

**Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of  
Sea Turtles  
Belize City, Belize August 29th – September 1st, 2016**

**CIT-CC13-2016-Doc.7**

**Report on the 13th IAC Scientific Committee Meeting (SC13)**

**1. Welcoming Remarks**

The Thirteenth Meeting (SC13) of the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles Scientific Committee took place in Belize City, Belize at the BW Belize Biltmore Plaza Hotel. The meeting began with the welcome remarks by the delegates of the host country Mr. James Azueta (Ecosystems Management Coordinator) and Mr. Isaias Majil (Belize Focal Point) from Belize Fisheries Department, Dr. Diego Alejandro Albareda – IAC Scientific Committee Chair (SC) and Ms. Veronica Caceres – IAC Secretary *Pro Tempore*.

**2. Introduction to Sea Turtle Conservation Activities in Belize**

Mr. Isaias Majil from Belize Fisheries Department and WIDECAST National Coordinator Ms. Linda Searle presented a summary on the history of the regulations for the protection of sea turtles in Belize, as well as the research and activities in the country. The presentations summary can be found in Annex VII of this document.

**3. Adoption of the agenda, introduction of participants and election of rapporteur.**

The agenda (Annex I) was adopted without modifications. Delegates and advisors from 13 IAC Parties attended the meeting, and representatives from WIDECAST/WCS and WIDECAST/ECOMAR were present as observers (Annex II). The rapporteur was Belize delegate Ms. Adriani Nicholson with the support of the Secretary *Pro Tempore*.

**4. Report of the 12<sup>th</sup> IAC Scientific Committee Meeting Activities.**

Dr. Diego Albareda (Argentina), chair of the Scientific Committee, presented a summary on the implementation of the Committee's 2016 Work Plan including the intersessional activities of the Working Groups (WG) regarding: Interactions with fisheries, Sea Turtle Stranding, Marine Debris, and Loggerhead and Leatherback sea turtles. The United States delegate, Dr. Jeffrey Seminoff, highlighted the importance in the delegates fully filling up the information requested in the IAC Annual Reports, as well as the information for the working groups.

## **5. Report on the Activities of the Secretary *Pro Tempore***

Ms. Veronica Caceres synthesized the activities of the IAC Secretary *Pro Tempore*. In her presentation she highlighted a higher participation of delegates during the virtual meetings that have been conducted with the Consultative Committee of Experts and the SC Working Groups. It was also emphasised that ten Annual Reports were submitted in 2015 and nine in 2016. It is important that all countries submit them since the information reported has been critical for the analyses developed by the SC Working Groups. There was also a focus in the negotiation process to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP) which is about to realized.

Ecuador delegate, Mr. Eduardo Espinoza, suggested incidental catches as one of the items in the MoU with ACAP. Chile supports the idea of conducting on board observations of incidental capture of sea turtle, with the collaboration of fisheries observers, as they do with sea birds.

The United States delegate, Dr. Jeffrey Seminoff, highlighted the published hard copies of the document “Conservation Status of Hawksbill Turtles in the Wider Caribbean, Western Atlantic and Eastern Pacific Regions,” and suggested that if possible other printed documents should be available for the people in the field without access to internet or electronic equipment. The Secretary PT added that with this very aim the hard copy of the “Manual on Management Techniques for the Conservation of Sea Turtles in Nesting Beaches” is also available and will be distributed among the delegates during the meeting.

## **6. Review of the Exceptions Presented to the IAC Convention**

### **6.1. Presentation on Exceptions in Honduras**

Honduras delegate Ms. Carolina Montalván, presented a summary of the legal framework encompassing the five species of sea turtles found in Honduras (*Chelonia mydas* is included but data are still needed to confirm its occurrence in the country). The presentation focused on the use and management of the olive ridley sea turtle (*Lepidochelys olivacea*) in the *Golfo de Fonseca*, area which has generated the exception request. *Golfo de Fonseca* is located in the north of the country and is a territory shared with Nicaragua and El Salvador. Regulation of the sea turtle egg harvest is done through a closure program with a length of 25 days (September 1<sup>st</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup>) during which the community patrollers monitor 27 km of beach.

In social and economic terms, it is estimated that approximately 300 families are dedicated to collect 2.8 million eggs throughout the year in the *Golfo de Fonseca*, which are sold in a period of two to three months. The eggs are sold by the dozen and each dozen costs 60 lps. (US \$2.50). During the Closure Program, the families receive a subsidy equivalent to 500 lps. (US\$ 22) per week, consisting of a food ration every week. Honduras informed the delegates that there are reports showing that the eggs are traded mainly in El Salvador, Nicaragua and other areas of Honduras, which has implications in regards of biodiversity trafficking because all these countries are CITES signatories and olive ridleys are on Appendix I. A meeting with Nicaragua, and El Salvador, to address the issue within the wetlands conservation framework, would be ideal given *Golfo de Fonseca*'s importance as such.

In regards to the situation in the rest of the country, legal structures for protection in places where there is consumption are being organized in the north, and the protected areas declaration is also used as a tool to carry out monitoring (depending on available funding). The advantage in this area is that there are NGOs and a GEF project, in contrast with the south where the community and the government are the only stakeholders and NGOs are not present. Therefore Honduras requests the IAC support for capacity building in *Golfo de Fonseca*.

In response to Ecuador's question regarding population status of the olive ridley turtle, and Panama delegate Mr. Marino Abrego's question about an extension of the closure period, Honduras expressed that among the management mechanisms considered are the expansion of the closure, and increasing the information available about the nesting season. It seems that the season starts in July and not in September as previously thought. Currently there is monitoring before and after the closure, so there are enough data to request an extension or a change in the dates of the closure. However, there are social and economic aspects to consider.

Caribbean Netherlands delegate Dr. Julia Horrocks, queried whether instead of paying the collectors for bringing all the eggs to the hatcheries, collectors could get paid for protecting some nests *in situ*. Honduras explained that this option was not viable due to the unsafe conditions caused by the inequity in the distribution of the benefits, and to looting.

To the question from the SC Chair about the closure resolution repealing the main Fisheries Law, Honduras explained that the general fisheries law prohibits catches of fishing resources in general, and the closure resolution does not repeal it because it is specific for sea turtles and sea turtle by-products.

According to the report presented to establish an Exception, the supporting information provided for analysis by the Exceptions Working Group was not clear enough in regards of 1) the total amount of nests laid by *Lepidochelys olivacea* during the reproductive season in the beaches considered in the Exception, 2) the proportion of nests relocated for conservation activities in comparison with the total number of nests, and 3) the amount of nests allowed for human consumption.

Recommendation: Commencing after June 2017, Honduras will collect data to submit to the Scientific Committee information about two nesting seasons of *L. olivacea*, including:

- A total number of clutches recorded along the total length of the index beaches for *L. olivacea* (*Punta Ratón* and *El Venado*), and the numbers of clutches per month for each reproductive season.
- Total number of clutches protected in the hatcheries
- Total number of hatchlings produced from the hatcheries
- Information on historic nesting trends in these index beaches.

Through the Secretary PT, and no later than November 2016, the SC will send a letter to the Honduras Focal Point requesting the information mentioned to analyse their exception request.

## 6.2 Resolution on Exceptions implementation analysis and Recommendations to Honduras, Costa Rica, Guatemala and Panama.

Brazil delegate Mr. Alexsandro Dosantos presented the results of the intersessional working group regarding exceptions including:

Costa Rica: Complied with all the recommendations in the resolution before the due date, and selected as its sampling method Valverde and Gates (2000).

Guatemala: It complied with the immediate actions in the Resolution on Exceptions, but the mid-term actions have not started yet. It is required to begin *L. olivacea* population monitoring to enable the analysis of the data supporting sustainable harvest of eggs. The information in the “Hatcheries result” form is inconsistent with the clutches data.

Panama: Complied with most of the recommendations, or is still in the process of implementing them. Panama still needs to determine totals of the harvest (clutches or eggs collected) to enable the analysis of number of eggs protected in proportion to number of eggs harvested, and therefore clarify what is the total number of clutches or eggs laid along the 14 km of beach during the nesting season.

Costa Rica delegate, Mr. Didiher Chacón, highlighted the consideration that in the future the species could be exploited throughout Central America and that therefore this harvest pressure should be monitored to ensure that the consumption of eggs does not adversely affect the population in the long term.

Recommendations to Panama and Guatemala: Until there is compliance with the midterm activities according to the Resolution (5 years), and the five-year compliance report is submitted, it is suggested that a description that allows understanding of the methodology used by each country is presented for the sole use of the SC Exceptions working group. Both countries should report the number of clutches protected and how many clutches are used for consumption.

Recommendations a Costa Rica: Costa Rica is encouraged to continue forward in the way that it has been doing it, since it has complied in time and execution with the recommendations in the Resolution.

The SC will request the IAC Secretary PT, to send a letter with these recommendations to the Focal Points in the three countries, and request a progress report regarding the recommendations provided.

## 7. Working Groups Meeting

During the sessions there were meetings of the working groups on: **a) Exception**, composed of Honduras, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Panama, Caribbean Netherlands and Brazil; **b) Fisheries**, composed of Mexico, Argentina, Belize, Peru, Chile and Ecuador; **c) *Caretta caretta***, composed

of United States, Chile, Belize, Caribbean Netherlands, Brazil, Honduras, Mexico, Panama and Peru; **d) Climate Change and Sea Turtles**, composed of Caribbean Netherlands, Brazil, Honduras, Belize, United States, Peru and Chile; and **e) Sea Turtles Stranding**, composed of Costa Rica, United States, Argentina, Ecuador, Panama, Chile, Belize and Guatemala.

## **7.1. Reports and Recommendations of the Working Groups**

### 7.1.1 Report WG Strandings (CIT-CC13-2016-Tec.12)

Costa Rica delegate Mr. Didier Chacón read the report with the agreement of the group (Annex VI) and approved the technical document on stranding in the IAC region.

### 7.1.2 Report WG Climate Change (CIT-CC13-2016-Doc.4)

Caribbean Netherlands delegate Dr. Julia Horrocks presented the following recommendations (Annex V):

- a) Those countries with nesting beaches should be encouraged to follow the guidelines to collect environmental data on index nesting beaches detailed in the document “Reducing Climate Change Impacts on Nesting Beaches” CIT-CC12-2015-Tec.10
- b) Periodically (every 5 years), the Secretary *PT* will request from the Parties information regarding the environmental data that is being collected. The first request will be in 2018.
- c) The request for environmental data from the IAC Parties will be included in the SC future work plans.
- d) These recommendations will be presented at COP8, 2017.

### 7.1.3 Report WG Loggerhead Sea Turtle *Caretta caretta* (CIT-CC13-2016-Tec.13):

United States delegate Dr. Jeffrey Seminoff, presented a report on the document. Information about Ecuador needs to be completed. The final report will be sent to the Secretary *PT* for its distribution among the Scientific Committee, and will be presented at the COP8, 2017.

### 7.1.4 Report WG Fisheries

Chile delegate Mr. Francisco Ponce presented the agreements of the group (Annex IV).

In regards to collecting and sharing data on EP Leatherback incidental catches with the support of the Leatherback Trust, it is not considered viable at the moment because it is not efficient in terms of time and procedures to acquire the information.

The collaboration under the MoU IAC-ACAP will be strengthened by consulting the ACAP and IAC technicians in each country, to identify actions of interest for both conventions. This will be presented in the SC14 in 2017, and must be included in the SC work plan.

## **8. Technical Document on *Caretta caretta* Conservation Status**

The United States delegate, Dr. Jeffrey Seminoff presented the document on the Status of Loggerhead Turtles (*Caretta caretta*) within the Parties of the IAC, requested by the COP. The authors were Rebecca Chapman and Jeffrey Seminoff. The document is based on the Report IAC Index Nesting Beach Data Analysis.

Dr. Seminoff expressed that the preparation of the document took approximately 200 of his and his assistant Rebecca Chapman's work hours. Without Rebecca's support it would not have been possible to finish the job. The delegate mentions these details for the Secretary PT, the SC Chair and the IAC Focal Points to consider how time demanding it is to develop such documents. This is a positive comment since the report shows the quality of the job developed by the Scientific Committee. However other ways to conduct this type of task need to be considered, including third parties support funded by external sources, as it was the case of the Hawksbill document funded mostly by CITES.

In the case of some countries, the information was based on Wallace et al. (2010). The document shows the range where the species is found, nesting trends and threats. It is known that there is nesting in Costa Rica, Panama, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Guatemala, but the information on exactly where is not available.

The United States highlighted the efficient collaboration of Ms. Hedelvi Guada from Venezuela, in delivering the information, and the time that Dr. Laura Sarti (Mexico) invested arranging the data.

Ecuador stated that it could provide information about different areas of the country. Mexico's delegate, Mr. Heriberto Santana, stated that the country will continue supporting the efforts to collect updated information and wanted to determine the causes of the recent strandings of this species. Panama has it in mind to share data from *Bocas del Toro*.

The SC Chair stated the existence of a new paper about juvenile hawksbills at *Río de la Plata*, and considered that Argentina and Uruguay might supply other documents and maps on the use of habitat in this area.

## **9. Report of the East Pacific Leatherback Task Force**

Peru delegate, Mr. Javier Quiñonez, presented the results and recommendations from the LAUD OPO network workshop in Mexico. The "Report of the Eastern Pacific Leatherback Turtle Task Force Annual Meeting (2016) - CIT-CC13-2016-Inf.2" was read along with the recommendations.

In regards of Recommendation 1 of the CIT-CC13-2016-Inf.2, Chile considered that convening a meeting at a ministerial level was not feasible. Chile suggested instead convening a meeting at a more technical and administrative level attended by the technicians and agents directly involved. Ecuador supported Chile's position in terms of the difficulty in convening a high level meeting and added that if there was not a clear agenda to be presented to the Ministries, the meeting would not be viable. Chile, Ecuador and Peru suggested that the EP Leatherback Task Force can

use the concrete actions of the LAUDOPO action plan to prioritise actions to address the problem of incidental catches.

Recommendation: After analysing the recommendations of the Eastern Pacific Leatherback Task Force included in their GT annual report CIT-CC13-2016-Inf.2 the Scientific Committee suggests including the two following recommendations in the EP Task Force Report to be presented at the next Scientific Committee meeting:

1. Organize national workshops in the range countries of the species to prioritize specific mitigation measures to address threats to EP Leatherbacks. We suggest that for each technical meeting relevant government agencies, academic institutions and civil society be invited, in order to identify and agree upon potential actions set out in the action plan of the east pacific leatherback (<http://savepacificleatherbacks.org>) and the Resolution that are feasible to implement.

2. One mitigation measure that should be discussed is the desirability/feasibility of temporary/seasonal closure of fishing in the high priority areas identified by the EP Leatherback action plan and the Task Force in 2 b *i.ii.ii* (Report LB task force), in order to alleviate bycatch threat to the population while considering the social, economic and political implications.

Following these technical meetings, a high level meeting between Ministers of applicable Parties will be convened with the purpose of obtaining agreement on the way forward to implement specific priority actions by Parties for EP Leatherback Conservation.

It was agreed that the SC recommendations will be submitted through the Secretary *Pro Tempore* to the EP Leatherback Task Force and to the Chair of the Consultative Committee for his consideration at the next CCE meeting.

## **10. Scientific Committee Work Plan Update (2017-2018)**

Updates regarding the tasks of the Working Groups were carried out along with a follow up of the activities which the Secretary PT is in charge of. The IAC Scientific Committee Work Plan (Annex III) was approved, and will be presented for approval at the COP8.

## **11. Review of the IAC Annual Report Form (CIT-CC13-2016-Inf.3\_Sea Turtles Foraging Sites)**

The IAC Secretary PT assistant, Ms. Luz Helena Rodríguez, presented the results of the “Comparative Analysis of Sea Turtles Foraging Sites in the IAC Countries (2012 – 2015)” where foraging sites were reported in the annual reports of 14 of the IAC countries. (CIT-CC13-2016-Inf.3).

The United States expressed that although only two sites have been reported in the US, there are more than 100 nesting sites in the country, but due to the large amount not all the information could be reported. The government also does not have access to all the information collected by NGOs. The United States questioned the usefulness of the information contained in the Foraging Site table. Chile and Ecuador supported the United States position. The Caribbean Netherlands

stated that it is important to have an up to date list showing the foraging areas per country in the IAC region in order to identify interactions with fisheries. The Scientific Committee Chair suggested that developing a technical document about foraging areas would be more useful than a table in the Annual Report.

Agreement: The foraging sites Table in Annex 3 of the IAC Annual Report is removed, in its place the information currently collected in this table will be included in a technical document on sea turtles foraging sites in the IAC, including the following topics: a) List of foraging areas in the IAC Parties, b) Contact information of people working in the areas, c) Threats to foraging areas, among other. This document will be updated every 5 years. The first version will be presented in SC14.

The working group to prepare this technical document is composed of: Argentina, United States, Caribbean Netherlands and Ecuador.

The IAC Focal Points will be notified of this change when the IAC Annual Report format is sent by the Secretariat PT in 2017.

## **12. Building Capacities of the IAC Parties and Synergies with Associated International Organizations (Ramsar, CITES, UNLOS, CMS, etc.)**

The Scientific Committee Chair presented his participation in the United Nations Marine Debris meeting in June 2016.

The United States inquired if IAC recognition at a global level is increasing. The Chair stated that there is greater interest and recognition of the work and the part played by the IAC within other international conventions' frameworks. The IAC Secretary PT is being invited to more international events, there is an increased collaboration within the MoUs, and the SC technical documents have more visibility. Additionally, the Secretary PT spoke about her participation in the CARIWET-RAMSAR meeting, and on the communications with the Convention of Biodiversity.

The Secretary PT highlighted the support building capacities and projects on topics required by IAC Parties such as: Costa Rica, Chile, and Belize. Imminently support will be provided for projects in Peru, Panama and Guatemala.

Mr. Miguel Donoso -Pacífico Laud - (Chile) presented the results of the Project on the Characterization of Artisanal Fisheries interacting with EP Leatherback in Chile. This project was conducted with the support of the Sea Turtle Conservation Fund USFWS, Sub Secretaría de Pesca – Chile, IAC Secretary PT and Pacífico Laud (Annex VII).

## **13. Adoption of Recommendations and Agreements of the meeting.**

13.1 The SC13 agreements were reviewed and approved (Annex VIII)



### 13.2 Proposal of items for the COP8 agenda

- a) Presentation of the report Conservation Status of *Caretta caretta*
- b) Recommendations on the use of the technical document CIT-CC12-2015-Tec.10 on climate change and nesting beaches, and periodic requests for physical data collected at index beaches.
- c) Scientific Committee Work Plan
- d) Presentation of the summary of technical works by the Scientific Committee since 2011 (to call the attention of the Focal Points to the service and the role of the IAC Scientific Committee).
- e) Jointly with the Consultative Committee of Experts, inform on the progress of the EP Leatherback Resolution implementation.

## **14. Preparation of the next meeting (SC14) conclusions and next steps**

### 14.1 Election of the Scientific Committee Chair and Vice Chair

Dr. Diego Albareda was re-elected as the Scientific Committee Chair, as well as Mr. Francisco Ponce as Vice Chair for the next two years.

### 14.2. Proposals of host country for the SC14

The delegate Mr. Abrego representing the Ministry of Environment, presented an introduction about Panama with an interesting video, and proposed his country as the venue for the next meeting of the Scientific Committee.

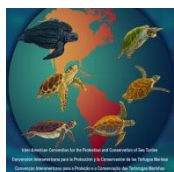
## **15. Closing remarks**

After complying with the items in the agenda, the Chair of the Scientific Committee proceeded with the closing remarks and the participants thanked Belize Department of Fisheries representatives Kirah Forman, Isaias Majil, Linda Sirle, Ines Garcia, Adriani Nicholson and James Azueta, and applauded the work of the IAC Secretary PT staff and the interpreters from Honduras who provided translation for the meeting.

Belize delegation presented an overview regarding the fieldtrip to the Bacalar Chico nesting beach where the SC assisted with a beach clean up to mitigate the impact of Hurricane Earl on this important index beach. (Anexo IX). Afterwards the SC visited Holchan Marine Reserve.

## ANNEXES

### ANNEX I. Agenda



CIT-CC13-2016-Doc.1

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

#### Agenda

#### 13<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the IAC Scientific Committee (SC13) Belize City, Belize August 29 – 1 September 2016

Sunday – 28.08.16

Arrival of participants to Hotel Best Western Biltmore Belize

Monday – 29.08.16

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|-------------|--|
| 08:00-09:00 | Registration of participants   |
| 09:00-9:40  | Opening of the meeting by Host Country, Scientific Committee Chair and Secretariat PT  |
|             | Welcome remarks  |
|             | Authorities from Belize  |
|             | <i>Mr. Diego Albareda</i><br>Scientific Committee Chair  |
|             | <i>Ms. Veronica Caceres</i><br>IAC Secretary <i>Pro Tempore</i>  |
| 09:40-10:15 | Introduction to Sea Turtle Conservation Activities in Belize. Belize delegate  |
| 10:15-10:30 | Adoption of the agenda, introduction of participants and election of meeting rapporteur.<br>Mr. Diego Albareda, SC Chair CIT-CC13-2016-Doc.1 |
| 10:30-10:45 | Coffee break   |
| 10:45–11:30 | Report of the 12 <sup>th</sup> IAC Scientific Committee Meeting Activities. SC Chair   |
| 11:30-12:00 | Report on Activities of the Secretariat <i>Pro Tempore</i> . MS. Veronica Caceres, IAC Secretary PT  |
| 12:00-13:30 | Lunch break  |

### **Review of Exceptions Presented to IAC Convention**

- 13:00-13:40 Presentation Exception in Honduras. Ms. Carolina Montalvan, Honduras Delegate SC  
(15 minute presentation + Q&A)
- 13:40-14:30 Analysis of the Implementation of Exception Resolution and Recommendations for Honduras, Costa Rica, Guatemala and Panama. Ms. Neca Marcovaldi WG Coordinator  
CIT-CC13-2016-Doc.2 and CIT-CC13-2016-Doc.3
- 14:30-14:45 Coffee break

### **1<sup>st</sup> Session of Working Groups Meetings**

- 14:45-16:20 Exception Working Group meeting (1 h 30 min)  
Fisheries Working Group meeting (1 h 30 min)
- 16:20-17:00 Report and Recommendations from Exception WG/ Plenary Discussion
- 17:00 Session ends
- 19:00 Welcome reception

<b>Tuesday- 30.08.16</b>
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- 9:00 -9:30 Technical Document on the conservation status of *Caretta caretta*. Dr. Jeffrey Seminoff, WG  
Coordinator CIT-CC13-2016-Tec.13\_Report Loggerhead (15 minute presentation + Q&A)

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Session of Working Groups Meetings**

- 9:30-10:30 *Caretta caretta* Working Group meeting (1 h 30 min)  
Climate Change and Sea Turtles Working Group meeting (1 h 30 min)  
Stranding Working Group meeting (1 h 30 min)
- 10:30-10:45 Coffee break
- 10:45-11:15 Continue Working Groups meetings
- 11:15 -12:00 Reports and Recommendations from Working Groups. WG Coordinators  
Climate Change - CIT-CC13-2016-Doc.4
- 12:00-13:30 Lunch break

- 13:30-15:00 Reports and Recommendations from Working Groups. (*Continue*)  
 Fisheries  
 Strandings - CIT-CC13-2016-Tec.12  
 Loggerhead Turtle *Caretta caretta* - CIT-CC13-2016-Tec.13
- 15:00-15:20 Coffee break
- 15:20-16:00 East Pacific Leatherback Task Force Report - CIT-CC13-2016-Inf.2\_Task Force. Member of task Force – (*15 min presentation followed by plenary discussion*)
- 16:00-17:00 Summary of day two discussions
- 17:00 Session ends

<b>Wednesday–31.08.16</b>
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- 9:00-10:00 Scientific Committee Work Plan Update (2017-18) CIT-CC13-2016-Doc.5. Ms. Carolina Montalvan, WG Coordinator
- 10:00-10:40 IAC Annual Report Format review CIT-CC13-2016-Inf.3\_Sea Turtles Foraging areas
- 10:40-11:00 Coffee break
- 11:00-12:00 Capacity Building IAC Member Countries and Synergies with International Organizations partners (Ramsar, CITES, UNLOS, CMS etc.)
- 12:00-14:00 Lunch break
- 14:00-14:30 Other business
- 14:30-15:30 Adoption of the meeting Recommendations and Agreements  
 -Review of the SC13 Agreement and Recommendations CIT-CC13-2016-Doc.6  
 -Proposal of agenda items for COP8
- 15:30-15:45 Coffee break
- 15:45-16:30 Preparation of next meeting (SC14) Conclusions and steps forward  
 -Election of Chair and Vice Chair  
 -Hosting proposals for SC14  
 Delegates are invited to propose locations and dates for the next meeting.
- 16:30-17:00 Information about the field trip and Closing remarks

**Thursday–1.09.16**

**Visit to a Sea Turtle Conservation Site**

9:00-18:00

Field visit to sea turtle conservation projects organized by Government of Belize for IAC official delegates. The Scientific Committee is invited to provide advice and recommendations as appropriate.

**Friday – 2.09.16**

Departure of participants

**ANNEX II. Participants List**

**CIT-CC13-2016-Inf. 1**

COUNTRY / PAÍS	NAME / NOMBRE	INSTITUTION / INSTITUCIÓN	E-MAIL	PHONE
<b>DELEGATES / DELEGADOS</b>				
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**ANNEX III. Scientific Committee Work Plan (2016-2018)**

**CIT-CC13-2016-Doc.5**

<b>Actor</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Activity Proposed</b>	<b>Expected Result</b>	<b>Dates</b>
Scientific Committee	Exceptions	1) Follow up on the implementation progress of the recommendations on exceptions: Costa Rica, Guatemala, and Panama. 2) The SC will send a letter to Honduras FP with the recommendations on the technical aspects that must be included in the request for exceptions, so the latter can be re-evaluated by the SC. 3) The SC will develop a regional analysis on the status and trend of <i>L. olivacea</i> in the region. 4) El SC will send a letter to the FP of Guatemala, Panama and Costa Rica regarding the recommendations for the reports presented in 2016.	1) Recommendations of the SC to the countries when appropriate. 2) In a period of maximum 2 years, Honduras will present its exception again, including the information requested by the SC. 3) During SC14 the guidelines for the development of the document on the regional analysis of <i>L. olivacea</i> trend will be developed and the working group in regards of this task will be formed.	2017 2018 2020
Scientific Committee, Secretary <i>Pro Tempore</i>	Website and IAC Newsletter	1) Send to the Secretary <i>Pro Tempore</i> news relevant to your country –every month- for the IAC Newsletter.	1) Updated News in the website and regular publication of the IAC Newsletter.	Permanent
Fisheries Working Group	Fisheries	1) Update the list of Turtle Excluder Devices (TED) used.	1) An updated chart will be presented including the TEDs used for 2017.	2017

Fisheries Working Group	Fisheries	<p>1) Develop a report with the results on trawl fisheries targeting non-crustacean species.</p> <p>2) Define common topics to work on under the Memorandum of Understanding between IAC and ACAP.</p> <p>3) Continue with the EP Leatherback matter regarding fisheries.</p>	<p>1) Report on trawl fisheries targeting non-crustacean species interacting with sea turtles including the results of the analysis presented in SC13.</p> <p>2) Activities identified within the framework of the MoU IAC-ACAP to prepare a work plan.</p> <p>3) The SC will make recommendations on the matter to the COP when appropriate.</p>	<p>Intersessional 2017 CC14</p> <p>2017 2017-2018</p>
Nesting Working group and Scientific Committee	Conservation Status in Index Nesting Beaches	<p>1) Compile information of annual nesting in index beaches using the corresponding form and analyse it periodically (every 5 years).</p>	<p>1) Updated form including the information provided by the IAC Parties.</p> <p>2) Report on the analysis of nesting in index beaches 2009-2018 presented at the COP9.</p>	Permanent
Climate Change Working Group	Climate Change	<p>1) The SC will develop a form to allow collection of environmental data from index nesting beaches to send to Focal Points in 2018.</p> <p>2) The SC will send a request to the parties periodically regarding the environmental data collected at index beaches.</p>	<p>1) The Climate Change Working Group will analyse the information on environmental data collected at index nesting beaches and will present to the SC in 2018.</p> <p>2) The IAC Parties are informed about the environmental data they have to collect.</p>	2018 - 2019
Scientific Committee	Work Plan	<p>1) To develop and update the Scientific Committee Work Plan following IAC guidelines and the COPs Resolutions.</p>	<p>1) Scientific Committee biannual Work Plan including actions to be taken, timetable and responsible.</p>	Permanent
Scientific Committee	Connection with other organizations and strategic alliances.	<p>1) To review the Scientific Committee Work Plan to include topics and mechanisms towards improving the cooperation with Focal Points and other entities.</p> <p>2) Costa Rica and Honduras will develop and informative document on transboundary trafficking of <i>L. olivacea</i> in <i>Golfo de Fonseca</i> to inform the SC, and receive the SC feedback on how to work with other agreements such as CITES or other that are relevant.</p>	<p>1) Synergies with other organizations similar to the IAC identified with the purpose of sharing information (ACAP, SPAW, IATTC, CPPS, WIDECAST, ICCAT, RAMSAR, SWOT, ICAPO, ASO, WWF, CBD, CMS, TLT -The Leatherback Trust).</p> <p>2) Document about trafficking of <i>L. olivacea</i> eggs.</p>	Permanent January 2017

Scientific Committee	Annual Reports	1) Analyse the technical information included in the IAC Annual Reports.	1) Report on the analysis of the technical information presented in the IAC Annual Reports.	Permanent
Scientific Committee	Projects	1) Develop and analyse recommendations on high priority projects, to obtain financial funds and other kind of support required to accomplish the IAC objectives.	1) Recommendations on high priority projects when deemed necessary.	Permanent
Scientific Committee, Secretary <i>Pro Tempore</i>	COP and the Consultative Committee of Experts recommendations	1) Meet the COP and the Consultative Committee of Experts requests, and develop recommendations when appropriate.	1) Recommendations submitted to the COP and the Consultative Committee of Experts when appropriate.	2017- 2018
Scientific Committee	IAC Technical Documents	1) Develop technical documents when required. 2) Development of a technical document regarding foraging sites within the IAC Parties.	1) Technical documents available in the IAC website and distributed in the IAC Countries. 2) Technical document on the foraging sites in the IAC Parties for the SC14.	Permanente
Scientific Committee, Secretary <i>Pro Tempore</i>	IAC Directory of Experts	1) Update and maintain the directory of experts in areas of the IAC interest.	1) Directory updated in the IAC website.	Permanent
Scientific Committee, Leatherback Task Force, Fisheries Working Group	Eastern Pacific Leatherback <i>Dermochelys coriacea</i>	1) Continue to support the implementation of the EP Leatherback Resolution.	1) Report to the COP when required on the resolution progress.	2017

Scientific Committee, Loggerhead Working Group	Loggerhead Sea Turtle <i>Caretta caretta</i>	1) Presentation of the draft to the Consultative Committee of Experts 30 days before 2017 CCE meeting 2) Respond to the commentaries received from the Consultative Committee of Expert and submit the final report to the COP 45 days before 2017 meeting.	1) Final report on the status of all the population of loggerhead turtles in the IAC region, and recommendations submitted to the COP8, 2017.	2017
Scientific Committee	Strengthening Capacities	1)Support the SC members in workshops and training in topics that the IAC Parties identify and when funding is available.	1)Strengthening capacities on topics about sea turtles in the IAC Parties.	Permanent

## **ANNEX IV. Fisheries Group Work Plan**

Group Members (WG-Fisheries): Chile (Francisco Ponce /Coordinator, and Miguel Donoso), Ecuador (Eduardo Espinoza), Peru (Javier Quiñonez), Mexico (Heriberto Santana), Argentina (Diego Albareda), Belize (Adriani Nicholson, Ines Garcia and Kirah Forman).

Observers present in the discussion: Virginia Burns and Linda Searle

### **Topics covered during the meeting:**

There was a review of the topics discussed by the working group during the 12<sup>th</sup> scientific committee meeting, as follows:

1. Update the list of Turtle Excluder Devices (TEDS)
2. Continue working with the trawling fisheries targeting non-crustacean species and interacting with sea turtles.
3. Efforts to move forward with the implementation of the Resolution for the Conservation of the Eastern Pacific (EP) Leatherback Sea Turtle CIT-COP7-2015-R2.
4. Monitoring the Scientific Committee recommendation to the IAC Parties regarding the use of the manual on best practices to handle sea turtle on board fishing vessels.
5. Inclusion of other topics considered relevant

1. Update the list of Turtle Excluder Devices (TEDS)

This activity is based on the information included in each country's Annual Reports. Since the changes in the use of TEDS in fishing gears is not frequent it was proposed to update the list every two years, therefore the update will be done during the SC14.

2. Continue working with the trawling fisheries targeting non-crustacean species and interacting with sea turtles (intersessional).

A survey was conducted among the IAC parties, 13 answered. Six of them have interactions with sea turtles in some of their trawling fisheries targeting non-crustacean species. The preliminary analysis shows that the interactions take place in the minority of the countries (6) and half of them are adopting measures to reduce incidental catches. According to this, it is convenient to thoroughly analyse the information to develop a report supporting the recommendations on good practices in the countries that have not adopted measures to reduce or mitigate the effect of incidental catches of sea turtles in their trawling fisheries targeting non-crustacean species. The report will be presented in the next Scientific Committee meeting SC14.

3. Efforts to move forward with the implementation of the Resolution for the Conservation of the Eastern Pacific (EP) Leatherback Sea Turtle CIT-COP7-2015-R2

There was an attempt to develop four topics towards exchanging information and collaboration between Ecuador, Peru, Chile and The Leatherback Trust, and a negotiation with the IATTC to obtain information on the EP Leatherbacks incidental catches in the tuna fleet. These activities could not be arranged formally.

However, following the 12<sup>th</sup> meeting recommendations, the fisheries group took part in the activities within the Resolution CIT-COP7-2015-R2, joining the Eastern Pacific Leatherback Task Force, which has developed a work plan to be presented during this meeting.

4. Through the Secretary PT, request the Focal Points information on the mechanisms used to implement the recommendation (exchange and outreach of the technical document developed by the SC), and what has been the feedback.

The request materialized through the following consultation to the SC delegates:

“Do you know how if the recommendations in the manuals included in the document CIT-CC11-2014-Tec.8 to handle sea turtles incidentally caught during fishing operations have been used in your country? Describe the results observed”

The Parties were requested for the information available on the implementation of the recommendations included in the document CIT-CC11-2014-Tec.8, regarding the use of manuals to handle sea turtles on board. Only five parties have replied thus far. From the answers obtained, most of them agree that the manuals are used in On Board Observers Programs.

5. Inclusion of other topics considered relevant

Once the memorandum of understanding between IAC and ACAP is signed, it is proposed to include intersessional activities to establish implementation protocols that allow the observers to collect useful information for ACAP and the IAC, as well as an exchange of experiences in the field in both organizations.

## **ANNEX V. Recommendations of Climate Change Working Group**

### **1. Background**

CCE identified Climate Change Resolution as the Resolution with the lowest compliance and requested assistance from the Scientific Committee

Why?

No action or inadequate compliance table?

- Revised the table and it was used in the 2014 Annual Report.
- Nine Parties' responded (some Parties have no nesting beaches, some used an old version of the Annual Report)
- With the assistance of Secretariat (Luz Rodriguez), the compliance of the Parties with the Climate Change Resolution was analysed by the intersessional WG and results circulated (Doc 4).

### **2. Doc. 4 Compliance Analysis Conclusions**

- National climate change adaptation plans include habitats that are critical for sea turtles, especially beaches, mangroves and coral reefs, but less often seagrass habitats.
- Most Parties are not yet implementing climate change adaptation plans that are relevant to sea turtle habitats, but some environmental monitoring is occurring that will be useful to evaluate impacts of climate change on sea turtle habitats (e.g. beach geomorphology, sand temperature).
- A smaller number of Parties are monitoring parameters relevant to critical marine habitats (coral bleaching, sea temperature).
- All Parties with nesting populations are monitoring hatching success and duration of the nesting season; some Parties are also monitoring sex ratio of hatchlings, mortality and recruitment.
- Most Parties have included management activities that can assist with adaptation to climate change. Measures to protect clutch e.g. relocation to other parts of beaches or to hatcheries, were more common than measures to protect beaches from rising temperatures or erosion.
- Most Parties had identified experts to work with on adaptation to climate change impacts on sea turtles and their habitats, but only one indicated that they had conducted a

capacity-building workshop specifically for sea turtles and their habitats aimed at monitoring impacts of/ adaptation to climate change.

### **3. Recommendation of WG**

- IAC Parties that have nesting beaches follow the guidelines on collecting environmental data on the nesting beach provided in the Mitigation Strategies document Tech Doc 10.
- The Secretariat will periodically request information on what environmental data the Parties are collecting.
- This will be included in future Work Plans of the Scientific Committee
- This recommendation will put forward at the COP8 in 2017



## **ANNEX VI. Recommendations of Strandings Working Group**

### **Strandings Working Group: Costa Rica (Coordinator), United States, Argentina, Ecuador, Panama, Chile, Belize and Guatemala.**

Belize, Venezuela and Ecuador's information was included and the survey analysis was completed. The results and recommendations were reviewed. The report was completed with additional information. Peru's information is already included.

#### **Recommendations**

1. To develop a "Directory of Specialists" linked with topics on strandings and sea turtles unusual events of mortality that can be consulted in an emergency, therefore the best advice is provided and there is a guided collection of information, required for an effective diagnosis. Include labs in the region for analysis of biotoxins.
2. To develop a LIST OF INSTITUTIONS/ORGANIZATIONS responsible to coordinate sea turtles mortality events in each country, to ease communication and create an effective technical advice in the field (Almost finished, will be a technical report of the SC).
3. To develop a protocol of procedures (stranding, necropsy, sample collection, etc.) by region (where required), including environmental, anthropic and biologic particularities from each region, as well as the previous stranding reports and unusual sea turtle mortality events. Include as an example in an annex some reference protocols on necropsy and sample collection.
4. To promote training and capacity building activities on strandings and necropsies. These activities are an effective complement to improve the monitoring of sea turtles strandings. Include an annex with examples of training and workshop conducted in the last two years (Costa Rica, Argentina, Belize and Panama), including a thematic program, equipment required and illustrations.
5. At a national level, to promote the organization of stranding networks aiming to standardize procedure and sampling collection protocols, as well as to improve and strengthen the coordination and communication between different working groups.
6. To promote spaces for discussion and communication between neighbour countries, regarding strandings and sea turtle unusual events of mortality within the framework of regional meetings.

## **ANNEX VII. Presentations Summary**

### **1. Introduction to Sea Turtle Conservation Activities in Belize**

Mr. Isaias Majil -Belize Department of Fisheries- presented a summary on the evolution of law regarding the protection of sea turtles since 1925 (when sea turtle were considered an inexhaustible resource) until today. Nowadays sea turtles are protected throughout the country. Illegal trafficking is penalized with fines e.g. for the possession of sea turtles or sea turtle by products, and for not using TEDs in the shrimp trawl fisheries. In addition to the IAC, Belize is a part of the SPAW Protocol, and the Action Plan for the recovery of sea turtle 1992, is currently being reviewed. Additionally, Belize Sea Turtle Network Parties meet every three months. Belize Fisheries office also provides the access to research permits, aiming to increase the information available on the country's sea turtles.

WIDECAST National Coordinator Ms. Linda Searle presented the activities of the organization "Belize Turtle Watch", including the historical importance of sea turtle in Belize, which distribution zones are printed on the BZ 5 notes. The results on the surveys carried out in Markets between 2000 and 2001 were presented. Sea turtles with sizes smaller than the one allowed were found, and fishermen informed no to be aware of the new regulations regarding size. Robinson Point is an area with a great concentration of sea turtles and Gallows point is an important foraging area. Results on satellite telemetry allowed establishing the biological connectivity (considering the sea turtles distribution) with other countries such as Cuba, Cayman Islands, Costa Rica, Honduras, Jamaica and Mexico. Education material used during education and awareness campaigns was presented, as well as flyers to promote the stranding network that continues receiving reports.

### **2. Report of the Secretary PT Activities to the Scientific Committee**

Ms. Veronica Caceres Chamorro provided a synthesis of the activities carried out by the Secretary *Pro Tempore*. The presentation focused on the following topics:

Annual meetings of the Scientific and Consultative Committees, the latest using Videoconference and with the highest number of participants thus far, and the annual meeting of the Leatherback Task Force.

Technical and financial support of the IAC Secretary PT in Costa Rica and Belize, during the workshops on "Better practices to handle sea turtles incidentally caught in fisheries – March 2016" and "Sea turtles first aid and necropsy techniques – August 2016" respectively, with the collaboration of Costa Rica Ministry of Environment, Belize Direction of Fishing Affairs, NOAA- Fisheries, and Buenos Aires Ecopark.

Use of external funding obtained by the Secretary PT, granted by the Sea Turtle Conservation Fund -US Fish and Wildlife Service- for the project "Building Capacities of Fishermen in Peru for the Conservation of the EP Leatherback" with contributions of Peru Government (IMARPE and Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Mexico Government (Protected Areas National Commission) and the IAC Secretary PT.

10 Annual Reports were submitted in 2015 and nine in 2016. The information provided there has been critical for the development of the intercessional Working Groups analyses such as: Sea Turtles foraging sites analysis, the development of the Technical document on *Caretta caretta*, the Climate Change resolution analysis and the analysis on Exceptions.

Following the agreement between the IAC, IOSEA and CITES (2015) a document on sea turtles trafficking has been developed, and it was presented in the CITES Standing Committee meeting. On the other hand, there is a proposal for a collaboration regarding illegal trafficking of Hawksbill products in the IAC region which will be presented at the COP CITES in September 2016 to obtain approval and funding. There was a participation in a workshop on loggerhead sea turtles organized by CMS during the ISTS annual symposium. There is a negotiation process to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the ACAP. There was a participation in the annual meeting of RAMSAR initiative for the Caribbean, with a presentation on synergies.

The preparation of the COP8 to be held in June 2017 (Argentina) is soon to be started. The topics concerning to the Scientific Committee are Exceptions, presentation of the Technical Document on Loggerhead Turtles, the Scientific Committee Work Plan, and suggestions requested to the SC.

The Secretary PT highlights the importance of the information contained in the IAC Annual Reports and encourages the countries to submit them every year.

### **3. Characterization of Fishing Gear that has an Impact on the Capture of Leatherbacks in the Artisanal Fisheries of Chile - Miguel Donoso, Pacifico Laud.**

Developed by the NGO *Pacífico Laúd*, the project “Characterization of fishing gear that has an impact on the capture of leatherbacks in the artisanal fisheries of Chile” was coordinated and articulated by the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles (IAC) Secretariat *Pro Tempore*, with funds from National Marine Sanctuary Foundation (NMFS), and the participation of different national organizations such as Chile’s fisheries authority *Subsecretaría de Pesca*, and the collaboration of NOAA – National Marine Fisheries Service under the Bilateral Agreement US – CHILE. Mr. Miguel Donoso presented the Project final results. The aim of the Project was to evaluate leatherback sea turtle bycatch in various artisanal fishing gears along Chile including gillnets, purse seine, trawl nets, surface longline, bottom longline. Fishermen and captains of artisanal vessel were surveyed in those which were considered as more representative ports for this fisheries including. Arica, Iquique, Tocopilla, Antofagasta, Caldera, Coquimbo, Valparaíso, San Antonio, Tomé y Lebu. Although bycatch per unit effort is low, there is a direct correlation between incidental catches of leatherback and the latitude and seasonality of the vessels, mitigation measures are suggested accordingly.

## ANNEX VIII. Recommendations and Agreements of the 13<sup>th</sup> IAC Scientific Committee Meeting

CIT-CC13-2016-Doc.6

### 1) Exceptions presented to the IAC

#### General Recommendations

Considering the Resolutions adopted at the Conference of Parties (COP) on exceptions for subsistence harvesting of *Lepidochelys olivacea* eggs in Guatemala, Panama and Costa Rica, and the exception request from Honduras submitted this year in their 2016 Annual Report; taking into account that in the future at least four countries in Central America will be using the eggs of this species, and knowing that the genetic and population connectivity of *L. olivacea* has been proven in the Eastern Tropical Pacific region, it is recommended that:

- The Scientific Committee (SC) develops a regional analysis on *L. olivacea* status and population trend every 5 years. The first analysis will be presented in 2020.
- The results of the regional analysis will provide countries with exceptions to have a technical base line for decision making and the management of their exception.

#### Recommendations to Honduras for the submission of its Exception

The SC reviewed the documentation on exception provided by the Honduras Government in its 2016 Annual Report, and recommends the following:

Commencing after June 2017, Honduras will collect data to submit to the Scientific Committee information about two nesting seasons of *L. olivacea*, including:

- A total number of clutches recorded along the total length of the index beaches for *L. olivacea* (*Punta Ratón* and *El Venado*) the numbers per month for each reproductive season.
- Total number of clutches protected in the hatcheries
- Total number of hatchlings produced from the hatcheries
- Information on historic nesting trends in these index beaches.

Through the Secretary PT, and no later than November 2016, the SC will send a letter to Honduras Focal Point requesting the information mentioned to analyze their exception request.

#### Recommendations to Panama and Guatemala

The SC reviewed the information in the progress in compliance report of the Resolution on Exceptions CIT-COP6-2013-R1, provided by the Governments of Guatemala and Panama, and recommends:

- Until there is compliance with the midterm activities according to the Resolution (5 years), and the five-year compliance report is submitted, it is suggested that a description

that allows understanding of the methodology used by each country is presented for the sole use of the SC exceptions working group.

- Both countries should report the number of clutches protected and how many clutches are used for consumption.

### Recommendations to Costa Rica

The SC reviewed the progress report of the Resolution on Exceptions CIT-COP7-2015-R1 compliance, provided by the Government of Costa Rica, and prepared the following observations:

- Costa Rica fulfills most of the recommendations in the Resolution on Exceptions and has selected the sampling method of Valverde and Gates (2000) to quantify *L. olivacea* nesting population.
- Costa Rica is encouraged to continue forward in the way that it has been doing it.

The SC request the IAC Secretary PT, to send a letter with these recommendations to the Focal Points in the three countries, and request a progress report regarding the recommendations provided for the next SC meeting in 2017.

## **2) Sea Turtle Strandings**

The document CIT-CC13-2016-Tec.12 “Characterization of sea turtle strandings information in the IAC region” was approved as a Scientific Committee Technical Document. This document is available on the IAC website.

## **3) Report on the Conservation status of *Caretta caretta* according to the Resolution CIT-COP7-2015-R2**

The report “Status of Loggerhead Turtles (*Caretta caretta*) in countries of the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles” CIT-CC13-2016-Tec.13 was approved in compliance with the assignment to the SC in Resolution CIT-COP7-2015-R2. The recommendations of this document will be presented at the 8<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties (COP8), in 2017. This document is available on the IAC website.

## **4) Climate Change and Sea Turtles**

The SC recommends to the IAC Parties:

- e) Those countries with nesting beaches should follow the guidelines to collect environmental data in nesting index beaches detailed in the document “Reducing Climate Change Impacts on Nesting Beaches” CIT-CC12-2015-Tec.10
- f) Periodically (every 5 years), the Secretary *PT* will request from the Parties information regarding the environmental data that is being collected. The first request will be in 2018.

- g) The request of environmental data in the IAC Parties will be included in the SC future work plans.
- h) This recommendation will be presented at COP8, 2017.

## **5) Interaction of Fisheries with Sea Turtles**

The SC Fisheries Working Group prepared approved their work plan (Annex IV, Report SC13) including the following items:

- Update of TEDS list every two years, the next one will be in SC14.
- Finish the analysis of the surveys regarding non-crustaceans trawl fishing interacting with sea turtles during the intercessional period.
- Include activities in the context of the Resolution CIT-COP7-2015-R2 (Laud OPO).
- Activities regarding the MoU with ACAP: It is suggested that once the memorandum of understanding is signed, the technical focal points of both agreements identify topics of common interest for the implementation of the MoU.

## **6) Scientific Committee Work Plan 2016-2018**

The SC updated the work plan 2016-2018 (CIT-CC13-2016-Doc.5) in which the intercessional activities of the working groups have been included (Annex III, Report SC13). The WP will be submitted to COP8 for approval.

## **7) Recommendations on the Eastern Pacific Leatherback Task Force Report**

The IAC SC recommends adding /including these 2 recommendations to those in the LB Task Force report CIT-CC13-2016-Inf.2 to be discussed at the next Consultative Committee Meeting.

1. Organize national level workshops or technical meetings in the range countries of the species to prioritize specific mitigation measures to address threats to EP Leatherbacks. We suggest that for each technical meeting relevant government agencies, academic institutions and civil society be invited, in order to identify and agree upon potential actions set out in the action plan of the east pacific leatherback (<http://savepacificleatherbacks.org>) and the Resolution that are feasible to implement.

2. One mitigation measure that should be discussed is the desirability/feasibility of temporary/seasonal closure of fishing in the high priority areas identified by the EP Leatherback action plan and the Task Force in 2 b i.ii.ii (Report LB task force), in order to alleviate bycatch threat to the population while considering the social, economic and political implications.

Following these technical meetings, a high level meeting between Ministers of applicable Parties will be convened with the purpose of obtaining agreement on the way forward to implement specific priority actions by Parties for EP Leatherback Conservation.

The SC through the IAC Secretary PT will convey these recommendations to the LB task Force Coordinator and Consultative Committee Chair for their consideration in the next CCE meeting.

## **8) Review of the IAC Annual Report Format – Sea Turtles Foraging Areas.**

The SC agreed to remove from the IAC Annual Report the sea turtle foraging sites Table in Annex 3, in its place the information currently collected in this table will be included in a technical document as follows:

The SC will develop a technical document about sea turtles foraging areas in the IAC including the following topics: a) List of foraging areas in the IAC Parties, b) Contact information of people working in the areas, c) Threats in foraging areas, among other. This document will be updated every 5 years. The first version will be presented in the SC14.

The working group to prepare this technical document consists of: Argentina, United States, Caribbean Netherlands and Ecuador.

The IAC Focal Points will be notified of this change when the IAC Annual Report format is sent to them by the Secretariat PT in 2017.

## **9) Collaboration with other International Organizations**

The SC Fisheries Working Group will work in collaboration with the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP) under the new Memorandum of Understanding.

## **10) Topics for COP8 agenda**

- a) Presentation of the Report Conservation Status of *Caretta caretta*
- b) Recommendations on the use of the technical document CIT-CC12-2015-Tec.10 on climate change and nesting beaches, and periodical request of climate data.
- c) Work plan of the Scientific Committee
- d) Summary presentation of technical documents developed by the Scientific Committee since 2011 (to call the attention of the Focal Points about the service and the role of the IAC Scientific Committee)
- e) Jointly with the Consultative Committee of Experts report on the progress of the EP Leatherback Resolution.

## **11) Election of the Scientific Committee Chair and Vice Chair**

The SC decided to renew for a period of two years (2017 and 2018) the delegates that have been in their current capacities as Chair of the SC Dr. Diego A. Albareda (Argentina) and Vice Chair of the SC Mr. Francisco Ponce (Chile).

## **12) Venue of the 14<sup>th</sup> IAC Scientific Committee Meeting (SC14)**

Panama Government through the Ministry of Environment has generously offered to host the SC14. The next meeting will be tentatively in October 2017. The dates will be decided in coordination with the host country.

## ANNEX IX. Scientific Committee SC13

Photos: Luz Helena Rodríguez – IAC Assistant



13<sup>th</sup> IAC Scientific Committee Meeting Group



IAC Scientific Committee Fisheries Working Group



IAC Scientific Committee Exceptions Working Group



**IAC Scientific Committee Beach Clean Up - Baccalar Chico, Holchan Marine Reserve, Belize**

