



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

[United States of America]

Annual Report 2012

IAC Annual Report General Instructions

Annex IV of the Convention text states that each Contracting Party shall hand in an Annual Report. To complete this Annual Report, Focal Points should consult with various stakeholders involved in sea turtle issues. If you have any questions regarding this Annual Report, please write to the PT Secretariat at secretario@iacseaturtle.org

Please note that the date to submit this Annual Report is **April 30, 2012**.

Part I (General Information)

Please fill out the following tables. Add additional rows if necessary.

a._ Focal Point

Institution	NOAA Fisheries Service
Name	Alexis T. Gutiérrez
Date Annual Report submitted	

b._ Agency or Institution responsible for preparing this report

Name of Agency or Institution	NOAA Fisheries Service
Name of the person responsible for completing this report	Alexis T. Gutiérrez
Address	1315 East West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910
Telephone(s)	301-427-8441
Fax	301-713-4060
E-mail	Alexis.Gutierrez@noaa.gov

c._ Others who participated in the preparation of this report

Name	Agency or Institution	E-mail
Sandy MacPherson	US FWS	sandy_macpherson@fws.gov
Jeff Seminoff	NOAA Fisheries Service	Jeffrey.Seminoff@noaa.gov



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

[United States of America]

Annual Report 2012

Yonat Swimmer	NOAA Fisheries Service	Yonat.Swimmer@noaa.gov
Barbara Schroeder	NOAA Fisheries Service	Barbara.Schroeder@noaa.gov

Part II (Policy and Management)

a. General description of activities carried out for the protection and conservation of sea turtles

In accordance with Articles IX and XVIII of the text of the Convention, each Party shall establish monitoring programs, policies and plans for implementation at a national level for the protection and conservation of sea turtles and their habitat.

As a result, the Party shall report on the action plans, management plan or other types of instruments, describing their location, the species considered and the actions implemented by governmental, non-governmental and private institutions related to sea turtles.

In addition to the above, please fill out the following tables and explain the level of progress in the comments column.

	YES/NO/ In Progress	Comments
Does your country have a national plan of action in accordance with Article XVIII?	Yes	There are national recovery plans for each species. Links to each of these plans were sent to the IAC Secretariat earlier this year.
Does your country have policies and programs at local and regional levels in accordance with Article XVIII?	Yes	
Does your country have monitoring programs in accordance with Article IX?	Yes	

b. National legislation and international instruments related to sea turtles adopted in the preceding year

Describe any national regulations, international agreements and other legal instruments adopted during the preceding year (April 30, 2011-April 30, 2012) related to sea turtles and/or relevant activities. Provide a reference and attach the digital file



Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles [United States of America] Annual Report 2012

for the legislation and its corresponding number. The laws adopting the international legislation should be included, when they exist.

In January 2012, the United States notified the public that no additional fisheries would be added to the Annual Determination. The Annual Determination allows NOAA Fisheries to identify fisheries in U.S. waters that will be required to take fishery observers in order to better understand incidental capture of sea turtles. No additional fisheries were identified due to lack of resources to expand the program at this time.

In September 2011, the United States designated nine distinct population segments (DPS) under the U.S. Endangered Species Act for loggerhead sea turtles. The United States then determined that 4 DPSs were threatened and five were endangered. In the IAC region, the relevant DPSs are the Northwest Atlantic DPS (threatened), South Atlantic DPS (threatened), South Pacific DPS (endangered) and North Pacific DPS (endangered). More information can be found at <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/species/turtles/loggerhead.htm#regulations>.

In June 2011, NOAA Fisheries announced the intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement to assess the impacts of new regulations in the southeastern shrimp fishery. The new regulations would potentially require turtle excluder devices in skimmer trawls, pusher-head trawls, wing nets (butterfly trawls) in state and Federal waters.

In May 2011, NOAA Fisheries determined that a petition to revise critical habitat for leatherback sea turtles in Puerto Rico may be warranted. NOAA Fisheries is now conducting further review to determine whether to propose a revision to critical habitat for leatherbacks in Puerto Rico.

National Legislation		
Type and name of legal instrument (No.)	Description (Range of application)	Sanctions(s) Imposed
Endangered Species Act	Global	Prohibition of take of listed species unless exempted under Section 7 and Section 10 in U.S. waters
International Instruments		
Treaty, Convention, Agreements, Memorandum of Understanding		Year signed and/or ratified
Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles		2000
Indian Ocean Southeast Asian Marine Turtle MOU		2001



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

[United States of America]

Annual Report 2012

Note: If this is the first time a country is submitting this information, please include all pertinent national legislation and international instruments currently in force.

c. Actions for compliance with national and international legislation

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:

			RESOLUTION DOES NOT APPLY	
IS COMPLYING WITH THE FOLLOWING:	YES	NO	DESCRIBE ACTION (*)	DOES NOT APPLY
1a) Have you created conservation plans and long-term programs that can reverse the critical situation of the leatherback turtle in the Eastern Pacific?	X		Recovery Plan for Pacific Leatherbacks http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/recovery/turtle_leatherback_pacific.pdf	
1b) Are you implementing these conservation plans and monitoring programs?	X		Yes, the United States is taking action to minimize interactions with Leatherbacks in domestic fisheries by using gear modifications and, as necessary, time area closures. In addition, we are working closely with several countries in the ETP to try and reduce leatherback interactions by using large circle hooks and whole finfish	
2a) Have you taken conservation measures to significantly reduce the use of leatherback turtle products and by-products?	X		Trade of sea turtles and their parts is illegal in the United States.	



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

[United States of America]

Annual Report 2012

2b) Do you evaluate these conservation measures?	X		Yes, the status of the species are formally reviewed on an approximate five-year basis, this review includes an evaluation of the effectiveness of conservation measures. Additionally, the U.S. National Marine Fisheries Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service conduct consultations on all federal actions that may affect sea turtles. During these consultations, conservation efforts are evaluated.	
3a) 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?				N/A
3b) Do you evaluate the conservation measures taken to protect those nesting sites and their associated habitats?				N/A
4. Has your country adopted fishing techniques that reduce incidental capture and mortality of this species?	Yes		With respect to Western Pacific Leatherbacks, we have taken significant measures to reduce fishery bycatch. The California drift-gillnet fishery is currently closed. The Hawaii shallow-set fishery is managed through 100% observer monitoring and the fishery closes if the annual limit of interaction with leatherbacks is reached. U.S. fishermen are required to use large circle hooks with whole finfish baits in longline fisheries known to interact with Leatherbacks in the Pacific and the Atlantic Ocean, as well as the Gulf of Mexico. Fishers are also provided safe-handling gear to increase turtles' chances of survival post-release. The US has also declared Critical Habitat for leatherback turtles along the US West Coast that further limits anthropogenic impacts to leatherback turtles in the region.	
5a) Is your country collecting information on incidental capture of leatherbacks in the following fisheries:				
Artisanal fisheries				
i) Long-line				NA
ii) Gillnets				NA
iii) Other fishing gear (indicate which one(s))				NA



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

[United States of America]

Annual Report 2012

Industrial fisheries			
i) Long-line	Yes		http://www.fpir.noaa.gov/OBS/obs_hi_ll_ss_rprts.html http://www.sefsc.noaa.gov/turtles/TM_NMFS_SEFSC_607.pdf
ii) Gillnets	Yes, but not for all fisheries		http://swr.nmfs.noaa.gov/fmd/observer/catch0910.htm
iii) Other fishing gear (indicate which one(s))	Pot and trap		We currently do not have any bycatch estimates for leatherbacks in trap/pot fisheries. The majority of the information on the occurrence of these interactions is from strandings and a disentanglement program in the northeastern U.S.
5b) Have you provided the IAC with information on incidental capture of leatherbacks in the following fisheries:			
Artisanal fishing			
i) Long-line			NA
ii) Gillnets			NA
iii) Other fishing gear (indicate which one(s))			NA
Industrial fisheries			
i) Long-line			See above
ii) Gillnets			See above
iii) Other fishing gear (indicate which one(s))			See above
6. Have you established agreements and/or understandings with countries fishing within international waters to adopt fishing techniques that reduce incidental capture of leatherback turtles? List which countries:	Yes		Through our participation in Regional Fisheries Management Organizations we have worked to secure binding measures to reduce entanglement in FADs and to use large circle hooks in pelagic longline fisheries. These organizations include IATTC, ICCAT and WCPFC.



Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles [United States of America] Annual Report 2012

7. Have you encouraged other non-Party states to the IAC, carrying out activities that affect leatherback turtles, to adopt measures in favor of their conservation, by means of bilateral, multilateral or regional contacts?	Yes		We have encouraged several non-Party states to use circle hooks in longline fisheries, TEDs in trawl fisheries and modified gillnets in gillnet fisheries. See annex of work that we do in the region related to sea turtle bycatch mitigation.	
8. Have any cooperative agreements or alliances been established with pertinent organizations? List:	Yes		Yes, NOAA Fisheries has worked collaboratively with World Wildlife Fund US, Pretoma, Projeto Tamar, Prodelphinus, Propenisula, WWF Greater Mekong, DINARA, CICMAR, Equilibrio Azul, Submon, Kai Marine Services, and several other groups to address sea turtle bycatch issues around the globe.	

(* 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		DESCRIBE ACTION (*)	DOES NOT APPLY
	YES	NO		
1. Has your country promoted synergies with other Conventions, treaties, international organizations, and/or regional fisheries bodies on the management and conservation of hawksbill turtles and their habitats? Indicate which one(s).	Yes		We have been a strong advocate of the IAC and CITES collaborating on hawksbill issues.	
2 a) Are you strengthening monitoring of the illegal use and trade of hawksbill turtles and their products?	Yes		It is illegal to trade hawksbill turtles and their parts in the United States. Further through the Central American Free Trade Agreement we have worked to address illegal hawksbill trade in the Dominican Republic.	
2 b) Are you enforcing pertinent hawksbill legislation?	Yes		Enforcement efforts at the state and national level are ongoing to enforce the ESA.	
2 c) Are activities being carried out in order to stop illegal trade of hawksbill products?	Yes		Our enforcement officers work to stop illegal trade of hawksbill products.	



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

[United States of America]

Annual Report 2012

3. Does your country support and strengthen the research and monitoring activities required to improve the scientific basis of conservation measures for the hawksbill turtle? Especially in:	Genetics	Yes		
	Migratory behavior	Yes		
	Location and conservation status of foraging habitats.	Yes		
	Location and conservation status of prey species.	Yes		
	Population dynamics at foraging sites	Yes		
	Integrity of nesting habitats	Yes		The United States supports nesting surveys and nest protection efforts on Mona Island, Puerto Rico, and Buck Island Reef National Monument, U.S. Virgin Islands, the two most important hawksbill nesting sites in the United States. We also protect nesting habitat in Hawaii.
	Others (specify)			
4. As indicated in the recommendations from FAO's Technical Meeting on the conservation of marine turtles and fisheries that was held in Bangkok in 2004 and adopted by the 26th Session of FAO's Fisheries Committee (COFI), does your country carry out any activities mentioned in a) and/or b)?	a) Evaluate incidental capture of hawksbill turtles in jurisdictional waters.	Yes		All of our fisheries observers report all sea turtle information. Hawksbills are encountered less frequently than other turtle species in our fisheries, but they are noted when encountered.
	b) Actions to mitigate incidental capture of hawksbill turtles in their jurisdictional waters.	Yes		We believe that mitigation measures in longline, gillnet and trawl fisheries will likely also benefit hawksbills.
5. Does your country apply the precautionary approach when considering proposals for seismic exploration on priority marine habitats of the hawksbill turtle?		Yes		Through the section 7 process of the Endangered Species Act, the United States evaluates all seismic activity for its impact on all protected species, including hawksbills.
6. 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	Y		Nesting beaches of the southeastern U.S. are a mixture of public and private lands. Public conservation lands include National Wildlife Refuges (NWR), National or State or County Parks, and military installations. In Florida, approximately 40% of nesting beaches have been identified as conservation lands; in Georgia, 71%; in South Carolina, 38%; in North Carolina, 47%; and in Alabama, 22%. The two major hawksbill nesting beaches in the U.S. Caribbean, Buck Island Reef



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

[United States of America]

Annual Report 2012

				<p>National Monument, U.S. Virgin Islands, and Mona Island, Puerto Rico, are protected as a National Park and Commonwealth Protected Area, respectively.</p> <p>The most important leatherback nesting beaches in the U.S. Caribbean are Sandy Point, U.S. Virgin Islands (protected as a National Wildlife Refuge); Brava and Resaca Beaches, Culebra, Puerto Rico (protected as a Commonwealth Protected Area); Vieques Island, Puerto Rico (protected as a National Wildlife Refuge); Fajardo (Northeast Ecological Corridor) on the main island of Puerto Rico (mixed ownership, only partially protected); and Maunabo on the main island of Puerto Rico (beaches are in public domain, but uplands adjacent to the beaches are privately owned with the potential for future development).</p>	
	b) Protection of feeding habitats				
7. Does your country promote exchange of technical capacity and collaborative research on hawksbill habitats among Parties as well as non Parties and other involved organizations in the Area of the Convention?		Y		Our researchers are regularly working with other countries to share information on hawksbills conservation.	

(*) 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
1. 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				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collect information by fishery 	Y		The United States works to observe those fisheries known to interact or likely to interact with sea turtles.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observer programs 	Y		http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/fr/fr75-81201.pdf	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research on sea turtle/fishery interactions 	Y		NMFS conducts modeling exercises to pinpoint the areas of greatest likelihood of sea turtle / fisheries interactions. In Hawaii, the NMFS Pacific Islands Science Center's Turtlewatch project produces maps for fishery on the areas of high likelihood of interaction with	



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

[United States of America]

Annual Report 2012

			loggerheads. The NMFS Southwest Science Center through the SLEUTH project is trying to better understand how Leatherbacks and swordfish use the coast of California in order to better inform management decisions	
• Information on non-Party vessels	Y			
• Cooperation with non-Party states to obtain information	Y		The United States works collaboratively with several countries to better understand fisheries interactions with sea turtles.	
B. Mitigation measures for the following fisheries:				
i) Long-line	Y		Relatively large circle hooks with certain bait combinations in most pelagic longline fisheries.	
ii) Gillnets	Y		Restrictions on mesh-size in some gillnet fisheries, prohibition of gillnets in certain state waters, restrictions on tie-downs and gillnet length in some fisheries.	
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)	Y		TEDs are required in otter trawls targeting shrimp and summer flounder in the Southeast United States. The regulations can be found at http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/fr/fr68-8456.pdf	
iv) Other fishing gear (indicate which one(s))				
C. Training, education and dissemination				
• Training, education and dissemination activities	Y		We train our observers in safe handling and dehooking. Our training materials for observers in pelagic longline fisheries can be found at http://www.sefsc.noaa.gov/species/turtles/observers.htm .	
D. Harmonization of policies and legislation				
• Modifications to instruments	Y		We develop as necessary regulations to reduce fisheries interactions with sea turtles.	
E. Capacity building				
• Creation of a national sea turtle committee/network	Y		US Fish and Wildlife Service and NOAA Fisheries have national sea turtle programs.	
F. Financing				
• Financial support obtained to implement guidelines in this resolution		N	We do not allocate funding specifically to implement the FAO guidelines, but by our recovery actions we often are implementing the guidelines.	
G. Socio-economic considerations				



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

[United States of America]

Annual Report 2012

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support socio-economic activities that help mitigate adverse impacts of fisheries on sea turtles 	Y		NMFS Southwest Fisheries Center is conducting research to look at best practices for fisheries management to reduce transfer effects.	
H. Other aspects				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental impact studies for mariculture projects 	Y		Any Federally permitted mariculture project would have to undergo an Environmental Impact Statement which would look at the impact on listed species, like sea turtles.	
2. Sent information and documents on sea turtles created by your country to the Secretariat of the Convention? List documents.		N	All our regulations and recovery plans can be found at http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/species/turtles/	
3. Initiated activities that assist the Convention Secretariat in contacting non Party States through established mechanisms, especially in the area of the Convention, so that they may provide, in a cooperative spirit, the Secretariat with available data on incidental sea turtle catches in their fisheries?		N		
4. Supports the Convention Secretariat, through established mechanisms, to commence discussions with regional fishery management organizations in order to develop Memorandum of Understandings.	Y		The United States has facilitated contact between the Secretariat and the IATTC Secretariat.	

(* **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-COP4-2009-R5: Adaptation of sea turtle habitats to climate change

ACCORDING TO RESOLUTION CIT-COP4-2009-R5, REPORT WHETHER YOUR COUNTRY:

IS COMPLYING WITH THE FOLLOWING:	YES	NO	DESCRIBE ACTION (*)	DOES NOT APPLY
1 a) Have marine and coastal habitats on which sea turtles depend been included in national plans and programs for adaptation to climate change? Specify habitats and plans	N			
1 b) Are these plans for adaptation to climate change being implemented?	N			
2 a) Are corrective measures and measures on adaptation to climate change included within management plans and/or protection and conservation programs for sea turtles and their habitats?	N			
2 b) Are you evaluating the corrective measures and measures on adaptation to climate change included within management plans and/or protection and conservation programs for sea turtles and their habitats?	Y			



Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles [United States of America] Annual Report 2012

3. Have you identified any organizations or pertinent expert groups as possible partners to work on the topic of adaptation by sea turtles to climate change? Please list.		N		
4. Have you carried out research and monitoring to improve knowledge of the effects on, and vulnerability of sea turtles and their habitats, to climate change?	Y		NMFS Pacific Islands Center has conducted modeling looking at the impacts of climate change on loggerhead and leatherback nesting abundance trends to help decipher the impact of fisheries versus climate.	
5. Has your country hosted capacity building workshops for monitoring techniques and/or adaptation to climate change?		N		
6. Has your country implemented mitigation measures for non-climatic threats as a way to improve the resilience of populations to the impacts of climate change? Specify which ones.		N		

(* **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.**

c.2 National and International Mandates

List actions that are being carried out to comply with national and international mandates (Ex: inspections, confiscations, sanctions, etc.)

The United States regularly carries out the mandates of the Endangered Species Act, which prohibits all taking of listed species, unless permitted under the ESA. Through the implementation of regulations we are working to reduce sea turtle incidental capture and mortality in fisheries. The United States regulations can be found at <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/species/turtles/regulations.htm>. Further, the United States evaluates all Federal actions that may affect sea turtles through the Section 7 process of the Endangered Species Act, as well as the environmental review process required by the National Environmental Policy Act.

Both NOAA Fisheries and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have enforcement offices that monitor compliance with existing laws and develop cases against those violating the Endangered Species Act.

d. *Application[submission] of exceptions established in the Convention*

Describe in detail the exceptions allowed in accordance with article IV, item 3(a,b,d) and Annex IV of the text of the Convention, in accordance to the procedure established by the COP (Doc. CIT-COP5-2011-R2). Attach management program.

N/A



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

[United States of America]

Annual Report 2012

Part III (Research information)

a. Threats

Describe threats (*Coastal development, incidental capture, direct use, contamination and pathogens, and climate change*) by species, with information on the area and activities taken to control them in the following table. Lo = *Lepidochelys olivacea*; Lk = *Lepidochelys kempii*; Dc = *Dermochelys coriacea*; Ei = *Eretmochelys imbricata*; Cc = *Caretta caretta*; Cm = *Chelonia mydas*.

Species	Threat(s)	Actions
Lo	Incidental Capture in Fisheries	Through the Endangered Species Act regulations and Section 7 process, the United States works to mitigate impact of fisheries on sea turtles.
Lk	Incidental Capture in Fisheries	Through the Endangered Species Act regulations and Section 7 process, the United States works to mitigate impact of fisheries on sea turtles.
Dc	Coastal development (includes construction, repair, and maintenance of upland structures and dune crossovers; installation of utility cables; installation and repair of public infrastructure (such as coastal highways and emergency evacuation routes); and construction equipment and lighting associated with these activities alter nesting habitat and harm sea turtle nests, adults, and hatchlings.)	<p>Through permit conditions, most direct construction-related impacts are avoided by requiring that non-emergency activities be performed outside of the nesting and hatching season. However, indirect effects also result from the post-construction presence of structures on the beach, and these impacts can only be minimized to the maximum extent practicable. Light management plans have been successfully developed and implemented in most developed coastal counties and communities in Florida to minimize these impacts. Light management plans have also been developed at coastal military installations in Florida. Light pollution issues adjacent to the leatherback nesting beach at Sandy Point, USVI, are still problematic but some efforts have been undertaken to resolve them.</p> <p>Nest protection programs vary but include 100% nest screening at Canaveral National Seashore; raccoon trapping and removal at Merritt</p>



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

[United States of America]

Annual Report 2012

	<p>Depredation of eggs and hatchlings.</p> <p>Incidental Capture in Fisheries</p>	<p>Island NWR, Hobe Sound National NWR, and Archie Carr NWR; feral hog control at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station; coyote control in the Florida Panhandle; and mongoose trapping at Sandy Point NWR.</p> <p>Through the Endangered Species Act regulations and the Section 7 process, the United States works to mitigate the impact of fisheries on sea turtles.</p>
Ei	<p>Depredation of eggs and hatchlings</p> <p>Incidental Capture in Fisheries</p>	<p>A fence has been constructed as a barrier to hogs at hawksbill nesting beaches on Mona Island, Puerto Rico. Rat control activities have been undertaken on Buck Island Reef National Monument in the USVI. Through the Endangered Species Act regulations and the Section 7 process, the United States works to mitigate the impact of fisheries on sea turtles.</p>
Cm	<p>Coastal development</p> <p>Depredation of eggs and hatchlings</p>	<p>Through permit conditions, most direct construction-related impacts are avoided by requiring that non-emergency activities be performed outside of the nesting and hatching season. However, indirect effects also result from the post-construction presence of structures on the beach, and these impacts can only be minimized to the maximum extent practicable. Light management plans have been successfully developed and implemented in most developed coastal counties and communities in Florida to minimize these impacts. Light management plans have also been developed at coastal military installations in Florida.</p> <p>Nest protection programs vary but include 100% nest screening at Canaveral National Seashore; raccoon</p>



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

[United States of America]

Annual Report 2012

	Incidental Capture in Fisheries	<p>Force Station and at problem areas in Georgia; and coyote control in the Florida Panhandle.</p> <p>Through the Endangered Species Act regulations and the Section 7 process, the United States works to mitigate the impact of fisheries on sea turtles.</p>
--	---------------------------------	---

b. Research

Describe scientific research that is being carried out in the country relating to sea turtle population assessments including tagging, migration, and genetic studies, as well as those relating to conservation issues including habitat monitoring, fisheries interactions, disease, etc. Provide a list of references for the information used in this report and note how to obtain them when needed.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service initiated a new project with the U.S. Geological Survey to: (1) extend and adapt current mark-recapture statistical methodology and software to maximize its utility to sea turtle studies, and (2) evaluate minimum sample sizes needed to achieve desired precision in tagging studies, for a variety of realistic scenarios of population size and fidelity to nesting beach. This development will consider both nesting beach and in-water studies, focusing on the former.

c. Other activities

Include information on: environmental education activities, programs to establish and manage protected areas, and cooperative activities with other Party countries.

See below the most recent U.S. Fish and Wildlife and NOAA Fisheries international capacity building activities.

The following projects were undertaken in the IAC region:

Bycatch Reduction Technology Transfer to Colombian Fishers, Fisheries Managers and Marine Enforcement (\$30,700 in FY2009 funds).

The Southeast Fisheries Science Center, Engineering and Harvesting Branch provided training on use and enforcement of TEDs in the Pacific and Caribbean.

Turtle Excluder Device (TED) Technology Transfer and Development in Uruguay's Coastal Non-Shrimp Trawl Fishery (\$44,000 in FY2009 funds).

The Southeast Fisheries Science Center, Engineering and Harvesting Branch, provided the training.



Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles [United States of America] **Annual Report 2012**

Continuing sea turtle workshops and offshore radio broadcasts to reach artisanal vessel captains in Peru (\$19,700 in FY2009 funds).

The Southwest Fisheries Science Center assisted in training artisanal fisheries crew members and observers on proper sea turtle dehooking and resuscitation techniques and promoted these practices through radio public service announcements;

TEDs University (\$50,000 from the CAFTA-DR Environmental Initiative in 2010). This was a comprehensive two-week training in TED technology for five students (from Costa Rica, Panama, Nicaragua, Honduras, and El Salvador), designed to establish TED extension agents in the region.

A two-part project on construction and installation of TEDs in the Uruguayan trawl fishery (\$38,700 in FY 2010 funds) Three visitors from Uruguay attended a workshop in the Pascagoula Laboratory; NOAA experts will visit Uruguay to assist with installation of NOAA-funded TEDs.

Building the Capacity of Central American Countries to Assess Bycatch (\$20,000 in FY2010 funds).

The World Wildlife Fund will collaborate with five Central American governments on use of best fishing practices to reduce bycatch in artisanal longline fisheries. WWF also conducted an introductory workshop in French Guiana in conjunction with its new law requiring TEDs (\$3,200 in FY2009).

Building capacity with Atlantic Canadian pelagic longline fishers (DFO supported). The Southeast Fisheries Science Center participated in a workshop in Nova Scotia in March 2011 to improve Canada's data collection on incidentally captured turtles to be consistent with the US Pelagic Longline Observer Program.

Studies to look at the effect of net illumination on capture rates of sea turtles and other non-target species in Peruvian and Brazilian coastal gillnet fisheries (2011-2012). NOAA Fisheries Pacific Islands Science Center provided \$15,000 to ProDelphinus and Project TAMAR to investigate sea turtle capture rates in illuminated coastal gillnets.

TEDs Inspections and Trainings – FY 11-12

TED Workshops for fishers (in conjunction with DOS, section 609 visits):

- *Costa Rica; Acajutla, Pacific coast with INCOPECA, October 17-19, 2010*
- *El Salvador; Puntarenas & La Union, with CENDEPESCA, Oct. 20-22, 2010*
- *Panama; Vacamonte, with ARAP January 17-19, 2011*
- *Guatemala; Puerto Quetzal, with UNIPESCA, January 20-22, 2011*
- *Brazil; Belem with IBAMA, April 24-27, 2011*
- *French Guiana; Cayenne, with CRPMEM, April 30-May 4, 2011*
- *Ecuador; Guayaquil, Playas and Manta, with SRA, September 5-9, 2011*
- *Mexico; (Pacific) Mazatlan, Guaymas, November 13-19, 2011*



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

[United States of America]

Annual Report 2012

- *Honduras; Roatan, December 11-16, 2011*
- *Mexico; (Gulf of Mexico) Tampico, Campeche, March 18-27, 2012*

TED Enforcement workshops

- *Central American Regional Marine Law Enforcement Workshop: Turtle Excluder Devices. Sonsonate, El Salvador. August, 2011. CAFTA funds / NOAA I/A*

TED research

- *Flexible TED for fish trawlers; preliminary trials with fishers. Suriname, with World Wildlife Fund Guianas. May 15-26, 2011*

See annex for the report of the MTCF grants 2011

In 2011, the USFWS awarded 39 new grants from the Marine Turtle Conservation Fund totaling \$1,717,006.00, which was matched by \$2,590,357.00 in leveraged funds. Field projects in 27 countries (in alphabetical order below) will be supported, in addition to two projects that involve multiple countries.

Part IV: Annexes

Table 1: Species Present

*Place an X in the box when the species listed is present in the oceanographic basins of your country as established in Article III of the text of the Convention. Lo = *Lepidochelys olivacea*; Lk = *Lepidochelys kempii*; Dc = *Dermochelys coriacea*; Ei = *Eretmochelys imbricata*; Cm = *Chelonia mydas*; Cc = *Caretta caretta*.*

Species	Pacific Ocean	Atlantic Ocean	Caribbean Sea
Lo	X	X	
Lk		X	
Dc	X	X	X
Ei	X	X	X
Cm	X	X	X
Cc	X	X	X



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

[United States of America]

Annual Report 2012

**Table 2: Important nesting sites for sea turtle conservation
SEE SPREADSHEET**

- a. *This table is intended to report information on the priority nesting beaches (for example, sites with greater abundance, endemism, genetic importance, others) for each species. For beaches that have multiple species nesting, enter that beach under the list for the primary nesting species. When entering information on nesting beaches, information is to be entered for each species independently. Indicate the names of nesting sites and the nesting season months for each site.*
- b. *Geographic location: Specify latitude and longitude in degrees, minutes and seconds - provide one or two points of reference for nesting sites (if available).*
- c. *Extension: Provide the total length (in Kilometers) of the nesting beach.*
- d. *Declared protection area: Indicate if the area is declared as some type of protected area.*
- e. *Protection measures: Indicate if any type of protection measures are in place at the nesting site (For example, turtle safe lights).*
- f. *Annual nesting abundance: Where possible, provide information on the total number of females and/or nests deposited at the nesting beach. If a specific value is not available, please provide a range for annual number of nesting females or nests deposited. If data are unavailable, enter 'unknown' or 'unavailable'. The ranges for annual number of females are: 0-10, 11-100, 101-500, 501-1000, 1001-5000, 5001-10000, 10001-50000, 50001-100000, >100000. The ranges for annual number of nests are: 0-10, 11-100, 101-500, 501-1000, 1001-5000, 5001-10000, 10001-100000, 100001-500000, >500000. On a separate sheet, provide a brief description/justification on why each site that was mentioned is considered important (sites with greater abundance, endemism, genetic, others). Include historical information (graphic and/or tables) showing the population status of each species present at the site.*
- g. *Information from tagging program: Indicate if there have been any tagging activities at the nesting beach. This includes flipper tagging, passive integrated transponder (PIT) tagging, and satellite telemetry programs. If possible, on a separate sheet or as attached reference provide greater detail about the type of tagging efforts conducted. Also provide satellite telemetry maps or flipper tag recovery information if available.*
- h. *Tissue sampling: Indicate if there has been tissue sampling conducted at this site. This includes skin, blood, and other body tissues. On a separate sheet, or as attached references, describe these tissue sampling programs in greater detail. For example, were samples collected for genetic, contaminant, and/or stable isotope studies?*



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

[United States of America]

Annual Report 2012

Table 3: Important in-water sites for sea turtle conservation

- a. *This table is intended to contain information for the priority in-water sites for each species. For marine habitats that have multiple species present, enter the specific site under the heading for the priority species at that site. Indicate whether or not there is in water occurrence and/or foraging sites for that species.*
- b. *Geographic location: Describe the in-water site in general, providing the name of the site and points of reference at sea, when available. If possible add the geographic location in Lat/Long coordinates.*
- c. *Declared protection area: Indicate if the area is declared as some type of protected area.*
- d. *Information from tagging program: Indicate if there have been any tagging activities at the in-water site. This includes flipper tagging, passive integrated transponder (PIT) tagging, and satellite telemetry programs. If possible, on a separate sheet, or as attached reference provide greater detail about the type of tagging efforts conducted. Also provide satellite telemetry maps or flipper tag recovery information if available.*
- e. *Tissue sampling: Indicate if there has been tissue sampling conducted at this site. This includes skin, blood, and other body tissues. On a separate sheet, or as attached references describe these tissue sampling programs in greater detail. For example, were samples collected for genetic, contaminant, and/or stable isotope studies?*

Species		Description of geographic location	Declared Protection Area	Tagging Program	Tissue Sampling
Lo	In water Occurrence				
	Foraging Sites				
Lk	In water Occurrence				
	Foraging Sites				
Dc	In water Occurrence	Central California tagging; Aerial Surveys from Central California, OR and WA		X	
	Foraging Sites				
Ei	In water Occurrence				
	Foraging Sites				
Cm	In water Occurrence	San Diego Bay, Los Alamitos Bay, San Gabriel River, Seal Beach NWR (tagging and inwater capture)		X	
	Foraging Sites				
Cc	In water Occurrence				
	Foraging Sites				



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

[United States of America]

Annual Report 2012

Additional survey information for multiple species are below. This list is not exhaustive and is only indicative of some of the efforts in the United States. See the spreadsheet for additional information.

Year	Season	Platform	Effort	Area
2009	May-July	Trawler	580 paired trawls	Winyah Bay, SC to St. Augustine, FL
2009	Sep-Nov	Pound Net	769 pound nets	Core and Pamlico Sounds, NC
2009	Summer	Vessel		Gulf of Mexico – 20m to US EEZ
2009	Aug	Plane (Twin Otter)	1,400 km	MA to NC in U.S. waters
2010	Aug-Sep	Plane (Twin Otter)	9,210 km	MA to Gulf of St. Lawrence, Canada
2010	May-Sept	Plane		Deepwater Horizon Response and NRDA - northern Gulf of Mexico
2010	July-Aug	Plane	7,944	Cape May, NJ to Cape Canaveral, FL
2010	May-Jul	Trawler	480 paired trawls	Bulls Bay, SC to Nassau Sound, FL
2011	Feb-Mar	Plane		Cape May, NJ to Cape Canaveral, FL
2011	May-Jul	Trawler		Winyah Bay, SC to St. Augustine, FL