



**Inter-American Convention for the
Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles
Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela
2006 Annual Report**

Second Annual Report [Translation]

Directory

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1. Biological Information

1.1. Species present

Species	Pacific Ocean	Atlantic Ocean	Caribbean Sea
	Phase(s)	Phase(s)	Phase(s)
<i>Lepidochelys olivacea</i>		F,M	F,M
<i>Lepidochelys kempii</i>			
<i>Dermochelys coriacea</i>		R,F,M	R,F,M
<i>Eretmochelys imbricata</i>		F,R,M	R,F,M
<i>Chelonia mydas</i>		F,R,M	R,F,M
<i>Caretta caretta</i>		F,M	R,F,M

Phases: R = Reproduction; F = Foraging; M = Migration; D = Phase Unknown

1.2. Important sites for sea turtle conservation

(The Table below indicates important nesting and foraging sites comprising of areas under a Special Administrative Regimen)

	Name of Site	Specie(s)	Season	Geographic Location (Lat/Long)	Area (km or ha, if applicable)	Protection Category	Observations *
Nesting Sites	R.F.S. Isla de Aves **	<i>Cm</i>	Feb-Oct	W 63 30' N 16 00'		Wildlife Refuge	** 158.021 ha * 158.017 ha
	P.N. Archip. de Los Roques **	<i>Cm, Ei, Cc, Dc</i>	<i>Ei</i> Sept-Oct <i>Cm</i> Apr-Oct	W 66 44' N 11 50'	225.193 Ha	National Park	** 221.120 ha * 217835 ha
	P.N. Morrocoy	<i>Dc, Ei</i>	April August	W 68 18' N 10 53'	22.600 Ha	National Park	** 32.090 ha * 20.500 ha
	P.N. Médanos de Coro	<i>Cm, Ei</i>		W 69 42' N 11 35'		Parque Nacional	** 91.280 ha * 59.880 ha
	P:N. Restinga Lagoon	<i>Cm, Ei, Cc, Dc</i>	March August	W 64 10' N 11 00'	27 Km	National Park	**18.862 ha * 6.364 ha
	P.N. Mochima	<i>Cm, Ei</i>	March August	W 64 26' N 10 21'	50.000 Ha	National Park	** 94.935 ha * 49.170 ha
	PN. Paria Peninsula	<i>Dc, Ei</i>	March August	W 62 03' N 10 42'	5.000 Ha	National Park	** 37.500 ha (0)
	P.N. Tacarigua Lagoon	<i>Ei, Dc, Cc</i>	March August	W 65 50' N 10 16'	28 Km	National Park	** 39.100 ha * 20.700 ha
	P.N San Esteban	<i>Dc, Cc</i>	April August	W 67, 26' N 10 33'	3.425 Ha	National Park	** 43.500 ha * 3.625 ha
	P.N Henri Pittier	<i>Dc, Cc, Ei</i>	April August	W 67 24' N 10 33'	8.000 Ha	National Park	** 107.800 ha (0)
	P.N. Delta del Orinoco	<i>Dc, Cm, Ei</i>	March August	W 61 31' N 9 47'		Nacional Park	** 331.00 ha (0)



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	Delta del Orinoco Biosphere Reserve	<i>Dc, Cm, Ei</i>	March August	W 61 25' N 9 41'		Biosphere Reserve	**1.125.000 ha
Foraging Sites	P.N San Esteban	<i>Cm, Ei, Cc,</i>	January - December	W 67, 26' N 10 33'	3.425 Ha	National Park	** 43.500 ha * 3.625 ha
	P.N. Archip. de Los Roques	<i>Cm, Ei, Cc</i>	January - December	W 66 44' N 11 50'	225.193 Ha	National Park	** 221.120 ha * 217835 ha
	P.N. Morrocoy	<i>Cm, Cc, Ei</i>	January - December	W 68 18' N 10 53'	22.600 Ha	National Park	** 32.090 ha * 20.500 ha
	P.N. Mochima	<i>Cm, Cc, Ei</i>	January - December	W 64 26' N 10 21'	50.000 Ha	National Park	** 94.935 ha * 49.170 ha
	R.F.S. Cuare	<i>Cm</i>		W 68 19' N 10 55'	68 Ha	Wildlife Refuge	**11853 ha * 1892 ha
	RFS Ciénaga de los Olivitos *	<i>Cm</i>		W 71 21' N 10 55'		Wildlife Refuge	**22200 ha * 65 ha
Migrator y Routes							

** Total Area *(Marine area) (Miloslavich et al., 2003)

1.2 Important sites for sea turtle conservation (Continued)

(The Table below indicates important nesting and foraging sites not under a Special Administrative Regimen)

	Name of Site	Specie(s)	Season	Geographic Location (Lat/Long)	Area (km or ha, if applicable)	Protection Category	Observations*
Nesting Sites	East coast of Edo. Vargas and west coast of Edo. Miranda	<i>Cc, Dc, Ei, Cm</i>	March-October	W 66°2' N 10°33'	13 Km	None	Approx. 35 beaches in total
	Paraguaná Peninsula	<i>Cc, Ei, Cm</i>	March – October				Approx. 12 beaches in total
	Northern Slope of Paria Peninsula	<i>Cm, Dc, Cc, Ei,</i>	March – October	W 62 40' a 62 50' N 10 42' a 10 45'		Some 6 beaches are included within its National Park	Approx. 35 beaches in total
	Southern slope of Paria Peninsula	<i>Dc, Ei, Cc, Cm</i>	March – October	W 61 50' N 10 41'		Some 6 beaches are included within its National Park	Approx. 15 beaches in total
	Edo Nueva Esparta	<i>Cm, Dc, Cc, Ei</i>	March – October	W 63 50' N 11 08'		Some are located within National Parks	Approx. 30 beaches reported, mainly 5 from Northeast



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	La Blanquilla	<i>Cc, Dc, Ei</i>	March – October	W 64°36', N 11°51'		None	
	La Tortuga	<i>Ei</i>	March – October	W65°19', N10°33'		None	
	Los Testigos	<i>Dc, Cc, Ei</i>	March – October	W 63°02' - W 63°08', N 11°20' - N 11°24'		None	
	La Orchila	<i>Dc, Ei</i>	March – October	W 66°59' - W 66°13', N 11°47' - N 11°49'		None	
	Archipelago Las Aves, Sotavento	<i>Ei</i>	Presumably March – October	W 67° 37', N 11° 58'		None	
	Archipelago Las Aves, Barlovento	<i>Ei</i>	Presumably March – October	W 67° 24', N 11° 56'		None	
Foraging Sites	Gulf of Venezuela	<i>Dc, Cm, Cc, Ei</i>	All year			None	
	Paraguaná Peninsula	<i>Dc, Cm, Cc, Ei</i>	All year			None	
	Isla de Margarita	<i>Cm, Lo, Ei, Dc</i>	All year			Some are within National Parks	Rocky areas abundant in algae, Cnidarian Bottoms, patches of marine Phanerogams
	La Blanquilla	<i>Cm, Ei</i>	All year	W 64°36', N11°51'		None	
	La Tortuga	<i>Cm Ei</i>	All year	W65°19', N10°33'		None	
	Los Testigos	<i>Cm, Ei</i>	All year	W 63°02' - W 63°08', N11°20' - N11°24'		None	
	Gulf of Paria	<i>Cm, Cc, E, Lo</i>	All year			Some are within National Parks	Rocky areas and patches of marine Phanerogams
	East coast of Edo. Vargas and west coast of Edo. Miranda	<i>Cc, Ei, Cm</i>	All year	W66°2' N10°33'	Km	None	Coral flats and patches of marine Phanerogams



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Aragua	<i>Cc, Ei, Cm, Dc</i>	All year		Km	None	Flats and fringing coral communities, patches of marine Phanerogams
Archipelago Las Aves, Sotavento	<i>Ei, Cm</i>	All year	W 67°37', N 11°77'		None	Abundant walls of Thalassia and coral reefs
Archipelago Las Aves, Barlovento	<i>Ei, Cm</i>	All year	W 67°24', N 11°56'		None	Abundant walls of Thalassia and coral reefs
La Orchila	<i>Ei, Cm</i>	All year	W 66°59' - W 66°13', N11°47' - N11°49'		None	Abundant walls of Thalassia and coral reefs

2. Information regarding the use derived from sea turtles

	Types of use	Specie	Products	Ocean Basin	Origin*		Estimated annual quantity	Information source	Actions
					L	I			
Consumptive Use	Domestic	<i>Cm, Ei, Dc, Cc</i>	<i>Cm</i> , Meat and eggs <i>Ei</i> , Meat, eggs and carapace <i>Dc</i> , Eggs <i>Cc</i> , Meat and Eggs <i>Lo</i> , Meat, carapace	Caribbean Sea, Atlantic		I	ND ▶	-Action Plan for the Recuperation of Sea Turtles in Venezuela -Sea turtles of Venezuela/ Actions for their Conservation	Regulations Environmental education and Community Participation -Policing and control - Product confiscation
	Commercial	<i>Cm, Ei, Dc, Cc</i>	<i>Cm</i> , Meat and Eggs <i>Ei</i> , Meat, eggs and carapace <i>Dc</i> , Eggs <i>Cc</i> , Meat and eggs <i>Lo</i> , Meat, carapace	Caribbean Sea		I	ND ▶		Regulations, Environmental education and Community Participation -Policing and control - Product confiscation



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	Research and/or repopulation		Eggs	Caribbean Sea				Reports	Regulations, Environmental education and Community Participation -. Policing and control -. Product confiscation
Non-Consumptive Use	Research and/or repopulation, tourism	<i>Cm, Ei, Dc, Cc, Lo</i>		Caribbean Sea				Annual Reports presented by researchers	Regulations, Environmental education and Community Participation -. Policing and control -. Product confiscation

*L = Legal, I = Illegal ► NOT DETERMINED

3. Main threats

3.1 Habitat and other threats

Threats	Specie(s) Affected	Size of Impact	Geographic Region(s) Affected	Information Source	Actions
Buildings on nesting beaches	<i>Dc, Ei Cc, Cm</i>	Not determined	Beaches for tourist, residential and industrial use	Sea turtles of Venezuela/ Actions for their Conservation	Regulations Coastal Zone Law (EIS) 1257, Territorial Plan
Vehicle traffic on beach	<i>Dc, Ei Cc, Cm</i>	Not determined	Beaches for tourist, residential and industrial use	Sea turtles of Venezuela/ Actions for their Conservation	Regulations Coastal Zone Law (EIS)
Behavior affected by beach lighting	<i>Dc, Ei Cc, Cm</i>	Not determined	Beaches for tourist, residential and industrial use	Sea turtles of Venezuela/ Actions for their Conservation	Regulations (EIS)
Predation of eggs and neonates by domestic and wild animals	<i>Dc, Ei Cc, Cm</i>	Not determined	Entire coast	-Action Plan for the Recuperation of Sea Turtles in Venezuela -Sea turtles of Venezuela/ Actions for their Conservation	Nest protection and relocation in Paria peninsula and coasts of the state of Miranda
Obstacles on the beach (Logs, organic waste)	<i>Dc, Ei Cc, Cm,</i>	Not determined	- Paria Peninsula (NE of Country) -. Coasts along the State of Miranda	Sea turtles of Venezuela/ Actions for their Conservation*	World Beach cleaning Day (Fudena) and Beach cleaning expeditions in Macuro, Edo. Sucre



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Associated habitats affected (Coral reefs, Marine Phanerogam walls)	<i>Ei</i>	Not determined	P.N Morrocoy Entire Country	Sea turtles of Venezuela/ Actions for their Conservation	
Feeding grounds affected by intensive artisanal and industrial fishing (Coral reefs, soft and hard bottoms, Marine Phanerogam walls)	<i>Dc, Ei Cc, Cm</i>	Not determined	Continental coasts throughout the country	Sea turtles of Venezuela/ Actions for their Conservation	Decree 1257 on Environmental evaluation of activities susceptible to degrading the environment
Non biodegradable solid waste in ocean	<i>Dc, Ei Cc, Cm</i>	Not determined	Some areas close to urban, turistic and industrial zones	- . Action Plan for the Recuperation of Sea Turtles in Venezuela	
Sicknesses: fibropapillomas	<i>Cm, Lo</i>	Not determined	Paraguaná Peninsula, RFS Isla de Aves, Gulf of Paria	- . Action Plan for the Recuperation of Sea Turtles in Venezuela	Research
Presence of hydrocarbons on nesting beaches	<i>Dc, Ei, Cc, Cm</i>	Not determined	Gulf of Paria	- . Action Plan for the Recuperation of Sea Turtles in Venezuela	
Regulation mechanisms are not very effective	<i>Dc, Ei, Cc, Cm, Lo</i>	Not determined	Entire marine sector	- . Action Plan for the Recuperation of Sea Turtles in Venezuela	

3.2 Capture (Intentional/incidental)

Threats	Specie(s) Affected	Size of Impact	Geographic Region(s) Affected	Information Source	Actions
Incidental capture in trawl nets	<i>Dc, Cm, Cc, Ei, Lo</i>		East coast of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela	Sea turtles of Venezuela/ Actions for their Conservation Alió <i>et al</i> (in revision) Action Plan for the Recuperation of Sea Turtles in Venezuela	Mandatory use of TEDs
Incidental capture in longlines	<i>Dc, Cm, Cc, Ei</i>		Eastern and central coast of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela	Sea turtles of Venezuela/ Actions for their Conservation	Evaluation of fisheries impact Establish mitigation techniques, Create awareness in fisheries community



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Incidental Capture in Gillnets	<i>Dc, Cm, Cc, Ei, Lo</i>		Coasts along the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela	Action Plan for the Recuperation of Sea Turtles in Venezuela Fishermen reports, strandings	Regulations Evaluation of Fisheries Impact, Establish technical mitigation, Create awareness in fisheries community
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4. Legal Framework

4.1. International instruments

Treaty, Convention, Agreements, Memorandum of Understanding	Year signed and/or ratification
Convention for the Protection of Flora, Fauna and Scenic Beauties of the Americas	1941
Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES)	1977
International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL)	1985
Convention for the protection and development of the marine environment of the Wider Caribbean / Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife	1986 / 1990
The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (RAMSAR)	1988
Convention on Biological Diversity	1994
Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles	1998

4.2. National legislation

Type and name of legal instrument (No.)	Description (Range of application)	Sanction(s) Imposed
Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (G.O.R.B.V. N° 5453 Extraordinary on 24/03/2000)	Protect biological diversity, genetic resources, ecological processes, national parks, natural monuments and other ecologically important areas.	
Organic Law of the Environment (G.O.R.V. N° 18/06/1976)	Conservation, defend and improve the environment	
Organic Law of Aquatic and Insular Spaces (G.O.R.B.V. N° 37.330 on 22/11/2001)	Guarantee better use of aquatic and insular spaces, aiming to ensure the conservation of natural aquatic resources, among others	
Wildlife Protection Law and its Regulation (G.O.R.V. N° 29.289 on 11/08/1970, G.O.R.V. N° 5.302 Extraordinary on	Prohibit hunting with the exception of hunting for scientific purposes	Products confiscated and administrative



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29/01/1999)		sanctions
Penal Law of the Environment (G.O.R.V. N° 4.358 Extraordinary on 03/01/1992)	Establishes the capture of sea turtles and the degradation of their habitat as a crime because they are species in danger of extinction	Penal Sanctions
Law of Biological Diversity (G.O.R.B.V. N° 5.468 Extraordinary on 24/05/2000)	Article 22 specifies that animal species in danger of extinction will be priority <i>in situ</i> conservation objects	
Fisheries and Aquiculture Law (G.O.R.B.V. N° 37.727 of 08/07/2003)	Defines “responsible fishing” as the sustainable use of the fisheries resources in harmony with the environment and the use of capture methods that do not harm the ecosystems, the resources nor their quality	
Coastal Zone Law (G.O.R.B.V. N° 37.349 of 19/12/2001)	Article 7 specifies that conservation and sustainable harvesting in coastal zones includes the protection of biological diversity, punishment control and mitigating the causes generating contamination, as well as the policing and controlling of those activities capable of degrading the environment.	
Decree declaring closure on those species in danger of extinction (N° 1.485, G.O.R.V. N° 36.059 of 11/09/1996) *	Completely prohibits hunting sea turtles, with the exception of hunting for scientific purposes.	
Decree that declares Species in Danger of Extinction (N° 1.486, G.O.R.V. N° 36.062 of 11/09/1996) *	Includes all species of sea turtles present in the country	
Resolution of the Ministry of Agriculture and Land that establishes the mandatory use of TEDs (Resolution MAC-67, G.O.R.V.N° 35.159 of 25/02/1993)		

* Establishes complementary dispositions required by the Penal Law of the Environment for the exact determination of punishable conduct.

4.3. Indicate any legal instruments that are currently in the process of being approved.

Organic Law of the Conservation of the Environment



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4.4. Public and private institutions involved in sea turtle conservation

Institution/ Entity	Responsibilities
Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources	In charge of coordinating and executing biological diversity conservation plans and the integration of social and economic development within the country, emphasizing endangered species. Communities are involved in conservation activities.
Ministry of Agriculture and Lands / INAPESCA	Encourage, promote, develop and regulate fisheries activities, based on the governing principles that ensure the production, conservation, control, administration, promotion, research and responsible and sustainable harvesting of hydrobiological resources, taking into consideration biological, technological, economic, food security, social, cultural, environmental and relevant commercial aspects.
Ministry of Science and Technology / INIA	The executive body of the Ministry of Science and Technology is in charge of researching and providing specialized services to generate and validate knowledge and technologies needed by the priority agricultural feed chains for the Venezuelan State and its objective is scientific research, technological development, consulting, and to offer specialized services in the area, contributing to sustainable development and a competitive agriculture, cattle, forestry, fisheries and middle rural sectors.
Defense Ministry / National Navy, National Guard (Environmental Guard)	To carry out policing work and control in coastal marine areas, support in fulfilling ecological activities for the conservation of the marine environment and coordinate research and administrative procedures when in violation of environmental legislation.
CICTMAR	To contribute to the research and conservation of sea turtles and their habitats, with the goal of providing scientific information to make appropriate public and private decisions. Promote and strengthen networks, specialist groups at national and international levels, and residents through training and information sharing.
PROVITA	PROJECT PROCOSTA has the objective of conserving sea turtles in the state of Miranda, where 4 out of the 6 of these endangered species are found.
FUNDATUN	Design and implement Onboard Observer Programs
Foundation La Salle	Teaching, research
Sea Turtle Working Group of the State of Nueva Esparta	Carry out activities to protect sea turtles and their nests in Isla de Margarita and Coche, coordinate the "Opportune Sighting Network" program*
Scientific Foundation Los Roques	Improve sea turtle conservation programs in the National Park Archipelago Los Roques. Includes nursery.
Gulf of Venezuela Sea Turtle Working Group	Sea turtle research and conservation projects in the Gulf of Venezuela.
IVIC	Prepare sea turtle conservation strategies in the Gulf of Venezuela using GIS.
LUZ	Blood hematology and biochemistry of the green turtle in Gulf of Venezuela feeding grounds. Graduate thesis. School of Biology. Presented 2005.
LUZ	Evaluation of some reproductive aspects of the leatherback turtle (<i>Dermochelys coriacea</i>) in Querepare, Paria Peninsula, State of Sucre, during the April-Sept. 2004 season. Graduate thesis. School of Biology. Presented January 2006.
ICONVIS-UNA	Evaluation of the impact of human activities on sea turtles in the Paria Peninsula, Venezuela. Masters thesis.
UCV	Importance of beaches to the east of the Sate of Vargas for nesting sea turtles. Graduate thesis. School of Biology.



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5. Exceptions

Programs involving extractive use (include Management Plan)

The country does not have any programs involving extractive use of sea turtles since the existing laws does not permit the consumptive use of these species.

6. Conservation Efforts

6.1 General description of the sea turtle protection and conservation program

In the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, various projects related to sea turtle conservation are being carried out, each including the research and management activities which are described below and are detailed in the book “Sea Turtles of Venezuela / Actions for their Conservation” which is provided [in Spanish] as an annex to this report.

- **Sea Turtle Conservation in the Gulf of Paria**

General Objective:

To conserve the sea turtle populations of the Gulf of Paria.

▪ Specific Objectives:

- Encourage an integrated study program and the protection and sea turtles and their nests in the areas surrounding Macuro (Municipality of Valdez) in the Gulf of Paria.
- Promote beach cleaning prior to the sea turtle nesting season in order to facilitate this natural activity as well as for hatchlings to make their way to the ocean.
- To implement an environmental education program directed towards the communities established in the study area with the goal of promoting awareness and introducing them to proactive behavior in favor of the conservation of this fauna.
- Achieve community participation.

Study Area:

Los Garzos, Macurito, Yacua, Cerezo and Obispo Beaches, the Gulf of Paria, Municipality of Valdez, State of Sucre.

Fieldwork

During the years 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004 and 2005, daily and nightly visits and observations have been carried out between the months of May and September, for a period of one week per month. At night, direct observations of sea turtles are carried out during a fixed schedule between the hours of 8 p.m. and 4 a.m. These observations are done applying the following protocol:



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Due to the small lengths of beach to study, extended patrols are unnecessary; one arrives directly by boat and sets up an observation camp.

Every half hour, between 8 pm and 4 am, one performs short patrols waiting for the sea turtles to nest. Once a turtle is found, she is observed in order to determine the stage at which she is at.

From the initial stage when the turtle is coming out of the water until the moment she begins to dig her nest chamber, the turtle is left alone, if she is between the stages of egg laying and covering or camouflaging her nest, one waits until she has finished and then proceeds to measure and tag her.

For each turtle, the following data are recorded: species, morphometrics (curved and strength carapace length), presence of Fibropapilomas; as well as the location of the nest on the beach.

When possible, the entire nesting process of one turtle per night is observed and photographed and her eggs counted by using a surgical glove to receive the eggs directly from the oviduct, then they are left to drop naturally into the nest chamber, the count is carried out by a hand counter.

Once she has finished nesting, the nest is marked using physical environmental references (shrubs, palms, etc.) and its progress is monitored.

During the day, marked nests and tracks from the previous night are observed and counted; nests marked on previous nights are also monitored. When possible, physical data (temperature, precipitation and water table levels) are recorded.

Community Work

Because both capture and illegal commercialization of sea turtles occurs in the Paria region, promoting awareness within the community regarding the importance of these species is crucial. In order to do this, a series of informal talks in schools and community centers was initiated in those areas visited throughout the year.

- **Monitoring and Conservation Project for the Green Turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) Population in the Isla Aves Wildlife Refuge (Federal Dependencies)**

Study Area:

The Isla Aves Wildlife Refuge is under the jurisdiction of the Federal Dependencies and is located 650 kilometers northeast of the port of La Guaira, in the Caribbean Sea (see Map 1). This natural protected area was created in 1972 (Official Gazette N° 29888 dated 24-



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08-72) and includes the island proper (580 meters long and varying width between 30 and 120 meters) and the corresponding territorial sea with an approximate area of 158.000 hectares.

Fieldwork:

In order to monitor nesting females, the island was divided into three sectors (north, central and south). These sectors were adopted by the NGO FUDENA, which had previously worked in the area, in order to have a reference point for the location of the nests laid by these animals. This information is recorded in the field book and later added to the database.

Nightly patrols are carried out throughout the sectors of beach on the island approximately every 30 min., between 8 pm and 3 am.

When a sea turtle is found in the process of nesting, the curved carapace measurements are taken. The standard width is measure at the widest part, as there are no anatomical references for this procedure. The standard length is measured from the extreme anterior point at the nuchal scute to the extreme posterior tip of the supracaudals.

At the same time, or afterwards, the turtle is tagged in the front left flipper. The tag is placed in the second or third scale of the flipper using a pair of pliers especially designed for this purpose and Monel steel metal tags. During this process, any existing injuries or lesions on the animal are noted, as well as the presence of barnacles, fibropapillomas and any other important information for their individual description.

- PROCOSTA Program – Project PICD Costa Barlovento – PROVITA

Started in 1999, the general objective of the **Project PICD Costa Barlovento** is to contribute to the conservation of nesting sea turtles along the western coast of the State of Miranda, through monitoring and nest protection, promoting awareness among the population and establishing strategic alliances with private and public institutions and organizations.

Activities:

Monitoring and protection activities consist of carrying out morning patrols during the months of March and September at selected beaches with sea turtles activities and nests. The sector, date, climatic data, and specimen (whether the turtle was seen, or tracks or nest was found) are recorded in field data sheets, designed by WIDECAS and modified to suit Venezuela by Hedelvy Guada. In order to protect nests, a hatchery is located in the Banquito sector with a capacity of around 25 nests at a time; each nest is separated by about one meter. With the goal of avoiding, whenever possible, any unnecessary manipulation of the eggs, relocation only occurs when the location of the nest does not guarantee a high hatching success. After all the hatchlings have left the nest, it is dug up to count the shells, infertile eggs, dead hatchlings and to determine the hatching success. In addition to monitoring activities, environmental awareness programs are carried out with



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the local school kids, offering recreational and cultural activities and creating environmental sergeants. Through strategic alliances, an Opportune Advice Network (Institutional) in the state of Miranda was established (started by the GTTM-Nueva Esparta), in order to provide attention and follow-up to different levels of state institutions on sea turtle sightings.

- Proyecto de Investigación y Conservación de Tortugas Marinas en la Península de Paria – CICTMAR-WIDECAS

This Project is directed at researching and protecting sea turtles in the two most important mainland nesting sites in Venezuela. One component of the project is awareness and the other is directed at identifying, promoting and implementing initiatives aiming to promote sustainable development of the coastal communities in the Paria peninsula where it is also being carried out, using the presence of sea turtles in the area as the center focal point. The activities include monitoring the reproductive period of the sea turtles in Cipara (62°42'O, 10°45'N) and Querepare (62°52'O, 10°42'N), where 80 to 100 females are tagged, 8,000 to 10,000 hatchlings are released, and between 4-6 research assistants are trained per year. Both localities are under the jurisdiction of the Municipality of Arismendi in the State of Sucre. Up to date, more than 400 females have been tagged and more than 35,000 hatchlings have been released since 1999.

- Biology and Conservation of Sea Turtles Courses and other training events – CICTMAR-WIDECAS

The objective of these courses is to provide scientific information on the biology of sea turtles. Through these courses, more than 250 students and professionals, mainly from Venezuela and Latin America, have been trained. The courses have been given biannually since 2004, with a Symposium or Workshop type event held in the off years. In 2005, a “Symposium on sea turtles in feeding grounds”, was held within the framework of the VI Venezuelan Congress of Ecology in collaboration with various national and international institutions.

- Characterizing potential feeding grounds for sea turtles; green (*Chelonia mydas*; Linnaeus, 1758) and hawksbill (*Eretmochelys imbricata*; Linnaeus, 1766), in the northern zone of Margarita Island. EDIMAR-IUTEMAR FLASA.

Potential green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) and hawksbill (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) feeding grounds were characterized in the northern part of Margarita Island, Venezuela, describing the biotic communities present and relating them to sea turtle sightings.



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General and Scientific Information Sharing

- CICTMAR-WIDECAS: This is accomplished through a web site (www.geocities.com/cardonrace) and through the production of informational materials (posters, brochures)
- Strengthen national and international networks – CICTMAR-WIDECAS
- Promote the growth of the Sea Turtles of Venezuela Working Group (GTTM) and the participation of international networks such as WIDECAS y el MTSG.
- Geographic Information System of the sea turtles of Venezuela – FLASA
- Observer Program aboard fishing vessels- FUNDATUN

6.2 Relevant Projects and Activities

Project/Activities	General objective	Results obtained	Duration	
			From	Until
Sea turtle conservation in the Gulf of Paria	To conserve sea turtle populations in areas close to Macuro, State of Sucre.	26 marked nests 7 Ei turtles tagged, <i>In situ</i> hatchlings released	2004	2005
Beach cleaning outings near Macuro, Paria Peninsula, Edo. Sucre	To facilitate the nesting process, hatching neonates and their journey to the sea	Collected 2.4 tons and 1.3 tons, respectively, of solid and organic (tree trunks and branches) waste	2004	2005
Monitoring and Conservation of the Green Turtle (<i>Chelonia mydas</i>) Population in the Isla Aves Wildlife Refuge		349 green turtles tagged	2004	2005
Proyecto de Investigación y Conservación de Tortugas Marinas en la Península de Paria (Cipara, Querepare and Puy Puy), northern slope of the Paria Peninsula	Protect nesting females and their nests	90 Dc, one Ei and one Cc females were tagged in 2005. More than 30,000 hatchlings released	2004	2005
“Symposium on sea turtles in feeding grounds”, was held within the framework of the VI Venezuelan Congress of Ecology	Strengthen Research and Conservation Capacity	More than 70 participants. An international guest speaker, Carlos Diez of DRNA, Puerto Rico, participated as well as many national researchers	2005	2005
Integrated Conservation and Development Program – Costa Barlovento, Program ProCosta, Provita	To contribute to the conservation of the 4 sea turtle populations along the west coast of the State of Miranda, by way of monitoring efforts, protection and environmental awareness.		2005	2005



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<p>Characterization of potential feeding grounds for sea turtles; green (<i>Chelonia mydas</i>; Linnaeus, 1758) and hawksbill (<i>Eretmochelys imbricata</i>; Linnaeus, 1766), in the northern zone of Margarita Island. EDIMAR-IUTEMAR FLASA.</p>	<p>Describe the biotic communities present in areas where fishermen, diving and local residents frequently report sea turtles.</p>	<p>5 areas along the northeastern coast of Margarita Island were described. Two of them are used by hawksbills and greens with certain frequency. These sighting frequencies were compared with other areas in the Caribbean reporting comparatively low densities.</p>	<p>2005</p>	<p>2005</p>
<p>Project EP/GLO/201/GEF-VEN Reduce the environmental impact of tropical shrimp trawl fisheries by introducing technologies that diminish the capture of bycatch and changes in management strategies. Financed: FAO-GEF, INIA, UDO, INAPESCA, industrial trawler fisheries.</p>	<p>This project evaluates populations of marine organisms affected by industrial, as well as artisanal, bottom trawling geared at shrimp and fish. Designs and tests fishing gear modifications to reduce their environmental impact. In particular, DET modifications are tested to improve their performance and reduce the economic impact associated with their use.</p>	<p>The characteristics (composition, seasonality, structure) of shrimp bycatch have been described in all areas of the country where capture is done with artisanal and industrial fishing gear, as well as other incidentally captured fauna (like sea turtles). Net modifications were tested to reduce the capture of small fish, as well as modifying the DET. The introduction of more selective non-traditional nets for shrimping was tested in fisheries throughout the country.</p>	<p>2004</p>	<p>2008</p>

7. International Cooperation

WIDECASST was founded in 1981 in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, and is dedicated to increasing the level of public awareness regarding sea turtles and their status in the Caribbean region. All species of sea turtles in the Caribbean are internationally recognized as “Endangered” or “Critically Endangered” on the Red List of Threatened Species of the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN). Many populations are diminishing and some have completely disappeared. Those that are actually increasing have benefited from effective and long term conservation actions. Due to the fact that the majority of the threats to sea turtle survival are local, it is our option that the best way to ensure their survival is by promoting a conglomeration of informed citizens. WIDECASST includes volunteer National Coordinators in more than 30 Caribbean states and territories. Because each Coordinator works closely with a national coalition of all governmental and non-governmental actors, WIDECASST consists of a variety of hundreds of scientists, conservationists, resource managers, politicians, educators and others. The shared objective is to visualize a future in which all the habitants of the Wider Caribbean Region, humans and turtles alike, can live together in harmony. WIDECASST has a National Coordinator in Venezuela and their national partner is CICTMAR. WIDECASST has helped in the preparation of the “Action Plan for the Recuperation of Sea Turtles in Venezuela”, the strengthening of the STWG, training students and professionals through "Sea Turtle Biology and Conservation Courses" and other activities



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such as workshops and symposia that have been ongoing since 1992. In the Wider Caribbean Region, WIDECAST has greatly supported the Cartagena Convention and the SPAW Protocol and there are members of this NGO on the Scientific and Consultative Committees of the Inter-American Convention.

8. National Directory

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9. Sources of Information

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10. Annexes

(See 2006 Venezuelan Annual Report Bibliography in Spanish)