



**Inter-American Convention for the Protection and
Conservation of Sea Turtles**
16th Meeting of the IAC Scientific Committee
September 25 – 27, 2019 | Gulfport FL, The United States

CIT-CC16-2019-Doc.10

Report on the 16th IAC Scientific Committee Meeting (SC16)

The Sixteenth Meeting of the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles Scientific Committee (SC16) took place in Gulfport – Florida at Stetson University College of Law campus, on September 25 – 27, 2019. Welcome remarks were given by Stetson College of Law Dean, Professor Michèle Alexandre, IAC Scientific Committee Chair, Dr. Diego Albareda, and Ms. Veronica Caceres, IAC Secretary *Pro Tempore*.

Delegates from 12 IAC countries attended the meeting for a toll of 27 participants representing the following countries: Argentina, Belize, Brazil, Caribbean Netherlands, Chile, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama, Peru, and the United States. The Chair of the IAC Consultative Committee of Experts, Mr. Paul Hoetjes, representatives of the United States Department of State, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and accredited observers from Stetson University and AIDA participated in the meeting as well. (*Annex I – List of Participants CIT-CC16-2019-Inf.1*).

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

The agenda was adopted with the inclusion under other businesses, of Panama announcement of the Government of Panama as host of the IAC 10th Conference of the Parties (COP10) in 2021. Ms. Katherine H. Welch from Stetson University and Ms. Leslie Bustos, the delegate from Chile volunteered to be the meeting rapporteurs in support of the IAC Secretariat *Pro Tempore*. *Annex II (Agenda CIT-CC16-2019-Doc.1)*

The SC Chair, Mr. Diego Albareda, addressed the communication submitted by the Inter-American Association for Environmental Defense (AIDA) to the IAC Scientific Committee about the critical status of coral ecosystems and herbivorous fish. The Chair mentioned the reply previously sent to this organization where the IAC recognizes the importance and the need to protect these ecosystems and invites AIDA to convey this information through the Consultative Committee NGOs Sector. Although the organization requested to present the project, the time could not be granted as the communication was sent after the established 90 days before the meeting to be included in the agenda.

2. Report on the IAC Secretariat *Pro Tempore* Activities

The IAC Secretary *Pro Tempore*, Ms. Veronica Caceres, presented the 2018-2019 activities report. She mentioned the efforts to increase the IAC Membership in Colombia, Canada, and El Salvador.

There were important meetings with fisheries and environmental authorities who agree on El Salvador becoming part of the IAC and will submit a notification to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In Colombia, the previous consultations to the communities are slowing the accession to the IAC, and Canada is pending to answer communication sent to the International Division Fisheries Management and Bilateral Relations at the Fisheries and Oceans Secretary. Other outreach activities included sending the IAC News Bulletin to countries that are no members of the IAC, as well as invitations to the COP9 and subsidiary organs meetings. Colombia participated as an observer in the COP9.

Regarding financial resources, the Secretary *Pro Tempore* has obtained 8 grants from the US Fish and Wildlife Service Marine Turtle Conservation Fund to this date. The most recent (Grant 9) is a 5-year project approved to comply with the objectives of hiring an IAC assistant, and carry out the Scientific Committee meetings, and COP10. The 15th and 16th Scientific Committee Meetings, the 12th Consultative Committee of Experts meeting, and the COP9 were held during the last year. Four resolutions were adopted at the COP9:

CIT-COP9-2019-R1: Revised Financial Guidelines

CIT-COP9-2019-R2: Conservation of Northwest Atlantic Leatherback Turtle

CIT-COP9-2019-R3: Finances 2019-2021

CIT-COP9-2019-R4: Data Access Procedure

The Secretary reported on the process to implement the online reporting system with WCMC as a contractor. The item was discussed later in the meeting. She also informed on the participation of the IAC in regional meetings such as the IATTC 9th Meeting of the Working Group on Bycatch and the 94th Meeting of the Commission, which after three years presenting a draft adopted Resolution C-19-04 to mitigate impacts on sea turtles.

Regarding collaboration with other international organizations, the Secretary reported that 10th Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the SPAW Protocol and as it is written in document UNEP (DEPI)/CAR IG.40/3 agreed to work with the IAC to identify and address the threats to the population of the Northwest Atlantic Leatherback Turtle in key countries such as Trinidad & Tobago, French Guiana, Suriname, and Canada. On the other hand, Ramsar is ready to sign the renewal of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) Ramsar – IAC.

3. Report on the compliance with the Scientific Committee Work Plan, intersessional activities and results

The Scientific Committee Chair presented the indicators system to measure implementation of the IAC Committee work plan, adopted during the COP9. He explained how this activity will be useful to monitor the Committee's agenda and the activities in which the SC should focus. (*Annex III – SC Implementation Report 2017-2019 CIT-CC16-2019-Doc.2*).

During the review of the compliance with the Resolution on exceptions involving Panama, Guatemala, and Costa Rica, Panama's 5-year report was highlighted. Regarding climate change, the WG developed a form for a pilot project, which was sent to Focal Points. Also, the WG has

answered queries from those Parties interested in the project (i.e. Costa Rica, United States, and Ecuador).

4. Presentation of Panama's Report on Exceptions

The delegate from Panama, Mr. Marino Abrego, presented the progress made during the implementation of short and mid-term actions recommended in Resolution CIT-COP6-2013-R1, which have been included in the management plan to be developed after the first five years of the exception.

At Isla Cañas, the 14 km of natural hatchery strip has been segmented, signaled, and defined. A conversation with the community needs to be carried out to socialize the expansion of the area shortly. Most of the nests are kept in this area and there is an effort for the relocation of nests in artificial hatcheries involving the community, and minimizing periods of exposure. These actions have resulted in hatching success above 80%. A total of 15811 nests have been recorded in the period 2015-2018, and 314 sea turtles have been tagged while keeping constant communication with neighboring beaches to exchange information on tags recovery.

Conservation and monitoring efforts have involved students, members of the community, volunteers, Peace Corps, and the Environmental Police continuously patrolling the beaches and ensuring control and surveillance of natural hatcheries. Other partnerships involving organizations and educational institutions (schools, universities, and NGOs) are being developed to support sea turtles protection and conservation and beach cleanups. Also, the signing of work agreements is in progress as well as collaboration with organized members of the community.

An eggs Harvesting Protocol with the list of families included in the activity is being developed. Existing manuals to apply an appropriate methodology are always used during monitoring, hatcheries operation, biometric data gathering, information management, species identification, among others. Likewise, a training and Environmental Education Plan is being developed to improve management and reduce the consumption of eggs.

A Cooperation Agreement between ANAM (today Ministry of Environment) and the *Cooperativa de Isleños Unidos, R.L.* to harvest sea turtle eggs and protect the species in Isla Cañas Wildlife Refuge (RVS) was signed between 2003 and 2009. After this experience the actions are aimed to train members of the community and students to support the protected area staff on sea turtle research, management and monitoring techniques, fisheries threats, and the presentation and consultation on the Sea Turtle Eggs Harvesting Protocol, in process of approval.

Among the efforts on protection and non-consumptive use is the project "Oysters Cultivation, Fattening and Commercialization" in Isla Cañas, implemented jointly with Isla Cañas Aquaculture, Fishing and Agriculture Association (ACPAT) with the support and training provided by the staff of ARAP Research and Development General Direction. Funding is required to implement other projects to reduce sea turtle eggs harvesting.

Funds raising has allowed purchasing equipment, cover collaborators expenses, and appointing the RVSIC Chief. Human and financial resources are still required to support protection and conservation in Isla Cañas Wildlife Refuge.

On what has not yet been accomplished, although the occurrence of *Chelonia mydas* and *Eretmochelys imbricata* has been observed at the beach and in the mangrove, respectively, no closures have been established. On the other hand, data collected thus far does not yet enable establishing trends, therefore day and night monitoring will continue.

5. Proposal for modification of Resolution on Exceptions and Scientific Committee recommendations on Panama's five-year report

Agreement 1 – The Exceptions WG (Costa Rica, Caribbean Netherlands, and Brazil) will prepare recommendations for Panama, regarding the five-year report presented by Panama to the SC16. The recommendations will be submitted on December 1st for the SC members' review who will have a week to send comments to the Exceptions WG. The Secretary PT will send the recommendations agreed by the CC to Panama's Focal Point on December 15th, 2019.

Agreement 2 –Based on the analysis of Panama's five-year report on exceptions presented at the SC16, the Exceptions WG will prepare a draft Resolution on Exceptions for Panama during the inter-session period. The draft Resolution will be sent to the IAC Secretariat PT 60 days before the SC17 in 2020 for inclusion on the agenda. This draft Resolution will include basic guidelines for the implementation and monitoring of Panama's Exception Management Plan.

6. Recommendations from the Scientific Committee to Guatemala

Agreement 3 - The Scientific Committee will send a note to Guatemala's Focal Point via the IAC Secretary *Pro Tempore*, requesting to submit as soon as possible, the five-year report on the compliance with the Resolution on Exceptions to be analyzed by the Exceptions WG, as well as the exception management plan for the sustainability of *L. olivacea* population, according to the Resolution on Exceptions and the Article IV of the Text of the Convention. This note will be drafted by the Exceptions WG to be sent to Guatemala's Focal Point on October 15th, 2019.

Agreement 4 – The SC and CCE Chairs jointly with the Secretariat *PT*, will follow up on the process after sending the note to Guatemala (Agreement 3), to proceed accordingly.

7. Green Turtles Index Nesting Beaches Status in the Southeastern Pacific

The delegate from the United States, Dr. Jeffrey Seminoff informed that the working group received updated information from Ecuador which allowed to determine that compared to previous years, there is a variation on sampling effort. The conclusion then, is that there is no decreasing abundance in the numbers of Galapagos green turtles.

The delegate from Ecuador, Mr. Eduardo Espinoza thank the United States support analyzing the data Ecuador submitted. The delegate stated the importance of monitoring the two biggest populations of green turtle found between Mexico and Galapagos. The United States suggested

developing a data analysis for publication under the leadership of Ecuador. The delegate from Peru, Dr. Javier Quiñones, supported developing a publication in the medium term.

Agreement 5 – The Green Turtle Working Group (Chile, Ecuador, USA, and Peru) will edit the document “Green Turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) index nesting beaches status in the Southeastern Pacific” CIT-CC16-2019-Doc.4, to include new information presented by Ecuador. The document will be prepared in 60 days (2 months) to be submitted to the consideration of the Consultative Committee of Experts.

Agreement 6 – The delegate of the United States will include updated information provided by Ecuador, regarding Green turtles in Galapagos Islands in the document “IAC Index Nesting Beach Data Analysis” CIT-CC15-2018-Tec.14 along with an explanatory note, and will modify recommendation 7 of this document, if necessary.

8. Northwest Atlantic Leatherback Turtle

8.1. Implementation Table for the Resolution for the Conservation of the Northwest Atlantic Leatherback for the IAC Annual Report

The SC Chair presented the table including the questions to follow up on the implementation of the Resolution for the Conservation of the Northwest Atlantic Leatherback for the IAC Annual Report. It was suggested that the first question is answered by all the IAC Parties, as it involves reaching out to countries that are no members of the IAC and are important for the NWA Leatherback population such as Canada, Guyana, French Guiana, and Trinidad & Tobago.

Agreement 7 – The Scientific Committee adopted document CIT-CC16-2019-Doc.6, with the questions to follow up on the implementation of the Resolution CIT-COP9-2019-R2 for the Conservation of the Northwest Atlantic Leatherback (Annex IV) to include them in the IAC Annual Report. This document will be sent to the Consultative Committee for review on October 1st, 2019, to subsequently send it to IAC Parties in December 2019 for consideration to be included in the IAC Annual Report.

8.2. Data form to report Northwest Atlantic Leatherback interactions with fisheries in the IAC Annual Report

The delegate from the United States, Dr. Yonat Swimmer, presented the table to collect data from interactions of the Leatherbacks with longline fisheries. Ecuador asked if this would mean requesting new data from observers. The SC Chair clarified that what will be requested is data already being collected by the countries. The United States added that for that reason the table is based on the information requested by the IATTC, to comply with the mandate of the Resolution requesting data harmonized with that from the RFMOs.

There was a discussion on including other sea turtle species in the form. The United States added that this would help to maximize the effort of people filling out the form. The Secretary reminded the delegates about the existence of tables to collect data on interactions with nets, which were

presented by the Scientific Committee in 2011. The Committee also discussed the reasons for requesting longline data only when gillnet fisheries are reporting a high number of sea turtle captured incidentally and therefore is as important. The Secretary reminded the delegates of the table to request data on interactions with gillnets developed by the Scientific Committee in 2011 and ask them to consider reviewing it.

Ecuador expressed his concern as this information is in occasions classified, which should be considered. The United States added that this has to be taken into account if an online report is expected to be useful. The Secretary stated that the participation of at least two members of the CC in the development of the online report is required to establish which information the committee is requiring. The SC Chair added that the tables should be suitable for an online report and therefore collect the information online efficiently. Chile indicated that the tables on interactions with nets have been used successfully in her country but it would be necessary to check if they also work for other countries.

Agreement 8 – The Scientific Committee adopted the form to report sea turtle bycatch in longline fisheries CIT-CC16-2019-Doc.07 (*Annex V*), following the requirements of Resolution CIT-COP9-2019-R2 on the Conservation of the Northwest Atlantic Leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*), to include it in the IAC Annual Report 2020. The SC understands that paragraph 7 of the resolution CIT-COP9-2019-R2 refers to longline fisheries regarding the reference to harmonizing the form with ICCAT’s data report requirements. This document will be submitted for an inter-session review by the CCE on October 15th, 2019, to subsequently send it to IAC Parties in December 2019 for consideration to be included in the IAC Annual Report.

8.3. Data form to report Sea Turtle interactions with fisheries in the IAC Annual Report

Agreement 9 - The Scientific Committee recommends adopting form and CIT-CC8-2011-Doc.9-Annex III, following the requirements on resolutions COP3/2006/R-2 (Reduction of the adverse impacts of fisheries on sea turtles) and CIT-COP7-2015-R2 (Resolution for the Conservation of the Eastern Pacific Leatherback Turtle [*Dermochelys coriacea*]). This document will be submitted for an inter-sessions revision by the CCE on October 1st, 2019, to subsequently submit it to IAC Parties in December 2019, with the recommendation to be included in the IAC Annual Report.

8.4. Adoption of methodology to identify the Leatherback Northwest Atlantic critical areas for conservation, to provide recommendations to IAC Parties

The SC Chair stated there is a concern regarding the areas which are critical for the NWA Leatherback and are not within the Convention’s jurisdiction. The objective of this item is to establish a mechanism to collect this information and submit it to the Consultative Committee.

The delegate from Costa Rica, Mr. Didier Chacon, presented a map showing areas requiring protection and informed that records of juveniles from the Caribbean have not been published. Peru indicated to know a source that could have that information. The United States thanked Costa Rica for the presentation and added that that could be a good material to get Canada’s attention. Additionally, he pointed out that much satellite information already exists that has not been

published and that although it is essential to increase the outreach, it is also important to gather the existing information, summarize it, and make it available to the public.

Costa Rica proposed using a criterion based on the species life cycle, recommended adding more information to the maps, and pointed out that obtaining data from Trinidad is important. The United States shared updated information and the Caribbean Netherlands delegate, Dr. Julia Horrocks, indicated that Grenada has been collecting this type of information every season. The SC Chair established the Working Group for this item, formed by the United States, Costa Rica, Caribbean Netherlands, and Dr. Bryan Wallace from the Consultative Committee of Experts Scientific Sector.

Agreement 10 - Prepare a technical document compiling information on areas critical for the conservation of the Northwest Atlantic Leatherback in the Gulf of Mexico, the Atlantic Ocean, foraging grounds, and migratory routes in compliance with Resolution CIT-COP9-1029-R2. This document will be completed in May 2020 to be reviewed by the SC17 and will be presented to the CCE and at the COP10, 2021.

Agreement 11 - Prepare a technical document based on the technical document CIT-CCE5-2012-Tec.3, as a tool to approach those countries within the range of the Northwest Atlantic Leatherback that are not IAC members (Canada, Guyana, Surinam, etc.). This brief document will highlight the NWA Leatherback population status and the importance of these countries for their conservation. This material will be finalized in May 2020 to be used by the Secretary *PT* and the IAC Parties.

9. EP Leatherback Population Model / IAC Leatherback Task Force Report

Dr. Bryan Wallace, the coordinator of the IAC EP Leatherback Task Force, presented a population model showing the high risk of extirpation that the EP Leatherback is facing in Nicaragua and Costa Rica. He expressed that collaboration is required on trading and research about the population numbers, as well as implementing mitigation measures. Dr. Wallace added that creativity is required for outreach and fundraising.

The delegate from Peru shared a successful experience with a radio program in which fishermen report interactions with EP Leatherbacks, as well as an observers program in the field. Critical areas to obtain information will be identified using this information.

The implementation of the Resolution for the Conservation of the EP Leatherback has allowed for progress as the delegate from Chile pointed out. However, she mentions that building capacities with regards to the identification of the species is still required.

Ecuador added that nesting in this country has not been successful and that the major threats are bycatch in artisanal fisheries and climate change which is affecting sex diversity.

10. Climate Change

The delegate from the Caribbean Netherlands, Dr. Julia Horrocks, reminded the ST that in 2018 it was proposed to collect environmental data from some index beaches to assess a relationship

with changes in nesting and with the adaptation to temperature changes. In this meeting, the working group decided to move forward with the Parties interested in this pilot project and to discuss the methods used to collect climate change data individually with each Party.

Agreement 12 – The members of the Climate Change WG from the United States and the Caribbean Netherlands will prepare responses to the IAC Parties Costa Rica, Ecuador, and The United States, three of the four Parties who have expressed interest in participating in the climate change pilot study, but had questions on data collection, clarification of objectives for the pilot study, and/or clarification on what the Climate Change WG will do with the information collected by each country after 5 years. These responses will be drafted by the United States and the Caribbean Netherlands and circulated to the WG for comments 2 weeks after the SC meeting. The responses will be sent to IAC Parties participating in the pilot study during the first week of November 2019.

Agreement 13 - The Climate Change WG will communicate with the countries that expressed interest in participating in the climate change pilot study to discuss each country's data collection plan. During this dialogue, the WG will further explain that the overall objective after the initial 5 years of data collection is to obtain a comprehensive understanding of what index beaches are more at risk for embryo feminization, erosion, or other issues triggered by climate change.

11. IAC Parties Annual Reports analysis, with emphasis on the Resolution for impacts of fishing operations in sea turtle bycatch

The delegate from Chile, Ms. Leslie Bustos, and the delegate from Mexico, Mr. Heriberto Santana, presented the products from the analysis of the IAC Annual Reports following the agreement from the SC15 meeting (Honduras 2018) *regarding research and the Resolution on adverse impacts of fisheries on sea turtles* (CIT-COP3-2006-R2). To that end, the delegates did a general review of the annual reports presented over the last 14 years (2005-2019) delving into the delegate's home country reports, Mexico and Chile.

The performance criterion was based on the review of the *IAC Annual Report table on the Fisheries Resolution*, to identify a) information useful to be analyzed by the Scientific Committee, and b) Information from the Parties required for a robust analysis of the level of compliance with the Resolution CIT-COP3-2006-R2. The results and conclusion from the analysis are as follows:

Conclusions

- The information presented in the Annual Reports tables explains the compliance with protection and conservation measures recommended by the IAC, in general. The priority is qualitative and not quantitative information.
- It was found that in several cases the information is repetitive, not only in the section where is requested but where another type of information is required.
- In some cases, it is possible to see progress in the implementation of measures for the protection and conservation of sea turtles, but at a general level, for instance, the number or percentage of countries implementing FAO's guidelines to reduce sea turtle mortality, measures implemented by country, among other.

- Most reports presented by the Parties don't show results of the investigations mentioned, references, or internet links to find them and be able to understand the magnitude of the issue or coverage of the programs implemented.
- One of the main shortcomings is that the report does not include quantitative information on the protection and conservation measures being implemented, for instance, quantification of intra and inter-annual bycatch (mortality and survival), number of trainings, number of fishermen trained, number of vessels and type of TEDs used, etc. In this scenario, it is not possible to obtain trends that show the real impact of fishing operations by IAC Parties on sea turtles.

Recommendations

- i. Include quantitative data forms (bycatch, sampling coverage, mortality, strandings, etc.) in the IAC Annual Report, as the information in the current table does not allow to measure reductions in the interactions and impacts of fisheries on sea turtles.
- ii. It is recommended that the Parties submit the information provided to the IATTC and ICCAT. The resolution indicates that the Parties should submit the documents they produce, even if they are for other organizations.
- iii. Request information that allows for an analysis of the effectiveness and efficiency of mitigation measures for the impacts of fisheries on sea turtles in each country.

12. Online System for the IAC Annual Report

Mr. Roger Ingle, Product Manager of the Biodiversity Informatics department at the UN Environment World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC) presented via Skype the operation and advantages of the Online Reporting System (ORS) to the IAC and answered the following questions from the delegates:

- a. Will the system be able to accommodate external spreadsheets and questions from users?

WCMC: You can attach links to outside documents or links to questions. Some of the summary data can be provided in attachments.

- b. How big a file size can you attach?

WCMC: 1GB files can be uploaded. But you can upload to a file-sharing service and include a link to larger documents. This helps to reduce the lags in the system. If the file is larger there are still ways of sharing it in the system like this.

- c. The nesting table that will be in the questionnaire form, is it possible to fix the name of the beach and the coordinates, then all the user has to do is put in the nesting numbers?

WCMC: Yes, we can do that. We could have things that prepopulate like that. We could also identify by user or by country what information will prepopulate, like the beaches for the U.S. will pop up when a user from the U.S. is trying to add info.

- d. Can more than one person work as the same user?

WCMC: We encourage the users to use the same account for a delegation so that multiple people can add info for the same state. But there would still need to be the main person assigned for each questionnaire.

- e. For those questions that we just have yes or no, can the system analyze those responses and produce a graph, like how many countries answered yes and how many no?

WCMC: Yes, we can create graphs from the answers as you go through the system as a way of reporting.

- f. Can the numeric information be uploaded to some kind of database like Excel, to make it easier to present that information?

WCMC: Yes, you can get a CSV or excel file to export from that numerical data. We can also create a dashboard that shows some of the information.

- g. Can we protect highly sensitive data so that it is not visible to everyone?

WCMC: Absolutely. We can select what information will be public to the IAC and what is hidden after it is entered. We can have CSV files that are only downloadable by the Secretariat.

- h. If once the focal point begins filling out the report, can you stop and then come back to the report and fill the rest out later if you do not have all the info at one time?

WCMC: Absolutely. You can begin a form and finish it later. Just answer what you can log out, and when you log back in, the info you added will be saved.

- i. Can you query the report? Is there a possibility to get nesting numbers from one beach for the last ten years? Will the database be able to generate those numbers if you ask for specific numbers?

WCMC: We cannot do that now but we are looking at being able to do that in the new version of the program. As we develop the new system we would like to be able to speak to the users to make sure the things they want are included in the new version, like queries.

Following the presentation, the Secretary *PT* reminded the delegates that the implementation of the Online System was approved by the COP9 in June 2019, and the contract will be signed soon. She requested the support of the SC to work on this implementation and added that the United States will work with the Secretariat and WCMC to include the bycatch table in the system platform.

The United States expressed concern regarding the form presented by WCMC to fill out tables and requested that tests are conducted before the system is open for the delegates, Brazil and Panama agreed. The Secretary proposed exploring the options and added that this is the best platform

currently available with probabilities of a new version with more options. She also asked the Scientific Committee its advice to continue or not with the contracting process and send their inquiries as soon as possible as the idea is that the platform boosts the work of the committee.

The United States stated not seeing any difference with the Survey Monkey system and proposed requesting WCMC transforming one of the tables into a database to see how it would work. The Secretary assistant, Ms. Luz Rodríguez clarified that WCMC was requested to present different options to the table and the one observed during the presentation is just one of them. An option for a table with dropdown menus exists and an example was presented from the IOSEA platform also developed by WCMC.

The delegate from the Dominican Republic, Ms. Cristiana de la Rosa was concerned regarding access to the database. The delegate from Panama, Mr. Marino Abrego, shared his experience using the CMS system (also developed by WCMC) and stated the importance of moving forward towards and online report.

The SC Chair reminded that the Committee should provide its requirements, so WCMC can make the relevant adjustments, as it is the case for the tables on fisheries that will be included in the annual report. The United States, Chile, Mexico, and Brazil formed a working group that will collaborate with the assessment of the table for the online system. The Secretary PT added that it is important to make the most of the following nine months of implementation of the system and that the group appointed should send their questions and meet WCMC to ensure the SC basic needs of information are covered. This process should be done before the Christmas holidays to determine if the contract is signed or not.

The Secretary assistant presented the tables available in IOSEA ORS (the Indian Ocean and South-East Asian Marine Turtle MoU) showing that information can be downloaded as an Excel form instead of doing it manually. The explanation allowed the delegates to observe the potential of the system and clarify doubts regarding the operation of tables. This demonstration is only available to the Secretariat as it is a private link.

Chile asked about the possibility to select information by beach and if the information could be downloaded in Excel into a database per year. Also, it was asked if the report would continue to be available as a PDF. The Secretariat explained that the operation of the platform depends on what is requested to WCMC and that the report can be downloaded as a PDF but will not look like the current form as the IAC could choose between the information that will be public and that which is not.

Agreement 14 – The Working Group formed by Brazil, Mexico, the United States, and Chile, will develop a document within the 30 days following the SC meeting, including questions and suggestions on the presentation from WCMC regarding the implementation of the IAC Annual Report Online, to recommend the use of tables in the online format, as well as ways to filter the information. The WG will work along with WCMC and the Secretariat *PT* in the development and implementation of the IAC Annual Report Online System.

Agreement 15 – The United States, Chile, Brazil, and Mexico will work along with the Secretary *PT* and WCMC to adequate the tables to collect fisheries data to the online system to be included in the IAC Annual Report.

13. Sea Turtle Conservation Status

There was no discussion on this item due to a lack of time during the meeting. The Chair proposed working intersessions to present an update at the next meeting.

14. Collaboration with RFMOs and other Regional International Organizations

a. CITES

Agreement 16 – Based on the recommendations from 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 in the implementation of decisions 17.222 and 17.223 on hawksbills and other sea turtles, the recommendation to the IAC Parties is to continue monitoring illegal trade, including actions such as training state officers in the police, judges, inspectors from the ministry of environment, customs, etc. particularly in Costa Rica, Panama, the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Guatemala and other IAC nations with trade background. Costa Rica, Caribbean Netherlands, and Brazil comprise the working group that worked on this collaboration with CITES and will prepare recommendations to be included in a report to be submitted to the Secretary *PT* on May 2020, so that they can be transmitted to IAC Focal Points.

b. IATTC

Agreement 17 – Within the framework of the MoU with the IATTC, the Scientific Committee recognizes the importance of Dr. Bryan Wallace work on behalf of the IAC, who will work along with the IATTC Scientific staff to develop a model for East Pacific Leatherback to explore different management scenarios for fisheries and the costs and benefits of conservations measures. This model will be presented in the IATTC Bycatch Working Group meeting in May 2020. The SC Fisheries WG is interested in developing a similar exercise with all the other species and proposes to present a note of interest to the IATTC within the framework of the MoU.

c. ICCAT

Agreement 18 – The Secretary *PT* will send a copy of the Memorandum of Understanding draft, presented to ICCAT in 2013 to the Fisheries WG. The WG will revise the proposal including relevant edits and suggestions, to share will CCE and update in the process in the SC17.

d. SPAW

Agreement 19 – The IAC Scientific Committee will identify common issues to work along with the SPAW Protocol. The Working Group formed by IAC/SPAW Parties (Belize (coordinator), Panama, the United States, the Dominican Republic, and the Caribbean Netherlands) will present a document to work within the framework of the MoU IAC-SPAW with topics and activities such

as sea turtle illegal trade in some areas of the Caribbean and the Northwest Atlantic Leatherback, at the SC meeting in 2020.

e. RAMSAR

Agreement 20 – Dr. Royal Gardner from Stetson University offered to facilitate the contact between the IAC WG on Climate Change and Ramsar’s Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) to work together on the compliance with their work plan activities regarding this matter.

15. Fisheries

The fisheries working group presented its proposal considering the new mandates from the COP and the Convention priorities.

Agreement 21 – The Scientific Committee recommends to include the forms adopted by the SC16 (CIT-CC16-2019-Doc.6 and CIT-CC8-2011-Doc.9 -Annex III) in the 2020 Annual Report. The Fisheries WG will prepare an analysis of sea turtles interactions with fisheries, and the impact of bycatch in IAC Parties with the information collected in the IAC Annual Report fisheries forms. The analysis will be presented in the SC17, and it will be updated every 5 years to present to IAC Parties.

Agreement 22 – Interaction of Leatherback Sea Turtles with Coastal Artisanal Fisheries. The delegate from Peru will prepare a pilot program to measure the number of leatherback turtles released from drift nets in Lambayeque port fishery for one year. Preliminary results will be presented at the SC17. The objective of this work is to be used as a base model to implement similar initiatives in other IAC Parties within the EP leatherback distribution.

Agreement 23 – The Fisheries WG within the framework of the EP Leatherback Resolution, will prepare a strategy for a workshop targeting small scale fisheries on the topic of sea turtle safe release and handling that can be done in the Eastern Pacific IAC Parties, to minimize interactions with sea turtles in those fisheries. The strategy for the workshops will include (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).

Agreement 24 – The fisheries WG will continue revising sea turtle stranding forms provided by NOAA to develop a field-friendly form.

16. Scientific Committee Work Plan 2019-2020

Because of a lack of time, the SC Chair committed to updating the Work Plan. He updated the Work Plan 2019-2020 following the agreements and recommendations adopted by the SC16, and submit them to the SC delegates for their review the first week of October.

Agreement 25 – The Scientific Committee adopted the Work Plan 2019-2020 following the agreements and recommendations of the SC16 (*Annex VI – Work Plan SC16 CIT-CC16-2019-Doc.5*)

17. Preparation of the next meeting (SC17)

Agreement 26 – Costa Rica will explore the possibility of hosting the SC in 2020, and subject to necessary funding, will provide an answer to the IAC Secretariat in the following months.

18. Other business

The delegates from Panama Mr. Jose Julio Casas and Mr. Marino Abrego announced its offer to be the host of the IAC Conference of Parties to the Scientific Committee and the Secretary *PT*. The Secretary *PT* thanked Panama for the support of IAC activities and their commitment to sea turtle conservation. The Secretary *PT* will announce Panama's generous offer to the Parties.

ANNEXES

Annex I
List of Participants CIT-CC16-2019-Inf.1

PAIS/COUNTRY	NOMBRE/NAME	ORGANIZACIÓN/INSTITUTION	E-MAIL
DELEGADOS/DELEGATES			
Argentina	Diego Albareda	Presidente Comité Científico/Scientific Committee Chair	diego.albareda@gmail.com
Belize	Kirah Forman	Belize Fisheries Department	kirahforman@yahoo.com
Brazil	Alexsandro Dos Santos	Fundación Projeto TAMAR	alex@tamar.org.br
Brazil	Neca Marcovaldi	Fundación Projeto TAMAR	neca@tamar.org.br
Caribbean Netherlands	Julia Horrocks	The University of West Indies - Barbados	julia.horrocks@cavehill.uwi.edu
Costa Rica	Didiher Chacón Chaverri	WIDECAST América Latina	dchacon@widecast.org
Chile	Leslie Bustos	Subsecretaría de Pesca	lbustos@subpesca.cl
Ecuador	Eduardo Espinoza Herrera	Parque Nacional Galápagos	eespinoza@galapagos.gob.ec
México	Heriberto Santana	Instituto Nacional de Pesca - INAPESCA	heriberto.santana@inapesca.gob.mx
Panamá	Marino Abrego	Ministerio de Ambiente de Panamá – Dir. Costas y Mares	meabrego@miambiente.gob.pa
Panamá	José Julio Casas	Ministerio de Ambiente de Panamá – Dir. Costas y Mares	jasas@miambiente.gob.pa
Perú	Javier Quiñones	Instituto del Mar de Perú - IMARPE	javierantonioquinones@gmail.com
República Dominicana	Cristiana De La Rosa	Viceministerio de Recursos Costeros y Marinos	cristiana.delarosa@ambiente.gob.do
United States	Jeffrey Seminoff	NOAA	Jeffrey.seminoff@noaa.gov
United States	Yonat Swimmer	NOAA	yonat.swimmer@noaa.gov
United States	Ann Marie Lauritsen	USFWS	annmarie_lauritsen@fws.gov
United States	Joe Fette	US Department of State	fetteja@state.gov

COMITÉ CONSULTIVO DE EXPERTOS/CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS			
CN - Bonaire	Paul Hoetjes	Presidente Comité Consultivo/Consultative Committee Chair	Paul.Hoetjes@rijksdienstcn.com
United States	Bryan Wallace	Sectorial Científico CCE/ CCE Sectorial Scientific	bryanwallace@gmail.com
OBSERVADORES/OBSERVERS			
United States	Royal Gardner	Stetson University College of Law	Gardner@law.stetson.edu
United States	Erin Okuno	Stetson University College of Law	okuno@law.stetson.edu
Costa Rica	Magie Rodríguez Esquivel	AIDA	mrodriguez@aida-americas.org
SECRETARIA CIT/IAC SECRETARIAT			
CIT	Verónica Cáceres	CIT	veronica@seaturtle.org
CIT	Luz Helena Rodríguez	CIT	asistentecit@gmail.com
CIT	Paul Schiftan	Interpreter	pschiftan@yahoo.com
CIT	Francis Benaton	Interpreter II	

Annex II
Agenda CIT-CC16-2019-Doc.1

Day 1

08:00-09:00	Registration of participants
09:00-09:30	Opening Ceremony <i>Veronica Caceres Chamorro, IAC Secretary Pro Tempore</i> <i>Diego Albareda, Scientific Committee Chair</i> Stetson University Representative
09:30-09:40	Introduction of participants and accredited observers/ CIT-CC16-2019-Inf.1
09:40-10:00	Adoption of the agenda and election of meeting rapporteur/ CIT-CC16-2019-Doc.1 - <i>Dr. Diego Albareda, Scientific Committee Chair</i>
10:00-10:30	Coffee Break
10:30-11:00	Report on the IAC Secretariat <i>Pro Tempore</i> Activities <i>Ms. Veronica Caceres, IAC Secretary Pro Tempore</i>

Compliance with the Scientific Committee Work Plan, progress and results

11:00-12:00 p.m. Report on the compliance with the Scientific Committee Work Plan, intersessional activities and results/ **CIT-CC16-2019-Doc.2**
Dr. Diego Albareda, SC Chair

12:00-01:00 p.m. Lunch

Exceptions

01:00-01:30 p.m. Presentation of Panama's Report on Exceptions **CIT-CC16-2019-Doc.3A** –
Mr. Marino Abrego

01:30-02:30 p.m. Proposal for modification of Resolution on Exceptions under Article IV (3a and b) for Subsistence Harvesting of *Lepidochehys olivacea* eggs in Guatemala and Panama, **CIT-CC16-2019-Doc.3** and Scientific Committee recommendations to the five-year report on the implementation of Resolution CIT-COP6-2013-R1 in Panama – *Working Group Exceptions*

Nesting

02:30-03:00 p.m. Green Turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) index nesting beaches status in the Southeastern Pacific/**CIT-CC16-2019-Doc.4** – *Dr. Jeffrey Seminoff*

03:00-03:30 p.m. Coffee Break

Northwest Atlantic Leatherback Turtle

03:30-04:30 p.m. COP9 assignments on the Resolution for the Conservation of the Northwest Atlantic Leatherback CIT-COP9-2019-R2

- a. Implementation Table for the Resolution for the Conservation of the Northwest Atlantic Leatherback for the IAC Annual Report. **CIT-CC16-2019-Doc.06** – *Dr. Diego Albareda*
- b. Data form to report Northwest Atlantic Leatherback interactions with fisheries in the IAC Annual Report. / **CIT-CC16-2019-Doc.7** – *Dr. Yonat Swimmer*
- c. Adoption of methodology to identify the Leatherback Northwest Atlantic critical areas for conservation, to provide recommendations to IAC Parties.

Resolution Link http://www.iacseaturtle.org/eng-docs/resolucionesCOP9CIT/CIT-COP9-2019-R2_%20NWA%20Leatherback_ENG_Adopted.pdf

04:30-05:00 p.m. EP Leatherback Population Model / IAC Leatherback Task Force Report within the framework of the MoU with the IATTC – *Dr. Bryan Wallace/LAC Consultative Committee*

05:00-07:00 p.m. Stetson University Welcome Reception

Day 2 – Starting at 08:30 AM

Collaboration with RFMOs and other Regional International Organizations

08:30-09:30 a.m.

- 1) Recommendation to IAC Parties based on CITES report “Status, scope, and trends of the legal and illegal international trade in marine turtles, its conservation impacts, management options and mitigation priorities” Link to report:
<https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/sc/70/E-SC70-50.pdf>
- 2) Revision and identification of an activity/project to carry out jointly with IATTC and IAC Parties to forward the implementation of the IATTC Resolution to mitigate the impacts on sea turtles adopted in 2019. *Dr. Bryan Wallace and Dr. Yonat Swimmer.*

IATTC Resolution: https://www.iattc.org/PDFFiles/Resolutions/IATTC/_English/C-19-04-Active_Sea%20turtles.pdf

- 3) Activities identified within the framework of the MoU IAC-ACAP to establish a work plan **CIT-CC16-2019-Doc.9** – *Dr. Diego Albareda/SC Chair*
- 4) Identification of an activity/project to carry out with Ramsar and IAC Parties to help implementation of the Ramsar Resolution on the enhanced conservation of coastal marine turtle habitats and the designation of key areas as Ramsar Sites (COP13 Doc.18.26 Rev.1.)

Ramsar Resolution:

https://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/library/xiii.24_sea_turtles_e.pdf

09:30-10:00 Report on the 12th Consultative Committee of Experts Meeting/ **CIT-CCE12-2019-Doc7** - *Mr. Paul Hoetjes, Chair Consultative Committee of Experts*

10:00-10:30 Coffee Break

10:30–12:30 **Working Groups Meeting**
Chair requests the working groups to meet accordingly

12:30-01:30 p.m. Lunch

Climate change

01:30-02:00 p.m. Progress report on the implementation of the pilot study to collect environmental data in index nesting beaches – *Dr. Julia Horrocks*

Fisheries

02:00-03:00 p.m. Fisheries Working Group Activities Results

- a. Draft sheet for IAC Reporting of Sea Turtles Stranding/**CIT-CC16-2019-Doc.8** -. *Dr. Javier Quiñones*
- b. Report on information needs in the IAC Annual Report to analyze compliance with the Leatherback and Fisheries Resolutions – *Ms. Leslie Bustos and Dr. Heriberto Santana.*
- c. Report form on the occurrence status of the EP Leatherback and its threats, in the Scientific Committee Fisheries WG member countries – *Mr. Eduardo Espinoza*

3:00-03:30 p.m. Coffee break

03:30-05:00 p.m. **Working Groups Recommendations** – *Working Groups Coordinators*

Day 3 - Starting at 08:30

2019 Scientific Committee Work Plan

08:30-09:30 Updating of the Scientific Committee Work Plan **CIT-CC16-2019-Doc.5**

IAC Annual Report

09:30-10:00 WCMC Presentation. Review of the IAC Annual Report content to transition to an online format, and list priority information in the Annual Report to be used for technical documents and recommendations to IAC Parties.

10:00-10:30 Coffee Break

Sea Turtle Conservation Status

10:30-11:00 Strategy to work with MTSG and SWOT to develop the Sea Turtle Conservation Status product and recommendations to the IAC Parties, and strategy to collect the information available on sea turtle conservation status
Dr. Diego Albareda/SC Chair

11:00-12:00 Review and Adoption of Recommendations from the meeting

12:00-01:00 p.m. Lunch

01:00-01:30 p.m. Other business:

Panama announcement on hosting the COP10 2021

Preparation of the next meeting (CC17)

01:30-02:00 p.m. Proposals to host CC17

02:00-02:30 p.m. Closing Remarks

02:30-03:00 p.m. Coffee Break

03:00-06:00 p.m. Visit to Apollo Beach Florida Aquarium Sea Turtles Rehabilitation Centre
Courtesy of Stetson University.

Annex III

Report on the Implementation of the Scientific Committee Work Plan 2017-2019

The following document is presented by the Scientific Committee and the Secretary *Pro Tempore*, and lists the activities adopted during CC14 (2017), CC15 (2018) and the COP9 of the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles included in the IAC Scientific Committee Work Plan, and the actions required according to the indicators on the current status where **green** is “completed”; yellow is in progress; red is no execution/no action, and blue is to be defined in the SC16. The list is organized by theme and divided into two columns one for the activity and the other to explain the reason for the current status shown by the respective color.

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE (SC)

Activity Proposed		Status – June 12, 2019
Exceptions		
1	Follow up on compliance with recommendations on exceptions to Panama.	Panama presents its 5-year implementation of Exceptions report at the COP9 and the SC16 Scientific Committee in 2019.
2	Follow up on compliance with recommendations on exceptions to Guatemala	Guatemala presents its 5-year implementation of Exceptions report during the COP9 and the SC16 Scientific Committee in 2019.
3	Exceptions Working Group (WG) and Scientific Committee – SC16 review Panama and Guatemala 5 year report and prepare a draft updated Resolution on Exceptions to submit to SC16.	WG on exceptions (Costa Rica, Brazil, Caribbean Netherlands), submitted a draft updated Resolution on Exceptions for review and adoption at SC16.
4	Follow up on compliance with recommendations on exceptions to Costa Rica. The SC will send a letter to Costa Rica Focal Point requesting to prepare the report on the implementation of Exceptions to be considered at the SC17 2020.	Costa Rica will present its 5-year implementation of Exceptions report at the SC17 in 2020.
5	The SC will carry out a status and trend analysis of <i>Lepidochelys olivacea</i> in the region.	Information required for this analysis could not be collected as it involves no-IAC countries. The SC agreed on removing the item from the agenda.

Activity Proposed		Status – June 12, 2019
Website and IAC News Bulletin		
6	Every month, the Scientific Committee will provide news relevant to IAC Parties to the Secretary <i>Pro Tempore</i> 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 <i>PT</i> is required.
Fisheries		
7	Update the Sea Turtle Excluder Devices (TEDs) list used in each country.	List of TEDs used along with corresponding regulations updated and in the website http://www.iacseaturtle.org/docs/dets/CIT-CC15-2018-Doc.3 TEDs 2018 ENG Web.pdf
8	Develop a report with the results from the survey on trawl fisheries targeting non-crustacean species interacting with sea turtles.	Report on trawl fisheries targeting non-crustacean species interacting with sea turtles presented at the SC15 (CIT-CC15-2018-Doc.7 – Annex III)
9	Define common topics to work within the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding IAC – Agreement for the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP).	Pending for the SC16
10	Implementation of IAC-ACAP MoU	SC implements a collaboration activity with ACAP. Pending
11	Continue to work on East Pacific Leatherback and Fisheries.	SC Members from Peru, Chile y Mexico provided recommendations within the framework of the WG Leatherback Task Force to be presented at the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) Working Group on Bycatch meeting 2018 y 2019.
Index Beaches Conservation Status		
12	Collect information on annual nesting in index beaches using the form developed by the SC, and the IAC Annual Report and report periodically (every 5 years).	Technical document on the analysis of index beaches 2009-2018 CIT-CC15-2018-Tec.14 presented to COP9 (CIT-CC15-2018-Tec.14)
Climate Change		
13	The SC will develop a form to collect environmental data in nesting index beaches to send it to the IAC Focal Points inviting them to participate in the pilot project.	Form developed and sent to Focal Points by the IAC Secretary <i>PT</i> in 2019 (CIT-CC14-2017-Doc.06 – Annex VII)

Activity Proposed		Status – June 12, 2019
14	The SC will send a periodic request to the Parties of the environmental data collected in index nesting beaches to the Parties.	An invitation was sent in 2019 to Focal Points to participate in the Pilot Project. Formal answer accepting to participate has been received from Ecuador, the United States, Costa Rica, and the Caribbean Netherlands.
15	The SC answered questions to the Parties regarding the Pilot Project.	The Climate Change Working Group Coordinator Julia Horrocks received questions from Ecuador and USA on the Pilot Project and prepared the answers to be presented at the SC16.
Work Plan		
16	Update the Scientific Committee Work Plan following IAC guidelines and COPs Resolutions.	Work Plan updated at the 15th Scientific Committee meeting in Tegucigalpa, 2018 (<u>CIT-CC15-2018-Doc.7</u>) 2019 Work Plan was updated at the COP9.
Collaboration with Other Organizations and Strategic Alliances		
17	Costa Rica and Honduras will develop and informative document on across-borders trafficking of <i>Lepidochelys olivacea</i> in <i>Golfo de Fonseca</i> to inform the CCE for recommendations on working with CITES and other relevant conventions.	This activity was not carried out due to the lack of information that involves non-IAC countries. The SC requested removing the activity from their Work Plan.
18	Proposal by the COP Chair: To identify in Ramsar Sea Turtle Resolution a specific activity for collaboration.	Pending for SC16
Annual Reports		
19	Review technical information included in the IAC Annual Report.	Annual Reports were used to develop: A. TEDs list B. Report on index nesting beaches C. Analysis of compliance with resolutions.
Projects		
20	Develop and analyze recommendations about high priority projects to apply for funds and other resources needed to achieve the IAC objectives.	Fisheries WG will present and intention note to ICCAT to develop a model to explore different scenarios on fisheries management and the cost and benefits of conservation measures similar to the EP Leatherback model. This model (EP Leatherback) will be presented in May 2020.

Activity Proposed		Status – June 12, 2019
Recommendations from COP and CCE		
21	Address COP and Consultative Committee of Experts requests and makes recommendations accordingly.	Jointly with the CCE, develop ACAP's informative document and MoU edits presented to ACAP's MOP in 2018
IAC Technical Documents		
22	Develop technical documents as needed.	Technical document on the analysis of index beaches 2009-2018 updated CIT-CC15-2018-Tec.14
23	Develop technical documents on sea turtles foraging sites in at IAC Parties.	In discussion with the CCE, it was determined that this information is not relevant to the Parties at the moment as its use is not clear.
IAC Expert Directory		
24	Review and update the IAC Expert Directory.	Experts Directory updated on the website to April 16, 2018. http://www.iacseaturtle.org/directorioExpertos-eng.htm
Eastern Pacific Leatherback <i>Dermochelys coriacea</i>		
25	Continue supporting the implementation of the EP Leatherback Resolution	Updated information on Leatherbacks and important sites near nesting beaches. Information was provided by the IAC Leatherback Task Force to the IATTC bycatch working group meeting 2018, and 2019.
Green Turtle <i>Chelonia mydas</i>		
26	Working Group (WG) formed by Jeffrey Seminoff, Javier Quiñones, Eduardo Espinoza and Leslies Bustos, will prepare an information document on <i>Chelonia mydas</i> for COP9.	Informative document "Green Turtle (<i>Chelonia mydas</i>) index nesting beaches status in the Southeastern Pacific" presented at COP9.
27	WG develops a technical document on <i>Chelonia mydas</i> to be presented at SC16	Technical document will be updated by the WG.
Northwest Atlantic Leatherback <i>Dermochelys coriacea</i>		
28	Draft Resolution on the Conservation of the Northwest Atlantic Leatherback for review at CCE 2018.	COP9 adopted the resolution in 2019.
29	SC develop a table for monitoring compliance with the Resolution on the Conservation of the Northwest Atlantic Leatherback for the IAC annual report to be adopted at SC16.	Table presented, adopted, and submitted for CCE review.
30	SC develops a form to report Northwest Atlantic Leatherbacks bycatch data to be	Form presented, adopted, and submitted for the CCE review.

Activity Proposed		Status – June 12, 2019
	included in the IAC annual report that will be discussed and adopted at SC16.	
Loggerhead Turtle <i>Caretta caretta</i>		
31	Present the loggerhead technical document to the CCE including the COP8 suggestions.	Final document revised and in the website (CIT-CC13-2016-Tec.13)
32	Develop a draft with questions on the loggerhead Resolution for the IAC annual report.	The SC prepared questions to follow up on <i>Caretta caretta</i> Resolution (CIT-COP7-2015-R3), which were included in the IAC Annual Report with the approval of the CCE since 2018.
Hawksbill Turtle <i>Eretmochelys imbricata</i>		
33	Work with CITES on the revision of the document on hawksbill products illegal trafficking in the region. The SC revised the resulting document from CITES consultancy and sent final edits to CITES.	The Scientific Committee recommended WWF Latin America for the consultancy. Recommendations and comments submitted to CITES Secretariat. An informative document presented at CITES COP 2019. Results from this meeting are expected.
34	The Scientific Committee will make recommendations to the Conference of Parties on conservation actions required in the region based on CITES document.	The WG will prepare recommendations for the report that will be submitted to the Secretary <i>PT</i> in May 2020.
Capacity Building		
35	Technical support of SC members in a multidisciplinary working group to follow up on the Artisanal Fisheries Facilities Project in Puerto Lopez, Manabí, Ecuador.	Ecuador did not clarify when this group met
36	Develop a report on sea turtle populations' conservation status for the COP.	COP9 recommended a partnership with IUCN-MTSG. The SC will define a strategy as to how this synergy will work at the SC16 meeting.

Annex IV

Questions to follow up on the implementation of Resolution CIT-COP9-2019-R2 in the IAC Annual Report

CIT-COP9-2019-R2: Conservation of the Northwest Atlantic Leatherback

ACCORDING TO RESOLUTION CIT-COP8-2017-R2, REPORT WHETHER YOUR COUNTRY:

IS COMPLIANT WITH THE FOLLOWING:	YES	NO	DESCRIBE ACTION (*)	DOES NOT APPLY
Note: Question 1 must be answered by all IAC Parties, please skip the rest of the questionnaire if the Resolution is not applicable in your country.				
1. Has reached out to Canada, Guyana, French Guiana, Trinidad & Tobago, and Suriname to inform on the critical situation of the population and priority actions for the conservation of the NWA Leatherback?				
IS COMPLIANT WITH THE FOLLOWING:	YES	NO	DESCRIBE ACTION (*)	DOES NOT APPLY
2. Has implemented techniques to reduce bycatch and mortality in fisheries, following the UN-FAO Guidelines to Reduce Sea Turtle Mortality in Fishing Operations?				
3. Have fishery observer programs that comply with the minimum standards for scientific observer coverage that have been established by pertinent Regional Fishery Management Organizations?				
4. Has implemented laws and regulations related to Northwest Atlantic leatherback conservation, particularly related to fisheries bycatch and marine protected areas?				
5. If your country has Northwest Atlantic Leatherback turtle nesting beaches:				
5.1. Has your country implemented conservation measures for the protection of the NWA leatherback nesting beaches and associated habitats?				
5.2. Does your country have a monitoring and tagging program in the NWA leatherback nesting beaches?				
6. Is your country collecting data on interactions of the NWA leatherback with fishing fleets? If YES, please answer question 6.1.				
6.1. Fill out the IAC form to report interactions of the NWA leatherback with longlines. Interactions form to be included here (LINK TO DATA COLLECTION FORM)				

(*) Specify actions implemented, the name of the project or relevant document, location, objective(s), institutions responsible, contact, financial or other support (optional), results (both positive and negative), and duration.

Annex V

Annual Summary Reporting Template for Fleet Information and Observer Data for Longline Vessels >20m Operating in the IAC Region CIT-CC16-2019-Doc.7

Member country	Country name
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FLEET INFORMATION (vessels >20m)									
Period covered	All sets types combined			Shallow sets (<15 HPB/HBF ¹ or <100m max hook depth)			Deep sets (≥15 HPB/HBF or ≥100m max hook depth)		
	date range mm/dd/yyyy–mm/dd/yyyy			date range mm/dd/yyyy–mm/dd/yyyy			date range mm/dd/yyyy–mm/dd/yyyy		
Area fished	from (XXX) ^o W to (XXX) ^o W and from (XXX) ^o S/N to (XXX) ^o S/N			from (XXX) ^o W to (XXX) ^o W and from (XXX) ^o S/N to (XXX) ^o S/N			from (XXX) ^o W to (XXX) ^o W and from (XXX) ^o S/N to (XXX) ^o S/N		
	Total Fleet	Observed	% observed	Total Fleet	Observed	% observed	Total Fleet	Observed	% observed
No. of vessels that fished	100	9	9	60	3	5	90	8	8.9
No. of trips	300	19	6.3	150	15	10	300	10	3.3
No. of effective fishing days	4500	260	5.8	3700	238	6.4	800	22	2.8
No. of sets	5000	320	6.4	4000	800	20	1000	25	2.5
No. of hooks (in thousands) <i>If unknown, approx.. no. of hooks/set, using a *</i>	1000	60	6	700	120	17	300	12	4
Predominant ² hook type/size (IATTC code)	C-40	C-40		C-40	J-02		C-33	C-33	
Predominant bait type ³	SQ	SQ		SQ	SQ		M	M	

¹ Hooks per Basket / Hooks Between Float

² Predominant indicates most common, e.g. >50%

³ Bait code: SQ – squid (e.g. Cephalopods), M – mackerel (e.g. Scomber spp.), A – artificial lure (e.g. plastic jig)

NON-RETAINED SPECIES (vessels >20m)									
	No. of Individuals Observed								
	All sets types combined			Shallow sets (<15 HPB/HBF ⁴ or <100m max hook depth)			Deep sets (≥15 HPB/HBF or ≥100m max hook depth)		
	Released Alive	Released Dead	Released Condition Unknown	Released Alive	Released Dead	Released Condition Unknown	Released Alive	Released Dead	Released Condition Unknown
Taxa - Sea turtles									
leatherback (<i>Dermochelys coriacea</i>)									
loggerhead (<i>Caretta caretta</i>)									
green (<i>Chelonia mydas</i>)									
olive ridley (<i>Lepidochelys olivacea</i>)									
Kemp's ridley (<i>Lepidochelys kempii</i>)									
Hawksbill (<i>Eretmochelys imbricata</i>)									

⁴ Hooks per Basket / Hooks Between Float

Annex VI

CIT-CC16-2019-Doc.5

WORK PLAN SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE 2019-2021

Actor	Topic	Proposed Action	Expected Result	Time Frame
<p>Exceptions Working Group and delegates from Panama, Guatemala, and Costa Rica</p>	<p>Exceptions</p>	<p><u>Panama</u> 1) The WG prepares recommendations for Panama, regarding the five-year report presented at the SC16. The recommendations will be submitted on December 1st for the SC members' review within the next 7 days. Final recommendations will be sent to Panama's Focal Point on December 15th, 2019. 2) The WG prepares a draft Resolution on Exceptions for Panama to be presented 60 days prior SC17 meeting. This draft Resolution will include the guidelines for the implementation and monitoring of Panama's Exception Management Plan.</p>	<p>1) Document with recommendations for Panama 2) Resolution draft on the Exceptions in Panama</p>	<p>1) 15/12/2019 2) 2020 (60 prior CC17)</p>

Actor	Topic	Proposed Action	Expected Result	Time Frame
<p>Exceptions Working Group and delegates from Panama, Guatemala, and Costa Rica</p>	<p>Exceptions</p>	<p><u>Guatemala:</u></p> <p>3) The SC sends a note to Guatemala's Focal Point requesting the five-year report on the compliance with the Resolution on Exceptions to be analyzed by the Exceptions WG, as well as the exception management plan, according to the Resolution on Exceptions and the Article IV of the Text of the Convention. This note will be drafted by the Exception WG and the Secretary will send it to Guatemala's Focal Point on October 15th, 2019.</p> <p>4) The SC and CCE Chairs jointly with the Secretariat <i>PT</i> will follow up on the process after sending the note to Guatemala (Agreement 3), to proceed accordingly.</p>	<p>3) Note submitted to Guatemala requesting their five-year report on their Exception.</p> <p>4) A follow-up to the Exception process in Guatemala</p>	<p>3) 15/10/2019</p> <p>4) 2019 - 2020</p>

Actor	Topic	Proposed Action	Expected Result	Time Frame
Exceptions Working Group and delegates from Panama, Guatemala, and Costa Rica	Exceptions	<p><u>Costa Rica:</u></p> <p>5) GT reviews compliance with Costa Rica's five-year report and management plan on Exceptions and provides recommendations at the SC17.</p> <p>6) GT reviews the Resolution on Exception in Costa Rica to decide on its update.</p>	<p>5) Recommendations to Costa Rica on the compliance with the Resolution on Exceptions and management plan.</p> <p>6) Updated Costa Rica's Resolution on Exceptions</p>	<p>5) CC17 – 2020</p> <p>6) CC17 – 2020</p>
Scientific Committee, Secretariat <i>Pro Tempore</i>	IAC Website & Newsletter	1) Every month, the SC will provide news relevant to IAC Parties to the Secretary <i>Pro Tempore</i> for the IAC Newsletter.	1) Updated news on the IAC website, and regular publication of the IAC's Newsletter.	Permanent
Fisheries and Leatherback EP Working Group	Fisheries and Eastern Pacific Leatherback <i>Dermochelys coriacea</i>	<p>1) Prepare a preliminary analysis on sea turtles interactions with fisheries in the IAC Parties with the information collected in the IAC Annual Report 2020 bycatch forms adopted in the SC16 (longline forms by SC16, 2019, nets forms by SC8).</p> <p>2) Peru will prepare a pilot program to measure the number of leatherback turtles released from drift nets in Lambayeque's port fishery for a year.</p>	<p>1) A preliminary diagnosis presented at the SC17. Report on the analysis of bycatch information every five years since 2020 (1st report on 2024).</p> <p>2) Presentation on Peru's experience to the SC, to be used as a base model to implement similar initiatives in other IAC Parties where the EP Leatherback Resolution is applicable.</p>	<p>1) Inter-session 2019-2020 2024</p> <p>2) SC17 – 2019-2020</p>

Actor	Topic	Proposed Action	Expected Result	Time Frame
Fisheries and Leatherback EP Working Group	Fisheries and Eastern Pacific Leatherback <i>Dermochelys coriacea</i>	3) Prepare a strategy for a workshop targeting small scale fisheries, on sea turtle safe release and handling, which can be implemented in the Eastern Pacific IAC Parties, within the framework of the EP Leatherback Resolution.	3) 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).	3) Inter-session 2020-2021 (SC18)
		4) WG on Fisheries will revise sea turtle stranding forms provided by NOAA to develop a field-friendly form.	4) Eastern Leatherback sea turtle stranding and necropsy protocol.	4) SC17 – 2019-2020
		5) Develop a template report for each Party member of the Leatherback TF (Peru, Chile, Mexico, and Ecuador) on the status of occurrence and threats to the EP Leatherback.	5) Reports on the status of occurrence and threats to the Leatherbacks in countries that are part of the Leatherback WG.	5) 2019
		6) Collect bibliographic data on incidental catches of Leatherbacks in IAC Countries fisheries to identify other threats.	6) Report on the analysis of bibliographic information on incidental catches of Leatherbacks in IAC Countries fisheries.	6) 2019-2020
		7) Review the Annual Report table on fisheries and develop an updated report on the information required from the IAC Parties aiming for a comprehensive analysis of the compliance with the Resolution on Leatherbacks.	7) Report on the information required in the Annual Report aiming for a comprehensive analysis of the compliance with the Resolution on Leatherbacks.	7) 2019

Actor	Topic	Proposed Action	Expected Result	Time Frame
Nesting Working Group	Conservation Status in Index Nesting Beaches	1) 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. The next update is in 2023.	1) IAC Annual Reports updated with nesting information that Parties and Scientific Committee delegates provide.	Inter-session 2020 - 2021
Scientific Committee	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.	Permanent
Scientific Committee and the Coordinator of strategies to work with International Organizations	Collaboration with other Organizations and Strategic Alliances	1) ACAP: Define topics to work within the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding IAC - ACAP. Responsible: SC Chair 2) CITES: Prepare recommendations for IAC Parties, based on CITES report on sea turtle trade and decisions 17.222 and 17.223 on hawksbills and other sea turtles. Parties who reviewed CITES document. 3) ICCAT: Review the proposal of MoU with ICCAT presented in 2013, including relevant edits to present it to the CCE. Responsible: Fisheries WG	1) Report on topics identified to work jointly with ACAP. 3) Recommendations to IAC Parties on actions to continue monitoring illegal trade (CITES) 3) Proposal of MoU with ICCAT	1) 2019 - 2020 2) Permanent 2) May 2020 3) 2019-2020

Actor	Topic	Proposed Action	Expected Result	Time Frame
<p>Scientific Committee and the Coordinator of strategies to work with International Organizations</p>	<p>Collaboration with other Organizations and Strategic Alliances</p>	<p>3) SPAW: Identify common issues to work with the SPAW Protocol. Responsible: WG MoU SPAW – IAC (Belize –coordinator-, Panama, USA, Dominican Republic, Caribbean Netherlands)</p> <p>5) RAMSAR: Identify topics to work within the framework of the MoU with Ramsar, considering the recommendations established (E.g. Joint work with Ramsar’s STRP and Climate Change WG).</p> <p>6) IATTC: Within the implementation of the MoU with IATTC, the Scientific Committee Fisheries WG proposes to present a note of interest for developing an analysis of the impact of fisheries mitigation measures on sea turtles that are not leatherback.</p>	<p>4) Proposal with topics to work within the framework of the MoU with SPAW</p> <p>5) Proposal with topics to work within the framework of the MoU with Ramsar.</p> <p>6) Note of interest submitted to the IATTC to develop an analysis of the impact of fisheries mitigation measures on sea turtles in the IAC region, different from the leatherback EP</p>	<p>4) CC17 - 2020</p> <p>5) CC17 - 2020</p> <p>6) 2019 - 2020</p>
<p>Scientific Committee and IAC Annual Report Working Group</p>	<p>Annual Reports</p>	<p>1) Analyze technical information included in the IAC Annual Report. 2) Prepare a document including questions and suggestions for WCMC on the customization of the IAC Annual Report tables in the online format. Responsible: Annual Report WG (Brazil, Mexico, USA, Chile) working with the Secretary <i>PT</i> in the development of this system.</p>	<p>1) Report on the analysis of technical information from the IAC Annual Reports with recommendations to the Parties when needed. 2) Recommendations from the SC to WCMC on the online IAC Annual Report form.</p>	<p>1) Permanent 2) November 2019</p>

Actor	Topic	Proposed Action	Expected Result	Time Frame
Scientific Committee and IAC Annual Report Working Group	Annual Reports	3) The United States, Chile, Brazil, and Mexico will work along with the Secretary <i>PT</i> and WCMC to adequate the tables to collect fisheries data to include them in the IAC Annual Report.	3) Tables to collect fisheries data customized for the new online annual report form.	3) Nov 2019 – Nov 2020
Scientific Committee	Projects	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.	Permanent
Scientific Committee	COP and Consultative Committee of Experts Recommendations	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
Scientific Committee	IAC Technical Documents	1) Develop technical documents as needed	2) Technical documents available at the IAC's website and shared with IAC Parties.	Permanent
Scientific Committee and Working Group	Green Turtle <i>Chelonia mydas</i> in the Southeastern Pacific	1) Update document CIT-CC16-2019-Doc.4 with information updated by Ecuador. Responsible: Green Turtle WG (USA, Peru, Chile, and Ecuador) 2) Update document CIT-CC15-2018-Tec.14 on nesting beaches with updated information on Green Turtle in Galapagos. Responsible: Green Turtle WG, USA, and Secretary <i>PT</i> .	1) Document CIT-CC16-2019-Doc.4 updated. 2) Document CIT-CC15-2018-Tec.14 updated.	1) December 2019 2) December 2019

Actor	Topic	Proposed Action	Expected Result	Time Frame
Scientific Committee and Working Group	Northwest Atlantic Leatherback <i>Dermochelys coriacea</i>	<p>1) Send Table CIT-CC16-2019-Doc.6 to follow up on the implementation of the Resolution on the Northwest Atlantic Leatherback CIT-COP9-2019-R2 to the CCE, for adoption by the Parties and inclusion in the Annual Report 2020.</p> <p>2) Send the tables to report bycatch in longline fisheries CIT-CC16-2019-Doc.7 and nets fisheries CIT-CC8-2011-Doc.9-Annex III to the CCE, for adoption by the Parties and inclusion in the Annual Report 2020.</p> <p>3) Prepare a technical document on critical areas for the conservation of the Northwest Atlantic Leatherback for completion in May 2020 to present it to the SC17, CCE, and COP10. Responsible: NWA Leatherback WG (Costa Rica, Brazil, Caribbean Netherlands, and Bryan Wallace from CCE).</p>	<p>1) Table to follow up on the Northwest Atlantic Leatherback Resolution CIT-COP9-2019-R2 included in Annual Report 2020.</p> <p>2) Tables to report bycatch in longline and nets fisheries included in Annual Report 2020.</p> <p>3) Technical document on critical areas for the Northwest Atlantic Leatherback presented to the SC17, CCE, and COP10.</p>	<p>1) December 2019</p> <p>2) December 2019</p> <p>3) SC17-2020</p>

Actor	Topic	Proposed Action	Expected Result	Time Frame
Scientific Committee and Working Group	Northwest Atlantic Leatherback <i>Dermochelys coriacea</i>	4) Prepare a technical document based on document <u>CIT-CCE5-2012-Tec.3</u> , to use it as a tool to approach those countries within the range of the Northwest Atlantic Leatherback, which are not IAC members. Responsible: Northwest Atlantic Leatherback WG	4) Technical document on the status of the Northwest Atlantic Leatherback population for the use of IAC Parties and the Secretary <i>PT</i> to approach countries that are not IAC members.	4) March 2020
Scientific Committee, Secretariat <i>Pro Tempore</i>	IAC Directory of Experts	1) Review and update the IAC Expert Directory.	1) Updated directory available on IAC's website.	Permanent
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
Scientific Committee	Climate Change	1) Prepare answers for Costa Rica, Ecuador, and the United States addressing their questions on the climate change pilot project. Responsible: the United States and Caribbean Netherlands. 2) Contact those countries that showed interest in the climate change pilot project to support the data collection process in each country. Responsible: Climate Change WG.	1) Answers regarding the climate change pilot project sent to Costa Rica, Ecuador, and the United States. 2) Data collection plan established for each IAC Country interested in the climate change pilot project.	1) November 2019 2) Inter-sessions 2019-2020

Actor	Topic	Proposed Action	Expected Result	Time Frame
Scientific Committee Working Group	Sea turtle conservation status	1) 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: SC Chair 2) Compile information available on sea turtles conservation status.	1) Progress report on the approach to organizations to create partnerships. 2) Recommendations on sea turtle conservation status developed for the IAC Parties.	1) 2019 - 2020 2) Permanent

Annex VII
Photos – IAC 16th Scientific Committee



Group photo of the IAC 16th Scientific Committee Meeting



Stetson University representatives – Hosts of the SC16 Meeting



Scientific Committee (SC16) working groups discussing about Exceptions and the Northwest Atlantic Leatherback (above), and Fisheries and Climate Change (below).