



Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles  
VIII Meeting of the Consultative Committee of Experts  
March 18-19, 2015

**CIT-CCE8-2015-Doc.6**

**Report of the 8th Meeting of the IAC Consultative Committee of Experts**

Day 1, March 18<sup>th</sup>

Opening Remarks and Agenda adoption

1. The Eighth Meeting of the Consultative Committee of Experts (CCE) of the IAC took place via video conference on March 18 and 19, 2015, and was hosted by the Department of State of the United States of America.
2. Due to technical difficulties the meeting started at 11:00 am EST. In order to save time, Mr. Paul Hoetjes (Caribbean Netherlands), Chair of the Consultative Committee, proposed to skip the reports on activities in agenda items 2 and 3.
3. The meeting was attended by delegates from the following IAC Contracting Parties: Argentina, Brazil, Caribbean Netherlands, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico, Peru, and the United States (10 countries). Two sectorial delegates from the NGO sector attended, Mr. Diego Albareda (Chair of the IAC Scientific Committee) and Ms. Veronica Caceres (IAC Secretary *Pro Tempore*). The Humane Society International attended as accredited observer (Annex I).
4. Mr. Damon Yeh (Colorado State University) and Ms. Maya Lacayo (FIU Graduate student) volunteered to help the IAC Secretariat PT to be the meeting rapporteur.
5. The Agenda (CIT-CC11-2014-Doc.1) was adopted with the change suggested by the Chair (Annex II).

Review draft Resolution on the Exceptions for Costa Rica CIT-CC11-2014-Doc.2

6. The meeting began with a discussion on the comments made prior to the meeting on the document (CIT-CC11-2014-Doc.2). The recommendations to Costa Rica in regards to their exception for the harvest of *L. olivacea* eggs in Ostional was prepared by the IAC Scientific Committee (SC) per request of the CCE. The participants suggested changes to the second page of the document, the operative part of the draft Resolution. Comments were made regarding word choice and paragraph order. All edits in this section were agreed upon by the CCE.
7. In the section on recommendations for Costa Rica to meet the requirements for exceptions, Mexico commented that once Costa Rica decides which method, either the

Chavez-Morera or the Valverde and Gates they will use to monitor the *L.olivacea* arribada site, it will be desirable to standardize their method with Mexico and other countries in the IAC region. Currently Mexico uses the Valverde and Gates method. Costa Rica agreed to discuss their methodology with Mexico.

8. Costa Rica also requested to change the language from 'study/survey' to just 'study'. They felt that this would allow more flexibility in the work to be done.
9. The edits to the document were approved by the CCE and it will be included in the agenda of the 7<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties (COP7) as a draft Resolution on exceptions under article IV (3a and b) for subsistence harvesting of *Lepidochelys olivacea* eggs in Costa Rica (Annex III).

#### Review updates on exception from Panama

10. The *Secretariat Pro Tempore* provided an update on the exception for Panama. She shared that the Scientific Committee Delegate from Panama, Mr. Marino Abrego, Autoridad de Recursos Acuaticos (ARAP), submitted a letter from his legal advisers at Autoridad del Ambiente (ANAM) stating that there are no contradictions between the legal framework in place in Panama in regards to *L. olivacea* egg harvest at the Wildlife Refuge Isla Cannas and the recommendations on the exception put forth by IAC COP6 in the Resolution CIT-COP6-2013-R1. The letter clarifies that in the Isla Cana Refuge there can be no egg harvesting until a management plan is developed for sustainable use. (Letter ANAM CIT-CCE8-2015-Inf.2 Annex IV)
11. USA asked if there were any updates on the exception from Guatemala. The *Secretariat Pro Tempore* informed that there were no updates on the situation.

#### Review CCE Work Plan (2015-2016) CIT-CCE8-2015-Doc.3

12. The meeting agreed to the inclusion of two activities in the work plan to be done by the East Pacific Leatherback task Force (LB Task Force) in regards to the draft Resolution discussed in agenda item 7. It was agreed that the LB Task Force would develop a cost estimate for the activities in the draft Resolution (CIT-CCE8-2015-Doc.4) as well as indicators or questions to be included in the IAC Annual Report in order to monitor compliance. Ms. Joanna Alfaro (sectorial member NGO CCE), Coordinator of the LB Task Force will lead these tasks. The work plan was adopted with those changes (Annex V).

#### Resolution proposal from East Pacific Leatherback Task Force to COP7 CIT-CCE8-2015-Doc.4

13. The meeting discussed the comments to the draft Resolution for the Conservation of East Pacific Leatherback (CIT-CCE8-2015-Doc.4) prepared by the LB Task Force (Task Force members: Chile, Mexico, Peru, USA, Ecuador, NGO and Scientific Sectorial Delegates). The first comment on the document was in relation to the operative part on how countries with fishing fleets in the East Pacific do not necessarily have nesting beaches so the

language in the document should be changed to clarify this. The USA delegate suggested deleting the reference to protecting key nesting beaches to reflect the change on language and Mexico added that the description of fleets should be more general to fleets that operate within the habitat range of the species. In reference to reporting and data collection on bycatch, it was discussed that countries are already supposed to be reporting their activities in these matters and it is unclear what kind of data the LB Task Force is looking for. It was suggested that there is a need for more specific language in order to provide better guidance to the IAC Parties and it was recommended to include what kind of research and data are needed.

14. There was an extensive discussion about the inclusion of language on item 6 of the draft Resolution regarding the availability of funds to carry out the activities outlined in Annex 1 of the document. Mexico did not feel it was necessary to mention that IAC Parties should be looking to acquire funds to comply with the Resolution because it should be understood that if IAC Parties adopt a Resolution, this will bring commitments that the IAC Parties should prepare to include them in their annual budgets. Brazil and USA agreed with this sentiment. The CCE Chair reminded that Parties should always be striving to acquire funding to comply with the IAC Convention objective and that if specific financial language is included in this Resolution it will be necessary to do the same for all Resolutions adopted under the Convention. Costa Rica felt that it was important to keep the language that refers to the need funding to carry out activities and they would like to see a more concrete work plan including the costs of the activities outlined in the Annex 1.
15. Costa Rica also mentioned that they have already invested a significant amount of funds in protecting their East Pacific Leatherback nesting beaches and hope that other countries will continue to make similar efforts. Costa Rica also stated that it is important to recognize that IAC Parties have different needs of financial support and that some are in better financial situation than others. It was agreed that all references regarding finances should be combined into their own paragraph in the document.
16. The CCE Chair suggested bringing this unresolved issue to the attention to COP7 for a decision on this matter. The participants agreed with this suggestion.
17. The observer from Humane Society International mentioned that the NGO sector has been an untapped resource and there will be many representatives at the COP that Parties should discuss with.
18. The discussion moved on to paragraph 8 in the document in relation to the duties of the *Secretariat Pro Tempore* to coordinate with countries the implementation of the work plan. Costa Rica suggested that the LB Task Force should present an estimate of the expected cost for each country. The CCE Chair commented that any figures developed before the COP (in June) would be rough estimates. Instead, determining how much money will be required it should be included in the CCE work plan as a high priority item to allow more time to develop a more accurate figure. Costa Rica then suggested submitting an estimate 30-days in advance of the COP instead of the required 90 days.

19. This issue was largely unresolved, since the participants could not agree on specific text to be included in the document. The CCE Chair also stated that the IAC Committees could work with the Parties to identify financial resources to carry out the activities. The Scientific Committee Chair agreed and suggested reviewing Article IV of the IAC Text to identify the scope of duties of the IAC Parties.

Day 2, March 19

Resolution proposal from East Pacific Leatherback Task Force to COP7 CIT-CCE8-2015-Doc.4. (continues).

20. The CCE Chair gave a summary of the discussions from Day 1 and opened the floor reminding the participants that although paragraph 8 states that the *Secretariat Pro Tempore* will assist the parties in coordination of activities it cannot be expected that the Secretariat Pro Tempore will obtain the funds for the implementation of the Resolution. He stated that the current *Secretariat Pro Tempore* consists of only one person and therefore unlikely to fulfill those expectations. The Chair of the Scientific Committee also agrees with this comment. USA suggested language for paragraph 8 that they had prepared. "It is recommended that the Eastern Pacific Leatherback Task Force develop a cost estimate for all activities in the work plan. This will be finalized no later than July 31, 2015. Further, they will work with the foundations, the NGO communities, and other stakeholders to develop grant proposals to support the plan." They noted that the Task force should leverage other organizations to help develop the work plan.

21. Costa Rica was not totally in agreement with the recommendation put forward by USA. Additionally they suggested that the *Secretariat Pro Tempore* should establish synergies with other organizations and international entities in support of the objectives of the Resolution.

22. Argentina proposed changes to paragraph 8, in order to identify the actors for the conservation actions that the document refers to. USA agreed that the coherence of the document is very important. They suggested inserting a break between paragraphs 6 and 7 and to insert new text beginning with "request" to refer to the IAC Parties, the LB Task Force, and the *Secretariat Pro Tempore*. The participants agreed with this point or order.

23. The meeting discussed the section about the work plan in the draft Resolution. Costa Rica suggested that the CCE committee agrees to develop a work plan rather than agree on the work plan that was provided in Annex 1 of the draft Resolution. They do not consider it as a work plan but rather as recommendations to prepare a work plan. USA commented that the task force has already presented a work plan in Annex 1 and that they had spent considerable time and effort and that failing to acknowledge this would be a step backwards. Costa Rica then remarked that they were not wishing to ignore the work that has been done but, would like a work plan that contains more detail such as cost estimates. By doing this, they will have a specific work plan and can move forward with its implementation.

24. The CCE Chair based on the different opinions, suggested edits and language for sections 6-9. The participants agreed with the suggestions in general, and where there was no consensus for the language, it was agreed that those sections will be left in brackets (sections 6-9) and the IAC Parties can bring up their opinions to the COP7.
25. The meeting discussed the Annex 1 of the draft Resolution. USA proposed that that the word 'recommendations' be removed from the title and that the comments made by the USA on this section could be retracted since they will be addressed due to the establishment of a mechanism for funding. USA and Argentina indicated that by removing the word 'recommendation' this implies that Annex 1 of the document will become the official work plan for the Resolution. Costa Rica disagreed with the removal of this word because as they mentioned before they do not consider Annex 1 as a work plan, because it is lacking information.
26. The CCE Chair notes that the word 'recommendation' will be bracketed and brought up at the COP7 for decision on the matter. The participants agreed with this suggestion.
27. In reference to the activity in the Annex 1 to prevent poaching of leatherbacks, Argentina suggested changing the word 'reduce' to 'eliminate' which is a better word to in line with the IAC Convention text.
28. Ecuador mentioned that they have found nesting sites for East Pacific Leatherback turtles and will need to be added among the countries where nesting occurs. The changes were agreed upon and the East Pacific draft Resolution (Annex VI) will be presented to COP7 for consideration.

Resolution Compliance Working Group - Report with recommendations of changes to the IAC Annual Report CIT-CCE8-2015-Doc.5

29. The document CIT-CCE8-2015-Doc.5 was prepared by the Resolution Compliance Working Group of the CCE. The Coordinator of the WG Mr. Joao Thome (Brazil) provided a summary of the recommendations to select only those questions in the IAC Annual Report related to the Resolution compliance tables that were the most useful to follow up the compliance by IAC Parties. Ms. Alexis Gutierrez (USA) and the Secretary PT added that the goal of the WG was to prioritize the information in the Annual Report that will be truly of use for a compliance analysis and by doing this the duplication of questions will be avoided and therefore the Parties will improve their reporting as well.
30. Chile asked about the additional questions that were identified as not relevant for compliance analysis and how will they be used. The Coordinator explained that some of this information was already included in the fisheries Resolutions in the annual report so they were in duplicated and the information that is more technical about the specific research that IAC Parties carry out can be requested by the IAC Committees to the Parties separately. The participants agreed with the changes proposed by the WG.

31. The Coordinator also recommended including in the CCE Work Plan that the LB Task Force will develop additional questions to be included in the IAC Annual Report to reflect the new East Pacific Leatherback Resolution. This should be done before COP7. The participants agreed and this recommendation was included in the CCE Work Plan.
32. The WG recommended also removing the climate change Resolution table from the IAC Annual Report because this information can be collected per request of the IAC committees directly to the IAC Parties when needed for specific analysis. The participants agreed with the recommendations in the document CIT-CCE8-2015-Doc.5 (Annex VII) which will be included in the COP7 Agenda.

#### Collaboration with International Organizations

##### **Sargasso Sea Commission (SSC)**

33. The *Secretariat Pro Tempore* explained the invitation from the (SSC) to the IAC to become a Collaborating Partner, and asked the CCE for comments on the matter.
34. Argentina commented that they do not have objections to the scientific collaboration, but are hesitant to put an official label on the partnership because it is still unclear how the two organizations will work together. Costa Rica agreed with this sentiment and asked if becoming a partner meant that an agreement would need to be signed, or if this is even necessary. Ecuador also agrees with not making a reference to a formal agreement.
35. The CCE Chair noted that all the conditions are not there yet to propose a formal relation such as becoming a collaborating partner between both organizations, and secondly, he stated that it is possible to continue to cooperate with SSC to identify areas for mutual interest where the collaboration can continue.
36. The CCE Chair suggested language for a recommendation to the COP as follows:

“The CCE in its 8<sup>th</sup> meeting noting the success of the collaboration in scientific matters between the IAC and Sargasso Sea Alliance, recommends that the Conference Parties request that the *Secretariat Pro Tempore* continue the cooperation with SSC, that together with the Scientific Committee and the CCE will identify areas for collaboration.

37. The participants agreed and requested that the letter from the SSC be placed in the Annex of this report (Annex IX) as an informative document (CIT-CCE8-2015-Inf.3). This recommendation will be included in the CCE Chair report to COP7.

##### **Agreement for Conservation of Albatross and Petrels (ACAP)**

38. During the last COP6, the *Secretariat Pro Tempore* was authorized to begin discussions of an MOU with ACAP Secretariat. ACAP will carry out their Meeting of Parties in May (ACAP-MOP) at which time the ACAP Secretary will request authorization from the Parties to begin drafting the MOU with IAC.

39. Argentina stated that at the upcoming ACAP-MOP (Meeting of the Parties) they could provide more information about synergies between IAC and ACAP that could result from a MoU between both organizations. Chile agreed to help Argentina in this matter. Mr. Steven Wilger of US State Department will also attend the meeting and offered to facilitate discussions as well.
40. Ecuador brought out the importance to continue to work with the Convention of Migratory Species (CMS) Secretariat in the implementation of the Loggerhead Single Species Regional Action Plan recently adopted. Honduras agreed that making synergies with CMS is important since they are also members to this Convention.

#### Other Business

41. The USA delegate told the participants that they will send out formal notices bilaterally and through the IAC *Secretariat Pro Tempore* soliciting information on green sea turtles. The US is looking to change the status of the green sea turtle and would like any information or comments countries may have regarding the proposal. Ecuador offered to send their information and will support the USA.
42. Mexico asked for confirmation from parties attending the COP7. Currently there are only 7 confirmations and at least 10 countries need to attend in order to hold a COP meeting.

#### Place and Date for CCE9

43. The CCE Chair asked the participants to contact the IAC *Secretariat Pro Tempore* with their hosting offers for the CCE9 since; no proposals were brought up by the IAC Parties at this meeting.
44. The meeting concluded with the acknowledgements to the colleagues at State Department who facilitated the video – conference, the CCE Chair thanked all participants for their hard work.

**Annex I**  
CCE8 Participant List CIT-CCE8-2015-Inf.1

| Country                  | Name  | Institution  | Email  |
|--------------------------|---|--|--|
| <b>CCE Delegates</b>     |   |  |  |
| Argentina                | Antonio De Nichilo<br>Jorgelina del Pilar Oddi<br>Debora Jessica Winter | Secretaría de Ambiente y Desarrollo Sustentable de la Nación       | ajdnichilo@ambiente.gob.ar<br>joddi@ambiente.gob.ar<br>dwinter@ambiente.gob.ar |
| Argentina                | Rodolfo A. Sanchez<br>Patricia Hurtado                                  | Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Culto                        | zrf@mrecic.gov.ar<br>pah@mrecic.gov.ar   |
| Mexico                   | Laura Sarti   | CONANP   | Lsarti@conanp.gob.mx   |
| Honduras                 | Eleonora Aguilar<br>Kessel Rosales                                      | Dirrección de Gestión Ambiental, SERNA                             |  |
| Honduras                 | Carolina Montalvan  | Dirrección de Biodiversidad, SERNA                                 | Carolmontalvan1568@gmail.com   |
| Honduras                 | Iris Oneyda Acosta  | Departamento de Vida Silvestre, Instituto de Conservación Forestal |  |
| Costa Rica               | Antonio Porras Porras   | INCOPESCA  | porrasantonio1@yahoo.com   |
| Costa Rica               | Laura Brenes<br>Carlos Mario Orrego                                     | SINAC  | sobrecha@yahoo.com<br>corregovasquez@gmail.com                                 |
| Costa Rica               | Marco Solano  | MINAE  |  |
| United States of America | Earl Possardt   | FWS  | Earl_Possardt@fws.gov  |
| United States of America | Alexis Gutierrez  | NOAA   | Alexis.Gutierrez@noaa.gov  |
| United States of America | Steven Wilger   | Department of State  |  |
| Caribbean Netherlands    | Paul Hoetjes<br>CCE Chair   | EL&I National Office for the Caribbean Netherlands                 | Paul.hoetjes@rijksdiensten.com   |
| Chile                    | Francisco Ponce   | Subsecretaría de Pesca y Acuicultura                               | franciscoponce@subpesca.cl   |
| Chile                    | Jorge Azocar  | Instituto de Fomento Pesquero                                      |  |
| Chile                    | Patricia Zarate<br>Miguel Donoso  | Pacifico Laud  |  |
| Peru                     | Evelyn<br>Javier Quiñones   | IMARPE   | jquinones@imarpe.gob.pe  |
| Brazil                   | Joao Thomé<br>CCE Vice Chair  | ICMBIO   | joao.thome@icmbio.gov.br   |



|                                    |                          |   |                             |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| Ecuador                            | Eduardo Espinoza         | Parque Nacional Galapagos   |                             |
| <b>Sector NGO-CCE</b>              |                          |   |                             |
| Uruguay                            | Alejandro Fallabrino     | Karumbe   |                             |
| Peru                               | Joanna Alfaro            | Pro Delphinus   |                             |
| <b>Sector Productive-CCE</b>       |                          |   |                             |
| Mexico                             | Carlos Merigo            | Camara de Pesca   |                             |
| <b>IAC Scientific Committee</b>    |                          |   |                             |
| Argentina                          | Diego Albareda           | Chair IAC Scientific Committee<br>Programa Regional de Investigación y Conservación de Tortugas Marinas de la Argentina (PRICTMA) | diego.albareda@gmail.com    |
| <b>Observer</b>                    |                          |   |                             |
| USA                                | Rebecca Regnery          | Humane Society Int  |                             |
| <b>IAC Secretariat Pro Tempore</b> |                          |   |                             |
|                                    | Veronica Caceres         | Secretary PT  | secretario@iacseaturtle.org |
|                                    | Dario Palma              | Interpreter   |                             |
|                                    | Damon Yeh<br>Maya Lacayo | Volunteers -<br>Rapporteur  |                             |

**Annex II**  
CCE8 Agenda CIT-CCE8-2015-Doc.1

| DATE /TIME  | AGENDA ITEM   | DOCUMENTS  |
|---|---|--|
| March 18 10:00 am - 3:00 pm EST Washington DC Time (45 min break) |   |  |
| 15 min  | 1. Opening Remarks and Agenda adoption<br><i>CCE Chair Mr. Paul Hoetjes</i>   | CIT-CCE8-2015-Doc.1  |
| 15 min  | 2. Summary of 7 <sup>th</sup> Consultative Committee Meeting<br><i>Mr. Paul Hoetjes</i>   |  |
| 15 min  | 3. Report on 2014 Activities of the <i>Secretariat Pro Tempore</i><br><i>Ms. Veronica Caceres Ch - IAC PT Secretary</i>   |  |
| 1 Hour  | 4. Review draft Resolution on the Exception - Costa Rica<br><br>Participants are invited to discuss the recommendations from the 11 <sup>th</sup> Scientific Committee meeting (September/2014) on exceptions presented by Costa Rica.<br><i>Result: Prepare draft resolution with final recommendations to COP7 on the exception presented</i><br><br>Review update exception Panama | CIT-CC11-2014-Doc.2<br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br>Letter ANAM Inf.2 |
| 1 Hour  | 5. Review CCE Work Plan (2015-2016)<br><br>Participants share their comments on draft document<br><i>Result: Updated Work Plan for approval at COP7</i>   | CIT-CCE8-2015-Doc.3  |
| March 19: 10:00 am- 4:00 pm Eastern Time (45 min break)           |   |  |
| 1.5 Hour  | 7. Review Resolution proposals from Leatherback Task Force to COP7<br><br>Resolution on East Pacific Leatherback proposed by Leatherback Task Force<br><i>Result: Prepare draft resolution with final recommendations to COP7</i>   | CIT-CCE8-2015-Doc.4  |
| 1 Hour  | 6. Presentation of Resolution Compliance Working Group<br><i>Coordinator Mr. Joca Thome CCE Vice Chair</i><br><br>Report on resolution compliance based on 2014 Annual Reports from IAC Parties and proposal for changes in the format of the Resolution tables in the IAC annual report.<br><i>Result: Recommendations to COP7 on Annual Report changes</i>                          | CIT-CCE8-2015-Doc.5  |
| 1 Hour  | 8. Collaboration with International Organizations<br>a) Discuss invitation to IAC from Sargasso Sea Commission to become Collaborating Partner<br>b) Collaboration IAC-ACAP<br><i>Result: Prepare recommendation to COP7</i>  | Letter from Sargasso Sea Commission Inf. 3                                   |
| 30 minutes  | 9. Other business   |  |
| 15 minutes  | 10. Proposals for locations and preliminary dates for next meeting (CCE9) and closing remarks   |  |

## Annex III

CIT-CC11-2014-Doc.2

### Recommendations on exceptions under article IV (3a and b) for subsistence harvesting of *Lepidochelys olivacea* eggs in Costa Rica

*Recalling* that Article IV of the Convention, paragraph 2a states that the Parties have prohibited the intentional capture, retention or killing of, and domestic trade in, sea turtles, their eggs, parts or products;

*Further recalling* that Article IV, paragraph 3a states that each Party may allow exceptions to satisfy economic subsistence needs of traditional communities, taking into account the recommendations of the Consultative Committee of Experts established pursuant to Article VII, provided that such exceptions do not undermine efforts to achieve the objective of this Convention;

*Noting* that at the fifth Conference of Parties that procedures for cases where exceptions exist were adopted (CIT-COP5-2011-R2);

*Acknowledging* that all species of sea turtles classified as “endangered, vulnerable and critically endangered” must be protected from any negative impacts resulting from an exception;

*Considering* that IUCN has recently classified *Lepidochelys olivacea* as vulnerable;

*Recognizing* that *Lepidochelys olivacea* on the beaches of the Eastern Pacific Ocean (Mexico to Panama) is the only turtle species that can tolerate a controlled amount of egg harvesting, and only when the population to be harvested shows a status of “recovery or verifiable stability;”

*Considering* that this exception existed prior to Costa Rica becoming a party of the IAC, and today remains under the control of the different relevant governmental organizations;

*Considering* that the technical information presented by Costa Rica in its 2014 Annual Report that was reviewed by the IAC Scientific Committee in their 11<sup>th</sup> meeting and the IAC Consultative Committee of Experts in their 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> meetings, determined that Costa Rica has well organized information in their five year plan to manage this exception.

### **THE IAC CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES RECOMMENDS THE FOLLOWING MEASURES TO COSTA RICA TO MEET THE REQUIREMENTS OF ARTICLE IV (3) REGARDING EXCEPTIONS:**

- 1.) The COP recommends that one standardized sampling method to quantify the nesting population at Ostional Beach be selected. Since there is not currently one method it is recommended that a study be conducted to assess the accuracy and precision of the two methods currently used (methods Chávez- Morera and Valverde, R. and C. Gates. 2000) and to choose the most statistically robust method. Costa Rica must provide a report of this study to the IAC Scientific Committee and Consultative Committee by the end of 2017.

- 2.) In the interim, Costa Rica should continue to manage its exception as described in the Five Year Plan.
- 3.) To prevent illegal trade of eggs from other *L. olivacea* populations and from other sea turtle species Costa Rica must develop and implement a system for traceability from the beach to the final distributor.
- 4.) In order to determine the status of the nesting population of Ostional olive ridleys and the impact of the egg harvest on it, Costa Rica must monitor for additional indicators including: number of neonates (a recruitment index), number of viable clutches, and percentage of non-viable clutches. Costa Rica must implement the monitoring of these indicators no later than the end of 2017. After this monitoring, there should be an evaluation to make adjustments to ensure the egg harvest is sustainable.

#### **Annex IV**

CIT-CC11-2014-Inf.2

#### Update on Exceptions Presented by Panama- Letter from ANAM

Original document in Spanish

National Environmental Authority (ANAM)  
Department of Protected Areas and Wildlife

Panama, September 25, 2014  
DAPVS-2029-14

MARINO EUGENIO ABREGO  
Aquatic Resources Authority of Panama  
Delegate of Panama for the Scientific Committee of the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles, IAC  
Panama City

Dear Mr. Abrego,

We are following up with the report that was presented by the Authority of Aquatic Resources of Panama (ARAP), during the seventh meeting of the Consultative Committee of Experts of the IAC (CCE), held in Gulfport, Florida, United States, from June 4-6, 2014, regarding the progress of the application of the recommendations from IAC on exceptions for Panama and regarding the request of the CCE that Panama clarify whether or not there is a legal framework that allows the take of sea turtle eggs of the species *Lepidochelys olivacea* in the Isla de Cañas Wildlife Refuge (RVS in Spanish). The IAC could not approve any exception that is not legal under the regulations of Panama according to the report that was presented.

Regarding the requested clarification, the Resolution JD-010-94 from June 29, 1994, which established the Isla de Cañas Wildlife Refuge, points out that one of its objectives is, "to guarantee the sustainable use of renewable resources", recognizes the importance of sea turtles as resource for subsistence for the local community of Isla de Cañas and allows the harvest of the eggs in a sustainable manner. This Resolution provides the legal framework for the local community to use this resource.

However, we would like to clarify that there is no legislation from 2009, nor has ANAM modified any legislation with respect to the use of sea turtle eggs *Lepidochelys olivacea* in the Isla de Cañas Wildlife Refuge. It is important to note that since 2010, there has not been an agreement with the community on use of the eggs; however, use of the eggs by the residents of the Refuge is being evaluated in order to meet the rules set from the creation of the Refuge (RVS). We recognize that in the RVS there has been extraction of eggs from residents and foreigners that is not allowed by any agreement with ANAM, whenever such activities occur they need to be authorized or regulated.

It is also important to mention that while the situation in the Isla de Cañas Wildlife Refuge, in recent years, has been in an unstable , which has led to projects for the protected area not being implemented, especially for following up on the progress of the recommendations of the IAC for compliance with exceptions, we report that the ANAM has taken the lead on this issue, in order to fulfill the commitments to the IAC, understanding the importance of what this means for the conservation of sea turtles.

Therefore we would like to report that we are currently working towards the implementation of the following:

- Preparation of the situational analysis for the Isla Cañas Wildlife Refuge,
- Implement a monitoring program for sea turtles,
- Preparation of the egg harvest protocol,
- Make improvements in the nursery in the Wildlife Refuge.

The implementation of a monitoring program for the sea turtles will include a standardized methodology for harvest of eggs that is used to monitor arribada nesting beaches as well as individual nestings. This methodology should allow for evaluation and comparisons on a local and regional level, and should fulfill IAC guidelines and the National Action Plan for Sea Turtles. This will allow in the upcoming years a better understanding of the status of sea turtle populations in the RVS and the impact of the use of their eggs.

Similarly, upon completion of the situational analysis of the RVS, we hope to have, by the beginning of 2015, an updated status of the natural resources and the demographics and socioeconomic situation of the Isla de Cañas Wildlife Refuge. This will lead to the conclusion of the National Management Plan, which is currently being drafted.

Regards,

Zuleika Pinzon,  
Director

cc. Mr. Max Lopez Director of organizations and international conventions-Ministry of Foreign Affairs

cc. Ms. Veronica Caceres Secretaria Pro Tempore CIT

**Annex V**  
**CCE Work Plan CIT-CCE8-2015-Doc.3**

| <b>Actor</b>                        | <b>Topic</b>                             | <b>Proposed Action</b>   | <b>Expected Result</b>   | <b>Timeframe</b>   |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|--|--------------------|
| Consultative Committee              | Exceptions                               | 1) Follow up on draft Resolution for Costa Rica Exceptions<br>2) Follow the progress of Guatemala exception<br>3) Follow the progress of Panama exception  | 1) Draft Resolution on Costa Rica Exception presented at COP7<br>2) Report about follow-up on Costa Rica, Panama and Guatemala exceptions to CCE and COP (if needed)                                   | 2015, 2016         |
| Consultative Committee, Secretariat | Website & Newsletter                     | Countries will send Secretariat relevant news on a monthly basis for the IAC Newsletter  | Update the IAC Website with relevant news and maintain regular publications, and Newsletter  | Permanent /Ongoing |
| East Pacific Leatherback Task Force | East Pacific Leatherback                 | 1) Perform LB Task Force activities as recommended in CIT-CCE5-2012-Doc.04<br>2) Prepare draft Resolution on East Pacific Leatherback to CCE8 and COP7<br>3) The LB Task Force will identify any additional questions necessary to evaluate compliance with the Eastern Pacific Leatherback Resolution table in IAC Annual report<br>4) The LB Task Force will prepare & include cost estimates and indicative funding sources for the activities in Annex 1 of the new Leatherback Resolution | 1) Draft Resolution on East Pacific Leatherback presented at CCE8 and COP7<br>2) Cost estimates and indicative funding sources made by the LB Task Force to Annex 1 will be completed by July 31, 2015 | 2015               |
| East Pacific Leatherback Task Force | East Pacific Leatherback                 | 1) Follow up on implementation of new resolution East Pacific LB<br>2) Carry out annual meeting of the LB Task Force   | Prepare report from LB Task Force to IAC Committees and COP  | 2016               |
| WG Resolution compliance            | IAC Annual Report /Resolution Compliance | Prepare recommendations on resolution compliance to CCE8 and COP7  | Recommendations presented at CCE8 and COP7   | 2015               |
| WG Resolution compliance            | IAC Annual Report/Resolution Compliance  | Prepare report on Resolution compliance to CCE9  | Report presented at CCE9   | 2016               |

|                                     |  |   |   |                    |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|---|--------------------|
| Consultative Committee              | Work plan  | Update CCE work plan following IAC guidelines and COP Resolutions   | CCE biannual work plan updated with actions, timetable and responsibilities   | Permanent /Ongoing |
| Consultative Committee              | Collaboration with other organizations                     | CCE delegate will set up meeting with RAMSAR focal points to identify activities to do under MOU                                    | Report per country of results from meeting  | 2015               |
| Consultative Committee              | Collaboration with other organizations/strategic alliances | Make recommendations to promote synergies for collaborative work with other related organizations to meet the Convention objectives | 1) Identification of synergies with similar organizations to share information (SPAW, IATTC, CPPS, WIDECAST, ACAP, ICCAT, RAMSAR, SWOT, ICAPO, ASO, WWF, CBD) | 2015, 2016         |
| Consultative Committee, Secretariat | Collaboration with other organizations                     | Review or /and draft MoU with relevant organization identified  | Documents presented to COP for consideration  | 2015, 2016         |
| Consultative Committee, Secretariat | Drafting Resolutions and Recommendations to COP            | Address COP requests and draft recommendations /Resolutions accordingly   | Present draft Resolutions and recommendations to COP as needed  | 2015, 2016         |
| Consultative Committee              | IAC Technical Documents                                    | Develop technical documents as needed   | Technical document posted on IAC Website and shared with IAC Focal Points   | 2015, 2016         |
| Consultative Committee, Secretariat | Expert Directory   | Update and maintain an expert directory   | Updated directory on IAC Website  | 2015, 2016         |

## **Annex VI**

CIT-CCE8-2015-Doc.4

### **Draft Resolution for the Conservation of East Pacific Leatherback Turtles (*Dermochelys coriacea*)**

WHEREAS leatherback sea turtles have existed on Earth for millions of years;

WHEREAS leatherback sea turtles are an important component of marine ecosystems of the Pacific Ocean;

WHEREAS leatherback sea turtles are valued for cultural, socioeconomic, ecological and scientific reasons;

CONSIDERING that the East Pacific leatherback subpopulation is listed as Critically Endangered by IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature), and that this species is listed on Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Flora and Fauna (CITES), and Appendices I and II of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), and furthermore, is considered among the conservation priorities of various intergovernmental organizations such as the FAO;

RECOGNIZING that the nesting data obtained along the coast of the Eastern Pacific has shown a decrease in the population of more than 90% since the mid-1980s, and the status of leatherbacks in the Eastern Pacific is dire and may be near the point of irreversibility;

CONSIDERING that the principal threats to leatherback turtles have been identified as incidental capture in fishing activities, unsustainable exploitation of eggs and turtles, as well as the destruction or alteration of nesting habitat;

RECOGNIZING that the countries where nesting occurs make extensive efforts to prevent egg exploitation and that the regional fisheries management organizations in the IAC Convention area have adopted measures to better understand the impact of their fisheries on sea turtles but that the decline of the Eastern Pacific population has continued;

CONSIDERING that the adoption and implementation of additional bycatch mitigation measures such as gear modifications and closed areas are necessary to protect leatherback sea turtles;

CONSIDERING the Memorandum of Understanding between the IAC and the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) to collaborate on sea turtle conservation, and the approval of the IATTC Resolution C-07-03 directly relating to sea turtle conservation, which was created during the 75th Meeting of the IATTC, carried out in 2007;

CONSIDERING that the decline in leatherback sea turtle populations is undermining the ecological stability and the cultural and economic benefits to coastal communities.



THE SEVENTH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES OF THE INTER-AMERICAN  
CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION OF SEA TURTLES  
RESOLVES TO:

REQUEST the Parties to prioritize in their work programs the with the following conservation actions that can reverse the critical situation of the leatherback sea turtle in the Eastern Pacific;

- 1) That all IAC Parties whose fishing fleets operate in the Eastern Pacific submit their leatherback bycatch information on an annual basis, to the IAC *Secretariat Pro Tempore* in order for it to be reviewed by the IAC committees so they can provide recommendations to the Parties.
- 2) That all IAC Parties whose fishing fleets operate in the Eastern Pacific report annually the measures that they have taken to reduce leatherback bycatch in fishing gear, including, but not limited to, gill nets, longlines and trawl fisheries.
- 3) That the Scientific Committee's fisheries working group and the Leatherback Task Force will work together to identify key critical areas and fisheries in the Eastern Pacific that are in need of spatial and temporal management to reduce leatherback bycatch.
- 4) That all IAC Parties strengthen actions for leatherback nest protection in the Eastern Pacific to increase hatchling survival and take measures to protect leatherback habitat, in the Eastern Pacific.
- 5) That all IAC Parties with fishing fleets operating in the Eastern Pacific establish and evaluate national training programs fostering best practices for safe handling and release of sea turtles incidentally caught in fisheries including but not limited to gill nets, longlines and trawl fisheries.
- [6) That all IAC Parties agree to the 5 year work plan of critical activities identified in Annex 1, and report progress annually to the IAC *Secretariat Pro Tempore*.

REQUEST the Leatherback Task Force in cooperation with the *Secretariat Pro Tempore* and the other IAC Parties:

- 7) To evaluate the implementation of the 5 year work plan through annual meetings of the IAC Leatherback Task Force where they will provide a consolidated summary report to the IAC subsidiary bodies, IAC Focal Points and *Secretariat Pro Tempore*.
- 8) That the IAC *Secretariat Pro Tempore* coordinates with the Eastern Pacific countries involved in the implementation of the work plan.
- 9) That the Leatherback Task Force develop cost estimates for all activities in the work plan to be finalized no later than July 31, 2015 and further that the Leatherback Task Force work

with foundations, the NGO community, and other interested parties, including non-parties, to identify financial support for the work plan.]

10) The IAC *Secretariat Pro Tempore* will provide copies of this resolution to other relevant Conventions and those organizations with whom the IAC has a Memorandum of Understanding.

This resolution repeals and replaces the IAC Resolution on Conservation of Leatherback Turtles (*Dermodochelys coriacea*) (COP2/2004/R-1) in its entirety.

## ANNEX 1

### LEATHERBACK TASK FORCE [RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE] FIVE-YEAR WORK PLAN

The Regional Action Plan for Reversing the Decline of the East Pacific leatherback (<http://savepacificleatherbacks.org>) was used as a basis for many of the activities in the 5 year work plan below. These activities divided in four strategies all focus on mortality reduction in marine habitats and protection of nesting sites and nesting females to increase reproductive productivity.

#### 1) Reduce bycatch of adult and sub adult leatherback turtles

Time: 5 years.

IAC Parties: IAC members whose fleets interact with East Pacific leatherbacks

Activities:

- a. Conduct research on possible bycatch reduction mitigation measures, including testing mitigation actions in passive nets (e.g lightsticks/net illumination, reducing net soak time, lowering the net buoy line and employing best practices for setting and retrieving nets), and implement appropriate mitigation methods.
- b. Promote training to foster best fishing practices to ensure safe handling and release of incidentally caught sea turtles and hold workshops to disseminate this information.
- c. Continue and increase efforts for monitoring bycatch at ports and /or on-board observers (when and where possible) throughout the East Pacific region, and ensure that the information is collected in a standardized way so that it is comparable at the regional level.
- d. Expand and/or create a radio communication program for vessels as means of promoting best practices for handling incidentally captured turtles and reporting bycatch as well as social media, or closed list servers.
- e. Promote exchanges between fishermen (industrial and artisanal) to share experiences on how to reduce bycatch with low cost mitigation measures.

#### 2) Identify areas of high bycatch or otherwise important for leatherback survival

Time: 1-2 years

IAC Parties: Ecuador, Peru, Chile, Mexico, Costa Rica, the United States and other IAC Parties whose fleets interact with East Pacific leatherbacks

Activities:

a. Perform assessments by country of fishing fleets that interact with East Pacific leatherback that includes characterizing of fisheries and their relation to bycatch, and a regional compilation of information on fishing operations adjacent to nesting beaches, and to share this information with the IAC *Secretariat Pro Tempore*.

b. Work to identify critical areas in the IAC Convention area that are in need of spatial and temporal management to reduce leatherback bycatch or directed take.

3) Define and protect important areas for East Pacific leatherback survival in different life stages

Time: 1-5 years.

IAC Parties: Mexico, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Perú, Chile, Panama, Guatemala, and USA

Activities

a. Identification of potential locations to be declared protected areas, including migration routes, and adults and juveniles aggregation sites.

4. Eliminate poaching of leatherbacks

Time: 2-5 years.

IAC Parties: all IAC members on the East Pacific coast.

Activities

- a. Identify areas where poaching occurs and quantify the frequency of occurrence.
- b. Carry out awareness and enforcement campaigns to stop sea turtle poaching.

5. Nesting sites protection

Time: 1-5 years

IAC Parties: Mexico, Costa Rica, Panama, Guatemala and Ecuador

Activities

- a. Maintain and/ or increase monitoring on index beaches and any other important nesting sites.
- b. Maximize efforts to ensure all nests are identified and protected.
- c. Identify and implement alternative livelihoods for communities adjacent to nesting beaches.

**Annex VII**  
CIT-CCE8-2015-Doc.5

Report with recommendations of changes to the IAC Annual Report

The CCE7 Resolution Compliance Working Group (WG on Compliance) in their meeting in 2014, after analyzing the data from IAC Annual Reports 2013-14 made the following recommendations of changes to Part II Policy and Management in the section c.1 IAC Resolutions in the Annual Report format, which were endorsed by the CCE in its 8<sup>th</sup> meeting (2015):

- a) The WG on Compliance recommends the COP evaluate any updates needed to the Resolutions to improve conservation and recovery of sea turtles in the IAC Convention area.
- b) Using fewer questions but choosing the ones that are the most important will provide more robust strategic information, and will reduce mistakes that have been observed when the Annual Report is being completed and which are in most cases caused by the complexity of the current tables and questions and duplication of information in the Annual Report.
- c) All fisheries information should be located in the section on the Fisheries Resolution.
- d) More modifications may be needed for the Eastern Pacific leatherback Resolution to match the new Resolution proposed by the CCE8, to be determined by the Eastern Pacific Leatherback Task Force.
- e) It is recommended to eliminate the Climate Change Resolution from the IAC Annual Report; the information in this resolution can be collected per request from the Committees to IAC Parties when necessary.

Below you will find the proposed tables and questions for each Resolution for your consideration. The questions are those that the WG on Compliance has identified (from the original IAC Annual Report) and recommended as important to evaluate the compliance with each Resolution.

Taken from the IAC Annual Report

**Part II (Policy and Management)**

**c.1 IAC Resolutions**

Fill in the following tables for each of the IAC Resolutions listed below. In the case that a Resolution does not apply to your country, please mark the box RESOLUTION DOES NOT APPLY, and if a specific question does not apply, please mark the column DOES NOT APPLY. If you need more space to describe these actions, please attach additional pages and note the resolution and question number to which you are responding.

**Resolution CIT-COP2-2004 R1:** Conservation of leatherback turtles (*Dermochelys coriacea*)

**ACCORDING TO RESOLUTION CIT-COP2-2004-R1, REPORT WHETHER YOUR COUNTRY:**

| IS COMPLYING WITH THE FOLLOWING:   | RESOLUTION DOES NOT APPLY |    | DESCRIBE ACTION (*) | DOES NOT APPLY |
|--|---------------------------|----|---------------------|----------------|
|  | YES                       | NO |                     |                |
| 1a) Have you created conservation plans and long-term programs that can reverse the critical situation of the leatherback turtle in the Eastern Pacific?                           |                           |    |                     |                |
| 1b) Are you implementing these conservation plans and monitoring programs?   |                           |    |                     |                |
| 2. If your country has leatherback turtle nesting beaches in the Eastern Pacific: Have you taken conservation measures to protect the nesting sites and their associated habitats? |                           |    |                     |                |
| 3. Has your country adopted fishing techniques that reduce incidental capture and mortality of this species?   |                           |    |                     |                |

(\*) Specify actions implemented, 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.

**Resolution CIT-COP3-2006 R-1: Hawksbill turtle conservation (*Eretmochelys imbricata*)**

**ACCORDING TO RESOLUTION CIT-COP3-2006-R1, REPORT WHETHER YOUR COUNTRY:**

| IS COMPLYING WITH THE FOLLOWING:  |                                   | RESOLUTION DOES NOT APPLY |    |                     |                |
|---|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|----|---------------------|----------------|
|   |                                   | YES                       | NO | DESCRIBE ACTION (*) | DOES NOT APPLY |
| 1. Are you strengthening monitoring of the illegal use and trade of hawksbill turtles and their products?   |                                   |                           |    |                     |                |
| 2. Are you enforcing pertinent hawksbill legislation?   |                                   |                           |    |                     |                |
| 3. Are activities being carried out in order to stop illegal trade of hawksbill products?   |                                   |                           |    |                     |                |
| 4. Indicate if your country is strengthening the protection of important nesting and foraging habitats by declaring protected areas and regulating anthropogenic activities that adversely impact these habitats. | a) Protection of nesting habitats |                           |    |                     |                |
|   | b) Protection of feeding habitats |                           |    |                     |                |

(\*) Specify actions implemented, 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.

**Resolution CIT-COP3-2006-R2: Reduction of the adverse impacts of fisheries on sea turtles**

**ACCORDING TO RESOLUTION CIT-COP3-2006-R2, REPORT WHETHER YOUR COUNTRY:**

| IS COMPLYING WITH THE FOLLOWING:  | YES | NO | DESCRIBE ACTION (*) | DOES NOT APPLY |
|---|-----|----|---------------------|----------------|
| Adopted the "Guidelines to Reduce Sea Turtle Mortality induced by fisheries operations", of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), including:  |     |    |                     |                |
| A. Research and monitoring of adverse impact of fisheries on sea turtles  |     |    |                     |                |
| • Collect information by fishery  |     |    |                     |                |
| • Observer programs   |     |    |                     |                |
| • Research on sea turtle/fishery interactions   |     |    |                     |                |
| • Information on non-Party vessels  |     |    |                     |                |
| • Cooperation with non-Party states to obtain information   |     |    |                     |                |
| B. Mitigation measures for the following fisheries:   |     |    |                     |                |
| i) Long-line  |     |    |                     |                |
| ii) Gillnets  |     |    |                     |                |
| iii) Trawling (e.g., 1. TEDs: specify legally approved TEDs, their dimensions, material, and target species for that fishery, 2. time-area closures: specify geographical area, time of closure and target species for that fishery, 3. tow times and/or 4. other measures) |     |    |                     |                |
| iv) Other fishing gear (indicate which one(s))  |     |    |                     |                |
| C. Socio-economic considerations  |     |    |                     |                |
| • Support socio-economic activities that help mitigate adverse impacts of fisheries on sea turtles  |     |    |                     |                |

(\*) Specify actions implemented, 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 IX

CIT-CCE8-2015-Inf.3

### Invitation from Sargasso Sea Commission to IAC to become Collaborating Partner

21 January 2015

Ms. Veronica Caceres Chamorro  
Inter-American Turtle Convention Secretariat Pro Tempore  
veronica@iacseaturtle.org

Dear Ms. Caceres:

This past year was an exciting time for the Sargasso Sea initiative. Thank you for your support for the Sargasso Sea Alliance over the past few years. As the second phase of the initiative- the Sargasso Sea Commission- proceeds, we would like to invite your organization to become a Collaborating Partner of the Commission.

As you know, in March 2014, five governments (Azores, Bermuda, Monaco, United States and the United Kingdom) came together in Bermuda to sign the *Hamilton Declaration on Collaboration for the Conservation of the Sargasso Sea*. The Declaration called for the establishment of the Sargasso Sea Commission, five international experts who in August 2014 were appointed by the Government of Bermuda after consultation with the Declaration Signatory governments. The Declaration Signatories and Commission then convened their first joint meeting in October 2014. At this meeting, Professor Howard S.J. Roe was elected as the first Chairman of the Commission and a Commission Work Programme was drafted and is now finalized (please see attached). As we begin to implement this Work Programme, the Commission would like to invite you to become a Collaborating Partner.

Paragraph 11 of the Declaration envisages "Collaborating Partners." The Signatories agree to:

"11. Encourage relevant regional and international organisations, as well as other bodies and entities, who wish to contribute to efforts to conserve the Sargasso Sea ecosystem in accordance with this Declaration, to participate as Collaborating Partners by notifying the Secretariat of their interest in doing so."

The Rules of Procedure of the Meeting of Signatories of the Hamilton Declaration, adopted on 21 October 2014 further state:

"19. The Commission shall select Collaborating Partners based on an assessment of each potential Partner's application, international reputation, and influence, as well as its ability, and demonstrated commitment, to advance the vision of the Declaration."

The Commission views collaborating partners as vital to our ambitions, representing as they do authoritative, international expertise and support. Becoming a Collaborating Partner does not imply any financial commitment, but the Commission will welcome offers of support to assist in the implementation of the Commission Work Programme, by, for example, leveraging existing programs to further the vision of the Declaration.

As a former important collaborator with the Sargasso Sea Alliance, the Commission would very much like you to continue your association with us and invite you to become a Collaborating Partner. We attach the Commission Work Programme for your information and look forward to hearing from you and working with you. Collaborating Partners names and logos will be listed on our website and in other materials.



Kate Morrison and I at the Commission Secretariat are happy to discuss the Work Programme and answer any questions you may have as you consider this invitation. If you are interested in setting up a time for a Skype discussion, please notify Kate Morrison at [kmorrison@sargassoseacommission.org](mailto:kmorrison@sargassoseacommission.org).

We hope you will agree to become a Collaborating Partner as we embark on this exciting new venture. We look forward to hearing from you.

Warm regards,

David Freestone  
Executive Secretary  
Sargasso Sea Commission