

June - December 2017 No. 32

IAC NEWS BULLETIN



**Holiday Greetings and Good
Wishes for a Happy New Year**

**Saludos navideños y nuestros mejores
deseos para un Feliz Año Nuevo**

Secretaría Pro Tempore CIT/IAC

Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles (IAC)
Convención Interamericana para la Protección y Conservación de las Tortugas Marinas (CIT)

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



WELCOME DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

The Dominican Republic is the second largest and most diverse country in the Caribbean. With a coastline of 1600 km, it is surrounded by the Atlantic Ocean in the North and the Caribbean Sea in the South. Five species of sea turtles are found in its 400 km of beaches including leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*), green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*), hawksbill (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), olive ridley (*Lepidochelys olivacea*) and loggerhead (*Caretta caretta*).

Committed to the protection and conservation of sea turtles, the Dominican Republic became the 16th Party to the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles on July 26th, 2017, joining Argentina, Belize, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Caribbean Netherlands, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, México, Panama, Peru, Uruguay, the United States of America and Venezuela, in their mission to preserve sea turtles in the Americas.



Source: <http://www.godominicanrepublic.com>
<http://beachup.com.do>

**MASSIVE “ARRIBADAS” OF OLIVE RIDLEY IN OSTIONAL, COSTA RICA
SHOWCASED ON BLUE PLANET II**

Costa Rica, December 14th, 2017

The second part of the BBC series about the world’s oceans Blue Planet II, presented by the naturalist **Sir David Attenborough**, includes in its sixth episode the “*arribadas*” of olive ridley turtles *Lepidochelys olivacea* to the National Wildlife Refuge Ostional in Costa Rica.

Sergio Pucci, a Costa Rican photographer, and his team produced the images that will be broadcasted throughout the world, highlighting the wonderful phenomenon that takes place in Ostional.



Sea turtles *Arribada* in the worldwide famous Ostional (Image from BBC video) Source: crhoy.com

Ostional appearance in the series is an opportunity to raise awareness among the viewers, regarding the importance of sea turtle protection with the involvement of coastal communities such as Guanacaste in conservation. Costa Rica Government has a management plan in place in this area to ensure that conservations actions are sustainable. The series will be premiered in Latin America in 2018.

Source: Manuel Sancho (2017) *Costa Rica figura en episodio de famosa serie sobre los océanos.*
<http://bit.ly/crhoyBPII> December 14th, 2017

FIRST RECORD OF A LEATHERBACK TURTLE IN LAS PALMAS BEACH, ECUADOR

Ecuador, December 11th, 2017

On December 11th, the first record of a leatherback turtle *Dermochelys coriacea* in Las Palmas Beach, Esmeraldas Province, Ecuador, was announced by the Ministry of Environment – Esmeraldas Provincial Direction twitter account. Park rangers have begun monitoring the nest. A strategy to continue monitoring the area has been planned with the support of the students from Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador in Esmeraldas (PUCESE in Spanish), staff from the Wildlife and Mangroves Estuary Refuge Río Esmeraldas and the Marine and Coastal Undersecretariat of the Ministry of Environment of Ecuador, according to the information provided in the twitter account @MAEEsmeraldas.

The IAC is pleased to receive this information, as it provides hope given the critical situation of East Pacific leatherback turtles.



Créditos: @MAEEsmeraldas



Créditos: @MAEEsmeraldas

IAC SECRETARY *PRO TEMPORE* MEETS WITH GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES IN CHILE TO FOLLOW UP ON THE ACTIVITIES FOR THE CONSERVATION OF THE EAST PACIFIC LEATHERBACK TURTLE

Chile, December 4, 2017

The IAC delegation consisting of the Secretary *PT*, Ms. Veronica Caceres, and Chile delegates to the IAC Consultative Committee, Ms. Patricia Zarate, and Mr. Jorge Azocar from the Fisheries Development Institute (IFOP in Spanish) carried out meetings with IFOP's Executive Director, Mr. Leonardo Nuñez, and with Chile Undersecretary of Fisheries and Aquaculture, Mr. Pablo Berzaluce on Monday December 4th, 2017.



From left to right. Mr. Javier Rivera – Chief Fisheries Department, Ms. Patricia Zarate – IFOP, Ms. Veronica Caceres – IAC, Mr. Pablo Berzaluce – Undersecretary of Fisheries and Aquaculture, and Mr. Leonardo Sasso - Chief of Office Affairs. Meeting in Santiago. © Mirko Sánchez - SUBPESCA

The progress in the implementation of the IAC objectives was discussed during these meetings, noting that the activities undertaken by of the national sea turtle working group formed in 2011 (after Chile became a member country to IAC) has been instrumental to further the implementation of the IAC in Chile. Activities carried out by Chile include sea turtle monitoring and data collection in longline fisheries done by the observer program, preparing the national sea turtle action plan, supporting the organization of the IV regional sea turtles symposium in the East Pacific carried out this year in Arica, and negotiations to declare an important sea turtle foraging area in Arica “La Puntilla” as a Marine Reserve to protect the only green sea turtle colony in Chile.



Undersecretariat of Fisheries and Aquaculture Chile © Mirko Sánchez- SUBPESCA

As a result from the meetings, and following up on the implementation of actions under the East Pacific Leatherback Resolution, IFOP will carry out workshops with fishermen on best practices to handle and release sea turtles incidentally caught in longline and gillnet industrial and artisanal fleets to strengthen compliance with the Resolution. The Fisheries Undersecretariat expressed their support by helping to achieve good attendance from the fishing sector. The Fisheries Undersecretariat and IFOP expressed their commitment to continue supporting the national sea turtle working group as they implement the sea turtle conservation measures that have been recommended for Chile under the IAC.



From left to right. Mr. Jorge Azocar – IFOP, Ms. Veronica Caceres– IAC, Mr. Leonardo Nuñez – Executive Director IFOP, and Ms. Patricia Zarate – IFOP. Meeting in Valparaiso. © IAC Secretariat PT

Related News: IFOP. CIT Secretariat highlights Chile's work in sea turtles protection. December 5th, 2017.

IAC SCIENTISTS ATTEND THE VI REGIONAL SEA TURTLE SYMPOSIUM OF THE SOUTHEAST PACIFIC
ARICA, CHILE – November 27th through December 1st, 2017

The VI Regional Sea Turtle Symposium of the Southeast Pacific took place in Arica, Chile from November 27th to December 1st, 2017. The goal of this event was to “Disseminate the outcomes of the scientific and technological sea turtle research, thereby promoting economic, social, cultural, and conservation development in the East Pacific.”

The event was organized by Arturo Prat University, Chile’s National Sea Turtle Working Group, and Arica’s Regional Sea Turtle Working group led by Chile’s Fisheries and Aquaculture Under-secretary. The Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles (IAC) Secretary *PT* attended the event, along with delegates from the IAC Scientific and Consultative Committees from Chile, Peru, the United States and Uruguay.



Delegates to the IAC Scientific and Consultative Committees, and IAC Secretary *PT*

The IAC Scientific Committee delegate from Peru, Dr. Javier Quiñones, presented the “Conservation Actions by Peruvian Fishermen interacting with Leatherback Turtles (*Dermochelys coriacea*) based on the Mexican experience”. This is the result of a project done with the support of IAC Secretariat PT and the Marine Turtle Conservation Fund. It summarizes the exchange of experiences between Peruvian and Mexican fishermen and biologists at an East Pacific Leatherback nesting beach in Mexico. Dr. Quiñones also presented a poster from IMARPE titled “Should I Stay or Should I Go? El Niño and the green turtles in Virrilá Estuary, North Coast of Peru” The Consultative Committee of Experts (CCE) delegate Dr. Bryan Wallace presented the “Status of threats to sea turtles and conservation opportunities in the East Pacific”, and the CCE sectorial delegate Mr. Alejandro Fallabrino presented “New Challenges for Conservation”. The event was an opportunity to exchange knowledge, and build capacity among scientists in this

region; it had the participation of researchers from Chile, Peru, Colombia, Uruguay, USA, Brazil, and Argentina.



Presentation by Dr. Javier Quiñones, IAC Scientific Committee, Peru



Symposium organizers and members of the National Sea Turtle Working Group left. Darío Contreras, Paula Salinas (TORTUMAR), Verónica Cáceres (CIT) and Marco Soto (SUBPESCA)



Presentation by Alejandro Fallabrino delegate to the IAC Consultative Committee

IAC INVITED TO REPORT ON PROGRESS IN THE CONSERVATION
ACTIONS FOR THE EAST PACIFIC LEATHERBACK TURTLE AT
“LAUDOPO WORKSHOP ON BYCATCH”

Arica, Chile – November 29th, 2017

On November 29th, 2017, the members of the East Pacific Leatherback Network (LaudOPO) met at the “LaudOPO Workshop on Bycatch”. Objectives of the workshop included updates of conservation projects, monitoring and the measures for reduction of bycatch, as well as identifying priorities and next steps regarding bycatch in the region. The workshop was held in the framework of the VI Sea Turtle Symposium in Arica.



Participants of LaudOPO workshop on bycatch – Arica, November 29th, 2017 © LaudOPO

The IAC is a member of LaudOPO network and gave a presentation on the progress in the implementation of the **Resolution for the Conservation of the Eastern Pacific Leatherback Turtle**. The presentation included the activities reported by countries in their annual reports and highlighted the country commitments under the Convention. The IAC Scientific Committee delegate Mr. Javier Quiñones presented the results of the project on capacity building, between Peruvian fishermen and Mexican biologists at East Pacific Leatherback index beach in Mexico. The project was led by the IAC Secretary *PT* with the support of the Marine Turtle Conservation Fund, the Government of Mexico and Peru. The IAC Secretary *PT* highlighted the importance of the contributions from LaudOPO scientists to the implementation of the activities of the leatherback resolution in their countries.

Other presentations included monitoring and information on incidental captures of leatherbacks in Chile and Peru carried out by IMARPE, IFOP, ACOREMA, Prodelphinus, and Eco-Oceanica. Finally, the group identified knowledge gaps and priorities for the next steps of the LaudOPO network.

PANAMA HOST THE IAC 14th SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE MEETING (SC14)

Panama City, October 18 – 20, 2017

The Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles 14th Scientific Committee Meeting took place in Panama City on October 18 – 20, 2017, with the support of Panama IAC Focal Point at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The meeting was attended by the delegates from Argentina, Belize, Brazil, Caribbean Netherlands, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Uruguay and the United States, who welcomed the delegate from the new IAC Party, Dominican Republic. The 26 participants included representatives from the Aquatic Resources Authority of Panama (ARAP in Spanish), from the Ministry of Environment Department of Coasts and Sea, and observers from WIDECAST and JustSea Foundation.



Group Photo 14th IAC Scientific Committee Meeting
Panama, October 18- 20, 2017 © CIT

The following results were attained: 1) actions to work together with the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels were agreed; 2) a mechanism to improve the collaboration with the Regional Fisheries Management Organizations; 3) drafted a report to follow up on the compliance with the IAC Resolution for the conservation of the loggerhead turtle; 4) the IAC Annual Report Resolutions forms on Hawksbill and fisheries were updated; 5) forms to report environmental data from nesting beaches were developed; 6) the SC prepared a letter to acknowledge the work of the ICCAT Sub-committee on Ecosystems and Bycatch; and 7) the terms of reference for a study on legal and illegal traffic of hawksbill products in the IAC region were developed to be shared with the CITES Convention Secretariat.

During the Working Groups (WG) sessions, the Exceptions WG drafted guidelines for the regional analysis on the olive ridley (*Lepidochelys olivacea*) population

trend; and the Nesting WG agreed to update the IAC Technical Document on Nesting Areas with the information that the delegates will provide during the next meeting in 2018. Honduras offered to be the host country for the 15th meeting, the date will be decided with the host country.



Scientific Committee Working Group Session – Panama © CIT



IAC PARTICIPATES IN WORKSHOP ON IDENTIFICATION OF HAWKSBILL TURTLE PRODUCTS IN PANAMA

Panama City – October 17th, 2017

In the framework of the capacity building strategy regarding sea turtle conservation, the Ministry of Environment of Panama through their Coastal and Oceans Agency, and with the support of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) convened representatives of judicial and environmental agencies at a “Workshop on hawksbill turtle *Eretmochelys imbricata* products identification, and the country commitments under IAC Convention” carried out on October 17, 2017 in Panama City.



Workshop Participants © Veronica Caceres – CIT

The Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles (IAC) Secretary Pro Tempore, Ms. Veronica Caceres and the Chair of the Scientific Committee, Dr. Diego Albareda, were invited to facilitate the first part of the workshop, and presented the country commitments under IAC Convention, and highlighted the activities carried out with the community of Isla Cañas in the framework of the implementation of the Resolution on Exceptions (CIT-COP6-2013-R1).

The participants learned about the approval of Panama Action Plan for the Protection of Sea Turtles 2017 – 2021. Additionally, there was a review of the current regulations and their implementation in Panama, including a presentation of the first criminal proceeding that resulted in a \$2,000 dollars fine to an individual because of illegal traffic of sea turtle eggs.



Presentation of the first criminal proceeding in Panama due to sea turtle eggs traffic. ©CIT

The second part of the workshop was a training to identify hawksbill products lead by Dr. Didiher Chacon, Costa Rica's IAC Scientific Committee delegate. Mr. Chacon presented different methods to differentiate between plastic, horn and hawksbill shell. The participants participated in a practical session where those methods were used. The workshop concluded with a Q and A session.



Hawksbill products identification © Veronica Caceres - CIT



IAC VISITS “SEA TURTLE CONSERVATION” PROJECT IN PUNTA CHAME, PANAMA

October 19th, 2017

Within the framework of the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles 14th Scientific Committee Meeting in October 18 – 20, 2017, the IAC Secretary Pro Tempore, Ms. Veronica Caceres, the Vice Chair of the IAC Consultative Committee Mr. Joao Thome, and Panama’s delegate to the IAC Scientific Committee, Mr. Marino Abrego, visited the sea turtle conservation project in Punta Chame, located in the Pacific coast of Panama, 100 km from the capital.



Eloisa Carpintero Tortuguia and the IAC representatives in Panama ©Joao Thome

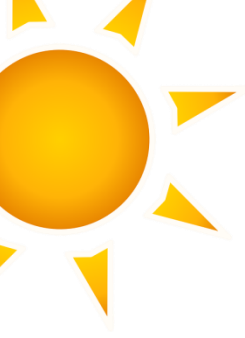
The project began in 2014 with the sponsorship of Banistmo and it is managed by Fundacion Tortuguías directed by Ms. Kerya Hernández. Tortuguías mission is to protect the sea turtle nests and monitors their development in the hatcheries mainly of olive ridley. The project carries out night patrols at nesting beach, nest relocation, and capacity building in the community.

Thanks to the work of a team led by the field biologist Ms. Eloisa Carpintero, who gained experience as an intern at Isla Cañas Index nesting beach, the IAC



IAC representatives in Punta Chame (Panama)
© Joao Thome

delegation witnessed the excellent management of the hatchery. So far for season 2017, there were 170 nests protected already in this location and more were expected. During this visit there was an exchange of experiences on how to manage and monitor sand /nest temperature, this is a significant issue that needs attention in this area, where sand temperature tends to be very high.



IAC SECRETARY *PT* ATTENDED THE 92nd MEETING OF THE INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION (IATTC)

Mexico City, July 24-27, 2017

The Secretary *Pro Tempore* of the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles (IAC), Ms. Veronica Caceres, attended as observed in the 92nd Meeting of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission on July 24 -27, 2017. The IAC provided assistance to its member countries in analyzing the proposal for new text to be added to IATTC-92 F-1 “RESOLUTION TO MITIGATE THE IMPACT OF TUNA FISHING VESSELS ON SEA TURTLES” that included more specific recommendations regarding the use of circle hooks, increasing observers coverage, and other measures to reduce sea turtles bycatch.

This proposal for new text was presented to IATTC Parties and there was no consensus at this meeting. We hope this negotiation can be discussed again in the next opportunity taking into consideration the opinions that IATTC Parties voiced at this meeting.





Group Picture IAC Conference of the Parties Buenos Aires, Argentina

THE EIGHTH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES (COP8) OF THE INTER-AMERICAN CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION OF SEA TURTLES CONCLUDED SUCCESSFULLY IN BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA.

Buenos Aires, Argentina – June 28 – 30, 2017

Between June 28 – 30, 2017, Buenos Aires hosted the delegates from 12 IAC countries (Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Peru, United States of America, Uruguay, and Venezuela), accredited observers from local and international non-governmental organizations (i.e. Foundation Mundo Marino, CONICET-INIDEP, Karumbé, Humane Society International, Center for Biological Diversity y JustSea) and the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP) Executive Secretary.

The Minister of Environment Rabbi Sergio Bergman welcomed the participants expressing good wishes for a productive meeting and a joyful stay in Buenos Aires.



Minister of Environment of Argentina Rabbi Sergio Bergman welcomes the COP8 ©IAC

COP8 updated the existing resolution on Conservation of Hawksbill Turtle by including language to strengthen and increase the effort to eliminate Hawksbill turtle's illegal traffic, and adopted the resolution to continue with the Convention Secretariat *Pro Tempore*. The Leatherback Task Force recommendations based on Resolution CIT-COP7-2015-R2 for the Conservation of the Eastern Pacific Leatherback Turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*) were adopted. IAC Parties drafted a Declaration on the Promotion of the Conservation of Sea Turtles and its relation to the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 69/292 on the "Development of an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on

the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction”.

The Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP) Executive Secretary, Mr. Marco Favero, presented the Memorandum of Understanding recently signed between the IAC and ACAP. Both organizations will work together on matters such as bycatch mitigation in fisheries, promoting better data collection and report on bycatch from RFMOs among others. COP8 received a report from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on the Sustainable Development Goals of Agenda 2030, highlighting Objective 14 to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development, and how the IAC plays an important role in this global effort.

COP8 elected the new sectorial members of the IAC Consultative Committee of Experts that began their appointment on July 2017. Argentina was re-elected President of COP and Guatemala was nominated as Vice-president, moreover, Guatemala kindly offered to host the next Conference of the Parties (COP9).

The IAC Secretary *Pro Tempore* Ms. Veronica Caceres announced the accession of the Dominican Republic as the 16th IAC member country. Peru presented their progress with Mexico and the United States in building capacities in the fishing sector for the conservation of the Eastern Pacific Leatherback turtle. The presentation included a video summarizing the visit of four Peruvian fishermen to the leatherback nesting beach *Barra de la Cruz* (Oaxaca, Mexico) to experience and join conservations efforts that are being carried out by Mexico conservationist and fishermen. IAC Parties agreed on the need to strengthen their work with the help from the foreign affairs ministries and relevant international bodies to encourage the ratification of new countries to the IAC, among those are Canada, Colombia, El Salvador, and Nicaragua.

COP8 was sponsored by the Republic of Argentina through the Nation´s Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship, their support and hospitality lead to a successful meeting.

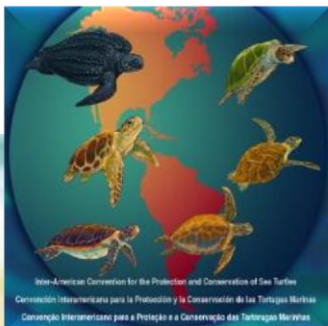


RECOMMENDED

VIDEOS

“Fishermen and the Leatherback”. The video presents the Peruvian fishermen exchange of experience with Mexican leatherback conservationists (See News Bulletin No.30).

“Eastern Pacific Leatherbacks” - Ministry of Environment and Energy of Costa Rica and MarViva.



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