

NEWS BULLETIN

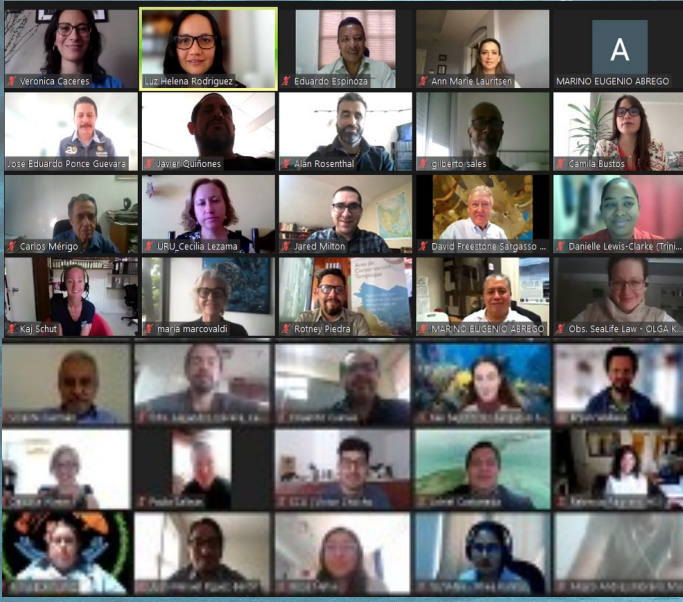
NO. 44 January-April, 2022



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

15TH MEETING OF THE IAC CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS (CCE15)

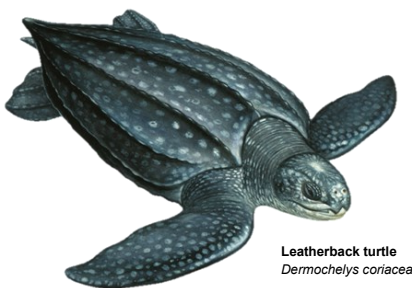
The 15th meeting of the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles Consultative Committee of Experts (CCE15) was held on March 3-4, 2022 via videoconference. The delegates from 14 IAC member countries participated in the meeting representing Argentina, Belize, Brazil, Caribbean Netherlands, Chile, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, Peru, the United States, and Uruguay, as well as the CCE sectorial members, and observers from the Governments of Canada, Trinidad & Tobago, France and Guyana. The delegations from the Executive Secretariats of the Sargasso Sea Commission and the South Pacific Permanent Commission (CPPS) also attended the meeting.



The CCE15 recommended to present to the IAC 10th Conference of Parties, in June 2022, the proposal to modify the Resolution for the Reduction of the Adverse Impacts of Fisheries on Sea Turtles (COP3/2006/R2) and the Resolution for the conservation of the Eastern Pacific Leatherback Turtle CIT-COP7-2015-R2, as well as the proposals for updated Resolutions on exceptions in Costa Rica, Panama, and Guatemala. The Committee also recommended the proposal for a Memorandum of Understanding with the Sargasso Sea Commission for consideration of IAC COP10. Other items that will be presented at COP10 include the analysis of interactions between industrial longlines and sea turtles, and the project implemented by IMARPE in Lambayeque, Peru to monitor the safe handling and release practices of EP leatherbacks incidentally caught with gillnets.

The Consultative Committee updated its work plan including the Artisanal Fisheries working group survey among the CCE members to characterize fisheries interacting with sea turtles, and the final edits to the technical document prepared by the Northwest Atlantic Leatherback Working Group to establish a correlation between, the species' high-use areas, and the areas in its range of distribution that have been declared protected areas important for its conservation. The IAC Legal Working group presented a progress report.

Regarding the IAC collaboration with International Organizations, the preliminary results of the collaboration IAC-IATTC to develop a model on the EP leatherback vulnerability to fisheries were presented. The IAC Secretary, Ms. Veronica Cáceres, announced the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding with the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) after 10 years of negotiations, which will be beneficial to moving forward toward mitigating the impacts of fisheries and protect sea turtles in the Atlantic.



Leatherback turtle
Dermochelys coriacea

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- IAC Secretary, judge at international environmental moot court
- IAC CCE Representative and Secretary, participated in IATTC workshop on circle hooks
- Activities in IAC Countries (Ecuador, Panama and Brazil)

SIGNING OF MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE CONSERVATION OF ATLANTIC TUNAS (IATTC) AND THE INTER-AMERICAN CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION OF SEA TURTLES (IAC)

On March 21, 2022, Ms. Veronica Cáceres, Secretary of the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles (IAC), and Mr. Camille Jean Pierre Manel, Executive Secretary of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that will facilitate the collaboration between these Regional bodies.

The ceremony was held virtually, after both Secretariats exchanged the original version of the document by certified mail. The ceremony was attended by 21 people, including delegates from both ICCAT and the IAC from Brazil, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Mexico, Egypt, Panamá, Honduras, Nicaragua and the IAC and IATTC staff.

The Secretariat's representatives highlighted the importance of the technical exchange between IAC Scientific Committee and ICCAT SCRS in support of the Memorandum objective, cooperation to support the efforts to minimize bycatch and enhance the conservation of sea turtle species within ICCAT's Convention area.

The Chair of the ICCAT Commission, Mr. Ernesto Penas Lado, and the Chair of the IAC COP, Mr. Rotney Piedra Chacón, transmitted their optimism for the benefits of the MoU and their commitment to promote its implementation, that will strengthen scientific information exchange to support the ecosystem approach in ICCAT fisheries, taking in to account the mitigation of interactions with non-target species.



The MoU will provide opportunities for both treaties to further the implementation of their objectives of sustainability and conservation of the marine species they look after and share habitat in the Atlantic Ocean.

PRESENTATION OF THE IAC ACTIVITIES IN THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE WIDER CARIBBEAN SEA TURTLE CONSERVATION NETWORK (WIDECAST)



The Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network (WIDECAST) held its annual meeting in March 23-25, 2022, to evaluate its members national and regional programs and set priorities for the coming year.

On the second day of the virtual event, the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles (IAC) Secretary, Ms. Veronica Cáceres, presented the progress in the implementation of the treaty in the last 20 years, the relevance of the partnership with WIDECAST members to carry out important collaborative work that has resulted in scientific support to adopt resolutions in the IAC.

Dr. Olga Koubrak, IAC accredited observer and WIDECAST member contributed with the preparation of the presentation, describing the process that lead to the adoption of the Resolution for the Conservation of the Northwest Atlantic Leatherback Turtle (CIT-COP9-2019-R2) prompted by the results presented in the WIDECAST Nesting Trend Analysis on this species. Dr. Koubrak is a member of the IAC working group to help outreach to countries within the range of this species, but are no members of the IAC. This working group was formed to help the implementation of this Resolution. This group that includes sever WIDECAST members

produced a technical document on the challenges and opportunities for the conservation of the Northwest Atlantic Leatherback (CIT-CC17-2020-Tec.17).

The WIDECAST meeting was a remarkable opportunity to listen to presentations by the WIDECAST Country Coordinators from IAC countries, and experts from around 20 countries, sharing their inspiring efforts to conserve sea turtles in the Greater Caribbean region, thus contributing to the objectives of the IAC.



IAC SECRETARY PARTICIPATION AS JUDGE AT STETSON UNIVERSITY 26TH INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL MOOT COURT (APRIL 7-9, 2022)

The IAC Secretary, Ms. Veronica Caceres was invited to be one of four judges of the finals of the 26th Stetson University International Moot Court Competition, the largest in the world focused on global environmental issues. This is the second time that IAC is invited to judge the final round.

Protected Areas and Armed Conflict was the fictional case of this year competition, this included coastal development in an endangered sea turtle species nesting area that was threatened by the construction of a hotel and a marina. The Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles (IAC) and the RAMSAR Convention on Wetlands were the key regional treaties that were studied to address the hypothetical- case.

This year the competition welcomed 12 teams from 11 countries, 5 continents, who were the winners of the regionals after competing with students from universities in Africa, East Asia, Central and Eastern Europe, Ireland, Latin America, North America and Southeast Asia. Students from the University of Cebu Law School in the Philippines were the finals winning team.

There is enormous value for the IAC to be included in this competition as talented law students from all over the world are exposed to learn about the treaty, and are inspired to support its implementation within their own countries, and beyond. Law students at the moot court develop expert knowledge of the IAC and bring their best skills to the contest.



Front row - Judges invited to the competition finals, second in the line is Ms. Veronica Caceres, the IAC Secretary.

Back row - The finalists of Stetson University Moot Court Competition. The students from the University of Cebu School in the Philippines, were the winners (left, in grey).

© Photo: Stetson University



Organizers, Judges, and Finalists of the 26th Stetson University World Moot Court Competition

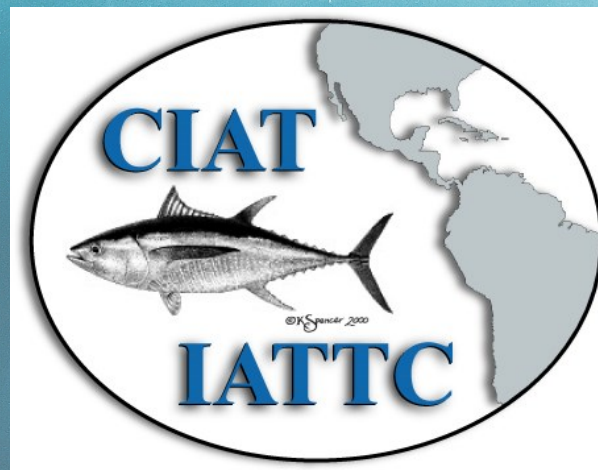
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Following the recommendation in IATTC Resolution C-19-04, approved in July 2019 and entered into force on 1 January 2021, to work with the Bycatch Working Group Chairs of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), in a workshop that was convened to discuss the possible definition of a size of circle hook that could be optimal to reduce sea turtle bycatch in long lines turtles. The 1st Workshop on Circle Hooks was held on March 7-8, 2022. Dr. Bryan Wallace, representative of the IAC Consultative Committee of Experts Scientific Sector provided an expert presentation with a summary the scientific knowledge regarding the different sizes of circle hooks and their effect on sea turtles.

Several experts presented the benefits of using best practices for safe handling and release of incidentally caught sea turtles when they are caught with circle hooks of different sizes. The workshop participants did not decide on a size for circle hook at this time, and it was recommended to continue with the efforts to implement best practices on handling and release of sea turtles incidentally caught.

This IAC participation contributes to the collaborative activities carried out jointly by the IATTC and the IAC, within the framework of their Memorandum of Understanding, to support exchange of scientific knowledge among both entities.



ACTIVITIES IN IAC COUNTRIES

ECUADOR - Galapagos Environmental Education Program teaches kids from Puerto Ayora in Santa Cruz the importance of protecting sea turtles and their nests. Photos: Mr. Eduardo Espinoza - Ecuador's Delegate to the IAC Consultative Committee of Experts and kids participating in the activity.



PANAMA - Sessions of the Population, Environment, and Development Commission continue to bring Bill 164 for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles in Panama to a first debate in the Congress of Panama. Photos: Mr. Marino Abrego—Panama's Delegate to the IAC Consultative and Scientific Committee. Source: Video: Summary of the Population, Environment, and Development Sub-commission.



BOLETIM CENTRO TAMAR — ICMBio-MMA —



BRASIL - TAMAR - ICMBio commemorated the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles with a special edition of their newsletter BOLETIM CENTRO TAMAR in their issue No. 3 of April 2022. The entire report is available at http://www.iacseaturtle.org/docs/tecnicos/BOLETIM_TAMAR-03.pdf

Muito obrigado, Brasil!

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