Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtle
17th Meeting of the Scientific Committee
October 20 – 22, 2020 – Videoconference

CIT-CC17-2020-Doc.15

Report with Agreements and Recommendation of the IAC Scientific Committee Meeting (SC17)

The Seventeenth Meeting of the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles Scientific Committee (SC17) was held via videoconference on October 20-22, 2020.

The delegates from the 16 IAC Parties and their advisors, observers from Canada and the French Guyana Government, and IAC accredited observers participated in the meeting for a total of 52 participants. The countries represented were Argentina, Belize, Brazil, Caribbean Netherlands, Chile, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, México, Panama, Peru, Honduras, United States, Uruguay, and Venezuela. (*Annex I – Participants List CIT-CC17-2020-Inf.1).*

The following recommendations and agreements were adopted from the discussions during the meeting:

IAC Scientific Committee 17th Meeting Recommendations and Agreements

1) Adoption of the agenda and election of the meeting rapporteur

The meeting agenda was adopted without changes. The Secretariat *Pro Tempore* was the meeting rapporteur. (*Annex II - Agenda CIT-CC17-2020-Doc.1)*

2) Update of the SC Work Plan 2020-2022

The Scientific Committee Chair, Dr. Diego Albareda presented the SC compliance report (*Annex III) and* the workplan including was updated according to the activities decided by the SC Working Groups presented in the agreements and recommendations of the SC17 (*Annex IV – Workplan CIT-CC17-2020-Doc.3)*

3) Guatemala and Costa Rica Exceptions

Agreement 1 – New members joined the Exceptions WG which now has the following structure: Coordinator: M.Sc. Diego Albareda (Argentina), M.Sc. Didiher Chacon (Costa Rica), Dr. Julia Horrocks (Caribbean Netherlands), Dr. Cecilia Baptisttote (Brazil), Ms. Airam López (Guatemala), Mr. Marino Abrego (Panama), and Dr. Laura Sarti (Mexico´s Delegate to the Consultative Committee).

Agreement 2 – The Exceptions WG will prepare recommendations to Guatemala and Costa Rica, in response to the five-year report presented by both countries to the SC17. These recommendations will be presented for approval by the Consultative Committee not later than January 15, 2021.

These recommendations will be prepared by following the work plan below:

Dates	**Activity**	**Expected result**
Between October 26 and November 23, 2020.	Review and provide comments to Guatemala and Costa Rica´s report. Develop preliminary recommendations.	Preliminary recommendations to Costa Rica and Guatemala.
December 4th	WG meeting to agree on recommendations to adopt final recommendations.	Final recommendations to Costa Rica and Guatemala.
Between December 5th, 2020, and January 3rd, 2021.	Develop and edit a document with final recommendations to Costa Rica and Guatemala.	Document with final recommendations to Costa Rica and Guatemala.
January 5th, 2021	Submit a document with final recommendations to IAC Secretary for the **Scientific Committee.**	Document with final recommendations submitted to the Scientific Committee for adoption.
January 15th, 2021.	Submit a document with final recommendations to IAC Secretary for the **Consultative Committee**	Document with final recommendations submitted to the Consultative Committee.

Agreement 3 – The Exception WG will review the feedback from the CCE to Guatemala and Costa Rica recommendations and will prepare the final recommendations. These recommendations will be shared with Guatemala and Costa Rica Focal Points in two meetings, one for each country, the participants to these meetings will be each respective Focal Point, the CCE, SC, and COP Chairs, and representatives from the Exception WG. These meetings should be scheduled by **the end of April 2021, at the latest.**

Agreement 4 – The SC Chair will present the results from the analysis of Panama, Guatemala, and Costa Rica's exception to the IAC 10th Conference of Parties.

Agreement 5 – Based on the recommendations to the five-year report on Panama, Guatemala, and Costa Rica exception, presented at the SC16 (2019) and SC17 (2020), the Exceptions WG will discuss with the SC, CCE, and COP Chairs the need to prepare a new Resolution on Exceptions for these countries, during the inter-sessions period. This new Resolution would

include base guidelines for the implementation and monitoring of the Exception Management Plan in each country. This meeting should take place before the COP10-2021.

4) Timetable to Update IAC Technical Documents on Sea Turtle Conservation Status and collaborations

The Scientific Committee discussed the need to create a standardized format for the IAC technical documents to be considered. The delegations of Chile and Ecuador offered their help preparing a draft format for the SC18.

a. Report on Index Nesting Beaches

Agreement 6 – The Nesting Working Group (the United States and Secretariat *PT*) will update the IAC Report on Index Nesting Beaches every five years, using the IAC Annual Reports information. The next update is in **2023**.

***b. Report on Caretta caretta* status**

Agreement 7 – The *Caretta caretta* WG was formed with the delegates from Mexico, Belize, Brazil, and the United States. It does not have a coordinator.

Agreement 8 – According to the Resolution on *Caretta caretta* (CIT-COP7-2015-R3), this WG must update the report every four years. The next update is in **2021** to present it to the COP10.

Agreement 9 – The United States delegate will consult the possibility of finding assistance from a student to update the *C. caretta* report and will provide an answer by **November 16, 2020.**

Agreement 10 – The WG will develop a work plan to include it in the SC17 report and will submit it to the SC17 Chair by November 20th, 2020. This plan will include the mechanism to prepare the update of the *C. caretta* status report, and submission date by **May 2021** (tentatively) before the COP10.

c. Report on Sea Turtle Interactions with Industrial Longline Fisheries

Agreement 11 – The delegate Mexico member of the Fisheries WG is the coordinator and will present the report to the Consultative Committee in **March 2021** and the COP10 in May 2021. This report will be updated every 5 years.

d. Collaboration with MTSG and SWOT

Agreement 12 – The delegate from Argentina will establish a mechanism to collaborate with the IUCN MTSG and SWOT experts and will report the results to the SC Chair to report to COP10 and SC18. The possibility of a collaboration with SWOT regarding the index nesting beaches report is considered, following a suggestion by the US delegate.

5) Fisheries and Interactions with Sea Turtles

a. Peru´s Pilot Program to quantify EP leatherback release from gillnets fisheries within the framework of actions to implement Resolution CIT-COP7-2015-R2 East Pacific Leatherback *(Annex V- CIT-CC17-2020-Doc.6)*

Agreement 13 – The Scientific Committee recognizes the importance of the strategy implemented by Peru to mitigate EP Leatherback bycatch in gillnets, and its value for the population recovery. This acknowledgment will be communicated to Peru´s Focal Point.

Agreement 14 – The Scientific Committee recommends that this work is replicated in Ecuador and Chile.

Agreement 15 – The Scientific Committee recommends to the COP10 and IAC Parties within the range of the EP Leatherback, to consider implementing strategies like the one in Peru within the framework of the EP Leatherback Resolution CIT-COP7-2015-R2.

Agreement 16 – The Scientific Committee recommends that Peru´s presentation of document CIT-CC17-2020-Doc.6 is included in the COP10 – 2021 agenda.

b. Analysis of information on interactions between industrial longline fisheries and sea turtles reported in the IAC Annual Report

Agreement 17 – The database and methods proposed by the Fisheries WG delegate from Mexico were adopted to analyze the information on interactions between sea turtles and industrial longline fisheries reported by the IAC Countries in their Annual Report. Responsible: Mexico´s delegate – Dr. Heriberto Santana. (*Annex VI – CIT-CC17-2020-Doc.7*)

Agreement 18 – The Scientific Committee adopts the Fisheries WG recommendations regarding the analysis of industrial longline data reported to IAC in 2020.

Agreement 19 – The Scientific Committee recommends that the presentation of the Fisheries WG preliminary analysis of interactions with industrial longlines is included in the COP10-2021 agenda.

Agreement 20 – The Fisheries WG delegate from Mexico will meet with the Scientific Committee US delegation and other countries that have submitted information for the report on longline fisheries, to select figures, clarify questions and prepare the report to be presented at the COP. The meeting will be carried out not later than **February 2021**.

c. Draft form to collect information on interactions between sea turtles and gillnets and methods proposed to analyze this information - Fisheries WG Ecuador and Chile delegations.

Agreement 21 – The Scientific Committee recommends the review of the text of the 2006 IAC Resolution COP3/2006/R-2 Reduction of the Adverse Impacts of Fisheries to consider an update. The draft of the updated version will be presented to the Consultative Committee in **January 2021** for the consideration of the COP10.

Agreement 22 – Not later than **November 6th, 2020** the Scientific Committee will review the form on gillnets CIT-CC17-2020-Doc.8 and provide recommendations regarding its adoption and inclusion in the IAC Annual Report.

Agreement 23 – [The Scientific Committee recommends [adopting the form to collect information on interactions with gillnet fisheries CIT-CC17-2020-Doc.8 to include it in the IAC Annual Report. This form will be presented to the consideration of the IAC Consultative Committee and the COP10 in 2021]. (*Annex VII – CIT-CC17-2020-Doc.8)* Recommendations pending to be addressed.

Agreement 24 – New members from Panama and Uruguay join the Fisheries Working Group.

Sea Turtle stranding datasheet

Agreement 25 – Not later than **November 3rd, 2020** the Scientific Committee will review the stranding datasheet **CIT-CC17-2020-Doc.9** and provide comments to Peru´s delegation and their recommendation for adoption as an IAC Technical Document available on the website for public use. (*Annex VIII – CIT-CC17-2020-Doc.9)*

6) Northwest Atlantic Leatherback

a. Scientific Committee Recommendations to COP10 on the Northwest Atlantic Leatherback Critical Areas – Resolution CIT-COP9-2019-R1

Agreement 26 – The Scientific Committee adopted document CIT-CC17-2020-Doc.13 prepared by Didiher Chacón, as an IAC Technical Document on critical areas for the conservation of the Northwest Atlantic Leatherback in the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic feeding grounds and migratory routes, following up on the mandate in Resolution CIT-COP9-2019-R2. This document will be completed by **November 3rd** and submitted for evaluation to the CCE by January 2021. It is requested that the presentation of this document is included in the COP10 agenda as part of the implementation of the Resolution for the Conservation of the Northwest Atlantic Leatherback. (*Annex IX – CIT-CC17-2020-Tec.16)*

b. Outreach Document on the Conservation Status of the Northwest Atlantic Leatherback CIT-CC17-2020-Doc.14 - Prepared by SeaLife Law and WWF Canada.

The representatives of SeaLife Law and WWF Canada, Olga Koubrak and Chelsea Boaler, respectively, presented the outreach document prepared for reaching out to non-IAC countries, such as Canada. At the end of the presentation, the SC delegates were consulted on the advantages of belonging to the IAC Convention, to add information on the benefits it would bring to other countries that are not members.

The SC Chair and Argentina´s delegate pointed out that accessing the Convention meant making a place for sea turtles on the government agenda. This allowed joining the government and NGOs efforts, resulting in greater visibility for issues and the activities that were already in place to

address them. The joint actions derived, among others, in the development of the national conservation plan that established the issue permanently on the governmental agenda.

The delegate from the United States added that the Convention contributes to implementing a top-down sea turtle conservation approach, mobilizing the participation of governments, and allowing that issues that are not generally discussed at the governmental level, such as the biology of sea turtles, become part of the government discussions.

Agreement 27 – The Scientific Committee adopted the document Northwest Atlantic Leatherback Turtles (*Dermochelys coriacea*): A Summary of Current Conservation Status, Challenges, and Opportunities as Technical Document CIT-CC17-2020-Tec.17 (*Annex X*) as an IAC Secretariat PT and Parties outreach tool, to raise awareness about the status of NWA leatherback and approach other countries to support the increase of the Convention´s membership.

7) Climate Change

Agreement 28 – Climate Change Working Group (Caribbean Netherlands, USA, and Brazil) will continue working and communicating with the countries participating in the pilot project to collect environmental parameters to monitor climate change (Costa Rica, Panamá, México, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, and the United States) to accompanying the implementation process of the project that will begin in 2021. Progress will be reported at the SC18 (*Annex XI - CIT-CC17-2020-Inf.2)*

8) Collaboration with RFMOs and Other International Regional Organizations

a. Collaboration IATTC – IAC

Project proposal for the second phase of the Model of Ecological Assessment of Sustainable Impacts of Fisheries (EASI-Fish) on Eastern Pacific Leatherback Turtles.

Agreement 29 – The Scientific Committee supports the recommendation to implement the second phase of the EASI-Fish model including EP leatherback distribution maps, and to continue the joint work IATTC-IAC along with all the collaborators (IATTC, IAC, Ecolibrium, Upwell) in this second phase. It is recommended to consider presenting results to the IAC COP10-2021.

Recommendation - Ecuador recommends preparing a concrete proposal on the purpose of what should be presented to the COP10 regarding the model results.

Agreement 30 – The IAC Scientific Committee delegates contributing to the IATTC- IAC collaboration will request the information required for the model to their relevant national agencies. The delegates will submit the information to the IAC Secretary *PT* and/or the EP Leatherback Task Force Coordinator for inclusion in the model second phase. The IAC SC delegates participating will be included as co-authors of the documents produced regarding the modeling process.

Agreement 31 – The SC delegates from Chile, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru y Panama will participate and contribute with information to this collaboration. The IAC Secretary *PT* will send a formal

communication to these countries Focal Points within the framework of the MoU IAC-IATTC with the information needed for the model.

b. CITES

Agreement 32 – CITES – IAC WG (Costa Rica and Caribbean Netherlands) will prepare recommendations from the SC to the COP10 based on the recommendations for the Inter-American region on pages 9 and 18 of the CITES report – *Status, scope and trends of the legal and illegal international trade in marine turtles, its conservation impacts, management options and mitigation priorities* – and the implementation of decision 17.222 and 17.223 on hawksbill -aligned with the IAC Resolution CIT-COP8-2017-R2- and other marine turtles. These recommendations will be submitted to the Secretary *PT* in the **first week of December 2020** and will include mechanisms for their implementation in the countries of the Convention as they are all members of CITES.

c. SPAW

Agreement 33 – The Scientific Committed adopted the areas of work proposed by Belize and Caribbean Netherlands WG in document CIT-CC17-2020-Doc.10. The priority for 2021 will be that the members of the Scientific and Consultative committee that are members of the Northwest Atlantic Leatherback Working Group and participated in the development of WIDECAST Technical Report No.16, worked with the United States delegate to the CCE (the only member of this committee WG), and request the Secretary *PT* to invite SPAW advisory committee to become a member of the IAC Working Group on Northwest Atlantic Leatherback if they haven´t already. This activity will be coordinated by the WG formed with the SPAW/IAC Parties: Belize (coordinator) and Caribbean Netherlands. (*Annex XII – CIT-CC17-2020-Doc.10).*

d. RAMSAR

Agreement 34 - The Scientific Committed adopted the areas of work with Ramsar proposed by the delegation of the Dominican Republic in the document CIT-CC17-2020-Doc.11. The priority for 2020-2021 will be updating the technical document CIT-CC10-2013-Tec.6 "Wetlands of International Importance and Sea Turtle Conservation" by including the Dominican Republic and other IAC Parties information that needs to be updated. The IAC SC members will send their updates to the Secretary ***PT* not later than November 16, 2020,** to share it with Ramsar Secretariat and define the mechanism to update the tables and maps in the document (*Annex XIII – CIT-CC17-2020-Doc.11*).

Agreement 35 – The Secretary *PT* will reach out to Ramsar Secretary to -as feasible as possible for both Secretariat- include the Dominican Republic information presented in Document CIT-CC17-2020-Doc.11 and its respective map, to Table 1 of document CIT-CC10-2013-Tec.6 on Ramsar Sites with the presence of Sea Turtles in the Americas, and the include more updates to this document from the SC members.

e. ACAP Agreement for the Conservation of Albatross and Petrels

Agreement 36 – The coordinator (Argentina) will schedule a meeting with the SC Delegates from Chile, Peru, Mexico, and Ecuador to establish a work plan for implementing activities with ACAP. This coordination should begin in the **first week of December 2020**.

Agreement 37 – The coordinator will schedule a meeting with ACAP´s bycatch working group to present a work plan based on the document CIT-CC17-2020-Doc.12 prepared by Argentina, and identify a priority activity, such as seabirds and sea turtle bycatch (*Annex XIV – CIT-CC17-2020-Doc.12*).

9) Preparation of the next SC meeting (SC18)

Agreement 38 – The IAC Scientific Committee elected Ms. Leslie Camila Bustos, Chile´s delegate, as the Scientific Committee Chair, and Dr. Heriberto Santana, Mexico´s delegate, as Vicechair for two years.

Agreement 39 – The next meeting format, and the host country, will be decided subject to the public health situation in 2021.

Annex I

Participants List – CIT-CC17-2020-Inf.1

No.	PAIS/COUNTRY	NOMBRE/NAME	ORGANIZACIÓN/INSTITUTION	E-MAIL
	DELEGADOS/DELEGATES			
01	Argentina	Diego Albareda	Presidente Comité Científico/Scientific Committee Chair	diego.albareda@gmail.com
02	Argentina	Romina Smeraldi	Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores	smk@mrecic.gov.ar
03	Belize	Kirah Forman	Belize Fisheries Department	kirahforman@yahoo.com
04	Brazil	Cecilia Baptistotte	Tamar-ICMBIO Center	cecilia.baptistotte@icmbio.gov.br
05	Brazil	Alexsandro Dos Santos	Fundación Projeto TAMAR	alex@tamar.org.br
06	Brazil	Erik Santos	Tamar-ICMBIO Center	erik.santos@icmbio.gov.br
07	Caribbean Netherlands	Julia Horrocks	The University of West Indies - Barbados	julia.horrocks@cavehill.uwi.edu
08	Costa Rica	Didiher Chacon Chaverri	WIDECAST América Latina	dchacon@widecast.org
09	Chile	Leslie Bustos	Subsecretaría de Pesca	lbustos@subpesca.cl
10	Ecuador	Jennifer Suarez	Parque Nacional Galápagos	jmsuarez@galapagos.gob.ec
11	Ecuador	Eduardo Espinoza Herrrera	Parque Nacional Galápagos	eespinoza@galapagos.gob.ecd
12	Ecuador	Geanella Ochoa	Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Movilidad Humana	dads@cancilleria.gob.ec
13	Ecuador	Walter Schuldt	Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Movilidad Humana	wschuldt@cancilleria.gob.ec
14	Ecuador	Carlos Alomía	Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Movilidad Humana	calomia00@hotmail.com
15	Guatemala	Airam López Roulet	CONAP – Sección de Recurso Hidrobiológicos	hidrobiologicosconap@gmail.com
16	México	Heriberto Santana	Instituto Nacional de Pesca - INAPESCA	heriberto.santana@inapesca.gob.mx
17	Panamá	Marino Abrego	Ministerio de Ambiente de Panamá – Dir. Costas y Mares	meabrego@miambiente.gob.pa
18	Perú	Javier Quiñones	Instituto del Mar de Perú - IMARPE	jquinones@imarpe.gob.pe
19	Perú	Jennifer Chauca	Instituto del Mar de Perú - IMARPE	jchauca@imarpe.gob.pe
20	República Dominicana	Cristiana De La Rosa	Viceministerio de Recursos Costeros y Marinos	cristiana.delarosa@ambiente.gob.do
21	República Dominicana	Karina Hierro	Acuario Nacional	karinaesther@gmail.com
22	República Dominicana	Ricardo Rodríguez	Viceministerio de Recursos Costeros y Marinos	ricardo.rodriguez@ambiente.gob.do
23	Uruguay	Cecilia Lezama	DINARA	clezama@mgap.gub.uy
24	United States	Jeffrey Seminoff	NOAA	Jeffrey.seminoff@noaa.gov
25	United States	Yonat Swimmer	NOAA	yonat.swimmer@noaa.gov
26	United States	Ann Marie Lauritsen	NOAA	annmarie.lauritsen@noaa.go
27	United States	Joseph Fette	U.S. Department of State	fetteja@state.gov
28	Venezuela	Marvin Jiménez	Ministerio del Poder Popular para el Ecosocialismo	diversidadbiologicaven.dg@gmail.com
29	Venezuela	Carliz Díaz	Ministerio del Poder Popular para el Ecosocialismo	carlizdiaz@gmail.com

PRESIDENTE DE LA COP/COP CHAIR				
30	Costa Rica	Rotney Piedra	Presidente de la COP/COP Chair	rotney.piedra@sinac.go.cr
	COMITÉ CONSULTIVO DE EXPERTOS/CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS			
31	México	Eduardo Ponce	Presidente CCE/CCE Chair	jponce@conanp.gob.mx
32	México	Laura Sarti	CONANP	lsarti@conanp.gob.mx
33	United States	Bryan Wallace	Sectorial Científico CCE/ CCE Sectorial Scientific	bryanpwallace@gmail.com
	OBSERVER COUNTRY DELEGATES AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS/ OBSERVADORES DELEGADOS DE PAÍS Y ORGANIZACIONES INTERNACIONALES			
34	Canada	Katherine Hastings	Fisheries and Oceans Canada / Government of Canada	katherine.hastings@dfo-mpo.gc.ca
35	Canada	Jose Benchetrit	Fisheries and Oceans Canada / Government of Canada	Jose.Benchetrit@dfo-mpo.gc.ca
36	Canada	Michael C. James	Fisheries and Oceans Canada / Government of Canada	Mike.James@dfo-mpo.gc.ca
37	United States	Shane Griffiths	IATTC	**sgriffiths@iattc.org**
38	French Guyana	Mathilde Lasfargue	OFB	**coordination.pnatmg@ofb.gouv.fr**
IAC ACREDITED OBSERVERS/OBSERVADORES ACREDITADOS DE LA CIT				
39	Argentina	Laura Prosdocimi	Ministerio de Agricultura, Ganadería y Pesca	lprosdo@yahoo.com.ar
40	Canada	Olga Koubrak	SeaLife Law	okoubrak@sealifelaw.org
41	Canada	Chelsea Boaler	WWF Canada	cboaler@wwfcanada.org
42	Costa Rica	Magie Rodríguez Esquivel	AIDA	mrodriguez@aida-americas.org
43	Costa Rica	María José Gonzalez	AIDA	mjgonzalezbernat@aida-americas.org
44	Ecuador	Macarena Parra	Fundación Charles Darwin	macarena.parra@fcdarwin.org.ec
45	México	Alejandro Olivera	Center for Biological Diversity	aolivera@biologicaldiversity.org
46	United States	Royal Gardner	Stetson University College of Law	Gardner@law.stetson.edu
47	United States	Erin Okuno	Stetson University College of Law	okuno@law.stetson.edu
48	United States	Lauren Beames	Stetson University College of Law	lbeames@law.stetson.edu
49	Uruguay	Alejandro Fallabrino	Karumbé	afalla7@gmail.com
50	Venezuela	Hedelvy Guada	WIDECAST	hjguada@gmail.com
	SECRETARIA CIT/IAC SECRETARIAT			
51	CIT	Verónica Cáceres	Secretary PT CIT	veronica@seaturtle.org
52	CIT	Luz Helena Rodríguez	CIT	asistentecit@gmail.com
53	CIT	Paul Schiftan	Interpreter	pschiftan@yahoo.com
54	CIT	Gloria Perdú	Interpreter II	centro@oxfordhn.org
55	Oxford Center	Nabil Pavón	Technical Support	centro@oxfordhn.org
(55 participants) 29 SC delegates and advisers, COP chair, 3 CCE delegates, 17 Observers, 5 IAC				

Annex II

Agenda SC17

CIT-CC17-2020-Doc.1

Day 1 / Time 11:00 am – 4:00 PM EST (Washington DC)

11:00 a.m. Participants connection to the conference (15 min)
Platform: Zoom with simultaneous interpretation.

11:15 – 11:40 a.m. Welcome remarks, introduction of participants, and adoption of the agenda.
Scientific Committee Chair, *Dr. Diego Albareda*
CIT-CC17-2020-Doc.1
CIT-CC17-2020-Inf.1 Participants List

Compliance with the Scientific Committee Work Plan 2019-2020, progress, and results

11:40 – 12:30 p.m. Report on compliance with the Scientific Committee Work Plan, intersessional activities, and results. CIT-CC17-2020-Doc.2
Dr. Diego Albareda, CC Chair

12:30 – 1:00 p.m. Updating of the Scientific Committee Work Plan
CIT-CC17-2020-Doc.3
Dr. Diego Albareda, CC Chair, and Working Groups

1:00 – 1:30 p.m. Report on the CCE13 Consultative Committee of Experts.
Dr. Eduardo Ponce, CCE Chair.

Exceptions

1:30 – 2:00 p.m. **Break**

2:00 – 2:30 p.m. Scientific Committee recommendations to Guatemala´s five-years report on the implementation of the Resolution on Exceptions in Guatemala CIT-COP6-2013-R1 – *Exceptions Working Group (D. Chacón, C. Batistotte, J. Horrocks)*
CIT-CC17-2020-Doc.4A Exception Report Guatemala and Pre-recorded Presentation
CIT-CC17-2020-Doc.4B

2:30 – 3:00 p.m. Scientific Committee recommendations to Costa Rica´s five-years report on the implementation of the Resolution on Exceptions in Costa Rica CIT-COP7-2015-R1 – *Exceptions Working Group (D. Chacón, C. Batistotte, J. Horrocks)*
CIT-CC17-2020-Doc.5A Exception Report Costa Rica and Pre-recorded Presentation
CIT-CC17-2020-Doc.5B

3:00 – 3:30 p.m. Adoption of Scientific Committee recommendations to Costa Rica´s and Guatemala Exceptions and Discussion on the drafting of a Resolution with guidelines for the implementation and monitoring of the exception's management plan – Dr. *Diego Albareda*

Sea Turtle Conservation Status

3:30 – 4:00 p.m. Discussion on the Scientific Committee Technical Reports periodicity

Progress report on the collaboration strategy with MTSG y SWOT to work together on a) preparation of a product on Sea Turtle Conservation Status and recommendations to the IAC Parties and b) compiling information available regarding sea turtle conservation status – *Dr. Diego Albareda*

Day 2 – Starting at 11:00 AM – 4:00 PM (EST)

Fisheries interactions with Sea Turtles

11:00 – 11:30 a.m Peru´s pilot program to quantify the release of EP leatherbacks caught in gillnet fisheries within the framework of actions to implement Resolution CIT-COP7-2015-R2 – *Dr. Javier Quiñones (Fisheries WG Coordinator)*
CIT-CC17-2020-Doc.6 and Pre-recorded Presentation

11:30 – 12:30 p.m. Recommendation of methodology to analyze the information on the interaction between industrial longline fisheries and sea turtles reported by countries in the IAC Annual Report, and presentation of a preliminary report on the data analysis of Annual Report 2020 industrial longline fisheries data to prepare for COP10 *Dr. Heriberto Santana (Fisheries WG)*
CIT-CC17-2020-Doc.7 and Pre-recorded Presentation

12:30 – 01:30 p.m. Recommendation of a form to collect information on the interaction between gillnet fisheries and sea turtles and methodology to analyze these data – *Ecuador Delegate (Fisheries WG)*
CIT-CC17-2020-Doc.8

01:30 – 2:00 p.m. Datasheet to report sea turtle stranding – *Dr. Javier Quiñones (Fisheries WG)*
CIT-CC17-2020-Doc.9 and Pre-recorded Presentation

2:00 – 2:30 p.m. **Break**

Northwest Atlantic Leatherback

2:30 – 03:00 p.m. Scientific Committee recommendations to the COP10 on critical areas for the conservation of the Northwest Atlantic Leatherback – Resolution CIT-

COP9-2019-R1 - CIT-CC17-2020-Doc.13 MSc. *Didiher Chacón*

3:00 – 3:30 p.m. Outreach document on the status of the Northwest Atlantic Leatherback Turtle.
CIT-CC17-2020-Doc.14 – Document presented by *Sealife Law* and WWF Canada.

Climate Change

3:30 – 4:00 p.m. Progress report on the implementation of the Pilot Project to collect environmental data to measure the impact of climate change on sea turtles. - *Dr. Julia Horrocks and Dr. Jeffrey Seminoff, Climate Change Working Group* CIT-CC17-2020-Inf.2

Day 3 – Starting at 11:00 AM – 3:00 PM (EST)

Collaboration with Regional International Organizations and RFMOs

11:00 – 11:30 a.m Collaboration IAC-IATTC: Project proposal for the second phase of the Model Ecological Assessment of Sustainable Impacts of Fisheries (EASI-Fish) on Eastern Pacific Leatherbacks. *Dr. Bryan Wallace (CCE and Leatherback Task Force Coordinator)*

11:30 – 11:45 a.m. Recommendations to COP10 on CITES "Status report of legal and illegal Trade of sea turtles". (*Working Group M.Sc. D. Chacon, Dr. J. Horrocks)* Links to documents: https://cites.org/sites/default/files/notif/E-Notif-2020-035-A2.pdf
https://cites.org/sites/default/files/esp/cop/18/doc/S-CoP18-070.pdf

11:45 – 12:00 p.m. Proposal of activities to collaborate with SPAW Protocol
Biol. Kirah Forman (SPAW WG Coordinator) CIT-CC17-2020-Doc.10

12:00 – 12:20 p.m. Recommendation from Scientific Committee on activity/project within the framework of Ramsar Resolution xiii.24 on the enhanced conservation of coastal marine turtle habitats and the designation of key areas as Ramsar sites. – *Ms. Cristiana de la Rosa*
CIT-CC17-2020-Doc.11
https://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/library/xiii.24_sea_turtles_e.pdf

12:20 – 12:30 p.m. Strategy to work jointly with GECT RAMSAR – *Dr. Diego Albareda*

12:30 – 01:00 p.m. Proposal and work plan for implementation of activities identified within the framework of the MoU IAC-ACAP– *Dr. Diego Albareda*
CIT-CC17-2020-Doc.12

01:00 – 01:30 p.m. **Break**

01:30 – 02:00 p.m. Adoption of Recommendations from the Scientific Committee

Preparation of the next meeting (SC18)

2:00 – 3:00 p.m. Election of the Scientific Committee Chair and Vice-Chair 2020-2022

SC18 host country nomination and Closing remarks

The Meeting Documents will be sent by email and Dropbox to delegates
https://www.dropbox.com/sh/ox6a0boi8vbb7x5/AABp56nFSyDzHZPOa3I9z9Kta?dl=0
Reference documents below

Report Scientific Committee 2019

- http://www.iacseaturtle.org/eng-docs/comite-cientifico/Final%20Report%20SC16_CIT-CC16-2019-Doc.10_Web.pdf

Report Consultative Committee 2020

- http://www.iacseaturtle.org/eng-docs/comite-consultivo/13reunion/CIT-CC13-2020-Doc.7_CCE13_Final%20Report_15May2020_Web.pdf

Resolutions on Exceptions in Guatemala and Costa Rica

- http://www.iacseaturtle.org/eng-docs/resolucionesCOP7CIT/CIT-COP7-2015-R1_Exception_Costa_Rica_ENG_7.15.15_ADOPTED.pdf

- http://www.iacseaturtle.org/eng-docs/resolucionesCOP6CIT/CIT-COP6-2013-R1_Exceptions_Final.pdf

Ramsar: Resolution

- https://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/library/cop13doc.18.26_rev1_dr_sea_turtles_s.pdf

CITES: Status, scope, and trends of the legal and illegal international trade in marine turtles

- https://cites.org/sites/default/files/notif/E-Notif-2020-035-A2.pdf

Annex III

CIT-CC17-2020-Doc.2

Report on the Implementation of the Scientific Committee Work Plan 2019-2021

The following document is presented by the Scientific Committee Chair and the Secretary *Pro Tempore*¸ and lists the status of the activities agreed during CC15 (2018), COP9 (2019), and CC16 (2019) of the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles included in the IAC Scientific Committee Work Plan 2019-2021. The status of the activities is defined as green "completed"; yellow is in progress, and red "no action". The items in blue are for discussion at the CC17-2020. The list is organized by theme and divided into two columns, 1) the activity and 2) explanation for the status shown by the respective color. As agreed by the COP9 this report will be presented at the Scientific Committee meetings and the Conference of Parties with its corresponding updates.

To carry out the activities the working groups have held the following 2019-2020 inter-sessions meetings: Fisheries (6 meetings), Climate Change (2 meetings), Exceptions (3 meetings), Online Reporting System (3 meetings), IAC-IATTC collaboration (3 meetings).

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE (SC)

	Activity Proposed	Status – December 16th, 2020	
Exceptions			
1	Panama presents its 5-years report on the implementation of the exception to the COP9 and the Scientific Committee SC16 Meeting in 2019.	Panama presented its 5-year report on the implementation of its Exception at the COP9 and SC16-2019.	
2	The Exceptions Working Group (WG) submits recommendations to Panama´s 5-years report to the Consultative Committee. Due Date: May 15th, 2020.	Exceptions WG submitted recommendations to CCE and subsequently to Panamá. Submission Date: September 3rd, 2020.	
3	Meeting with Panama Focal Point from Ministry of Environment and Focal Point from Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the IAC Chairs of the SC, CEE, and COP, and representative of Exception WG, to discuss the recommendations on exceptions and answer questions from Panama related to the next steps to prepare the Exception Management Plan.	The meeting took place on October 12, 2020.	

	Activity Proposed	Status – December 16th, 2020	
4	Panama will prepare a work plan including how they will implement the recommendations from SC and CCE, the opportunities, and challenges. This Work plan will be shared with the Exception working Group by December 2020.	Pending of submission	
5	Exception WG meeting with Panama Focal Point to discuss the work plan in January 2021.	See No.4	
6	**Recommendations from COP:** Panamá presents the exception management plan to the Scientific Committee.	Panamá reported to the SC16 that the preparation of the management plan is still in progress. Panama will present an update at SC18 2021	
7	**Recommendations from COP:** Guatemala presents the management plan and the 5-years report on the implementation of the exception for reviewing by the Scientific Committee SC17-2020.	Guatemala presented the following document to the SC17 on August 20, 2020: 1) 5-years progress report on the implementation of the resolution on exceptions CIT-COP6-2013-R1 Report 2016-2019 2) **PRODUCT 2**: Olive ridley (*Lepidochelys olivacea*) in Guatemala´s Pacific Coast. 3) **PRODUCT 3**: Proposal on economic alternatives to meet subsistence needs to reduce the harvest of olive ridley's eggs to a sustainable level. 4) **PRODUCT 5**: Assessment of items in Resolution CIT-COP6-2013-R1	
8	Exceptions WG reviews the documents submitted by Guatemala to assess compliance with the Resolution´s requirements.	Exceptions WG presents recommendations to Guatemala at the 17th Scientific Committee meeting SC17-20202. Responsible: Delegates from Costa Rica, Caribbean Netherlands, and Brazil.	
9	Exceptions WG presents a document with recommendations to Guatemala for review by the Scientific Committee on January 5th and the Consultative Committee on January 15th.	A new WG workplan was established during the SC17 and the final document with recommendations was scheduled for submission for the Consultative Committee on January 15th.	
10	Exceptions Working Group (WG) and Scientific Committee – SC16 review Panama and Guatemala 5-years report and prepare an updated draft Resolution on Exceptions.	No draft Resolution was received during the SC16 inter-sessional period.	
11	Costa Rica presents the 5-year report on the implementation of the exception for reviewing by the Scientific Committee SC17-2020.	Costa Rica presented the document "Costa Rica progress report on the exceptions resolution CIT-COP7-2015-R1" on July 20, 2020, to the SC Chair	

Activity Proposed		Status – December 16th, 2020	
		and the Secretary *PT*. The report was submitted to the Exceptions WG.	
12	Exceptions WG reviews Costa Rica´s 5-years progress report on the implementation of the exceptions Resolution, to assess compliance with the Resolution´s requirements.	Exceptions WG presents recommendations to Costa Rica at the 17th Scientific Committee meeting CC17-2020. Responsible: Delegates from Costa Rica, Caribbean Netherlands, and Brazil.	
13	Exceptions WG presents a document with recommendations to Costa Rica for review by the Scientific Committee on January 5th and the Consultative Committee on January 15th.	A new WG workplan was established during the SC17 and the final document with recommendations was scheduled for submission for the Consultative Committee on January 15th.	
14	Exceptions WG reviews feedback from the CCE on the recommendations to Guatemala and Costa Rica and prepare the final document.	The document is pending to be submitted to the CCE	
15	Recommendations to the Exceptions five-year report will be submitted to Guatemala and Costa Rica Focal Points through the Secretary *PT* and discussed in two meetings, one for each country, at the end of April 2021.	The document is pending to be submitted to the CCE	
16	Exceptions WG reviews Costa Rica Exception Resolution and decides whether an update is required.	Exceptions WG and the SC, CC, and COP Chair will discuss inter-sessions the need to prepare a new resolution on Exceptions.	
17	The SC Chair will present the analysis of the exceptions in Panama, Guatemala, and Costa Rica to the 10th IAC Conference of Parties.	The final document is pending submission to the Scientific and Consultative Committee of Experts.	
Website and IAC News Bulletin			
18	Monthly, the Scientific Committee will provide news relevant to IAC Parties to the Secretary *Pro Tempore* for the IAC Newsletter.	News updated on the website. Three news bulletins were posted. More proactivity from the Parties sending their national news to the Secretary *PT* is required.	
Fisheries			
19	**Recommendation from CCE to SC:** Develop a method to analyze data on interactions between sea turtles and industrial longline (Table 3 of 2020 IAC Annual Report)	Fisheries WG prepared a presentation and recommendations on the method to analyze data included in the Annual Report for the consideration of the Scientific Committee SC17 Products: Database to analyze the IAC Annual Report longline data. Responsible: Delegate from Mexico.	
20	The Scientific Committee reviews the report and database to analyze the Annual Report Table 3 data (Interactions between sea turtles and longline) proposed by WG.	The SC provides recommendations to Fisheries WG on the method to analyze the Annual Report Table 3 data at the Scientific Committee 17th Meeting SC17-2020.	

	Activity Proposed	Status – December 16th, 2020	
21	The Fisheries WG delegate from Mexico will meet the SC USA delegation to prepare a preliminary report for the CCE and COP10.	Mexico´s delegate sent information to the USA delegates	
22	**Recommendations from CCE to SC:** Develop a data collection form and a method to analyze data on the interaction between sea turtles and gillnets.	Fisheries WG prepared a report and presentation for the consideration and recommendations from the SC17. Product: Form to collect data on gillnet interactions with sea turtles and Database to analyze gillnets data. Responsible: Delegate from Ecuador	
23	The Scientific Committee reviews the form, database, and methodology to analyze data on interactions between sea turtles and gillnets at the SC17-2020.	The Scientific Committee (USA, Caribbean Netherlands, and Guatemala) provided recommendations to Fisheries WG regarding the form and database for gillnets data at the SC17-2020.	
24	Fisheries WG reviews recommendations to adjust the gillnets database and form to present them to the CCE in 2021	The document to be presented at the CCE is under preparation	
25	**Recommendations from the COP:** Review the IAC Annual Report table to monitor Fisheries Resolution and prepare a list of priority information and recommendations.	Recommendations presented by Chile and Mexico delegates included in the SC16 report – CIT-CC16-2019-Doc.10	
26	The Scientific Committee reviews fisheries WG recommendations presented at the SC16 and included in the report CIT-CC16-2019-Doc.10.	The SC17 must submit recommendations to the COP10 (according to number 18).	
27	Fisheries WG presents a proposal to update IAC Resolution COP3/2006/R-2 to the Consultative Committee on the Reduction of Adverse Fisheries Impacts.	Draft to update the IAC Resolution in preparation to be presented at the 2021 Consultative Committee.	
	Index Beaches Conservation Status		
28	**Recommendation from COP**: Collect information on annual nesting in the IAC Parties index beaches and analyze it every 5 years. Next technical document on nesting in 2023.	The WG was formed by the IAC Scientific Committee. Dr. Jeff Seminoff (USA Delegate) and the Secretariat *PT* have been preparing the updates of this document since 2014. They continue with the update of the Technical Document on IAC index beaches nesting 2009-2022 to present it to the Scientific Committee 2023 and COP13 – 2025.	
	Climate Change		
29	**Recommendation from COP:** Climate Change WG, and delegates in charge of the pilot project implementation from the USA, Ecuador, Costa Rica, Mexico, and Panama held their 1st meeting on August 12, 2020, to present their progress and challenges in the	WG presents a progress report on the implementation of the pilot project and the next steps resulting from the meeting with the project implementation team at CC17 - 2020.	

	Activity Proposed	Status – December 16th, 2020	
	implementation of the Pilot Project on environmental data to monitor climate change impacts.		
30	The United States, Costa Rica, and Mexico begin collecting information on environmental parameters in the second half of 2020.	The United States, Costa Rica, and Mexico present a progress update at the WG 2nd meeting in 2020.	
31	The second WG meeting on the implementation of the pilot project is scheduled for the third week of January 2021.	Climate Change WG prepares a 2nd meeting report with recommendations to begin the project implementation in the first quarter of 2021.	
32	WG will present a progress report on the implementation of the Pilot Project at the SC18	2021 results will be recorded to include them in the report	
	Eastern Pacific Leatherback *Dermochelys coriacea*		
33	Members of the Scientific Committee from Peru, Chile, and Mexico provided recommendations to the Coordinator of the EP Leatherback Task Force Dr. Bryan Wallace, to present them to the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) in the 2018 and 2019 Bycatch WG meetings.	The IATTC approved Resolution C-19-04 to mitigate impacts on sea turtles, which includes IAC contributions.	
34	Members of the Scientific Committee and the EP Leatherback Task Force from Costa Rica, the United States, Mexico, and Peru provide comments on the document prepared under the IATTC-IAC MoU "Vulnerability Status and Efficacy of Potential Conservation Measures for The East Pacific Leatherback Turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*) Stock using the EASI-Fish Approach"	Document "Vulnerability Status and Efficacy of Potential Conservation Measures for The East Pacific Leatherback Turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*) Stock using the EASI-Fish Approach", presented to the IATTC Bycatch WG on June 4, 2020.	
35	The Scientific Committee recommends the implementation of the EASI-Fish model second phase on habitat distribution. It is recommended to present the results at the COP10.	The delegates from Chile, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama, and Peru will request the information for the EASI-Fish second phase to their national agencies to then submit it to the IAC Secretary *PT* and/or to the IAC EP Leatherback Task Force coordinator. Preliminary results will be presented at the COP10.	
36	Prepare a stranding and necropsy standard protocol adapted to the Eastern Pacific leatherback.	SC delegate from Peru prepared a standing and necropsy protocol and its corresponding report, included in the documents presented to the consideration of the SC17. Available on the IAC Website.	
37	Peru develops a pilot program to measure the number of leatherbacks releases from gillnet fisheries for a year in the region of	SC Delegate from Peru presents this activity´s report and results to the SC17.	

	Activity Proposed	Status – December 16th, 2020	
	Lambayeque. Peru presents this activity´s report to the SC17 as a follow-up on the implementation of the Resolution for the EP Leatherback Conservation.	SC17-2020 recommendations are expected to implement similar activities in other IAC Parties where the EP Leatherback resolution applies.	
38	A request including the presentation of Lambayeque´s pilot project in the COP10 agenda to exhort the IAC Parties within the EP Leatherback range to implement similar strategies within the framework of the EP Leatherback Resolution CIT-COP7-2015-R2.	Recommendation to include the presentation on Lambayeque´s pilot program in the COP10 is pending.	
39	Prepare a "template" report for each Leatherback WG member country (Peru, Chile, Mexico, and Ecuador) on the status of occurrence of the EP Leatherback and its threats.	Guidelines for the template will be included in the draft to update the EP Leatherback Resolution.	
40	Collect bibliographic data on leatherback bycatch in fisheries at IAC Parties to identify other threats.	Bibliographic data requests will be included in the draft to update the EP Leatherback Resolution.	
41	Develop a strategy for a training/workshop, targeting small-scale fisheries, on sea turtles handling and release, which will be replicated in the EP Parties within the framework of the EP Leatherback Resolution.	Fisheries WG agreed on presenting results at the SC18-2021, after obtaining information regarding gillnet fisheries.	
	Northwest Atlantic Leatherback *Dermochelys coriacea*		
42	**Recommendation from COP** – Scientific Committee prepares a table on compliance with the Northwest Atlantic Leatherback Resolution for adoption at the SC16 and inclusion in the IAC annual report.	Table prepared by the SC16 adopted and submitted to the CCE. Table adopted by CCE and included in the current IAC Annual Report.	
43	**Recommendation from COP** - SC prepares a form to report data of Northwest Atlantic Leatherback bycatch in longline fisheries for adoption at SC16 and inclusion in the IAC Annual Report,	Form to collect data on longline and sea turtles prepared by SC and presented to the CCE13-2020, including all sea turtle species. The form to collect longline data was adopted by the CCE and is included in the current IAC Annual Report 2020 as table 3.	
44	**Recommendation from COP** - The Scientific Committee identifies areas critical for the protection of the Northwest Atlantic Leatherback and recommends these areas' protection to the IAC Parties.	The Technical Document CIT-CC17-2020-Tec.16 on critical areas for the Northwest Atlantic Leatherback will be presented at the COP10.	
45	NWA Leatherback WG Leatherback prepares a technical document based on document CIT-CCE5-2012-Tec.3, to be used as a tool to approach countries that are not IAC members within the range of the NWA Leatherback.	The document prepared by SeaLife Law and WWF Canada was adopted as Technical Document CIT-CC17-2020-Tec.17.	

	Activity Proposed	Status – December 16th, 2020	
Green Turtle *Chelonia mydas*			
46	**Recommendation from COP**: Technical Document CIT-CC15-2018-Tec.15 "Green Turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) Nesting Trends in the Eastern Pacific Ocean: Status Update and Conservation Priorities" prepared by WG formed by Ecuador, Chile, United States, and Peru.	The technical document on Green Turtles status was presented and adopted by the CCE and is available on the IAC website.	
Sea Turtle Conservation Status			
47	Draft an IAC technical documents standard form, when possible.	Chile and Ecuador will present options of forms a the SC18.	
48	Update report CIT-CC13-2016-Tec.13: Status of Loggerhead Turtles Within Nations of the IAC every 4 years.	*C. caretta* WG will develop a work plan to update the document for the COP10-2021.	
49	**Recommendation from COP -** Members of the Scientific Committee that belong to the MTSG-IUCN promote an approach for joint work between the IAC and MTSG-IUCN, SWOT, or other organizations related to the convention, to collaborate with information on sea turtle's conservation status that allows the SC to make recommendations to the COP.	The delegate from Argentina will establish a procedure to collaborate with IUCN MTSF and SWOT to then report the results to the SC Chair and the SC18. The US delegate suggested the potential to collaborate with SWOT on the IAC index beaches report.	
50	Scientific Committee Chair sends a communication to the MTSG.	See status in No. 49	
51	**Recommendation from COP:** Collect available information on sea turtle conservation status.	Documents collected and the Scientific Committee should present a recommendation on Sea Turtle populations' status to IAC Parties. Discussion linked to numbers 36 and 37. It is nuclear therefore is back on the SC17 agenda.	
Collaboration with Other Organizations and Strategic Alliances			
52	**Recommendation from COP**: Under the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between IAC and the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP) on common work topics.	IAC-ACAP work topics prepared by the Scientific Committee Chair were adopted at the SC16.	
53	Establish a Working Group at the SC17, responsible for developing a strategy to implement activities with ACAP.	Scientific Committee recommends a specific activity to implement the IAC-ACAP MoU. Scientific Committee forms a WG in charge (Argentina, Chile, Peru, Mexico y Ecuador) The Working Group presents a strategy to implement activities with ACAP at the SC18.	
54	Implementation of MoU IAC -ACAP	SC implements a collaboration activity together with ACAP, using the strategy	

Activity Proposed		Status – December 16th, 2020	
		designed by the Scientific Committee WG. The WG Coordinator (Argentina) will schedule a meeting with ACAP´s WG on bycatch to present the work plan and identify a priority activity, such as seabirds and sea turtle's bycatch.	
55	Proposal by COP Chair: Scientific Committee identifies a collaboration activity based on the Wetlands Convention Sea Turtle Resolution.	SC16 agenda item pending for SC17. The Dominican Republic was requested to present recommendations. Responsible: Cristiana de la Rosa delegate from The Dominican Republic	
56	The SC members will submit their updates to the Secretary *PT* to submit them to Ramsar´s Secretariat and establish the procedure to update the information and maps of Technical document CIT-CC10-2013-Tec.6 "Wetlands of International Importance and Sea Turtle Conservation"	The Dominican Republic presented its data and the Secretariat *Pro Tempore* consulted feasibility with Ramsar´s Secretary obtaining a favorable response.	
57	Proposal for activities to develop with the SPAW Protocol at SC17-2020.	Belize and Caribbean Netherlands prepared recommendations of the activities to carry out under IAC-SPAW MoU, included in the SC17 work document. A final recommendation is expected at the SC17. Responsible: Kirah Forman delegate from Belize	
58	The SC and CCE members who are part of the NWA Leatherback working group will present a report on the joint work with SPAW delegates.	The Scientific Committee delegates will participate in this IAC collaborative working group along with the USA delegate to the CCE and SPAW delegate Ms. Olga Koubrak.	
59	Fisheries WG presents an intention note to the IATTC, to develop a model to explore fisheries management scenarios, and the costs and benefits of conservation measures for other species of sea turtles, like the one developed for EP leatherbacks.	Collaboration has not been requested as the EP Leatherback EASI-Fish model collaboration is ongoing, see No. 22. The Scientific Committee removed this item from its work plan.	
60	ICCAT: Review the 2013 MoU proposal with ICCAT and adjust it to present it to the CCE.	Secretary *PT* presented the MoU proposal to CCE, editions were made, and the draft is under ICCATs Secretariat review.	
61	Scientific Committee will make a recommendation to the Conference of Parties on conservation actions in the region based on CITES document – *"Status, scope, and trends of the legal and illegal international trade in marine turtles, its conservation impacts,*	The WG CITES-IAC will prepare the SC recommendations to the COP10 based on the Inter-American subregion recommendations on the CITES report on sea turtle trade, and on decisions 17.222 and 17.223 on hawksbill -aligned	

Activity Proposed		Status – December 16th, 2020	
	management options, and mitigation priorities"	with Resolution CIT-COP8-2017-R2- including implementation mechanisms in all the IAC Convention countries as they are all CITES members.	
62	**Recommendation from COP:** Coordinator (SC Vice-chair and Leatherback WG) will follow-up on the strategy to work with RFMOs adopted by the SC14 to inform the Scientific Committee and the IAC Parties.	Refer to No. 22 (Document EASI-Fish)	
63	**Recommendation from COP:** Review Scientific Committee Work Plan to include items that improve and activate cooperation with international organizations.	No recommendations on identified synergies have been made.	
Annual Report			
64	Analyze technical information in IAC Annual Reports.	-Refer to Number 18 -Preliminary data analysis on interactions between sea turtles and industrial longlines.	
65	Prepare a document with questions and suggestions for WCMC regarding Annual Report tables adaptation to the online system. Responsible: Annual Report WG (Brazil, Mexico, USA, and Chile), working with the Secretary *PT* for the system development and implementation.	Online report adjusted following the WG suggestions.	
66	United States, Chile, Brazil, and Mexico work with the Secretariat *PT* and WCMC to adapt fisheries data collection tables to the IAC Annual Report online system.	Tables on interactions with industrial longline adapted to the online report. The online system has been tested by Brazil and the United States. Four training workshops have been carried out with Brazil, Costa Rica, and the United States (Workshop 1), Peru and Ecuador (Workshop 2), Chile, Guatemala, Dominican Republic and Venezuela (Workshop 3), and Argentina, Uruguay, and Mexico (Workshop 4).	
Projects			
67	**Recommendation from COP:** Prepare recommendations of high priority projects to obtain funding, and other activities required to meet the IAC objectives.	No projects recommended	
IAC Experts Directory			
68	**Recommendation from COP:** Update the directory of experts on the IAC areas of interest.	Experts Directory updated on the website to April 9, 2020. http://www.iacseaturtle.org/docs/Directorio%20de%20Expertos%202020_Dire	

Activity Proposed		Status – December 16th, 2020	
		ctory%20of%20Experts%202020-v2.pdf	
Capacity Building			
69	Technical support of SC members in a multidisciplinary working group to follow up on the Artisanal Fisheries Facilities Project in Puerto Lopez, Manabí, Ecuador.	The Scientific Committee removed this item from its 2019 work plan.	
Recommendations from COP and Consultative Committee of Experts			
70	Address COP and Consultative Committee of Experts requests and make recommendations accordingly.	Requests are highlighted in the Work Plan and this document according to each subject.	
IAC Technical Documents			
71	Develop technical documents as needed.	The Technical Document on Green Turtles CIT-CC15-2018-Tec.15 published in the IAC website (See. No. 32)	
Work Plan			
72	Update the Scientific Committee Work Plan following IAC guidelines and COPs Resolutions.	Work Plan updated at the 17th Scientific Committee meeting, 2020	

Annex IV – Workplan

Actor	Topic	Proposed Action	Expected Results	Time Frame
EXCEPTIONS				
Exceptions WG and delegate from Panama	**Recommendation from COP**; Panama Exception Management Plan	1) Panama presents its exception Management Plan for review by the Scientific Committee.	2) Panama Exception Management Plan and recommendations by the Scientific Committee.	2) 2021
Exceptions WG (Argentina, Costa Rica, Caribbean Netherlands, Brazil, Guatemala, Panamá y México (CCE)).	Exceptions Costa Rica and Guatemala; Recommendation; 5 years report	2) Review and provide comments to Guatemala and Costa Rica reports. 3) Develop preliminary recommendations	2) Review comments to Guatemala and Costa Rica reports. 3) Preliminary recommendations for Guatemala and Costa Rica.	2 and 3) October 26 to November 23
Exceptions WG	Recommendations to Costa Rica and Guatemala	4) WG Meeting to agree on recommendations to adopt final comments	4) Final recommendations to Costa Rica and Guatemala	4) December 4th, 2020
Exceptions WG	Recommendations to Costa Rica and Guatemala; Final document	5) Prepare a document with final recommendations to Costa Rica and Guatemala	5) Document with final recommendations to Costa Rica y Guatemala	5) December 5th to January 3rd, 2021.
Exceptions WG and Scientific Committee	Recommendations to Costa Rica and Guatemala; SC	6) Submit the document with final recommendations to the Secretary *PT* to present it to the **Scientific Committee.**	6) Document submitted to the SC for adoption	6) January 5th, 2021

Actor	Topic	Proposed Action	Expected Results	Time Frame
Exceptions WG and Committee Consultative	Recommendations to Costa Rica and Guatemala; CCE	7) Submit the document with final recommendations to the Secretary *PT* to present it to the **Consultative Committee.**	7) Document with final recommendations submitted to the Consultative Committee	7) January 15th, 2021
Exceptions WG, Costa Rica, and Guatemala	Recommendations to Costa Rica and Guatemala; Final Product; Focal Points	8) Exceptions WG will review the CCE feedback regarding recommendations to Guatemala and Costa Rica and will prepare the final document. 9) The recommendations will be shared through the Secretary *PT* with Guatemala and Costa Rica Focal Points in two meetings, one for each country, with the participation of the respective Focal Points, the CCE, SC, and COP Chairs, and the WG representatives. The meetings will be scheduled not later than the end of April.	8) Final document for Costa Rica and Guatemala 9) Report on the meetings between the Exceptions WG with Costa Rica and Guatemala Focal Points, and the SC, CCE, and COP Chairs.	8 and 9) End of April 2021
WG Exceptions	Resolutions on exceptions in Costa Rica, Panama, and Guatemala	10) The Exceptions WG will discuss inter-sessions with the SC, CCE, and COP Chair on the need for a new Resolution on Exceptions for the countries, including basic guidelines to implement and monitor the Exception Management Plan in each country.	10) Report on the results of the discussion	10) Inter-sessions before COP2021
WG Exceptions; SC Chair	Presentation on Exceptions; COP10	11) The SC Chair will present the results on the analysis of the exceptions in Panama, Guatemala, and Costa Rica at the IAC 10th Conference of Parties.	11) Comments by the COP10 to the progress on the implementation of Exceptions in Panama, Guatemala, and Costa Rica.	11) COP10 - 2021

Actor	Topic	Proposed Action	Expected Results	Time Frame
IAC WEBSITE AND NEWS BULLETIN				
Scientific Committee, Secretariat *Pro Tempore*	IAC website and news bulletin	1) Every month, the SC will provide news relevant to IAC Parties to the Secretary *Pro Tempore* for the IAC Newsletter.	1) Updated news in the IAC website, and regular publication of the IAC's News Bulletin	Permanent
FISHERIES				
Fisheries WG (Chile, Peru, Ecuador, Uruguay, and Panama) and Scientific Committee.	Industrial Longline Report; COP10	1) Recommend including in the COP10 Agenda the presentation of the preliminary report on interactions with industrial longline	1) Presentation of the preliminary report on interactions with industrial longline included in the COP10 Agenda.	1) COP10
Delegates from Mexico and USA, and Fisheries WG	Report on interactions with industrial longline	2) The Fisheries WG delegate from Mexico will meet the SC USA delegation to prepare the preliminary report that will be presented to the CCE and the COP10.	2) Meeting with the SC USA delegation and other countries	2) February 2021
Mexico´s delegate, Fisheries WG	Report on interactions with industrial longline	3) The delegate from Mexico (a member of the Fisheries Working Group) will prepare a preliminary report to present it at the Consultative Committee in March 2021 and the COP10 in May 2021. 4) Update report on interaction with industrial longline	3) Report for the COP10 submitted in May 2021. 4) Report updated every 5 years (First report in 2024).	3) March 2021 4) Every 5 years
Fisheries WG and Scientific Committee	Interactions with gillnets fisheries forms	5) Recommend the CCE including the form of interactions with gillnets in the annual report	5) Form on interactions with gillnets, included in the annual report	4) January 15, 2021, and COP10

Actor	Topic	Proposed Action	Expected Results	Time Frame
Scientific Committee and Fisheries WG	Fisheries information in the annual report	6) The SC17 must establish the use of the recommendations made by the fisheries WG in the report by Chile and Mexico at SC16.	6) Procedure established to implement recommendations presented by Chile and Mexico at SC16.	5) CC17 - 2020
Fisheries WG and Scientific Committee	Fisheries resolution; Update	7) The Fisheries WG will present a draft to update Resolution CIT COP3/2006/R-2 to the Consultative Committee. Reduction of Fisheries Adverse Impacts.	7) Draft to update the IAC Resolution on Fisheries Adverse Impacts	6) January 2021
CONSERVATION STATUS IN INDEX NESTING BEACHES				
Nesting WG	**Recommendation from COP**; Conservation Status in Index Nesting Beaches	Collect information on annual nesting in index beaches using the form developed by the SC, and the IAC Annual Report. The Technical Document on IAC Index Beaches is updated every 5 years. Next update in 2023.	Technical Document with IAC index nesting beaches data analysis 2009-2022 to present to the Scientific Committee 2023 and COP13 - 2025.	2023
CLIMATE CHANGE				
Climate Change WG (Caribbean Netherlands, USA, and Brazil) and participant countries: USA, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, and the Dominican Republic	**Recommendation from COP**; Climate Change; Pilot Project	1) The Climate Change WG will present a progress report on the implementation of the Pilot Project at the SC18	1) Progress report on the implementation of the climate change pilot project at the SC18	1) SC18

Actor	Topic	Proposed Action	Expected Results	Time Frame
EASTERN PACIFIC LEATHERBACK *Dermochelys coriacea* DEL PACÍFICO ORIENTAL				
EP Leatherback Task Force and Scientific Committee	EP Leatherback and IATTC; Presentation COP10	1) The Scientific Committee recommends implementing the second phase of the EASI-Fish model including EP leatherback distribution maps, and to continue the joint work IATTC-IAC along with all the collaborators (IATTC, IAC, Ecolibrium, Upwell) in this second phase. It is recommended to consider presenting results to the IAC COP10-2021.	1) Presentation of preliminary result at the COP10	1) COP10
EP Leatherback Task Force and delegates from Chile, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama, and Peru	EP Leatherback; distribution data; IAC Parties	2) The delegates from Chile, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama y Peru will request the information required for the second phase of the EASI-Fish model to their relevant national agencies. The delegates will submit the information to the IAC Secretary *PT* and/or the EP Leatherback Task Force Coordinator for inclusion in the model second phase. The IAC SC delegates participating will be included as co-authors of the documents produced regarding the modeling process.	2) Data on the leatherback distribution provided by Chile, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama, and Peru included in the EASI-Fish model.	2) 2021
EP Leatherback Task Force and Secretary *PT*.	EP Leatherback, distribution data, IAC Parties.	3) The IAC Secretary *PT* will send a formal communication to these countries Focal Points requesting the information required for the model within the framework of the MoU IAC-IATTC.	3) Data on the leatherback distribution provided by Chile, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama, and Peru submitted to the Secretary *PT.*	3) 2021

Actor	Topic	Proposed Action	Expected Results	Time Frame
Scientific Committee, Peru´s delegate	EP Leatherback; Stranding form	4) The Scientific Committee delegates review and adopt the stranding form	4) Stranding form in the IAC website as a technical document	4) November 3, 2020
Scientific Committee and Secretary *PT*	EP Leatherback; Pilot Program Acknowledgment; Peru-Lambayeque	5) The Scientific Committee recognized the importance of the strategy implemented in Peru to mitigate EP Leatherback bycatch in gillnets, and its value for the population recovery. This recognition will be communicated to Peru´s Focal Point.	5) Recognition submitted to Peru´s Focal Point.	5) Intersessions
Scientific Committee and Secretary *PT*	EP Leatherback; Peru Program; Presentation; Recommendation to COP10	6) Request including the presentation on Lambayeque´s pilot program in the COP10 agenda to recommend the IAC Parties within the EP Leatherback range considering implementing similar strategies to the one in Peru, within the framework of Resolution CIT-COP7-2015-R2 EP Leatherback.	6) Recommendation to COP10	6) COP10
Fisheries and EP Leatherback WG	EP Leatherback, Workshops on handling and release, small scale fisheries.	7) Prepare a strategy for a workshop targeting small-scale fisheries, on sea turtle safe handling and release, which can be implemented in the Eastern Pacific IAC Parties, within the framework of the EP Leatherback Resolution.	7) Draft strategy including (1) objectives and agenda, (3) design of the workshop, (4) budget by country, (5) potential sponsors, and (6) other considerations. This strategy will be presented at the SC18 (2021).	7) Inter-sessions 2020 – 2021 (CC18)
NORTHWEST ATLANTIC LEATHERBACK *Dermochelys coriacea*				
NWA Leatherback WG (Costa Rica, Brazil,	**Recommendation from COP**; NWA Leatherback,	1) Request the Consultative Committee of Experts recommend that the presentation of the technical document on the critical areas for the	1) Presentation of Technical Document on critical areas for the Northwest Atlantic Leatherback at the COP10 CIT-CC17-2020-Tec.16	1) COP10 - 2021

Actor	Topic	Proposed Action	Expected Results	Time Frame
Caribbean Netherlands, and Bryan Wallace- CCE).	critical areas for conservation.	Northwest Atlantic Leatherback CIT-CC17-2020-Tec.16 is included in the COP10 agenda as part of the implementation of Resolution CIT-COP9-2019-R2.		
SEA TURTLE CONSERVATION STATUS				
SC delegates from Chile y Ecuador	Standard form; sea turtle status	1) The SC discussed the need to propose a standardized format for the IAC technical documents, whenever possible. Chile and Ecuador delegates offered to present a draft form in the SC18 – 2021 meeting.	1) Draft of a standardized form for IAC technical documents.	1) CC18
Caretta caretta WG (Mexico, Belize, Brazil, and the USA) and IAC Parties	Update; conservation status report	2) The WG will update the report CIT-CC13-2016-Tec.13: Status of Loggerhead Turtles (*Caretta caretta)* Within Nations of the IAC every 4 years. Next update to present in 2021 at the COP10.	2) Technical Document CIT-CC13-2016-Tec.13 updated and presented at the COP10-2021.	2) COP10 and every 4 years
Caretta caretta WG and USA delegate	Report; external support; analysis of information	3) The United States delegate will find if it is possible to have the assistance of a student to update the *C. caretta* report.	3) Information on the availability of support to update report CIT-CC13-2016-Tec.13	3) November 16, 2020
Caretta caretta WG	*C. caretta* WG; Workplan	4) The WG will develop its workplan to include it in the SC17 report and will send it to the SC17 Chair. This plan will include the mechanism to prepare the updated status report and submission dates in **May 2021** (tentative) before the COP10.	4) Work plan and mechanism to update the report CIT-CC13-2016-Tec.13	4) November 20, 2020

Actor	Topic	Proposed Action	Expected Results	Time Frame
Argentina´s delegate (Dr. Diego Albareda)	**Recommendation from COP**; collaboration with organizations; sea turtles conservation status.	5) IAC approach to MTSG-IUCN and SWOT, or other organizations related to the Convention, to collaborate with information on sea turtle conservation status to help draft recommendations to the COP. Responsible: Argentina 6) The delegate from Argentina will establish a procedure to collaborate with the IUCN MTSG and SWOT groups of experts and will report the results to the SC Chair for the SC18 and the COP10. There´s the possibility of cooperation with SWOT regarding index beaches as suggested by the USA delegate.	5) Progress report on the approach to organizations to create partnerships. 6) Results report on the procedure for the SC to inform the COP10 and SC18.	5) 2019-2020 6) COP10 and SC18
Scientific Committee Chair and Scientific Committee	**Recommendation from COP**; Sea turtle's conservation status.	7) Collect information available on sea turtle's conservation status.	7) Recommendations on sea turtle conservation status developed for the IAC Parties.	7) Permanent
COLLABORATION WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS AND STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS				
Argentina (Coordinator) and Scientific Committee (Chile, Ecuador, Peru, and Mexico)	**Recommendation from COP**; Collaboration MoU with ACAP; joint work topics	1) **ACAP:** The coordinator (Argentina) will schedule a meeting with the SC members from Argentina, Chile, Peru, Mexico, and Ecuador to prepare a workplan to implement the activities identified to collaborate with ACAP	1) Workplan to implement activities identified with ACAP	1) First week of December 2020
Argentina (Coordinator)	**Recommendation from COP**;	2) The coordinator will schedule a meeting with ACAP´s bycatch working	2) Priority activity to work with ACAP	2) CC18

Actor	Topic	Proposed Action	Expected Results	Time Frame
and Scientific Committee (Chile, Ecuador, Peru, and Mexico)	Collaboration MoU with ACAP; joint work topics	group to present the work plan based on the document CIT-CC17-2020-Doc.12, developed by Argentina to identify a priority activity, such as seabirds and sea turtles' bycatch.		
Scientific Committee, and the Dominican Republic	Collaboration MoU with Ramsar. **Recommendation from COP**; joint activity.	3) **RAMSAR**: Update the technical document CIT-CC10-2013-Tec.6 "Wetlands of International Importance and Sea Turtle Conservation" including the Dominican Republic and other IAC Parties information that requires updating.	3) Technical document CIT-CC10-2013-Tec.6 update	3) 2020 -2021
Scientific Committee, Secretary *PT*	Collaboration MoU with Ramsar; **Recommendation from COP**; joint activity.	4) **RAMSAR**: The IAC SC members will send their updates to the Secretary *PT* to be shared with Ramsar´s Secretary, and to establish how to update the document tables and maps.	4) Updates to include in technical document CIT-CC10-2013-Tec.6 submitted to the Secretary *PT.*	4) November 16, 2020
Scientific Committee, Secretary *PT*	Collaboration MoU with Ramsar; **Recommendation from COP**; joint activity.	5) **RAMSAR**: The Secretary *PT* will contact Ramsar´s Secretary to include the Dominican Republic information presented in document CIT-CC17-2020-Doc.11 and its respective chart, as well as other information provided by the SC to Table 1 of the document CIT-CC10-2013-Tec.6 on Ramsar sites in the Americas where there are reports of sea turtle's occurrence.	5) Mechanisms to update technical document Tec.6 IAC-RAMSAR	5) 2020-2021
SPAW WG (Belize – coordinator-	Collaboration MoU with SPAW; joint work topics	6) **SPAW**: The Scientific and Consultative Committee members that are also members of the	6 and 7) Report on the joint work with the NWA Leatherback Working	6 and 7) 2021

Actor	Topic	Proposed Action	Expected Results	Time Frame
Panama, USA, Dominican Republic, Caribbean Netherland)		Northwest Atlantic Leatherback Working Group who developed WIDECAST Technical Report No.16, will work together with the CCE US delegate (the only member of that committee´s WG). 7) Request the *PT* Secretariat inviting the SPAW Advisory Committee to become part of the IAC NWA Leatherback WG. Coordinator: Belize and Caribbean Netherlands.	Group and SPAW´s Advisory Committee.	
Scientific Committee and CITES WG (Costa Rica and Caribbean Netherlands)	Collaboration with CITES; sea turtle's trade; hawksbill	8) **CITES**: CITES-IAC WG will prepare recommendations for the SC and the COP10 based on the CITES report on sea turtle trade recommendations to the inter-American sub-region, and on decisions 17.222 and 17.223 on hawksbills -aligned with Resolution CIT-COP8-2017-R2- and other sea turtles, including implementation mechanisms in all the Convention countries, as they are all CITES signatories.	8) Recommendations to the IAC COP10 on actions to continue monitoring illegal trade (CITES) submitted to the Secretary *PT*.	8) First week of December 2020
RFMOs strategy Coordinator	**Recommendation from COP**; Strategy to collaborate with RFMOs	9) The coordinator (SC vice-chair) monitors the collaboration strategy with RFMOs adopted by the SC14 and informs the Scientific Committee and IAC Parties.	9) Report on collaboration strategy with RFMOs and resulting outputs.	9) 2019 -2021

Actor	Topic	Proposed Action	Expected Results	Time Frame
Scientific Committee, and RFMOs strategy Coordinator	**Recommendation from COP**; Synergies with International Organisms.	10) Include subjects that improve and activate collaboration with international organisms.	10) Recommendations on synergies identified.	9) 2019-2020
ANNUAL REPORTS				
Scientific Committee	Annual Reports	1) Analyze the IAC Annual Report technical information.	1) Report on the analysis of technical information from the IAC Annual Reports with recommendations to the Parties when needed.	1) Permanente
PROJECTS				
Scientific Committee	**Recommendation from COP**; High priority projects; Recommendations	1) Develop and analyze recommendations about high priority projects to apply for funds and other resources needed to achieve the IAC objectives.	1) Recommendations on high priority projects when needed.	1) Permanent
EXPERTS DIRECTORY				
Scientific Committee, Secretary *PT*	**Recommendation from COP**; Experts Directory	1) Review and update the IAC Expert Directory.	1) Updated directory available on IAC's website.	1) Permanent
CAPACITY BUILDING				
Scientific Committee	Capacity building	1) Support from Scientific Committee members in workshops and training on topics identified by IAC Parties and those for which funding is available.	1) Strengthening capacities on topics related to sea turtles in the IAC Parties.	Permanent
COP AND CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS				
Scientific Committee	Recommendations from COP and CCE	1) Address the COP and Consultative Committee of Experts requests and make recommendations accordingly.	1) Recommendations submitted to the COP and the Consultative Committee of Experts, as needed.	Permanent

Actor	Topic	Proposed Action	Expected Results	Time Frame
TECHNICAL DOCUMENTS				
Scientific Committee	Technical documents	1) Develop technical documents as needed	1) Technical documents available at the IAC's website and shared with IAC Parties.	Permanent
SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE WORK PLAN				
Scientific Committee	SC Work Plan	1) Update the SC Work Plan following IAC guidelines and the COPs Resolutions.	1) Scientific Committee biennial work plan including actions, timetable, and responsibilities.	Intersessions 2020-2021

Annex V

CIT-CC17-2020-Doc.6

Document prepared by: Dr. Javier Quiñones (Perú Delegate SC)

PROJECT ON RELEASE OF LEATHERBACK (*Dermochelys coriacea*) TURTLES IN LAMBAYEQUE´S GILLNET FISHING FLEET

BACKGROUND

The Eastern Pacific leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*) population has hastily declined in the last years. Reductions have been severe in Costa Rica nesting beaches. Declines have been so rapid, that the 1980s average of 35,356 nests per year in their main nesting beaches throughout the Eastern Pacific (México, Costa Rica y Nicaragua), dropped to an average of 926 nests per year in 2010, meaning a 97.5% decline that has been more evident in the subsequent years. It is evident that at the beginning of the 1990s the declining trend continued showing a cyclic pattern between good and bad years, maybe due to the leatherback's reproductive triennial cycles. However, a given good year is not as good as the previous good year, and a bad year is worse than the previous bad year. This shows that the population is in a critical situation and declines are ongoing despite protection efforts made so far.

Historically, leatherbacks have been reported 3 to 4 hours off San Andres, Pisco (14°S), more frequently between December and March. San Andres fishermen have reported leatherbacks frequency during the summer months when the species is close to the coast feeding on jellyfish. In October 1978, 167 carapaces were found in a canon near Pucusana (12°28´S 76°47´S), a product of summer catches. Therefore Peru´s central coast is known as one of the world's largest *D. coriacea* fisheries areas, with an estimate of 200 individuals caught per year. Between 2000 and 2003, there were 133 leatherbacks caught in Peru, and most of them 76% (101) were caught by coastal gillnets. Most recently, between 2006 to 2015 there were 42 leatherbacks caught in the artisanal fleet of San Andres, Pisco – Tambo de Mora. Likewise, between 2010 and 2014, there were records of 13 leatherback turtles stranded in Tambo de Mora - San Andrés, Pisco area, and 8 evidenced human consumption (IMARPE, unpublished data). Capturing leatherback turtles has been banned in Peru since 1976.

The leatherback and the sunfish are among the largest mega-vertebrates in the oceans that despite their sizes and weight feed on gelatinous zooplankton throughout their entire life. Leatherback turtles feed primarily on gelatinous zooplankton throughout all the stages of their ontogenetic development. Most of its preferred prey belongs to the Scyphozoan jellyfish, including the genus *Chrysaora sp., Cyanea sp., Pelagia sp*. among others. Much of the leatherback's distribution is related to "hot-spots" where there is a proliferation of scyphozoan jellyfish.

In Peru leatherback turtles are distributed in three geographic areas, the Department of Tumbes (03°23'S – 04°00'S), the Department of Lambayeque between Punta Aguja and Puerto Eten (06°00'S – 07°00'S), and in the South of Peru in the area between Asia – Tambo de Mora and Pisco (12°30'S – 13°50'S). (Fig 1).

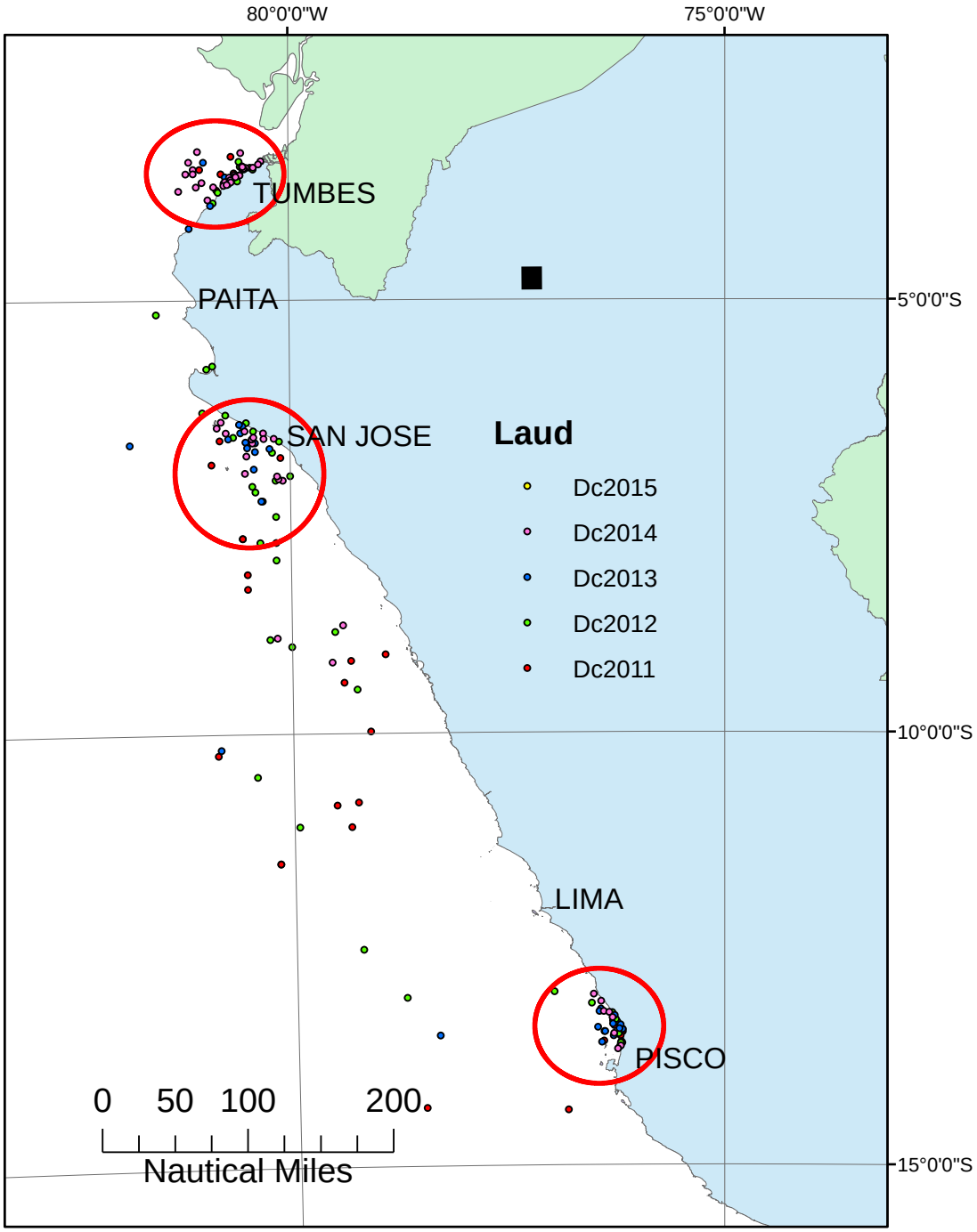


Fig. 1. Leatherback turtles (*Dermochelys coriacea*) distribution in Peru. Tumbes, close to the border with Ecuador; Lambayeque (06° - 07°S) and the Jahuay - Pisco area – Tambo de Mora (12°30's – 13°50'S) in Peru´s South-central coast.

Given this situation, the Instituto del Mar del Peru (IMARPE) jointly with IMARPE Santa Rosa, has promoted a leatherback turtle release program among artisanal fishermen who use drift gillnets, through a WhatsApp

users network and a local radio program in the community of San Jose. This leatherback release program is implemented and coordinated by San Jose´s fishing port observer through the fisheries technician, Mr. David Sarmiento Barturen.

OBJECTIVE

General:

- To mitigate leatherback bycatch in Lambayeque´s gillnet fisheries fleet.

Specific:

- Conduct conscience and awareness training for artisanal fishermen using gillnets in Lambayeque.
- Gather biological information such as biometry, photo ID, and Pit-Tags, and determine anthropogenic impacts and causes of death.
- Characterization of vessels and fishing gears with higher leatherback turtles bycatch rates.

INTER-AMERICAN CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION OF SEA TURTLES AND THE EP LEATHERBACK RESOLUTION.

Within the framework of the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles ("IAC"), which is an intergovernmental treaty that provides the legal framework for countries in the American Continent to take actions in benefit of these species. The Convention promotes the protection, conservation, and recovery of the populations of sea turtles and those habitats on which they depend, based on the best available data and taking into consideration the environmental, socioeconomic, and cultural characteristics of the Parties. These actions should cover both nesting beaches and the Parties' territorial waters. The IAC adopts resolutions that become Law in the member countries. In the Conference of Parties (COP7) held on June 24-26 in Mexico City, the parties issued the ''Resolution for the Conservation of the Eastern Pacific Leatherback Turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*)".

The Regional Action Plan to Reverse the Decline of the East Pacific Leatherback (http://savepacificleatherbacks.org) was used as a base for the activities included in the five-year strategic actions below. These activities are divided into five strategies and involve mortality reduction at sea and protection of nesting sites and females to increase reproductive productivity.

The main conservation lines adopted by the IAC parties consultative committee regarding leatherback turtles (*Dermochelys coriacea*) protection and conservation actions are as follows.

1.-Reduce bycatch of adult and sub-adult leatherback turtles in fisheries
2.-Identify areas of high interaction with fisheries of more importance for the leatherback survival
3.- Define and protect important areas for the leatherback turtle survival in different life stages
4.- Eliminate any consumption and illegal use of the leatherback turtle, including parts and derivatives, as well as all kinds of capture, transportation, and trade.
5.- Identify and implement economic alternatives in local communities in areas adjacent to nesting beaches.

METHODS

Study Area

This study was carried out in the Department of Lambayeque coast, and in the south of the Department of Piura, between Illescas massif (06°S) and Puerto Eten (07°S) and between Lobos de Tierra islands (06°26'S; 80°51'W) and Lobos de Afuera Islands (06°57'S; 80°43'W). This is one geographic area in the Eastern Pacific where there is a moderate occurrence of leatherback turtles in feeding grounds, hence the importance of conducting the study in this geographic area.

Strategy and data gathering

Within the framework of the resolution and in compliance with our commitments as members of the IAC, the Instituto del Mar del Peru through its decentralized office in Santa Rosa, Chiclayo developed the Project on Leatherback Turtles (*Dermochelys coriacea*) release that started in 2015 as a personal initiative of the environmental technician David Sarmiento, who works at IMARPE´s Santa Rosa coastal lab, involving a series of training to gillnets fishermen from San Jose fishing port (06°46'S; 79°58'S) only 13 km away from Chiclayo. During this training, the fishing community was informed on the importance of protected species conservation and the leatherback critical conservation status due to nesting declines and bycatch in their feeding grounds, such as in Lambayeque.

Characterization of fisheries, fishing gear, and target species

Mr. Sarmiento, with the support of the fishermen´s guilds from San Jose fishing port, began training mainly gillnets seas-fishermen working with drifting multifilament nets with a mesh size between 9¨ to 12¨ thread 36. Their target species are hammer sharks, (*Sphyrna zygaena*), thresher sharks (*Alopias vulpinus* and *Alopias pelagicus*), and the Chilean Eagle ray (*Myliobatis chilensis*). Also, training was provided to fishermen using monofilament coastal nets with a mesh size between 3¨ and 3.5¨ thread 50, which target species are Bonito (*Sarda sarda chilensis*), Salema butterfish (*Peprilus snyderi*), and flathead grey mullet (*Mugil cephalus*).

PRELIMINARY RESULTS

The program began in March 2015 with friendly fishermen sending videos and photos of leatherback turtle released to David, who was collecting the information. To date, 20 specimens have been registered (19 at sea and one stranded dead). Thirteen were released alive (Fig. 2 and 4), and unfortunately, the rest died. It is important to note that due to the local fishermen's inexperience in releasing this species at the beginning of the program, there was a greater number of deaths. With time, fishermen improved the technique and from September 2016 to date, only one turtle has been registered dead. Figure 2 shows a map where the turtles were released. A database of release events was created, including gear used, geographical position, specimen alive or dead, fishing area, and additional videos, which are saved in a

dropbox file. Most of the individuals are juveniles and sub-adults, but in many cases, the speed of the releasing maneuver did not allow them to take length measures.

The habitats where sea turtles' bycatch was recorded were mainly on the continental shelf (52.7%) where ten individuals were recorded, followed by the continental slope (26.4%) with five individuals, and the coastal zone where four individuals were recorded (21%) (Table 1). It must be emphasized that the spatial distribution of these turtles in Lambayeque is coastal, as it is associated with the large numbers of prey, represented mainly by the scyphozoan jellyfishes *Chrysaora plocamia* and *Pyrosomas*, which are gelatinous tunicate protochordates.

Fig. 2. A leatherback turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*) released by San Jose´s drifting gillnets fleet. This turtle was released in the fishing area around Lobos de Tierra Island in 2019.

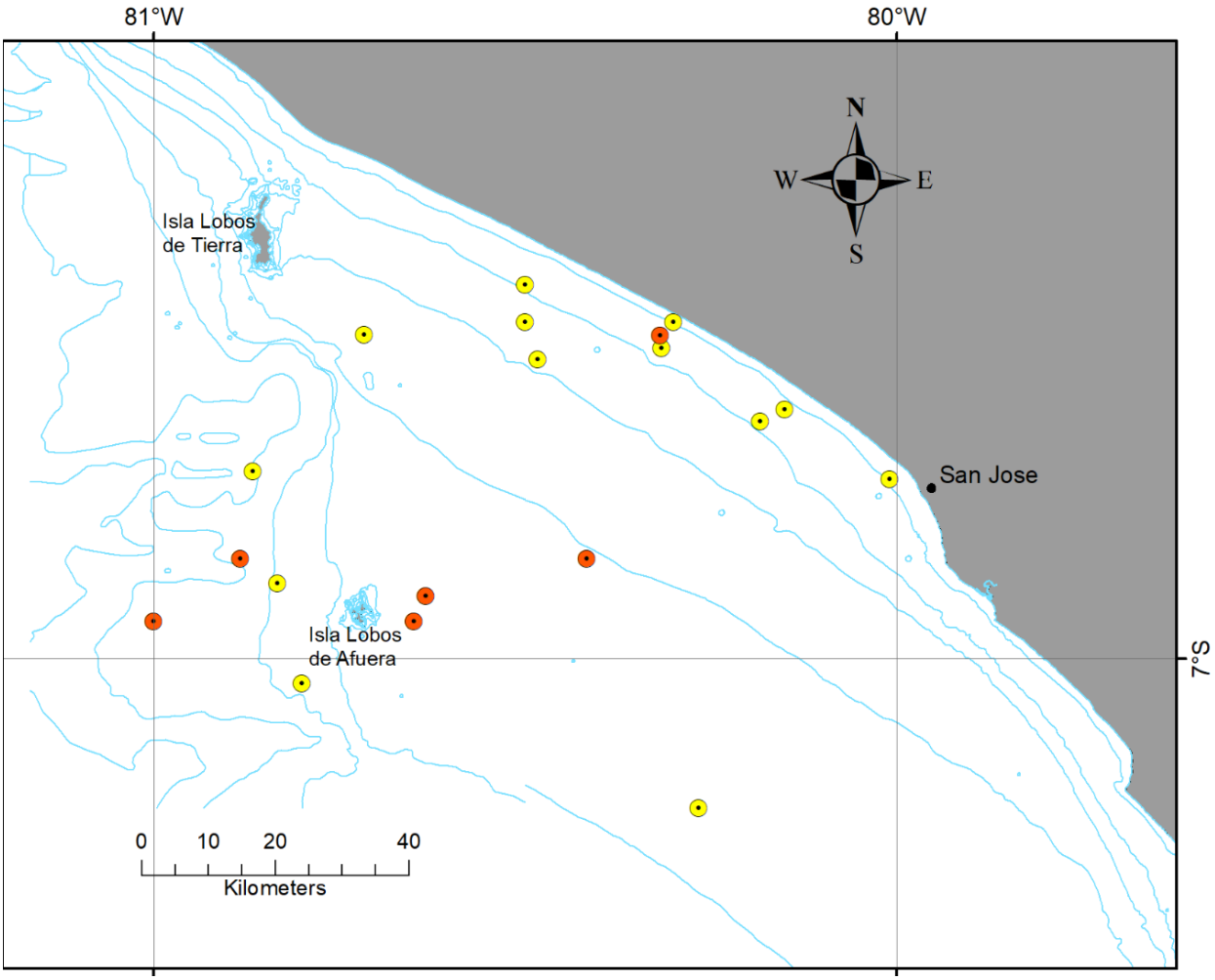


Fig. 3. Leatherback turtles (*Dermochelys coriacea*) in Lambayeque (2015 – 2020) north Peru. Yellow dots are sea turtles released alive and red dots are individuals that unfortunately were dead when the net was retrieved.

Table 1. East Pacific leatherback turtles (*Dermochelys coriacea*) regarding bathymetry during the releasing program (2015 – 2020).

Habitat	**Average depth (m)**	**Depth ranges (m)**	**N° of Leatherback Turtles (%)**
Coastal zone	5.4	(3–10)	4 (21)
Continental shelf	41.2	(15–76)	10 (52.6)
Continental slope	510	(211–867)	5 (26.4)
Total	**157**	**(3–867)**	**19 (100)**

Fig. 4. Leatherback turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*) released by San Jose´s drifting gillnets fleet, in 2020.

RECOMMENDATIONS

* Expand the awareness program for fishermen using drifting gillnets and deep nets.

*Expand this type of initiative to other geographical areas with records of leatherbacks bycatch, as well as to other IAC countries within the EP Leatherback range (e.g Ecuador and Chile).

*Use devices to mitigate sea turtles' bycatch such as LED lights and other mitigation measures (silhouettes).

*Training on disentanglement and good practices to release sea turtles.

*Implement control, surveillance, and inspection programs by relevant authorities.

Annex VI

CIT-CC17-2020-Doc.7

Expected Data Analysis of the IAC Annual Report Table 3: Form to Report Interactions Between Sea Turtles and Industrial Longline Fisheries

Fisheries Working Group

Reviewed and approved by the delegates from Peru, Ecuador, and Chile

Executive Summary

Following the request of the IAC Consultative Committee of Experts CCE13 to develop an analysis of the data requested to the IAC Parties in the Annual Report Table 3 "IAC Form to report interactions between sea turtles and industrial longline fisheries" in compliance with Resolutions CIT-COP9-2019-R2 Northwest Atlantic Leatherback, CIT-COP7-2015-R2 Eastern Pacific Leatherback, and COP3-2006-R2 Fisheries, the Scientific Committee Fisheries Working Group agreed that based on his expertise on industrial fisheries, the delegate from Mexico, Dr. Heriberto Santana, would develop a methodological proposal and a first approach to the expected results. The analysis was led by Dr. Santana because throughout his professional career he has been working with the Mexican longline fishery data analysis. This hypothetical data analysis allowed us to visualize different aspects of the interactions with sea turtles by region, type of set, type of hook, and bait. Simultaneously, these will enable the observation of the interaction patterns that we are trying to understand by requesting the information. While reviewing the results there was a need to discuss the format structure and some complementary aspects of the analysis, which should be clarified in the Scientific Committee plenary. A preliminary analysis using 2019 data submitted by Brazil, Ecuador, the United States, and Mexico in Table 3 of the Annual Report 2020 is presented in Annex I of this document.

Introduction

Specific data on interactions between sea turtles and industrial longline fisheries was requested this year as a comprehensive part of the IAC Annual Report 2020. The content of Table 3 is based on the form that the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) will request to this Regional Fisheries Management Organization (RFMOs) Parties industrial longline fisheries as of 2021. By analyzing the data in the form, it is expected to understand the industrial longlines features threatening sea turtles' conservation in the IAC region to a greater or lesser extent.

Methodology

As a first step, a database was developed in a spreadsheet, considering the sequence of data requested in Table 3: IAC Form to report interactions between sea turtles and industrial longline fisheries. Hypothetic/arbitrary data was used for this first test, not representing reality, but helping to test the objectives of the real data. Alphanumeric symbols were used instead of the countries' names to represent them. Some countries' symbols were repeated adding the alphabetic symbol (P

or A) meaning they are active in the Pacific (P) as well as in the Atlantic (A) Oceans. The geographic distribution of the interactions between longlines and sea turtles was not analyzed, as the data requested in the forms refers to a wide extension of the operation, that in most cases represents each country's Economic Exclusive Zone. The database was analyzed as summaries and data ordering using dynamic tables.

Results

Among the products from this first analysis, a spreadsheet database was developed using Microsoft EXCEL®. If enhanced and approved, this database has the potential to be transformed into another type of spreadsheet (e.g., ACCESS) that allows accumulation as well as storage with the safety and confidential measures this type of information requires. The data descriptive analysis allowed to obtain graphs illustrating different types of interactions such as 1) a table of the fishing effort in the countries and the region including the number of vessels, number of trips, number of sets, and the number of hooks used per region; 2) the total number of interactions with all sea turtle species by region (P or A) considering the number of hooks used; 3) the condition of sea turtles after interacting with longlines in each country, 4) interaction of each sea turtle species with longlines, as well as sea turtle interactions by 5) type of set (shallow/deep); 6) type of hook (C-33, C40, J-22) and 7) type of bait (mackerel or squid); also the impact of the interactions between a particular species (*Dermochelys coriacea*) and longlines by 8) region (Pacific, Atlantic); 9) type of hook (C-33, C-40, J-22); 10), type of bait (mackerel, squid); and 11) type of set (shallow/deep).

The Scientific Committee is requested to provide recommendations regarding: a) geographic distributions of interactions per country; b) the importance of seasonality (intra and inter-annual) as the data requested corresponds to the 2020 annual cycle, but the form establishes an operation period; c) there need to discuss the importance of the percentage of observed vessels versus the total fleet is expected, and it could also be used for a possible extrapolation of the interactions; as well as to d) determine the type of fisheries which the term “multiple fisheries” refers to. Pending aspects to be analyzed should be agreed upon at the Scientific Committee plenary to improve results.

Conclusions

The results obtained from the hypothetical data using the database and the descriptive analysis suggest this is an appropriate method to achieve what the IAC aimed for with the data requested. It is expected that the results can be improved after clarifying some terms and the extent of the scope for the temporal and spatial analysis of the interactions with sea turtles, considering the different components of industrial longlines in each country.

Recommendations to the Scientific Committee according to the results

1. It is recommended that the IAC Parties submit their national Annual Report on the designated date including complete information in the form to report interactions between sea turtles and industrial longlines.

2. It is recommended that the delegate of the Scientific Committee underline their countries the importance to respond to the request of submitting the data form on interactions of sea turtles with industrial longline fisheries.

3. It is recommended that the IAC Parties not reporting the aforementioned information strengthen their rapprochement to their national fisheries authorities reminding them of the importance of providing this information every year, so the IAC Scientific Committee can improve its knowledge regarding interactions with sea turtles in the region, type of sets, type of hooks and type of bait as well as allowing understanding the interactions patterns to be able to work with the fisheries sector and RFMOs, in their mitigation.

4. It is recommended that the Parties not reporting data due to the absence of an observer's program, continue with their efforts to establish one.

5. It is recommended that the Scientific Committee prepare a data analysis of the interactions with industrial longline fisheries submitted by the Parties in the Annual Report 2020 and 2021 (Table 3) to present it to the COP. To achieve this, the Parties should submit their 2020 and 2021 Annual Reports not later than April 30, 2021.

Attachments

Hypothetical and real databases are attached along with a presentation of the results.

Annex A

Based on the data provided by Brazil, Ecuador, Mexico, and the United States in the IAC Annual Report form to report interactions between sea turtles and industrial longline fisheries (Table 3), a preliminary analysis was carried out with the following results.

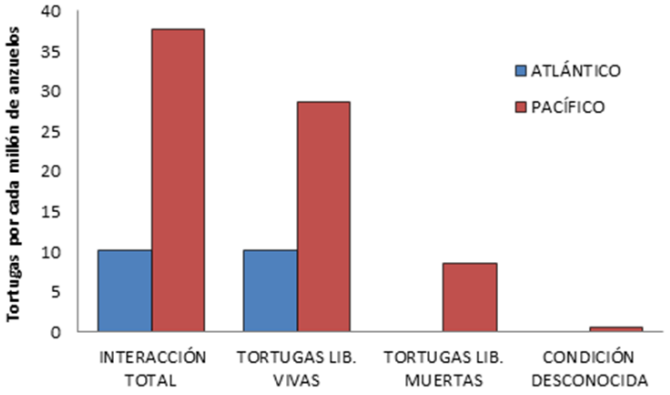


Figure 1. Interactions with longlines and impacts on the condition of sea turtles in the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. (Y axis = sea turtles per million of hooks; X axis = Total number of interactions; sea turtles released alive = vivas; sea turtles released dead = muertas; unknown condition = condición desconocida)

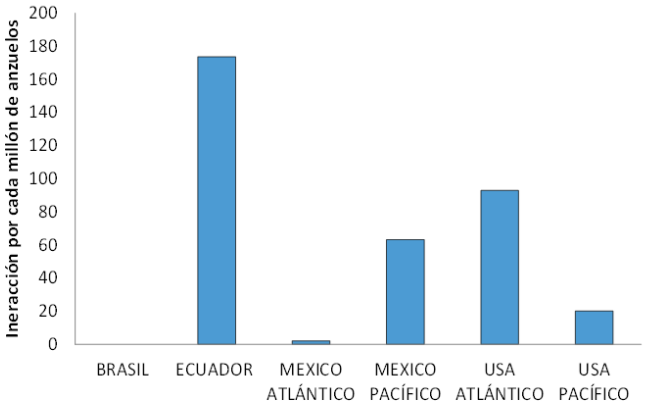


Figure 2. Total of interactions of sea turtles with industrial longline in the IAC Countries. Y axis = interactions per million of hooks; X axis = number of interactions reported by country)

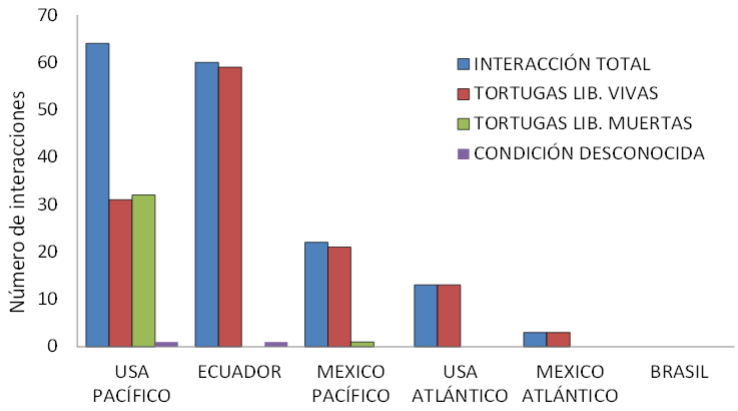


Figure 3. IAC Parties longlines and their impact on sea turtles (number of individuals) (Y axis = Number of interactions; X axis = countries; blue= total interaction; red= turtles released alive; green = turtle released dead; purple = unknown condition)

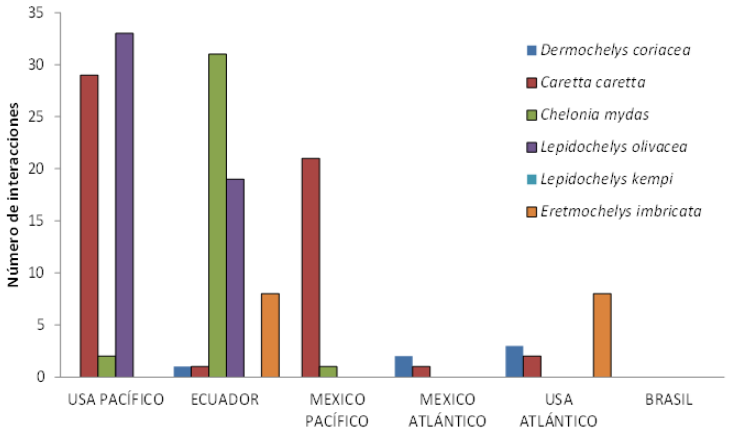


Figure 4. IAC Parties longlines interactions with sea turtle species (Y axis = number of interactions; X axis = country region)

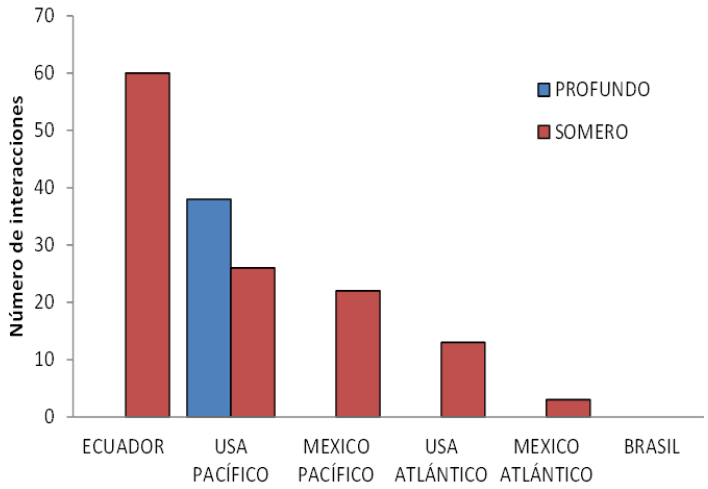


Figure 5. Industrial longlines interactions with sea turtles by type of sets (Y axis = number of interactions; X axis = countries; Profundo = deep sets; Somero = shallow sets).

Annex VII

CIT-CC17-2020-Doc.8

Data collection form to submit data to the IAC on interactions between sea turtles and gillnets in artisanal fisheries

Draft developed by Eduardo Espinoza member of the IAC Scientific Committee Fisheries Working Group

NOTE FOR FINAL REPORT: This form is designed to be included in the annual report and to be filled out with data corresponding to the annual summary. It is not a form for observers or use in the field.

I. BACKGROUND

Paragraph seven of the Resolution for the Conservation of the Northwest Atlantic Leatherback (CIT-COP9-2019-R2) adopted by COP9, and paragraph one of the Resolution for the Conservation of the Eastern Pacific Leatherback (CIT-COP7-2015-R2) adopted by COP7, and the Resolution for the Reduction of the Adverse Impacts of Fisheries (COP3/2006/R2) adopted by COP3, address the impacts of fisheries bycatch and incidental mortality on sea turtle populations. These resolutions request the Parties to submit information on those impacts to the Convention´s Secretary.

Sea Turtles bycatch in gillnets is a major cause of mortality, however, information available is limited in the IAC countries. For this reason, the IAC Scientific Committee (SC) identified as a priority the need to understand the impact of these gears on the Convention´s sea turtles' populations and proposes the Parties reporting in the IAC Annual Report, basic information needed to deepen the knowledge on the matter so the Scientific Committee can produce recommendations for the IAC Parties regarding sea turtle bycatch in gillnets.

To this end, we present a form and instructions to collect specific information on the interactions with gillnets and the fleets involved in these fisheries.

II. OBJECTIVES

a. Contribute to an evaluation of the level of interaction of sea turtle populations with fishing activities carried out using gillnets.

The purpose of this form is to provide an annual summary of the number of sea turtle incidentally captured in gillnets during fishing operations of the immediately preceding year.

b. Have an annual baseline data available per IAC country for the Scientific Committee to analyze information conducive to actions to reduce sea turtle bycatch in the short, medium, and long term, and to present them to the COP.

III. FORM

Data report form on interactions between sea turtles and gillnets

Provides information on the interactions between sea turtles with gillnets during fishing operations. It is proposed that this form is included in the IAC Annual Report to provide information to the Scientific Committee every year.

USER INSTRUCTIONS FOR IAC COUNTRIES TO COMPLETE ACCORDING TO THE DEFINED MARINE ZONES

1. **Country:** Name of the country providing information. **Countries without this type of fishery will mark "not applicable".**
2. **Reporting Period:** Operation period of the corresponding fishery. Start and end date of the fleet's fishing season.

3. Fishing Area: Approximated coordinates of the area where fishing or fishing trips took place within the previously described period. Define the area using a polygon in which vertex is determined by latitude and longitude coordinates.

4. Target Species: Scientific and common names of the gillnet fishery target species during the reported period.

5.Type of gillnet: Mark "x" the type of gillnet used according to the target species of the corresponding fishery. In general, a gillnet is a simple fabric wall, with a mesh area that allows catching fish by the gills. It remains relatively vertical with the help of a line of floats and a line of weights. However, in this form we have defined three types of gillnets described as follows:

- ***Driftnets*:** Type of entangling net used to catch variable size fish, which are not suitable for entanglement (highly migratory or deep-sea fishing species, such as tuna, swordfish, sharks, marlin, deep-sea mahimahi, other)

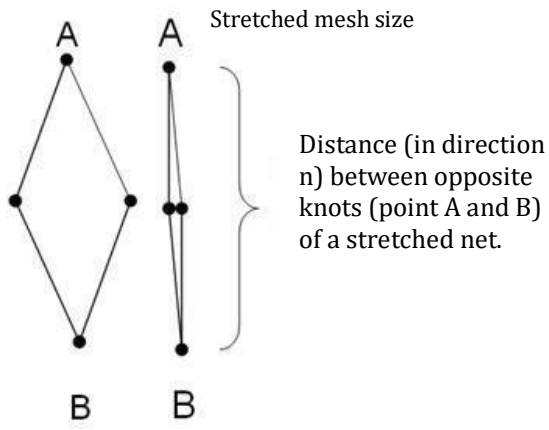
- ***Bottom and surface nets:*** Type of gillnet used to catch dense schools where fish size is uniform (for example, hake). Set at the bottom or with floats.

- ***Trammel:*** Net using a mix of netting and entanglement (for example, conger and common hake). It has three overlapping panels seeking to bag the catch with the central panel.

6. Net characteristics:

- **Length:** Total length of the net in meters, measured as the length of the rope holding the net, it includes all panels or bodies of the net.
- **Height:** Total height of the net in meters or number of meshes.
- **Stretched mesh size:** Measure of distance (in direction n) between opposite knots (point A and B) of a net stretched towards the working panel, measured in inches.

DIAGRAM TO MEASURE STRETCHED MESH SIZE



- **Number of panels or bodies:** Numbers of divisions in the net or number of panels, according to the type of net.
- **Resting time**: Average resting time of the net in the water, measured in hours, according to the type of net.

7. Characteristics of the fleet: Features of the fleet operating on the target species, according to the following definitions.

- **Number of vessels:** Total number of vessels operating during the reported period and fishery.
- **Length range:** Length range of the vessels reporting operations during the reported period and fishery.

8. Fleet operation: Features of the fleet operation on reported target species, according to the following definitions.

- **Net depth:** Average net depth (in meters) of the net in the water, according to the type of net.
- **Total trips**: Total number of fishing trips during the reported period.
- **Trips with onboard observer**: Number of fishing trips with an onboard observer during the reported period.

9. Sea Turtle species (scientific and common name): Scientific and common name of sea turtle species according to the form. In the case of an unidentified species, include the information in the corresponding box. Species should be reported as the number of individuals incidentally captured in the reported period an area as follows:

- **Release status of live turtles per species:** *Total number of sea turtles per species released alive in each case*

  Unharmed: number of unharmed turtles released
  Injured: number of injured turtles released
  CCL: record the minimum, maximum, and average CCL (Carapace Curved Length) reported for each species of unharmed and injured turtles

- **Fate of dead turtles:**

  Onboard: indicate the number of dead turtles kept onboard for any reason
  Discarded: indicate the number of dead turtles discarded at sea
  CCL: record the minimum, maximum, and average CCL (Carapace Curve Length) in centimeters, reported for each species of dead turtles left onboard or discarded.

10. Additional Notes: Please include comments and additional information, such as the report of sea turtles tagged (fin or satellite tags), recording them as the total number of sea turtles tagged.

Data Form to Report Gillnet Fisheries Interacting with Sea Turtles

(1) IAC Country					**Not applicable**	
(2) Reporting Period	**Starting Date**		**End Date**			
(3) Fishing Area	**Lat.**		**Long**			
(4) Target Species	**Common Name**		**Scientific Name**			

(4) Gillnet Type				**(6) Features of the Fleet**	
Drift nets		**Bottom-set or anchored floating gillnet**	**Trammel nets**	**No. of vessels operating**	**Vessels length range**

(5) Net Characteristics					**(7) Fleet Operation**	
Length (meters)	**Height (meters)**	**Extended mesh size (inch)**	**Resting time (average hours)**	**N° panels**	**Total trips**	**Trips with Onboard observers**

(7) Sea Turtle Species / **Common Name (Scientific)**	**8) Release status of live turtles**	**Number**	**CCL (Min/Max/Average - cm)**	**(9) Fate of dead turtles**	**Number**	**CCL (Min/Max/Average - cm)**
Loggerhead (Cc - Caretta caretta)	Unharmed			Onboard/Retained		
	Injured			Discarded		
Green (Cm - Chelonia mydas)	Unharmed			Onboard/Retained		
	Injured			Discarded		
Leatherback (Dc - Dermochelys coriacea)	Unharmed			Onboard/Retained		
	Injured			Discarded		
Hawksbill (Ei - Eretmochelys imbricata)	Unharmed			Onboard/Retained		
	Injured			Discarded		
Olive Ridley (Lo - Lepidochelys olivacea)	Unharmed			Onboard/Retained		
	Injured			Discarded		
Kemp´s Ridley (Lk - Lepidochelys kempii)	Unharmed			Onboard/Retained		
	Injured			Discarded		
Unidentified Species	Unharmed			Onboard/Retained		
	Injured			Discarded		
(16) Additional notes (e.g., Turtles tagged, etc.)						

Guatemala/DIPESCA comments on the form

1. The form does not make it clear the moment to use it, meaning when the operation has finished or during the operation, at the moment an event happens, or if it is for several operations or just one operation.
2. Although there is a dimensional date, it only refers to the time of filling out the form, but the date of the fishing operation does not appear. This information is important to estimate when most of the interactions between sea turtles and the fisheries occur.
3. Regarding the “fishing area” information, I consider the description ambiguous because it is requested to include a general coordinate (lat. and long.) for all the fishing operations in a set period. The purpose is not clear if only one coordinate is requested, instead of one per operation. That generalizes all the fishing in a given time. The object is not seen if only one is requested, rather than one per capture.
4. "Community or port of landing"; how does this information relate with the report of interactions with gillnets.
5. “Fishing types and nets” As this form will be used in several gillnet fisheries It would be good if the user manual specifies the differences between gears and other fishing gears.
6. In “Characteristics of the net”, there´s mention of another document "form 2", which is necessary for a better understanding of what is requested. I still don't understand why there is more than one art, and why there should be an average between two fishing gears. It would be worth it to include images of the net measuring points, for a better understanding.
7. “Total fleet”. It does not make sense to request this information as a whole, considering that each vessel has different characteristics, the sense of the previous information would get lost in the details. Same comment for “total trips” and “trips with an onboard observer”.
8. “Fishing effort and Observed Effort”. Unless it is related to direct observation by the person in charge of filling out the form. Data calculation based on an observation must be done in the office and is not practical to use these forms in the field.
9. “Sea Turtle Species” there is mention of the number of individuals incidentally caught in that period and zone, but the form does not include an item to determine the period.
10. “Status of sea turtles released alive per species” and “Fate of dead sea turtles”. It is not practical to include “CCL”, considering that this number includes the number of sea turtles reported, each turtle should be measured to then obtain an average for a general number.

Annex VIII

CIT-CC17-2020-Doc.9

SEA TURTLE NECROPSY DATA SHEET Elija un elemento.

RESPONSIBLE: _____ **DATE OF FINDING:** _____
LOCATION (Zone/Lat/Lon): _____ **DATE OF NECROPSY:** _____

SPECIES: ☐ Undetermined
_____
Common name
_____
Scientific Name
AGE GROUP:
☐ Juvenile ☐Sub-adult
☐Adult ☐Undetermined

VISUAL MATERIAL:
☐ Photographs
☐Videos

CARCASS CONDITION: ☐ Live ☐Fresh ☐Moderate ☐Advanced ☐Remains
BODY CONDITION: ☐ Good ☐Fair ☐Poor ☐Very poor ☐Undetermined

BIOMETRIC DATA: ☐ Carcass complete ☐Carcass incomplete
Curved Carapace Length (cm): _____ Curved carapace width (cm): _____
Plastron width (cm): _____ Plastron width (cm): _____ Tail length (cm): _____
Tail cloaca length (cm): ____ Head width (mm): _____ Weight (kg): _____
Sexo: ☐ Hembra ☒Macho ☐ND
Observations (Cuts, slots, fresh/healed wounds, etc):

INTERACTION WITH FISHERIES: ☐ Collision ☐Entanglement ☐Hook/Monofilament ☐Other
Describe the finding:

NECROPSY FINDINGS:
☐ Fresh ☐Refrigerated ☐Frozen
Description of organs assessed (color, size, consistency, presence of injures or abnormalities).
ALL ORGANS MUST BE COLLECTED IN SIZE 2X2cm AND PRESERVED IN FORMALIN 10%.

External exam (epibionts, eyes, cloaca, scavenger damage, parasites, nostrils, mouth):

Skeletal muscle: ☐parasites **Description:**

Body Cavity (presence of liquids or other odd content, injuries):

Trachea: ☐parasites **Description:**

Lungs: ☐ parasites **Description:**

Heart: ☐ parasites **Description:** _____

_____

Other (blood vessels, lymphonodus, etc): _____

Esophagus: ☐ parasites **Description:**

_____

_____

Stomach: ☐ parasites **Description:**

_____

_____

Liver: ☐ parasites **Description:** _____

_____

Spleen: ☐ parasites **Description:** _____

_____

Pancreas: ☐ parasites **Description:** _____

_____

Gallbladder: ☐ parasites **Description:** _____

Intestines (Small I., Large I.): ☐ parasites **Description:** _____

_____

Otros (lymphonodus, mesentery, etc): _____

_____

Urinary System:

Kidneys: ☐ parasites **Description:** _____

_____

Bladder: ☐ parasites **Description:** _____

_____

Reproductive system (Females: ovaries, uterine horns - Male: testicles): _____

_____

ADDITIONAL OBSERVATONS:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

SAMPLE COLLECTION

IMPORTANT: All simples must be labeled with the following information: Zone, date, species, type of sample, storage medium.

HISTOPATHOLOGY (in formaline 10%):

☐Skin ☐Muscle ☐Trachea
☐Lungs ☐Heart ☐Esophagus
☐Stomach ☐Liver ☐Spleen
☐Pancreas ☐Gallbladder ☐Small I.
☐Large I. ☐Kidneys ☐Bladder
☐Ovaries ☐Uterus ☐Testicles
☐Uterine horns

Other: _____

ÓRGANOS CONGELADOS: ☐Sí ☐No

Órganos: Haga clic o pulse aquí para escribir texto.

GENETIC ANALYSIS AND ISOTOPS (in salt or alcohol 96%): ☐Skin

PARASITES (in alcohol 70°):

(Mark the organs where samples come from and label the sample)

☐Skin ☐Muscle ☐ Trachea
☐Lungs ☐Heart ☐ Esophagus
☐Stomach ☐Liver ☐ Spleen
☐Pancreas ☐ Gallbladder ☐ Small I.
☐Large I. ☐ Kidneys ☐ Bladder
☐Ovaries ☐ Uterus ☐ Fat
☐Testicles ☐ Uterine horns

Observations:

ADDITIONAL SAMPLES:

☐Blood:
☐with anticoagulant ☐Without anticoagulant ☐In alcohol ☐In RNAlater
☐Serum
Extraction zone: _____

☐Eyeball

☐Stomach content, stored in:
☐Formaline ☐Alcohol ☐no medium/frozen

☒Type of warts in skin or another organ. Stored in: ☐alcohol 96° ☐ Formaline 10%

☐Viral swab Organs:

☐Bacterial swab Organs:

OTHER (describe type of sample, organ and storage medium): Haga clic o pulse aquí para escribir texto.

GLOSSARY
NECROPSY DATASHEET

1. INFORMATION

- **Responsible:** Person who will perform the necropsy and take samples
- **Date of the finding:** Day the stranded animal was reported and collected.
- **Date of necropsy:** Day the necropsy and sample collection were carried out.

2. CARCASS CONDITION

The animal condition will be estimated according to Geraci & Lounsbury (2005):

- Category 1: animal live stranded/dying
- Category 2: animal recently dead (fresh)
- Category 3: animal in a moderate state of decomposition
- Category 4: animal in an advanced state of decomposition
- Category 5: animal skeletal or mummified

3. BODY CONDITION

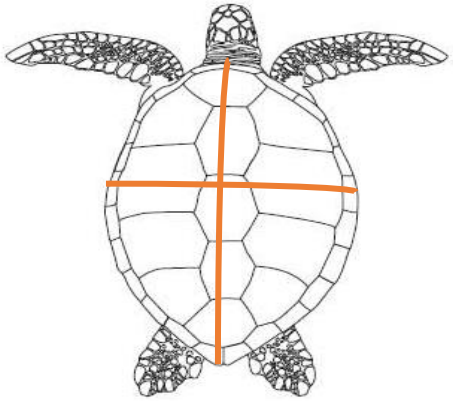
The body condition was classified according to (Flint et al. 2009):

- ***Good:*** with a convex plastron
- ***Moderate:*** with a flat plastron
- ***Poor:*** with a concave plastron
- ***Very Poor*****:** bones can be seen on the plastron

4. BIOMETRIC DATA

Sea turtles:

Curved carapace length and width



Plastron length and width

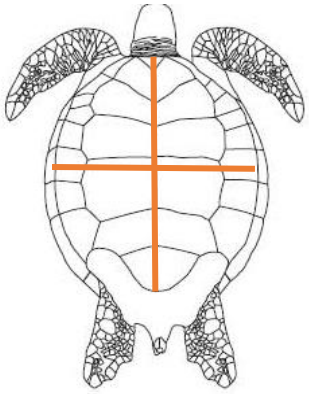


Figure 2. Sea turtle carapace and plastron length.

Table 1. Age group according to the CCL by sea turtle species.

Group age	*Chelonia mydas*	*Lepidochelys olivacea*	*Dermochelys coriacea*	*Eretmochelys imbricata*	*Caretta caretta*
Juvenile	CCL < 69cm		CCL<123cm	CCL<62.2cm	CCL<70cm
Sub-adult	69<CCL<85 cm		123<CCL<144.4cm	62.2<CCL<84.6cm	70<CCL<85cm
Adult	CCL>85cm	CCL>57cm	CCL>144.4	CCL>84.6cm	CCL>85cm

5. FISHERIES INTERACTION

The animal must be observed external and internally (in case of a necropsy), searching for injuries caused by interactions with fisheries. If observed, the finding must be thoroughly described. If a material such as fishing nets, hooks, lines, or other material related to the different fishing gear is observed, photographs of the initial findings should be taken, as well as when samples are extracted. All samples must be collected in properly labeled Ziploc bags. In cases of animals showing skin wounds caused by entanglement with nets, or other fisheries-related injuries, a sample of that skin area should be collected for histopathology (in formalin 10%).

6. NECROPSY FINDINGS

- Fresh: necropsy performed the same day the individual is collected.
- Refrigerated: the individual was refrigerated until necropsy day.
- Frozen: the individual was kept frozen until necropsy day.

When performing a necropsy, is necessary to have a photographic camera to **take diverse shots** of the organs, especially if there is an injury.

Organs must be assessed according to size, consistency, and color, all these characteristics should be described in the necropsy datasheet, even if the organ looks completely normal. In case that an organ has parasites, these will be described including their photographs.

7. SAMPLING COLLECTION

Histopathology: samples of approximately 1cm x 1cm will be collected in bottles. The medium will be 10% formalin. Bottles must be labeled with the animal minimum data. Organs samples collected should be marked on the card. Store at room temperature.

Genetic analysis and isotopes: All samples must be collected twice (one sample for genetic analysis and one for isotopes) and stored in alcohol 96 ° or iodine-free salt. Store frozen.
Sea Turtles: skin from the nape, approximately 0.5cm x 0.5cm.

Frozen organs: a minimum of 150 gr of each organ for freezing should be stored in Ziploc bags, labeled with the animal minimum data, placing a piece of Canson paper with the sample information inside the bag. Priority organs are kidney and liver, to discard pesticides.

.

Parasites: the parasites found, should be collected in containers with alcohol 70%, labeled with the animal information as well as the organs where they were found. The finding description must be included in the sheet and the sample collection section. Store at room temperature.

Additional samples:
Blood: Collected in the most sterile way possible, through cardiac or arterial puncture before opening the animal, indicating the preservation medium (mark on the sample collection section). Store at room temperature or refrigerate. If possible, store a small sample (1 or 2 drops) alcohol 96°, and preserve at room temperature.

Stomach content: If stomach content is found, it must be kept frozen and properly labeled.

- Sea Turtles: total content of food found should be placed in properly labeled containers.

Abnormal skin formations: Wart-type or suspicious lesions or abnormal coloring areas in the skin, should be collected. Part of the injury should be preserved in alcohol 96 ° and another part in formaldehyde 10% (as shown for histopathology) Both samples can be stored at room temperature.

Swabs: in case of performing cloacal swabs, the storage tube should be properly labeled, as well as other swabs performed. Bacterial swabs should remain refrigerated or at room temperature as much as possible, and viral swabs should be kept frozen.

Other: any type of sample collected and not previously contemplated should be placed in this section. In case of doubts about storing additional samples, please consult the Top Predator Research Office.

8. REFERENCES

FLINT M, PATTERSON-KANE J, MILLS P & LIMPUS C (2009) A veterinarian's guide for sea turtle postmortem examination and histological investigation. The University of Queensland.

GERACI JR & LOUNSBURY VJ (2005) Marine Mammals Ashore: A Field Guide for Strandings, Second Edition. NOAA-National Aquarium in Baltimore, Baltimore MD. Pg. 176-178.

PUGLIARES K, BOGOMOLNI A, TOUHEY K, HERZIG S, HARRY C, MOORE M (2007) Marine mammal necropsy: an introductory guide for stranding responders and field biologist. Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution. 133pg.

VANSTREET RE, ADORNES AC, CABANA AL, NEYMEYER C, KOLESNIKOVAS CKM, DANTAS GPM, ARAUJO J, CATÃO-DIAS JL, GRONCH KR, SILVA LA, REISFELD RC, BRADAÕ ML XAVIER MO, VIERA OAG, SERAFINI PP, BALDASSIN P, CANABARRO PL, HURTADO RF, SILVA-FIHO RP, CAMPOS SDE, RUOPPOLO V (2011) Manual de campo para a colheita e armazenamento de informações e amostras biológicas provenientes de pinguins de Magalhães (Spheniscus megallenicus). São Paulo Brasil: Centro de Pesquisa e Conservação de aves silvestres. 62 p.

Annex IX

INTER-AMERICAN CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION OF SEA TURTLES

CRITICAL AREAS FOR THE CONSERVATION OF THE NORTHWEST ATLANTIC LEATHERBACK TURTLE (*Dermochelys coriacea)*

CIT-CC17-2020-Tec.16

By

M.Sc. Didiher Chacon

Delegate from Costa Rica

IAC Scientific Committee

2020

CRITICAL AREAS FOR THE NORTHWEST ATLANTIC LEATHERBACK (*Dermochelys coriacea)*

Background

Leatherback turtles (*Dermochelys coriacea*) have a circumglobally distribution with nesting sites on tropical sandy beaches and migratory and foraging ranges extending into temperate and sub-polar latitudes. Wallace et al. (2010) defined Regional Management Units (RMU) for sea turtle species, functionally equivalent to the IUCN subpopulations, providing an appropriate demographic unit for the Red List assessment. There are seven leatherback turtle RMUs (hereinafter subpopulations): Northwest Atlantic Ocean, Southeast Atlantic Ocean, Southwest Atlantic Ocean, Northeast Indian Ocean, Southwest Indian Ocean, East Pacific Ocean, and West Pacific Ocean. (Figure No.1)

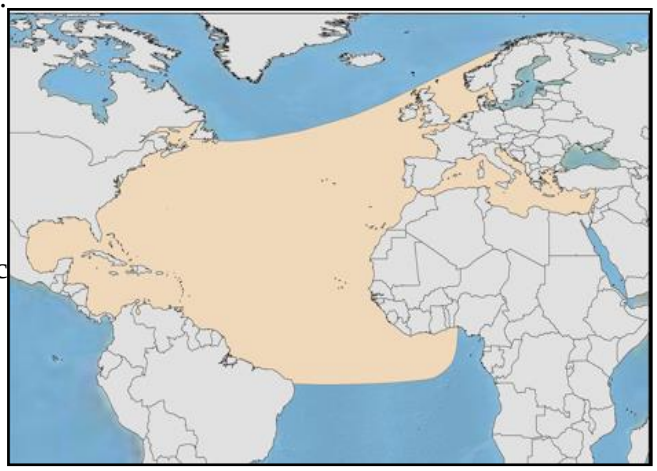


Figure 1: Distribution of the Northwest Atlantic Leatherback RMU (Wallace *et al.* 2010).

The Northwest Atlantic (NWA) Leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*) management unit (RMU) or subpopulation extends along the North Atlantic Ocean, from the Wider Caribbean region nesting sites to the feeding grounds from the Equator to northern temperate latitudes (TEWG 2007, Wallace et al. 2010; Eckert et al. 2012).

Their nesting is scattered with 92% of all known nesting beaches supporting relatively small numbers of nests (<100 clutches per year, the equivalent to <20 reproductive females) (Dow et al. 2007, Dow Piniak and Eckert 2011). Eckert and Eckert (2019) updated the Wider Caribbean Region nesting information recording 467 sites from the Florida Peninsula to north Brazil, and from the Gulf of Mexico and Central American coast to the Antilles (Figure Nº 2).

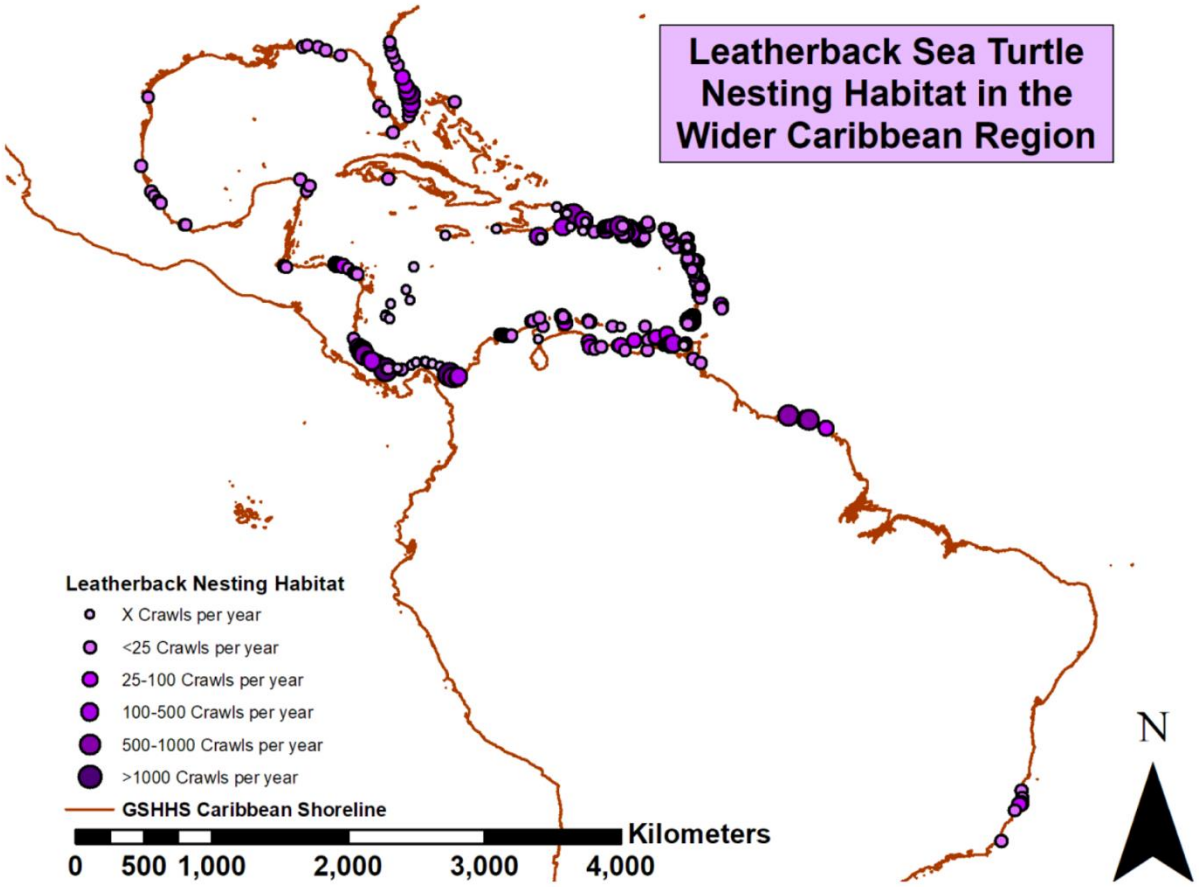


Figure Nº 2: Northwest Atlantic Leatherback *D. coriacea* nesting distribution (source: Eckert and Eckert 2019).

Last decade assessments on the NWA Leatherback status, concluded that this management unit was abundant with a steady and even increasing trend, except for those in Costa Rica already showing a population decrease (Troeng, Chacon and Dick 2004; TEWG 2007; Tiwari et al. 2013). TWEG (2007) compiled data on various demographic parameters and abundance metrics, to estimate the size and trend of the adult population and concluded that for 2004-2005 there were between 28.000 - 46.000 nests and between 4.800-11.000 nesting females, and an increasing trend throughout the region (TEWG 2007).

Hence, leatherback turtles provide the most troubling story, having appeared to be rebounding (TEWG 2007) until recent field observations of declining trends led to a quantitative regional assessment concluding that "Abundance-weighted trends were negative in all temporal scenarios and became more negative as the time series shortened." The most striking is the approximately 99% decline in Awala-Yalimapo, French Guiana (once ranked among the largest leatherback colonies in the world) within the most recent generation of leatherback turtles (Northwest Atlantic Leatherback Working Group 2018).

According to the Northwest Atlantic Leatherback Working Group (2018), regional trends of NWA leatherback (*D. coriacea*) annual counts of nests have decreased significantly at the site level and regional scales, over the long-term (1990-2017) and more recent periods (2008-2017), with decreases of over 90% in Awala-Yalimapo (French Guiana) and in Suriname since the 1990s. Only six colonies with more than 1000 nesting crawl per year remain, and these are grouped in the southern latitudes (French Guiana, Panama, Trinidad). Twelve sites reporting 500-1,000 crawls per year are more broadly distributed in

Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, French Guiana, Grenada, Panama, Puerto Rico, Suriname, Trinidad, and the USA (Florida) (Eckert and Eckert 2019). More than half, (63 %) of all known nesting beaches support small colonies with fewer than 25 crawls per year; 12% support an unknown abundance of crawls (Eckert and Eckert 2019).

Conservation Status and Threats

NWA Atlantic leatherback turtle's conservation is challenging given the broad spatial distribution, encompassing much of the Atlantic basin, including terrestrial, coastal, and pelagic habitats throughout various life stages, and because they travel across numerous political borders. As a result, effective management measures must be enacted at multiple international and local levels, including fisheries bycatch reduction, protection of nesting habitats, protection of in-water habitats, and reduction of intentional captures.

TEWG (2007) recognized that the greatest threats to the NWA species are at two levels; the first one and direct to its survival, is eggs extraction for consumption or trade, legal or illegal directed hunting, predation by introduced species, and the loss of nesting habitat either due to coastal development or to the effects of climate change. The second category is in their inter-nesting and migration habitats, including direct catches, bycatch, and collision with boats. Also, Dow et al. (2007) established that the greatest threats in beaches were erosion, loss of clutches due to abiotic factors, artificial light, and egg collection; while in-water are pollution, bycatch, entanglement, and hunting.

Oravetz (2000) showed that the main sources of sea turtle mortality by fishing gears around the world are: trawls, pelagic and bottom longlines, gillnets and trap nets, entanglement with buoy ropes and traps, as well as commercial and sport fishing lines and hooks.

Boulon (2000), Gibson and Smith (2000), Mortimer (2000), and Witherington (2000) list direct and indirect causes of mortality, and some threat reduction proposals were presented by Marcovaldi and Thomé (2000).

Based on the aforementioned analyzes and mainly on the work of the Northwest Atlantic Leatherback Working Group (2018), it is concluded that the regional trends of leatherback (*D. coriacea*) annual counts of nests have decreased significantly at a site level and regional scales, during long-term (1990-2017) and the most recent (2008-2017) timelines, with the decrease of more than 90% in Awala-Yalimapo (French Guiana) and Suriname since the 1990s (Figure Nº 3).

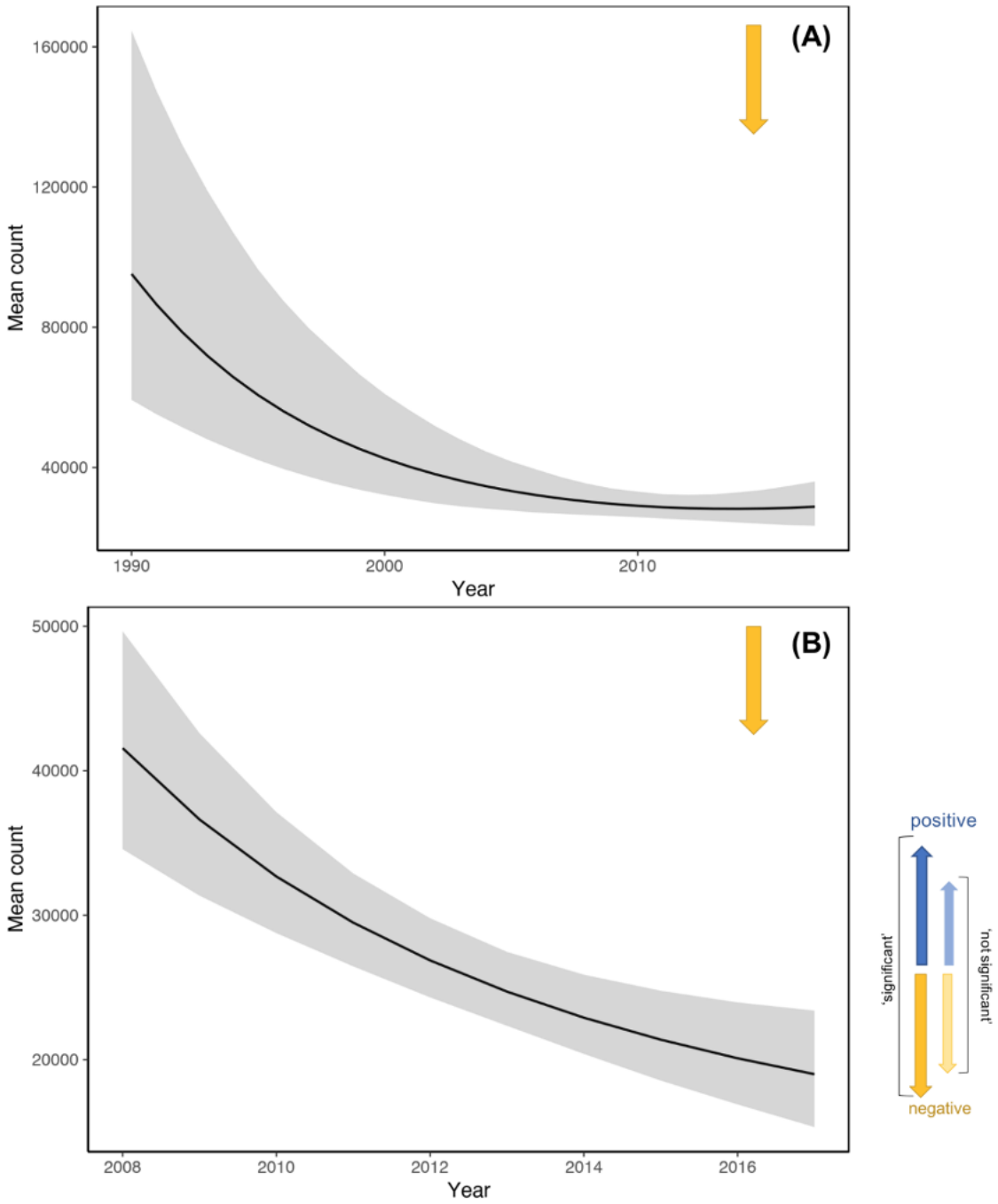


Figure Nº 3: Regional-level trends (annual geometric mean change in nest counts) for (A) 1990-2017 and (B) 2008-2017 (results for the intermediate scenario not shown). The line is the geometric annual mean trend (weighted by relative site-level abundance) and the shaded area is 95% Credible Intervals. Blue up arrows = positive trends, yellow down arrows = negative trends; large arrows = 'significant' trends; small arrows = 'non-significant' trends. Source: Northwest Atlantic Leatherback Working Group (2018).

Critical Areas in their life cycle:

Undoubtedly, critical stages of this species life cycle are linked to areas in the Atlantic and the Caribbean; these phases include feeding, migration, reproduction, and nesting. Several studies such as those by TEWG (2007), Dutton et al. (2013), Stewart et al. (2016), Northwest Atlantic Leatherback Working Group (2018), and Eckert and Eckert (2019); have compiled critical information that allows establishing a characterization of the Northwest Atlantic leatherback critical areas:

1. **Nesting areas**: From the continental Caribbean in southern Nicaragua through Costa Rica, Panama, and the Gulf of Uraba in Colombia. Venezuela's north coast, Trinidad and Tobago beaches, as well as several of the Lesser and Greater Antilles (especially Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic). The Florida Peninsula Atlantic Coast is also included (Figure Nº 4)

Figure Nº 4: Northwest Atlantic Leatherback main nesting areas

2. **Foraging grounds**; includes the Gulf of Mexico's inner waters in front of Florida and Louisiana, the whole USA east coast, and part of Canada´s east coast. (Figure Nº 5)

Figure Nº 5: Northwest Atlantic Leatherback main foraging grounds

3. **Migration areas:** There are two well defined two-way migration corridors (Annexes 1-3), the external waters of the Caribbean from eastern Canada to South America´s north coast (Trinidad and Tobago, the Guianas, Suriname, Venezuela), and the waters off Venezuela and Colombia towards the Central American isthmus. This same corridor is used as a post-nesting way back (Figure Nº 6). A second corridor goes from the Caribbean waters off Central America, passing through Yucatan´s strait to the inner Gulf of Mexico, coinciding with a foraging area in the Gulf.

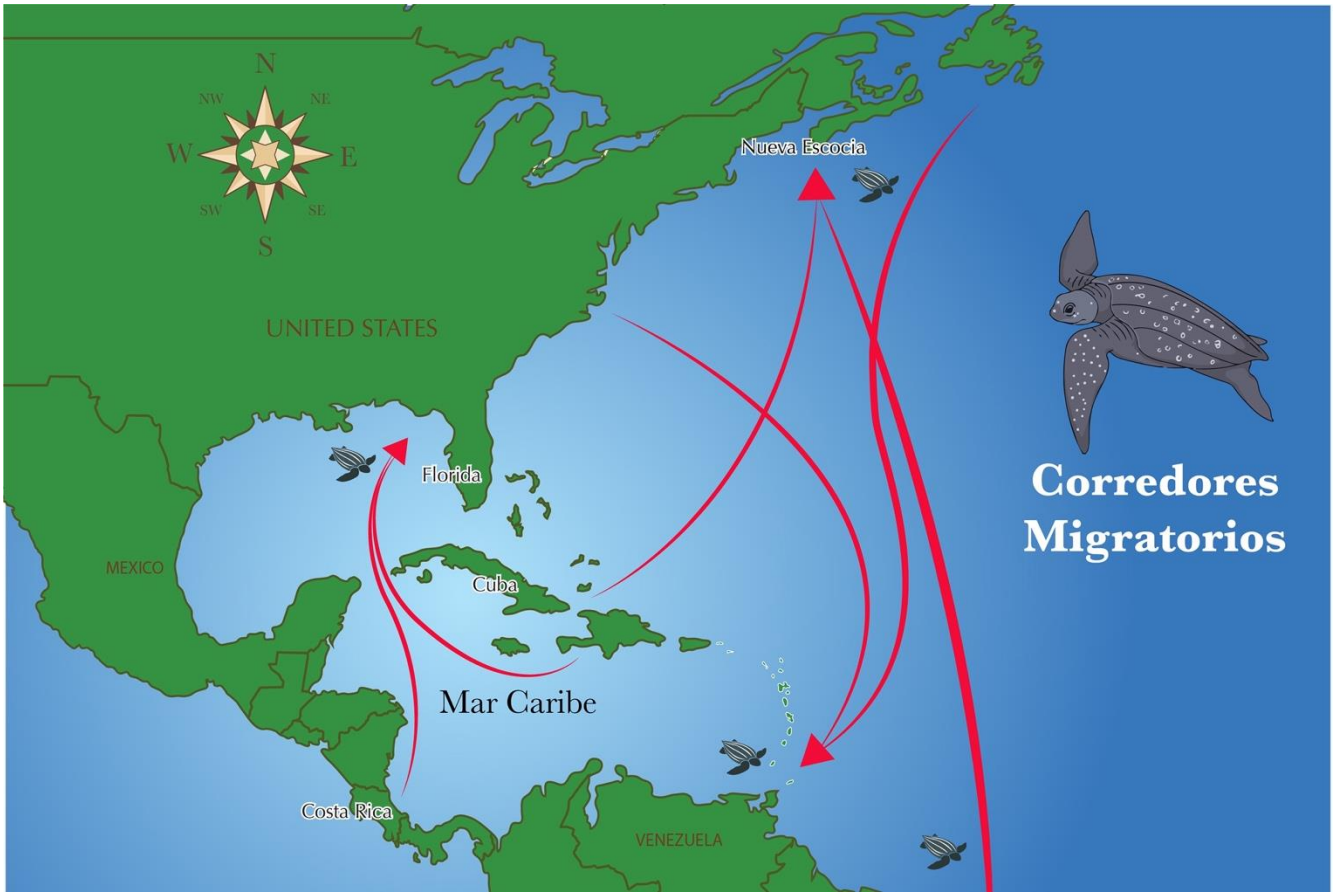


Figure Nº 6: Northwest Atlantic Leatherback main nesting and post-nesting migratory routes

Conservation Solutions

The Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles (IAC) provides the countries with solid foundations to work on actions towards this species recovery. Given the leatherback critical situation, regional efforts could be strengthened by working together with the Parties, as well as with national and international organizations involved in its conservation.

Several regional efforts over the past decades have pointed to the critical areas to focus resources and efforts that could change the current population trend. As a result, several viable actions have been identified to implement on nesting beaches, key marine areas, and policy/governance to address threats and promote their recovery. In particular, the Action Plan is being developed based on three goals:

1) Protect nesting beaches and increase hatchlings production
2) Reduce mortality in bycatch in fisheries
3) Use international political instruments for regional conservation, especially in critical areas where vital life cycle processes occur, such as migratory corridors, foraging grounds, inter-nesting aggregation areas, and nesting areas; and seek for the integration of key countries for this species, such as some Caribbean nations (e.g., Trinidad, Grenada, etc.) and Canada.

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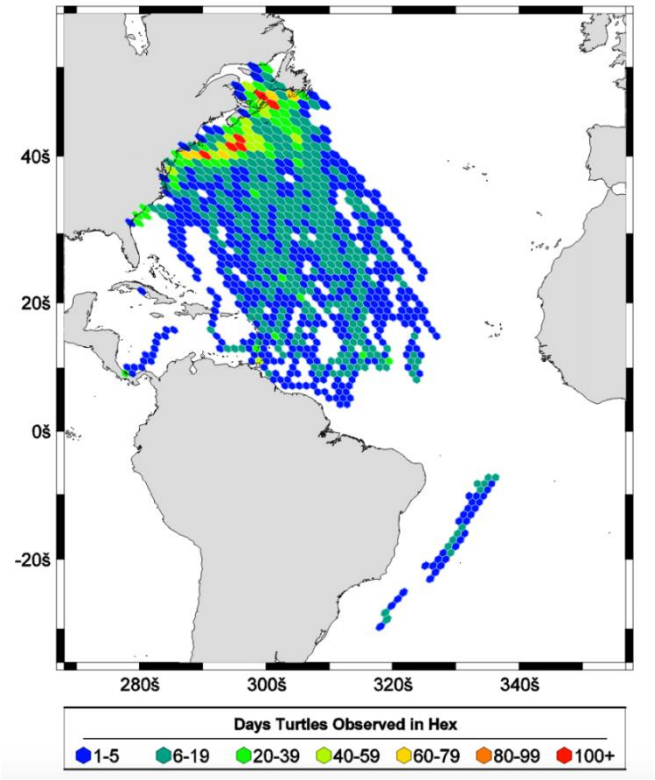
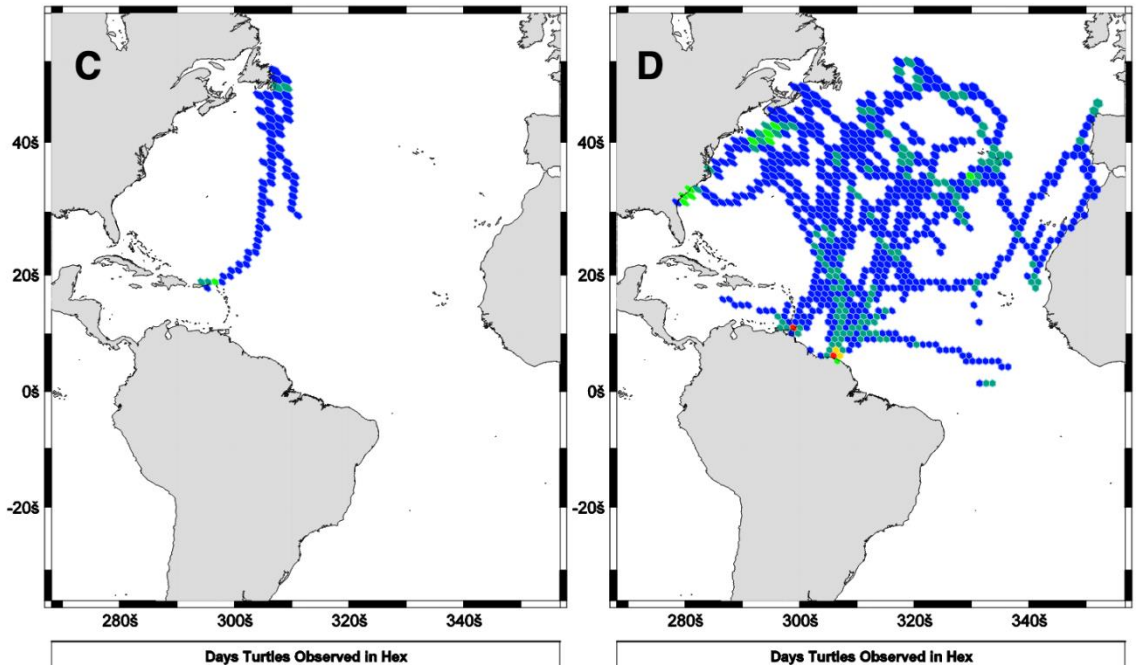
Annexes

Maps showing migratory routes from foraging to nesting zones and vice versa, based on satellite tracking. (TEWG 2007).



Annex 1



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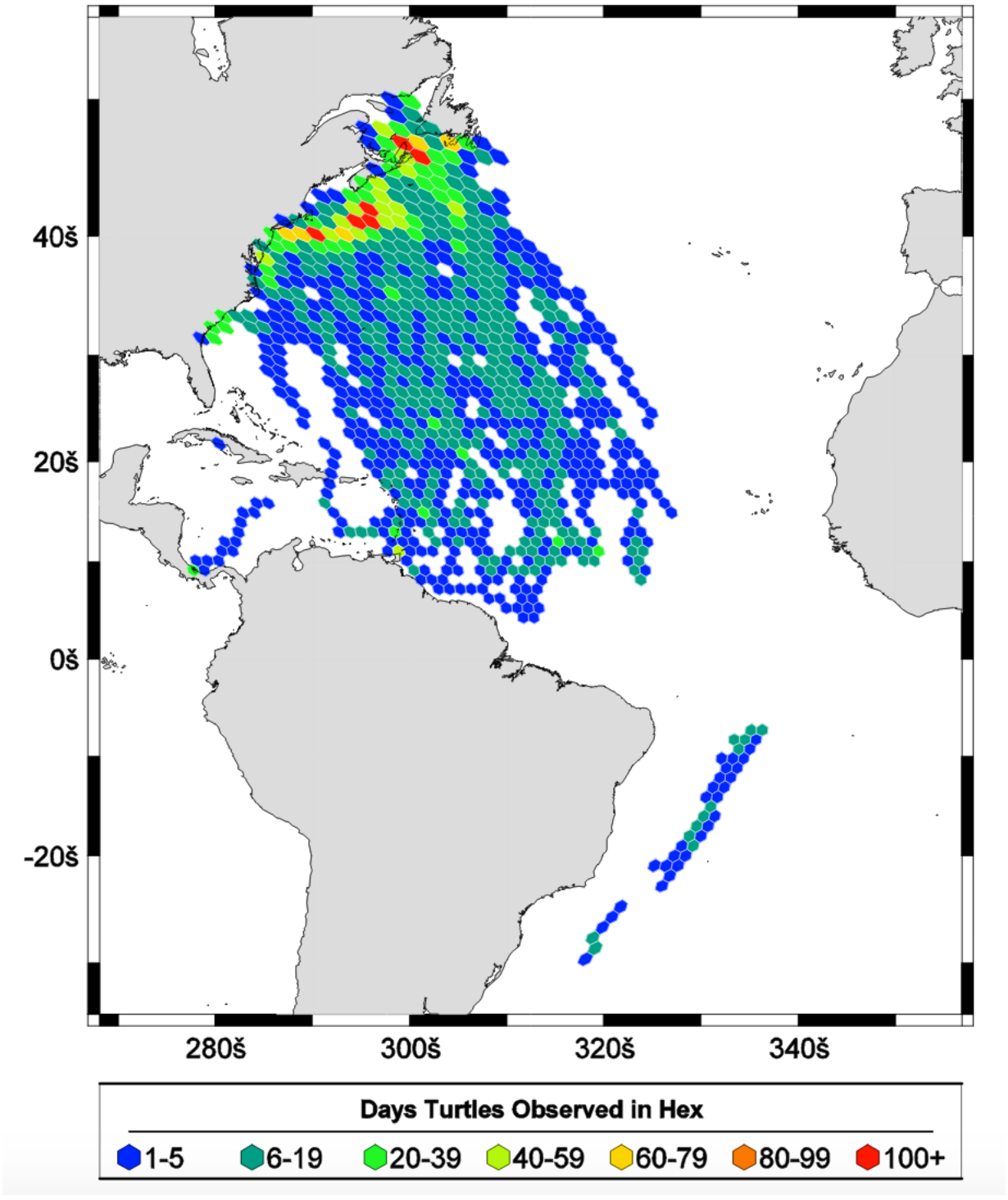
40š
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Days Turtles Observed in Hex
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100+

Annex 3

Annex X

INTER-AMERICAN CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION OF SEA TURTLES

NORTHWEST ATLANTIC LEATHERBACK TURTLES (*DERMOCHELYS CORIACEA*): A SUMMARY OF CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS, CHALLENGES, AND OPPORTUNITIES

CIT-CC17-2020-Tec.17

By

Olga Koubrak, Sealife Law and Chelsea Boaler, WWF Canada

2020

This document was presented at the 17th meeting of the Scientific Committee within the framework of the implementation of Resolution CIT-COP9-2019-R2 on the Conservation of the Northwest Atlantic Leatherback. The document was adopted for the use of the Scientific Committee and other collaborators in outreach activities regarding the conservation status of the NWA Leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea)* population.

Northwest Atlantic Leatherback Turtles (*Dermochelys coriacea*): A Summary of Current Conservation Status, Challenges, and Opportunities

Olga Koubrak, SeaLife Law and Chelsea Boaler, WWF Canada

The conservation crisis facing the Northwest Atlantic leatherback demands collective action through international forums. Unilateral conservation action on behalf of a migratory marine species is wholly inadequate to the important task at hand. This is a call for all Parties to the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles (IAC) to implement conscientiously the commitments agreed upon in CIT-COP9-2019-R2 Resolution on the NWA leatherback, and for the range states of the species, Canada, Guyana, French Guiana, Trinidad & Tobago, and Suriname to consider joining the IAC to unite efforts to effectively address the species conservation challenges.

1. Background

The leatherback sea turtle is the world's largest reptile, swimming the world's oceans since the time of the dinosaurs, at least 100 million years ago (Dutton et al. 1999). The species has a circumglobal distribution with nesting sites on tropical sandy beaches and migratory and foraging ranges that extend into temperate and sub-polar latitudes (Figure 1) (Eckert et al. 2012; Wallace et al. 2010). According to Wallace et al. (2010), there are seven Regional Management Units, or subpopulations, of leatherback sea turtles: Northwest Atlantic Ocean, Southeast Atlantic Ocean, Southwest Atlantic Ocean, Northeast Indian Ocean, Southwest Indian Ocean, East Pacific Ocean, and West Pacific Ocean.

The nesting sites of the Northwest Atlantic (NWA) leatherback subpopulation are concentrated in the southern latitudes of the Wider Caribbean. Only six colonies remain with more than 1,000 nesting crawls (successful and unsuccessful combined) per year; these are located in French Guiana, Panamá, and Trinidad. Twelve sites reporting 500-1,000 crawls per year are more broadly distributed in Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, French Guiana, Grenada, Panamá, Puerto Rico, Suriname, Trinidad, and the USA (Florida) (Eckert and Eckert 2019). More than half (63 percent) of all nesting beaches support very small colonies with fewer than 25 crawls per year (Eckert and Eckert 2019), a number not dissimilar from the 63 percent reported a decade earlier by Dow Piniak & Eckert (2011).

Figure 1: *The distribution of the Northwest Atlantic subpopulation. Source: Wallace et al. 2010.*

The NWA leatherbacks forage widely in the inshore and offshore waters of temperate and sub-polar Atlantic (James, Ottensmeyer & Myers 2005; James et al. 2006; Dodge et al. 2014). The turtles move into the more northern areas as the summer season progresses and the ambient water temperature increases (James et al. 2006). While in the high latitudes, the turtles feed on large species of scyphomedusae; their distribution in Canadian waters mirrors that of their gelatinous prey (James et al. 2006). The abundance of prey makes Canada a critical high-altitude habitat for this species (Eckert 2006; James et al. 2006).

As adult leatherbacks migrate between their nesting sites and foraging grounds, they disperse widely across the ocean (James, Ottensmeyer & Myers 2005; Stewart et al. 2013). Nevertheless, genetic analysis has shown that leatherbacks that forage in Canadian waters demonstrate fidelity to these forage areas and originate predominantly from nesting colonies in Trinidad and French Guiana (Stewart et al. 2013).

2. Conservation Status and Threats

The NWA Leatherback Working Group (2018) describes the most recent regional assessment of population trends. It was done after concerns regarding decreasing annual counts of nests and nesting females became evident through community-based monitoring throughout the Wider Caribbean Region.

The Working Group collected data from a multitude of sources (40 partners in 17 countries), through which they were able to analyze a long-term trend (1990-2017), an intermediate trend (1998-2017), and a more recent trend (2008-2017) (Northwest Atlantic Leatherback Working Group 2018). Based on these inputs, the NWA subpopulation shows a significant negative trend in nest counts for both long-term and recent timelines (Figure 2).

In response to the NWA Working Group (2018), the IUCN reclassified the NWA leatherback subpopulation as **Endangered** (IUCN 2019). This category means that this subpopulation is at a "very high risk of extinction in the wild in the immediate future" (IUCN n.d.). The Atlantic leatherback is listed as **Endangered** under the Canadian *Species at Risk Act,* **Endangered** under the U.S. Endangered Species Act, and an **Environmentally Sensitive Species** under the *Environmental Management Act, 2000* in Trinidad and Tobago.

A combination of persistent environmental and anthropogenic drivers is responsible for the observed declines. One of the key threats facing the NWA leatherback is interaction with fishing gear (Northwest Atlantic Leatherback Working Group 2018). Bycatch on high-seas pelagic longlines has been well documented (e.g., Fossette et al. 2014; Stewart et al. 2016); entanglement in fixed fishing gear, such as pot and trap nets, is a regular occurrence in leatherbacks' foraging grounds (James, Ottensmeyer & Myers 2005; Hamelin et al. 2016); and offshore major nesting beaches in Trinidad, bycatch numbers in artisanal gillnet fisheries are as high as 3,000 per year (Eckert & Eckert 2005; Lee Lum 2006). These interactions are worrisome because they affect mature individuals that are particularly valuable to this long-lived subpopulation.

Beach erosion is also contributing to the observed declines in nesting females. In the Wider Caribbean Region, leatherback nesting sites tend to be high energy beaches where changes in sand accretion and erosion are common (Northwest Atlantic Leatherback Working Group 2018). At major nesting beaches in the Guianas, however, sandy nesting habitat has shrunk significantly in the face of persistent erosion, contributing to declines in nesting numbers. A concomitant increase in nesting females has not been noted on other beaches in the region (Northwest Atlantic Leatherback Working Group 2018).

Natural cycles of erosion aside, anthropogenic coastal development (e.g., roadways, marinas, hotels) and seawalls (e.g., armour stone) can also drastically impact available nesting habitat, and so the Northwest Atlantic Leatherback Working Group (2018) advocates for due diligence from managers who issue permits for future coastal development to consider the impacts of such development on the nesting habitat of leatherbacks and other sea turtle species (see also Bräutigam & Eckert 2006).

Furthermore, modern climate change has a wide-range of direct and indirect negative consequences for all sea turtles, including leatherbacks: Rising temperatures can impact nesting leatherbacks by increasing incubation temperature, leading to decreased hatching success (Rafferty et al. 2017) and embryo feminization (as Monsinjon et al. 2019 has shown for loggerhead sea turtles); sea-level rise brought on by climate change can limit turtle nesting habitat (Fish et al. 2008; Doney et al. 2014); ocean acidification can lead to the release of harmful compounds from ocean sediments that can impact turtle (and other long-lived species) health (e.g., Hexavalent chromium [Cr(VI)], Speer et al. 2018); climate change is linked to increased rates of disease in many species, including turtles (Doney et al. 2014); and, increase in inter-nesting intervals and decrease in clutch frequency can be attributed to changes in the oceanographic conditions that affect prey availability (Doney et al. 2014).

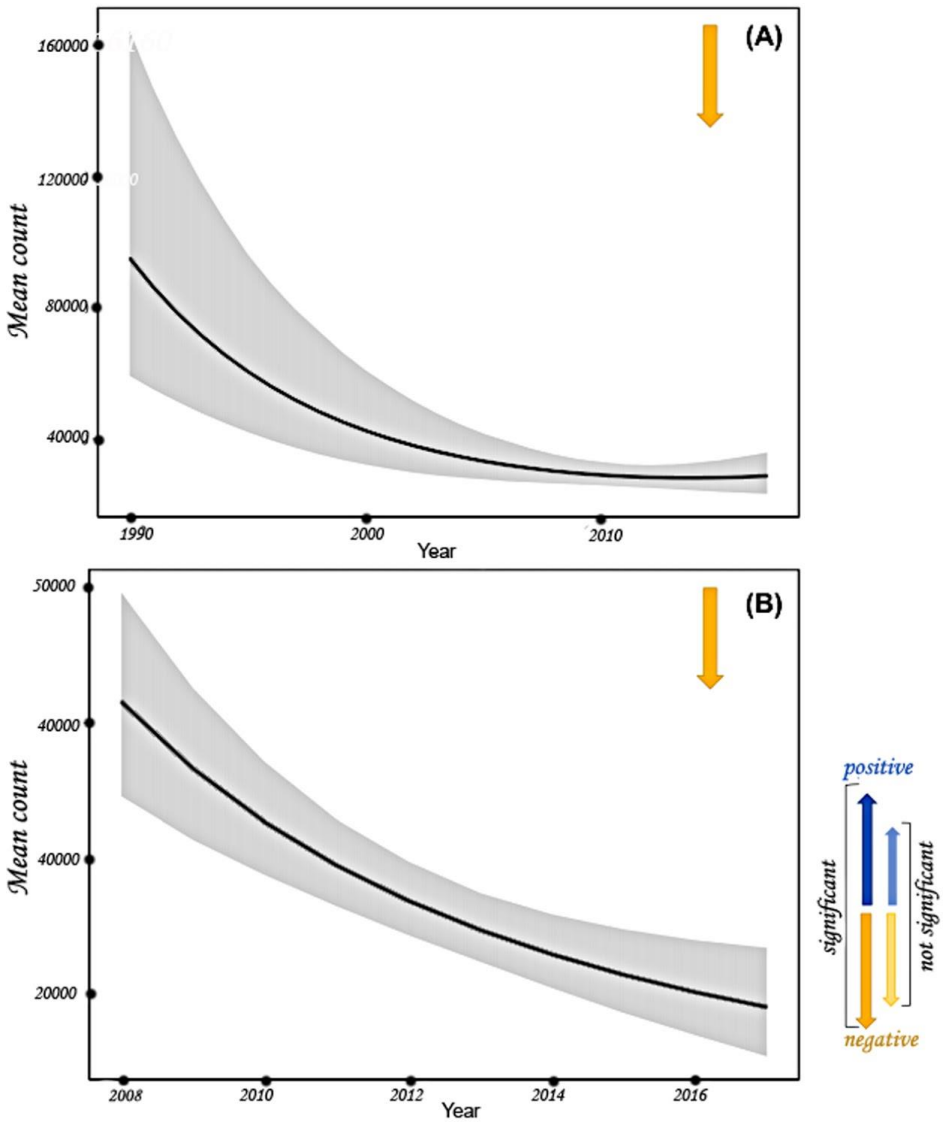

Figure 2: *Regional-level trends (annual geometric change in nest counts) for (A) 1990-2017 and (B) 2008-2017. Line is geometric annual mean trend (weighted by relative site-level abundance) and shaded area in 95 percent credible intervals. Source: Northwest Atlantic Leatherback Working Group 2018.*

3. Conservation Challenges and Opportunities

The life history of the NWA leatherback sea turtle poses several conservation challenges. This highly migratory species crosses multiple national and international boundaries in its lifetime, dispersing widely across the Atlantic Ocean. This makes it difficult to adopt area-based protection measures when the turtles are migrating or foraging. At the same time, nesting is concentrated in a few locations. This makes the subpopulation sensitive to fishing pressure in these areas, as well as changes in habitat suitability and the existential threat of climate change. International

cooperation is essential to overcome these issues (Bräutigam & Eckert 2006; Dow Piniak and Eckert 2011; Eckert et al., 2012; Northwest Atlantic Leatherback Working Group 2018).

The Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles (IAC) is the world's only treaty dedicated to sea turtles. The objectives of the IAC are the protection, conservation, and recovery of the populations of sea turtles and their habitats, on the basis of the best available scientific information and taking into consideration the environmental, socio-economic, and cultural characteristics of its Parties. In 2019, the IAC 9th Conference of Parties, addressing the technical advice from the Northwest Atlantic Leatherback Working Group in the document "Northwest Atlantic Leatherback Turtle Status Assessment" and the Recommendations from the IAC Scientific Committee adopted a Resolution on the Conservation of the Northwest Atlantic Leatherback Turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*) (CIT-COP9-2019-R2) instructing the Secretariat *Pro Tempore* and Parties to reach out to countries that are critical to the survival of the species but that are not yet parties to the convention. These countries – which host some of the largest remaining nesting colonies in the world – are Guyana, French Guiana, Trinidad & Tobago, and Suriname. Canada, which provides uniquely important foraging habitat and migratory passage to these same turtles, is also not yet a party to this important treaty. To realize holistic and comprehensive conservation solutions, it is highly advisable that each of these countries joins the IAC as soon as practicable.

Other priority actions identified in the IAC Resolution include strengthening fishery observer programs, implementing "Guidelines to Reduce Sea Turtle Mortality in Fishing Operations" of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and increasing enforcement of laws and regulations relevant to the NWA leatherback (CIT-COP9-2019-R2). These commitments form a strong foundation for Parties to work together to stabilize and reverse the declines of the NWA leatherback.

Using the IAC legal framework to cooperate and coordinate activities have several advantages. Information, knowledge, and experience exchange between all countries within the NWA leatherback's range provide important learning opportunities for everyone involved. IAC Parties have received technical support to develop their national sea turtle conservation plans, training on best practices to reduce sea turtle mortality in fishing gears, workshops to monitor nesting beaches, and nests handling, among others. Also, becoming part of the IAC has meant the installation of the discussion on sea turtles in the governmental agenda of the Parties, contributing to the implementation of a top-down conservation approach, mobilizing the governments' participation, and allowing that topics that are not generally discussed, such as sea turtle biology, are addressed at the governmental level.

Since the IAC is a binding treaty, it also serves as a forum for countries to review each other's efforts and, when needed, to hold each other accountable for the performance of their respective commitments. Finally, given that the large majority of Wider Caribbean Region range states already protect the leatherback (Eckert & Eckert 2019), joining the IAC, which is complementary to other Conventions, helps countries strengthen the implementation of their domestic policies, and comply with international commitments under other treaties already signed by the Parties.

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Annex XI

CIT-CC17-2020-Inf.2

Progress Report on the Pilot Project to Collect Environmental Data in the IAC Index Nesting Beaches

Prepared by the Climate Change Working Group, Dr. Julia Horrocks, Dr. Jeffrey Seminoff, and Dr. Cecilia Baptistotte

The report herein was prepared by the Scientific Committee Climate Change Working Group and the IAC Secretary *PT* and includes the next steps agreed upon during the first meeting of the implementation of the IAC climate change working group held on August 12, 2020. The objective of the meeting was to forward the implementation of the pilot project to collect environmental information in the IAC Index Nesting Beaches. The five countries participating in the pilot project are Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama, and the United States. This document is intended to inform the SC17 on the status of the pilot project which the main objective is to obtain data that allows the Scientific Committee to develop a comparison across years in each index beach to monitor environmental changes that could affect nesting abundance and hatching success.

Summary of the 1st Meeting of the IAC Climate Change Pilot Project Working Group

Date of the Meeting: August 12th, 2020

Videoconference

Participants: Rotney Piedra (Costa Rica), Ann Marie Lauritsen (USA), Alberto Proaño (Ecuador), Cecilia Baptistotte (Brazil), Jeffrey Seminoff (USA), Laura Sarti and Athziri Carmona (México), Marino Abrego (Panamá), and IAC Secretary *PT*.

Background of the IAC Climate Change Pilot Project

2009 – Resolution CIT-COP4-2009-R5 Adaptation of Sea Turtle Habitats to Climate Change
2015 – Technical Document CIT-CC12-2015-Tec.10 Mitigation strategies to reduce the impact of climate change on nesting beaches
2017 – Climate Change Working Group presents the pilot project
2018 – Consultative Committee approval and edits by Scientific Committee
2019 – IAC Secretariat submits an invitation for IAC Focal Points to participate
2019 – United States, Ecuador, Costa Rica, and Panama focal points confirm participation, and questions from these countries regarding the protocol to implement the pilot project are answered at the 2019 Scientific Committee.
2020 – August 12 – First meeting of the Climate Change WG and countries participating in the project on the status of the process and official starting date.

In their first meeting, the Scientific Committee Climate Change working group along with the delegates from Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama, and the United States, part of the project implementation group agreed on the following:

Agreement 1: The Pilot Project's official starting date is during the first quarter of 2021. The United States and Costa Rica will begin collecting the information in September 2020. This date was determined considering that the conditions impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic did not allow starting in 2020.

Agreement 2: Mexico will officially be one of the IAC countries implementing the pilot project.

Agreement 3: The Climate Change WG will identify publications of studies similar to the one proposed in the IAC pilot project and will share them with the participating countries (Ecuador, the United States, Costa Rica, Panama, and Mexico) as a reference for the methodology. This will be discussed at the next meeting in December.

Agreement 4: on November 3, 2020, the participating countries will send a report to the IAC Secretary *PT* and the Climate Change WG with questions/doubts, recommendations on standardization, data collection, and type of equipment to measure temperatures, sample size, statistical analysis, etc. or any events experienced during the implementation of the protocol proposed by the Climate Change WG. This exchange objective is to fine-tune the data collection form as well as make group decisions to use a standardized methodology for the project.

Agreement 5: the next group meeting will be held in the **first week of December 2020**. At this meeting, each country is suggested to invite the people collecting environmental information in the field to provide their views on the methodology to be followed. Reports and questions mentioned above will be discussed in November to make decisions and begin with the project.

Annex XII

CIT-CC17-2020-Doc.10

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MoU IAC-SPAW

Background

The IAC and SPAW Protocol signed a Memorandum of Understanding in 2006. The first collaboration was to convene "The Regional Workshop on Hawksbill turtles in the Wider Caribbean and Western Atlantic" that took place in Puerto Morelos, Mexico in 2009. The report can be found on the IAC website: http://www.iacseaturtle.org/eng-docs/publicaciones/Hawksbill_Report_Final_ENG.pdf

In 2015, the IAC adopted Resolution CIT-COP7-2015-R3 Conservation of the Loggerhead Sea Turtle, recognizing that populations of loggerheads (North Pacific, South Pacific, Northwest Atlantic, and South Atlantic) are found in the IAC Convention area. Resolution in this link: http://www.iacseaturtle.org/eng-docs/resolucionesCOP7CIT/CIT-COP7-2015-R3_Loggerhead_Resolution_ENG_7.15.15_ADOPTED.pdf

The COP asked the IAC Scientific and Consultative Committees to identify the main actions for the IAC Parties to undertake to improve the conservation status of all loggerhead turtles. As a result, in 2016 the IAC Scientific Committee presented a technical document with recommendations to COP entitled CIT-CC13-2016-Tec.13 "Status of Loggerhead Turtles (*Caretta caretta*) within Nations of the IAC". The report recommends an update on loggerhead nesting trends and the report to be done every 5 years. For these data, a collaboration between IAC and non – IAC countries will be very valuable, and as many of the latter nations are members of the SPAW Protocol, the collaboration could be facilitated under the IAC-SPAW MoU.

In 2019, the IAC adopted the Resolution CIT-COP9-2019-R2 Conservation of the Northwest Atlantic Leatherback, which can be found in this link http://www.iacseaturtle.org/eng-docs/resolucionesCOP9CIT/CIT-COP9-2019-R2_%20NWALeatherback_ENG_Adopted.pdf

The Resolution encourages IAC countries to collaborate with countries in the range of the species that are not members of IAC, but who are members of other international agreements such as the Cartagena Convention and SPAW Protocol, that can work together under the existing MoU on the implementation of this resolution.

Data holders from IAC and SPAW Parties throughout the North West Atlantic (North West Atlantic Leatherback Working Group) contributed nesting data to perform a region-wide analysis of trends in leatherback abundance and to provide recommendations for priority conservation actions and research[1].

[1]Northwest Atlantic Leatherback Working Group. 2018. Northwest Atlantic Leatherback Turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*) Status Assessment (Bryan Wallace and Karen Eckert, Compilers and Editors). Conservation Science

Declines in abundance were detected in the NWA leatherback nesting population, leading to the level of threat on the IUCN Red List being raised to Endangered for this population and the adoption of IAC Resolution CIT-COP9-2019-R2.

At the COP10 meeting of the Cartagena Convention/SPAW Protocol, a recommendation proposed by the Caribbean Netherlands was adopted as decision (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR IG.40/3) for IAC and SPAW to work together to support the implementation of IAC Resolution CIT-COP9-2019-R2 and work with countries in the range of the NWA leatherback to address the threats of this population.

Taking this into consideration IAC Parties asked the IAC Scientific Committee to recommend potential activities that can be proposed to the SPAW Protocol to help the implementation of IAC resolutions that are also in line with the objectives of SPAW. In addition to this, the IAC Consultative Committee in 2020 invited delegates to form a working group to address the NWA Leatherback resolution. So far only the United States has signed up as a member.

Based on the above information, the IAC Scientific Committee in 2019 formed an inter-sessional working group to draft recommendations to identify activities for implementation under the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the IAC and the SPAW Protocol signed in 2006. These are included below for consideration of the 17th Meeting of the IAC Scientific Committee.

The IAC Scientific Committee recommends:

IAC Scientific and Consultative Committee members, who are members of the NWA Leatherback Working Group that developed the WIDECAST Technical Report No. 16, work together with the WG established by IAC Consultative Committee for the species (one member from the USA only) and ask IAC Secretariat PT to invite SPAW Parties (or SPAW advisory committee) under the MoU to become members of the NWA leatherback Working Group if they are not already participating.

Parties of both conventions advised by their Scientific Committees develop a joint project to mitigate leatherback bycatch in fishing gear deployed off the major nesting beaches of non-IAC Parties (e.g., French Guiana, Trinidad)

IAC and SPAW Scientific Committees prepare technical documents to jointly lobby the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) to encourage all members operating in the Guianas to report leatherback bycatch.

Partners and the Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network (WIDECAST). WIDECAST Technical Report No. 16. Godfrey, Illinois. 36 pp.

IAC and SPAW Scientific Committees develop an information document on the impacts of pelagic *Sargassum* on leatherback and other sea turtle species nest success in SPAW and IAC Parties.

Development of standard terms of reference for coastal development EIAs that impact leatherback nesting beaches.

Prepare a list of SPAW sites where sea turtles are found

- ***The Dominican Republic***

The Dominican Republic is a signatory of the Cartagena Convention´s SPAW Protocol since 1998, with four SPAW sites:

1-National Park Sierra de Bahoruco
2-National Park Los Haitises
3-Submarine Park La Caleta
4- National Park Jaragua, with three sea turtle species included in SPAW Protocol Annex II:

Chelonia mydas
Eretmochelys imbricata
Dermochelys coriacea

Sea turtle management and protection activities are carried out in Jaragua.

The IAC Scientific Committee encourages:

IAC and SPAW Parties to collaborate on information exchange to improve the knowledge of the status of the loggerhead population, to support the implementation of IAC Resolution CIT-COP7-2015-R3. The first report to the IAC COP titled "Status of Loggerhead Turtles within Nations of the IAC", was presented in 2019, strengthening the collaboration with SPAW countries will improve data for the next report for the species, in 2021.

IAC Parties and SPAW Parties with large leatherback nesting populations (e.g., Grenada, Venezuela, Trinidad & Tobago, French Guiana, and Guyana) to engage in dialogue to discuss mechanisms of support for within-country sea turtle projects addressing threats to leatherbacks and their nesting beaches. SPAW Parties to collaborate with IAC Parties to compile bycatch data across gear types to identify opportunities for bycatch reduction of sea turtle species.

Examination of a mechanism by which IAC can assist SPAW Party countries with the training of onboard observers to document fisheries interactions between leatherback populations and longline fisheries occurring off the Guianas.

The IAC Secretariat *Pro Tempore* to continue efforts to encourage SPAW Parties that are not members of the IAC to join.

Annex XIII

CIT-CC17-2020-Doc.11

Recommendation on collaborative activities IAC-RAMSAR

Author: The Dominican Republic Delegate, Ms. Cristiana de la Rosa

Background

The IAC Scientific Committee Work Plan and the Conference of the Parties' recommendation request the IAC Scientific Committee to identify areas of collaboration, activities, and synergies with organizations with which the IAC has established a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), such as the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.

The first collaborative activity was in 2013 working together on the technical document CIT-CC10-2013-Tec.6: Wetlands of International Importance and Sea Turtle Conservation.

There was a second collaboration in 2018, by providing information on sea turtles in IAC countries, citing document CIT-CC10-2013-Tec.6, and requesting renewal of the MoU between the IAC and RAMSAR, as included in the Resolution XIII.24 adopted by Ramsar COP13: "The enhanced conservation of coastal marine turtle habitats and the designation of key areas as Ramsar Sites"

Recommendations Collaboration IAC-RAMSAR

After analyzing Ramsar´s Resolution XIII.24, the IAC-RAMSAR technical document CIT-CC10-2013-Tec.6, and the Resolution CIT-COP4-2009-R5 "Adaptation of sea turtle habitats to climate change", we provide the following recommendations on collaborative activities IAC-RAMSAR for the consideration of the 17th IAC Scientific Committee meeting:

1. Update the technical document CIT-CC10-2013-Tec.6: "Wetlands of international importance and Sea Turtle conservation" with information on the Dominican Republic. It is requested to invite Ramsar Secretariat to include the Dominican Republic information at the bottom of the document or as an annex stating the date it was updated in 2020, considering what is more feasible for both the IAC and RAMSAR Secretariats.

Add the following to what is reported in the CIT-CC10-2013-Tec.6 - Table No. 1.- Ramsar Sites with the presence of Sea Turtles in the Americas:

Number 2210	**Country**	**Ramsar Site Name**	**Latitude and Longitude**	**Area (has)**	**Species**	**Use**	**Threats to Sea Turtles**
Date 04-07-2014	The Dominican Republic	Wetlands of Jaragua Beach of Bahía de las Águilas	17°47'N 71°29'W	32.978,6	*Eretmochelys imbricata*, *Dermochelys coriacea*, *Chelonia mydas* y *Caretta*	Feeding Nesting	Bauxite storage and movement by air and land, vessel movement and anchorage, and tourist development in the area.

Wetlands of Jaragua

2- Considering Ramsar´s Resolution XIII.24 paragraph 23 "23. *URGES Contracting Parties to undertake collaborative research on impacts of climate change on marine turtles and their wetland habitats; and REQUESTS the Scientific and Technical Review Panel, consistent with its scope, mandate, and priority thematic work areas for 2019-2021, in developing its proposed work plan for presentation at the 57th meeting of the Standing Committee, to consider developing methods to rapidly assess climate vulnerability of wetlands, particularly those important as habitats for marine turtles*" it is recommended that the IAC Scientific Committee Chair and the Chair of the IAC Climate Change Working Group, with the support of the IAC Secretary *PT*, send a note inviting RAMSAR Secretariat and/or members of Ramsar´s Scientific and Technical Review Panel to participate in the implementation of the IAC Pilot Project to monitor climate change environmental parameters. This technical collaboration with RAMSAR will support the implementation of this IAC project enhancing a wetlands perspective on potential climate change impacts. This activity would respond to the IAC Resolution CIT-COP4-2009-R5 and RAMSAR Resolution XIII.24.

Request to the IAC 17th Scientific Committee Meeting

Provide comments on the contents and propose new recommendations (if needed) for adoption.

Annex XIV

CIT-CC17-2020-Doc.12

Prepared by: Dr. Diego Albareda (SC Delegate Argentina)

ACTIVITIES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MOU IAC-ACAP TO ESTABLISH A WORK PLAN

The following document was prepared by Dr. Diego Albareda, the delegate from Argentina and Chair of the Scientific Committee, in compliance with the Scientific Committee and COP9 Work Plan to identifying activities to be addressed jointly by ACAP and the IAC, within their MoU.

As a reminder, the MoU ACAP-IAC text mentions potential Areas of Cooperation between both Conventions and it reads as follows:

The participants may consult, cooperate and collaborate on areas of common interest that are directly or indirectly relevant to the conservation, including the protection and recovery of populations of albatrosses and petrels, and sea turtles including, among other things:

a) Exchange of scientific knowledge regarding techniques to mitigate interactions of albatrosses, petrels, and sea turtles with fishing operations to reduce the incidental mortality resulting from such interactions.

b) Exchange of information regarding management approaches relevant to the conservation of albatrosses and petrels, and sea turtles, and.

c) Reciprocal participation with observer status at relevant meetings of the IAC and ACAP.

IAC countries members of ACAP are Argentina, Chile, Ecuador, Peru, Brazil, and Uruguay.

As a result of a dialogue between seabird and sea turtle specialists from Argentina, Peru, and Mexico, the following topics and activities were identified to guide the IAC Scientific Committee discussion.

Two scenarios for IAC-ACAP collaboration were identified: (1) **local scenario**: countries signatories of both conventions, can jointly address common local issues affecting seabirds and sea turtles, and 2) **international scenario**: synergy ACAP-IAC on common issues in RFMOs agendas, other organizations, and States.

Topics and activities to be addressed jointly by ACAP and IAC within the MoU framework:

1) Strengthening of On-Board Observers Program, with a multitaxa approach that enhances capacities within the fisheries observer programs.

2) Promote in the member countries of both conventions, to addressing local issues jointly. For instance, although there is a proven interaction between longline fisheries vessels (artisanal longline) with albatrosses and sea turtles (Peru), there is a lack of observers on board these vessels.

3) Promote best practices on board fishing vessels, as well as compliance with current international regulations regarding solid waste produced by fishing activities, aiming to reduce marine pollution by plastics and ghost fishing gears.

4) Work in synergy to approach RFMOs and strengthen common postures. Develop a joint strategy to work on shared issues in the RFMO agendas.

5) Analyze and improve deficiencies regarding data collection and bycatch data reporting by RFMOS.

6) Promote interactions between ACAP and IAC countries which are only members of one of the conventions, to promote collaboration within the MoU and potentially increase the convention's membership.

Reference Document IAC-ACAP MoU: http://www.iacseaturtle.org/eng-docs/Memoradum_IAC-ACAP_ENG_WEB.PDF

Annex XV

Group Photo SC17