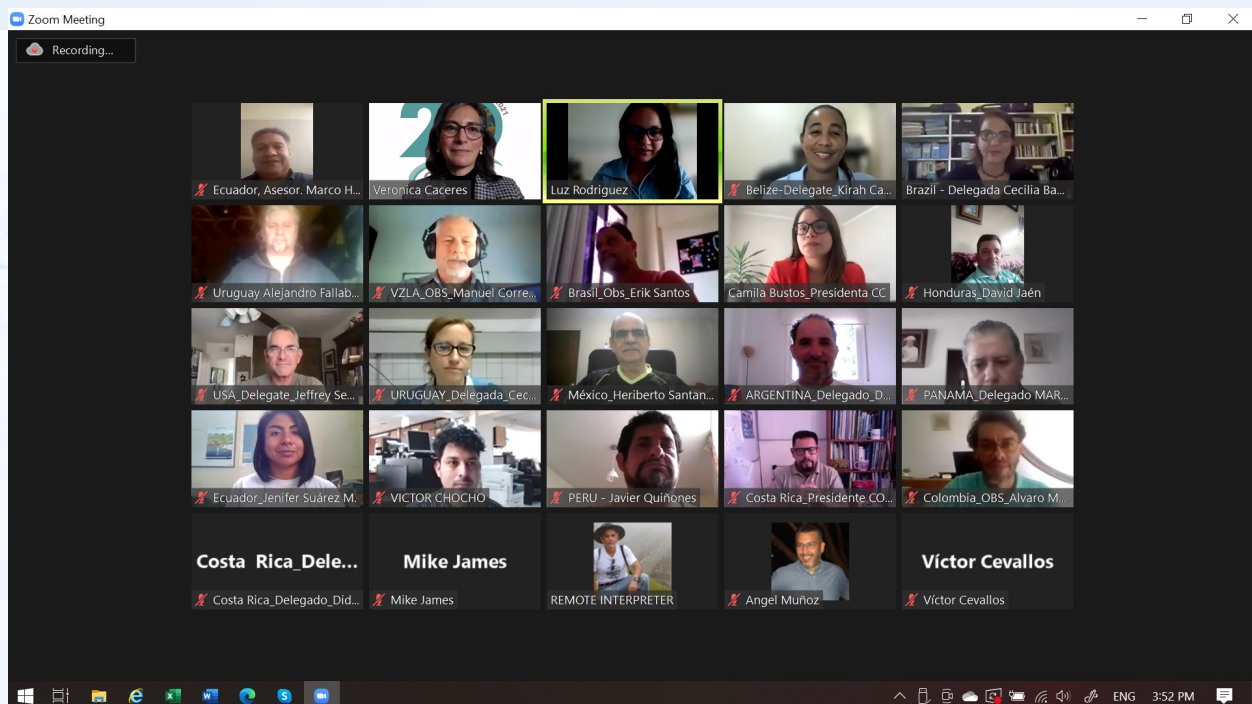
The 18th meeting of the IAC Scientific Committee (SC18) took on November 3-5, 2021. The meeting was attended by delegates from Argentina, Belize, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Peru, the United States, Uruguay and Venezuela; guests from the governments of Canada, and Trinidad and Tobago, the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP), the South Pacific Permanent Commission (CPPS), as well as IAC accredited observers, for a total of 56 participants.

The Scientific Committee Chair Ms. Leslie Camila Bustos with the support of the Vicechair, Dr. Heriberto Santana, delegate from Mexico, facilitated the discussions.

The SC18 discussed the results in the inter-session activities of the six working groups of the SC in the last two years. Among these: new resolution proposals for exceptions in Guatemala, Costa Rica and Panama, a new resolution proposal for sea turtles' interactions with fisheries, and technical documents regarding nesting on index beaches, and guidelines to monitor temperature in nesting beaches to record effects of climate change.

The SC18 acknowledged the progress in obtaining information on the interactions of sea turtles with industrial longline fisheries that will result in a report prepared by the SC delegation from Mexico. The Committee agreed on activities to implement jointly with the Agreement for Conservation of Albatross and Petrels, and the CPPS.

The SC18 approved the technical documents on status of sea turtle nesting in index beaches (2009-2021), and best practices for monitoring sand temperature on nesting index beaches, to help with implementation of the IAC Climate Change and Sea turtles Resolution.



Group Picture : 18th Scientific Committee

## IAC SECRETARIAT PARTICIPATION IN MEETINGS OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

The IAC Secretary attended as observer at the 11th Conference of Parties of the Cartagena Convention – SPAW COP11 in July 2021, and the Advisory Committee Meeting of the Agreement for the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP) in August 2021. The participation supports the implementation of the MoU between Organizations, and allows identifying new opportunities to strengthen the collaboration.



## MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING IAC – ICCAT APPROVED

The IAC Secretariat presented a proposal for a Memorandum of Understanding at the 27<sup>th</sup> Commission Meeting of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) held from November 15-22, 2021. ICCAT member countries agreed to this MoU. The signing will take place during the first months of 2022.



## HAPPY HOLIDAYS AND HEALTHY YEAR 2022 FROM IAC AND LAUD OPO NETWORK

IAC member countries and members of the Eastern Pacific Leatherback Network continue to work together to make sea turtles' wishes come true: healthy, sustainable oceans and a world of peace and health for all families

*Merry Christmas and Happy New Year*  
**2022**  
from

20 ANOS 2001-2021  
CIT - IAC

LAUD OPO  
RED SEA TURTLE CONSERVATION NETWORK

### Contact us

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