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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, 2017.**

Part I (General Information)

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

a._ Focal Point

Institution	Ministry of Environment and Energy
Name	Marco A. Solano
Date Annual Report submitted	May 11th, 2017

b._ Agency or Institution responsible for preparing this report

Name of Agency or Institution	Ministry of Environment and Energy-Conservation Areas National System
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c._ Others who participated in the preparation of this report

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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.

Costa Rica is still working in the development of the Strategic Plan for Conservation of the five species of sea turtles nesting and breeding in the country, or using foraging areas, found in several stages of their lifecycle in the Caribbean and Pacific coasts: leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*), green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*), hawksbill (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), olive ridley (*Lepidochelys olivacea*) and the loggerhead (*Caretta caretta*). To this date, there is a draft that will be socialized with researchers, NGOs representatives, the academy, and government officials who took part in the workshops. The final document will be obtained, after a national convocation and feedback provided by the participants.

The Ministry of Environment and Energy (MINAE) Conservation Areas National System (SINAC) is the agency in charge of managing Marine Protected Areas including sea turtle nesting sites, as well as of protecting, managing and conserving wildlife. The Marine Protected Areas have general management plans. Those MPAs including sea turtle conservation within their objectives include at least 80% of the areas, a monitoring program, and a conservation and management plan specific for each site. This program aims to promote and implement protection, conservation, research and environmental education activities regarding sea turtles. These activities are implemented by SINAC, NGOs, academic institutions, local guides associations, communal development associations, researchers, and governmental institutions such as the Fisheries and Aquaculture National Institute (INCOPESCA) and the Coast Guard National Service (SNG), inside and outside the Protected Areas.

SINAC has worked along with strategic partners designing a guide for developing control and protection plans for the analysis of threats and natural resource, and the identification and implementation of activities to minimize their impacts, based on article 46 Environment Organic Law that establishes as of public interest all those

activities for conservation, improvement, and recovery of biologic diversity as well as its sustainable use.

The document "Methodological Guide to Develop Comprehensive Plans for Prevention, Protection and Control in Wild Protected Areas" aims to guide, standardize and regulate the development of plans for prevention, protection and control at an governmental level as a fundamental procedure in the management of conservation areas and their respective protected areas including issues such as identification and prioritization of threats, governmental capacity, proper techniques and logistics for management, proper protocols and procedures, standardization of report and records of actions, identification of key stakeholders to develop and implement the plans, identification of strategic actions in the short, medium and long term according with SINAC´s Institutional Strategic Plan 2016 – 2026, building strategic partnerships including governmental participation and designation of monitoring and assessment mechanisms.

The Guide was presented before the National Conservation Areas Council Ordinary Session No. 02-2017 held on February 27th, 2017 where it was agreed:

> "AGREEMENT No. 22 – Adopts and formalizes the "Methodological Guide to Develop Comprehensive Plans for Prevention, Protection and Control in Wild Protected Areas" with the objective of having a tool to guide and homogenize the process to develop such an instruments in SINAC´s Conservation Areas, complying with disposition 4.10, in the General Attorney Report N° DFOE-AAE-IF-16-2014 on December 15th, 2014. AGREEMENT ADOPTED AND UNANIMOUS"

It is important to mention that minutes of the Ordinary Session No. 03-2017 of the National Conservation Areas Council of February 27th, 2017 were approved, endorsing the agreement.

Several Governmental organizations such as the Environment Prosecutor, the General Attorney, Incopesca, Senasa, Coastguard, MINAE-SINAC, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, Ministry of Public Works and Transport, and the Public Force are working in a protocol for reporting illegal activities at sea. This document or procedure would be a standardized base on how public officers from different State dependencies should act regarding crime at sea.

The country is doing an impressive effort to improve the effectiveness in the management of protected areas and ecological representativeness. Different products resulting from the Marine Protected Areas Consolidations Project GEF-PNUD-SINAC (PCAMP) are presented in this document Spanish version, same section.

Currently, efforts focus on important sites for conservation that include sea turtles as

conservation targets in Santa Elena Bay, Cabo Blanco, South Pacific and the Caribbean. Other conservation gaps are still pending, but there are important partners willing to collaborate with the restructuring process at Punta Pargos – Punta Gorda, in a very important area for nesting and movement of sea turtles in the North of the Country.

Research, hatcheries management, tourism and volunteers activities related to sea turtle must have their corresponding permits issued by MINAE and SINAC, regarding protected areas. Outside protected areas, the first two activities depend on SINAC and the Wildlife Law. However, until some issues regarding procedures to obtain research permits outside protected areas are not solved, INCOPESCA will also issue permits to those users who request it. Tourism activities are approved by Costa Rica´s Institute of Tourism and Municipalities. Any research involving genetic or biochemical access must be approved by the National Council for the Management of Biodiversity (CONAGEBIO). Regarding, scientific fishing, INCOPESCA issues the permits.

From the 11 Conservation Areas (AC in Spanish) in which the country is divided, 7 have sea turtle sites. Each AC has a research program in charge of issuing research permits regarding sea turtles, including following up on the project approved. They also have to establish the regulations and procedures regarding research on biodiversity and cultural resources:

Conservation Area La Amistad Caribe (ACLAC)

There are 10 nesting sites in ACLAC. Through its Marine and Coastal Program, ACLAC manages marine and coastal ecosystems involving local Caribbean communities regarding use and conservation of their resources. This comprehensive management enables better information management, strengthening citizens' participation and collaboration complying with the goals established by current national and international regulations. There is an ecosystem approach combined with research, education, enforcement, monitoring and outreach activities.

Cahuita National Park and Gandoca-Manzanillo Wildlife Mixed National Refuge (RNVS) are two important nesting sites for sea turtles within ACLAC. These places have their management plans, including all the actions required to comply with natural resources conservation, use and control responsibilities, including the sea turtles visiting this area: leatherback (*D. coriacea*), green (*C. mydas*), hawksbill (*E. imbricata*) and loggerhead (*C. caretta*), however, monitoring of these species has not been constant in the last few years. At Moín Beach there is a sea turtle conservation program since 2015, implemented by the Tropical Scientific Center (CCT) as part of the Environmental Management Plan of the Containers Terminal of Moín.

Further north, there are established sea turtle monitoring and research programs developed within the conservation area, such as the Sea Turtle Station, at rivers Mondonguillo and Serafin (www.estacionlastortugas.org), The Endangered Wildlife

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Trust at Pacuare Reserve in Mondonguillo beach (www.pacuarereserve.org) currently managed by Ecology Project International. The Save Parismina Sea Turtles Association (ASTOP, www.parisminaturtles.org) is also present, as well as local communities, especially with the management of sea turtle sighting activities.

Conservation Area Tortuguero (ACT)

Tortuguero National Park and Barra del Colorado Wildlife Refuge have been considered as important nesting and reproduction areas for green sea turtles (*C. mydas*). Other species of turtles are also monitored and protected such as the leatherback (*D. coriacea*), hawksbill (*E. imbricata*) and loggerhead (*C. caretta*). Management plans of these areas defined as a priority sea turtles conservation, protection, and research. Research on sea turtles nesting at Tortuguero National Park is done in coordination with non-governmental organizations such as Sea Turtle Conservancy (STC), which has been running a protection, conservation and monitoring program for more than fifty years. Regarding Barra del Colorado Wildlife National Refuge, sea turtle research is done in coordination with the non-governmental organization *The Canadian Organization for Tropical Education and Rainforest Conservation* (COTERC www.coterc.org).

Conservation Area Guanacaste (ACG

There are 10 nesting sites at the ACG, among the most important are: Nancite, Naranjo, Coloradas, Potrero Grande, Junquillal, Blanca, Cabuyal and San Jose Island. The AGC general management plan is being finalized, including sea turtle management actions sustainability. Robust research and monitoring are being carried out in four main places: Nancite Beach, an olive ridley (*L. olivacea*) massive arrival and nesting beach, and San Jose Island, a nesting site in the Pacific for an important population of green sea turtles (*C. mydas*). Three species nest in Naranjo Beach, mainly green sea turtles. ACG supports this monitoring developed by Biocenosis Marina, The Leatherback Trust, and Last.

Conservation Area Tempisque (ACT)

There are 27 nesting sites in the ACT, only 40% are protected by a management category, the beaches remaining are not declared as protected areas. However, this has not been an obstacle for monitoring, research, and protection of females and their nests.

The ACT has a regional monitoring and tagging program including Corozalito beach and Camaronal and Ostional Wildlife National Refugee, the world´s second most important beach for massive arrivals of the Olive Ridley (*Lepidochelys olivacea*) after Escobilla beach in Mexico. The Transects method has been implemented in these places

to estimate the size of the massive arrivals. There are records of massive arrivals in Camaronal and Corozalito in the last years.

Las Baulas Marine National Park (PNM) and the Refugees formerly mentioned, continue implementing research, monitoring and habitat improvement activities as well as those related with mitigation and adaptation to climate change, without forgetting the protection of nests and hatchlings. These activities are carried out with the participation of the local community through local guides associations, communal development associations and coordinated actions with several non-governmental organizations, state agencies, and national and international academic institutions.

The ACT continues supporting different non-governmental organizations and the academy, in the establishment and consolidation of sea turtle monitoring and research programs.

Conservation Area Central Pacific (ACOPAC)

ACOPAC research program gives special attention to sea turtles considering their population status. Playa Hermosa Wildlife National Refuge was created attending the need of protecting olive ridley (*L. olivacea*) nesting, as a vital rescue and conservation area at the Central Pacific. The refuge has a Management Plan considering sea turtles as a focal management point. Similarly, one of the main elements for Manual Antonio National Park expansion in Playa del Rey was olive ridley conservation. The protocol to measure rocky and sandy beaches ecological integrity using biological and abiotic indicators is being developed jointly with the Sea and Limnology Research Center (CIMAR) and BIOMARCC Project (German Cooperation).

Conservation Area Osa (ACOSA)

There are at least 16 nesting sites in ACOSA. As in the other Conservation Areas, ACOSA has a research and monitoring program with goals, objectives, and activities, including those that are a priority for sea turtles, mainly the nesting population monitoring.

Currently, the South Pacific Sea Turtle Conservation Network (created in 2015) is active. Its formation was one of the outcomes of the workshop Conservation of Nesting Beaches and Sea Turtles: A Joint Strategy for Monitoring convened by OSA Research Program (ACOSA) and funded by the Marine Protected Areas consolidation program of PNUD-SINAC-GEF. This network establishes the objectives and work plans.

The Prevention, Enforcement, and Protection program is in charge of protecting nesting beaches, and to give attention to complaints and other environmental coastal and marine crimes. Work is in coordination with non-governmental organizations making

conservation, monitoring and research efforts such as Conservation Osa, Corcovado Sea Turtle Conservation Committee (COTORCO), Corcovado Foundation, Tortuga Beach Reserve and Latin American Sea Turtle (LAST), as well as other initiative like Punta Banco Association and Progreso Sea Turtles Conservation Association (ACOTPRO).

Conservation Area Isla del Coco (ACMIC)

This conservation area comprises Isla del Coco National Park and Montes Submarino Marine Managed Area (AMMMS). The later was created on June 23rd, 2011 by Executive Decree No. 36452-MINAE. This is a marine area without islands, surrounding Isla del Coco. The objective is to protect and manage several species inhabiting/transiting throughout a series of geological structures rising from the depths of Costa Rica economic exclusive zone which have an important value attracting and aggregating marine biodiversity.

There is a great ecological richness of migratory species within the AMMMS, including birds, cetaceans, sea turtles, pinnipeds, and elasmobranchs. This is probably due to the tropical conditions, the oceanographic currents and geological substrate that provide an appropriate environment for these animals. Therefore, this area is used as a biologic corridor with conditions suitable for their reproduction, feeding, and resting.

Marine Managed Areas *Montes Submarinos* has a management plan approved, including actions for sea turtle conservation and protection.

Note. By the date, this report was submitted information from several projects on monitoring, research, and extension, among others, was still pending to be submitted.

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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?	In Progress	The development process of the plan began in 2015, including two workshops with the participation of key stakeholders. The first draft will be submitted for consideration of the stakeholders between June and July of this year.
Does your country have policies and programs at local and regional levels in accordance with Article XVIII?	Yes	Additional to the statement below, protected areas that have included sea turtles as conservation targets, have defined in their management plans, activities for the protection and conservation of these species and their habitats.
Does your country have monitoring programs in accordance with Article IX?	Yes	There are monitoring programs to ensure the enforcement of protection and conservation of sea turtles and their habitat inside and outside the protected areas, implemented through the projects approved by SINAC and INCOPESCA, and followed by their corresponding results and recommendations. In the case of protected areas, there are specific plans (control and surveillance; research; ecologic monitoring; communication; among other) which are assessed regularly. Also, the tool to assess Costa Rica´s Protected Areas Management Effectiveness is being used. Activities and monitoring are implemented in the monitoring projects or research, by governmental organizations, the academy, and local communities. Currently, there is a process of implementation of ecologic monitoring protocols previously mentioned.

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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, 2015-April 30, 2016) related to sea turtles and/or relevant activities. Provide a reference and attach the digital file for the legislation and its corresponding number. The laws adopting the international legislation should be included, when they exist.

National Legislation		
Type and name of legal instrument (No.)	Description (Range of application)	Sanction(s) Imposed
Implementación de las medidas citadas en el decreto No. 38681-MAG-MINAE, a través de los acuerdos AJDIP/115-2016; AJDIP/143-2016; AJDIP/218-2016 y AJDIP/239-2016		
International Instruments		
Treaty, Convention, Agreements, Memorandum of Understanding		Year signed/or ratified

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.

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Resolution CIT-COP7-2015- R2: Conservation of the Eastern Pacific Leatherback Turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*)

ACCORDING TO RESOLUTION CIT-COP7-2015-R2, 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**		What is written in the previous report remains. Nesting beaches in protected areas have a Management Plan with an ecosystem approach where nesting beaches and sea turtles are focal elements for management. There is a regular and permanent monitoring in each of the nesting beaches allowing assessing their status. In nesting beaches outside protected areas, there are local and non-governmental organizations implementing monitoring and conservation actions to protect the species in the Costa Rican Pacific. Index and secondary beaches for the leatherback of the Eastern Tropical Pacific are in the Marine National Park Las Baulas where there is a permanent monitoring program and activities toward reversing their current status.	
1b) Are you implementing these conservation plans and monitoring programs?	**X**		In protected areas implementation is done through Annual Work Plans including Environmental Education, Research, Volunteering, Protection, Control, and Eco-tourism. Also, the tool to Asses Protected Areas Management Effectiveness is used. Outside this protected areas, NGOs, academy or organized community groups, are in charge of implementing research, monitoring, nests protection, environmental education and volunteering activities approved by SINAC or INCOPESCA in through the projects. At the end of each season, a report must be handed to the area´s research coordinator.	
2. Have you taken conservation measures to eliminate poaching of leatherback turtles?	**X**		In most of the leatherback nesting beaches (Pacific and Caribbean) inside and outside protected areas, there are permanent patrols during nesting season. Females and nests information are recorded during these patrols while poaching is reduced. In some cases, nests are relocated or hatcheries are used for the same purpose. Research results and permanent monitoring annual reports must be considered in each protected area annual planning. Once a year, the protected areas should assess their management effectiveness and consider the corrections required. Each research and monitoring project inside or outside these protected areas should present a report with results and basic information such as the number of nests, the number of females, hatching success, emerging success, and respective recommendations which should be included in future proposals or work plans accordingly.	
3. If your country has leatherback turtle nesting beaches in the Eastern Pacific: Have you taken conservation	**X**		The consolidation process and monitoring programs of the National Marine Park Las Baulas is ongoing with the support of organizations such as TLT and Kuemar-Fundecodes, as well as SINAC. Monitoring programs continue strengthening in secondary sites inside and outside protected areas where	

measures to protect the nesting sites and their associated habitats?			leatherbacks nest sporadically, such as RNVS Camaronal (SINAC), RNVS Ostional (SINAC), and beaches known as Jesus-Zapotillal, Junquillal, Cabuyal other beaches in the south of the country. There is an important effort to protect leatherback nests inside or near the beach, as much as possible in all these places. At the end of each nesting season, responsible for each monitoring or research with a permit should hand out the corresponding reports which should be considered in the development of the annual work plan and in future monitoring and research. Also, researchers from organizations and SINAC, responsible for coordinating monitoring in specific sites should assess the results and make relevant recommendations, which should be analyzed and considered in the following monitoring. Recently the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation approved the regional project "Recovery of the Critically Endangered Leatherback Turtle population in the Eastern Pacific Ocean by enhancing hatchling recruitment and protecting index and secondary nesting beaches in Mexico, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica." presented by Fauna & Flora International (FFI) and members of LaudOPO. This project includes secondary beaches of Costa Rica North Pacific and focuses on activities described in the Spanish version of this document.	
4. Has your country adopted fishing techniques that reduce incidental capture and mortality of this species?			According to the Executive Decree No. 38681-MAG-MINAE on regulations for the use of tuna other related species in the EEZ of Costa Rica´s Pacific Ocean, INCOPESCA board issued the following agreements applicable to small and advanced scale commercial vessels: 1. **Agreement AJDIP/115-2016** 1) Tags on fishing equipment, 2) Logbook including fishing operations and 3) Records of sets and transfers including interactions with sea turtles (Annex 11). 2. **Agreement AJDIP/143-2016** the Executive Chair is in charge of establishing mechanisms to follow up on the Training Programs on techniques to increase post-capture survival of sea turtles incidentally captured in Costa Rica fisheries (training for fishermen and officers reported in the national report 2016) (Annex 12). 3. **Agreement AJDIP/143-2016** 1) Approve the Training on techniques to increase post-capture survival of sea turtles incidentally captured in Costa Rica fisheries. 2) Instruct the Department of Extension and Training to develop a permanent training program on techniques for handling and release sea turtles. 3) Instruct this same Department to coordinate the training with ship-owners or operators to comply with Executive Decree 38681-MAG-MINAE. The Department will have the support of experts appointed by the General Technical Direction to provide the training to crews. 4) Training will be valid for three years and will include a written or oral evaluation according to INCOPESCA criteria and the instructor. 5) The Department will have a record of fishermen trained who will receive a certificate of approval of the training. 6) All ship-owners or operators of longline vessels have a period of two	

			months since the implementation of this agreement to schedule their training with the Department, therefore the whole fleet would complete the training within a year. 7) The name of the training is "Techniques to increase post-capture survival of sea turtles incidentally captured in Costa Rican fisheries". 8) INCOPESCA Directions and Regionals offices receive instructions to verify that longline vessels comply with minimum requirements of equipment for handling and release of sea turtles at sea (a tool that allows to cut the monofilament from deck as close as possible to the turtle, two types of dehookers for "J" and "pork tail" hooks, a hook cutter, and a net to bring the turtle on board. 9) This equipment must comply with the measure and characteristics presented in an explanatory document developed by the Technical General Direction (Annex 13). 4. **Agreement AJDIP/239-2016** stating the interest of the Núcleo Náutico Pesquero del Instituto Nacional de Aprendizaje –INA- to develop training on the release of sea turtles, according to the programmes developed by INCOPESCA on the matter (Annex 14).	

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

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

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

			RESOLUTION DOES NOT APPLY		
IS COMPLYING WITH THE FOLLOWING		**YES**	**NO**	**DESCRIBE ACTION (*)**	**DOES NOT APPLY**
1. Are you strengthening monitoring of the illegal use and trade of hawksbill turtles and their products?		**x**		Each conservation area is responsible for reporting about inspections in markets, therefore, hawksbill products can be confiscated. Monitoring carried out by NGOs is also important. Association LAST, for example, carried out surveys in Puntarenas, showing hawksbill illegal trafficking is still ongoing. The complaint has been presented before SINAC and the issue is being evaluated by the coordinator of the Department of Prevention, Protection, and Control.	
2. Are you enforcing pertinent hawksbill legislation?		**x**		Hawksbill commercialization is illegal and there are efforts to enforce national regulations. Complaints are presented before the corresponding authorities.	
3. Are activities being carried out in order to stop the illegal trade of hawksbill products?		**x**		Customs and border police personnel have been trained about the current regulations regarding trafficking of hawksbill products and byproducts. As previously stated in this report, the Protocol to work with these complaints is being developed. Regarding LAST complaints, a control operation is being organized with the police and the Environmental Prosecutor to carry out confiscation and control of products and byproducts.	
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	**x**		Particularly at Cahuita National Park. If nests are found on beaches where there is monitoring or research, hawksbill nests are highly protected.	
	b) Protection of feeding habitats	**x**		Costa Rica has declared protected areas which are important for hawksbill turtles and have been assigned with personnel such as Cahuita National Park (Caribe), Camaronal Wildlife National Refuge (Pacific), Caletas-Ario Playa Caleta Wildlife National Refuge (Pacific), the Marine Protected Area of Conservation Area Guanacaste (Pacific). There are conservation efforts in Bahia Santa Elena, Cabo Blanco, the South Pacific and the Caribbean.	

(*) 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.

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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	x		Activities described in the previously mentioned Agreement AJDIP/115-2016. Currently, in use, Fishing Operation books were provided to the longline fleet in January 2017. To this date, 53 satellite buoys have been installed to monitor where the boats are fishing.	
• Observer programs	x		INCOPESCA is developing the onboard Observers Program that should be finished and implemented in this 2017.	
• Research on sea turtle/fishery interactions	x		During the training on "techniques to increase post-capture survival of sea turtles incidentally captured" information on sea turtle interaction was updated during conversations with fishermen and observers. INCOPESCA agreements AJDIP/115-2016; AJDIP/143-2016; AJDIP/218-2016 and AJDIP/239-2016 support the collection of this information.	
• Information on non-Party vessels	x		Purse seine boats category IV with a permit to fish in the EEZ should bring observers on board who report interaction with turtles to the IATTC.	
• Cooperation with non-Party states to obtain • information		x		
B. Mitigation measures for the following fisheries:				
i. Long-line	x		Implementation of measures in Decree No.38681-MAG-MINAE through the agreements AJDIP/115-2016; AJDIP/143-2016; AJDIP/218-2016 and AJDIP/239-2016	
ii. Gillnets		x		
iii. Trawling (e.g., 1.TEDs: specify legally approved iv. TEDs, their dimensions, material, and target species for that fishery, 2. time-area closures: specify geographical area, time of closure and	x		The Constitutional Chamber order stays in force where it declared that INCOPESCA, cannot issue any more permits for shrimp trawl fishing, nor authorize new permits, renovations or reactivations; while those still in the activity should do it following legal regulations strictly and with the most environmentally friendly technologies possible. For instance, TED use is mandatory in Costa Rica´s shrimp trawl fishing. All those using trawling nets are required to use it. Also, before this decision, as a member of OSPESCA, Costa Rica signed the Regulation OSP-06-13 on the Appropriate Use of Turtle Excluder Devices (TEDs). Likewise, INCOPESCA inspectors have received training from NOAA.	

	target species for that fishery., 3.tow times and/or 4. other measures)				
V.	Other fishing gear (indicate which one(s))	**x**		Foreign purse seine vessels catching tuna with Costa Rican license should report to ICCAT interactions and comply with the resolution C-04-07.	
vi.	Training programs for fishermen about best practices for safe handling and release of sea turtles incidentally caught.	**x**		The Agreements AJDIP/143-2016; AJDIP/218-2016 and AJDIP/239-2016, previously described, refer to training programs and activities.	
C. Socio-economic considerations					
•	Support socio-economic activities that help mitigate adverse impacts of fisheries on sea turtles	x		Training and the activities previously mentioned, address the development of responsible fishing and therefore access to better markets.	

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

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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.)

As mentioned in the previous reports the Ministry of Public Safety and its units, the National Coastguard Service, the Public Force and Tourist Police jointly with SINAC take part in the protection and compliance with the national environmental law. Marine patrols inside and outside protected areas, night and day journeys on land, inspections, and confiscation of sea turtle products and byproducts are carried out. Complaints are presented to the Public Ministry. INCOPESCA responsibility is to authorize, regulate and control fishing gears.

d._ Application [presentation] 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 with the procedure established by the COP (Doc. CIT-COP5-2011-R2). Attach management program.

Three important documents are highlighted regarding the exception in Ostional:

1. After a long process gathering the experience from Ostional Comprehensive Development Association (ADIO), Ostional National Wildlife Refuge of ACT – SINAC, University of Costa Rica and INCOPESCA, and by following the annual plans, annual assessment, and carrying out workshops and work sessions where the different perspectives were presented, and after a very detailed process of assessment , updated, adequacy and re-negotiation, the ***Five Year Plan for Management and Conservation of the Olive Ridley in Ostional National Wildlife Refuge 2017-2021*** is developed and formalized (Annex 15), focusing its objectives on:

    1) Guarantee the rational harvest of olive ridley, as a management tool for the sustainability of the area and that benefits, are for the groups of interest.
    2) Guide eco-tourism activities towards environmental education and a conservation strategy to disseminate the concept of management forged in Ostional.
    3) Maintain under permissible limits the use of sea turtles hence the impact of tourist activities is minimized.
    4) Position in the market a concept-product with a unique brand and identity, of a management and conservation model of olive ridley sea

turtles.

2. The annual report of achievements from the use of eggs, control and habitat management of the population of olive ridley (*Lepidochelys olivacea*) nesting in the community of Ostional Beach is attached. The year 2016. Ostional Wildlife Mixed Refuge. Conservation Area of Tempisque (Annex 16). The document includes detailed information of the activities developed by the ADIO: 1. Habitat maintenance and management, 2. Release and protection of hatchlings; 3. Surveillance and control of eggs poaching; 4. Contribution from the members of ADIO Local Tourist Guides Group to the project; 5. Extraction and commercialization of eggs; 6. Social aspects of the projects, investment, and infrastructure; 7. Conclusions and 8. Recommendations for 2017.
3. Now the Refuge has its own Traceability Plan (Annex 17a and 17b) which is an operational manual for trade and traceability of olive ridley *Lepidochelys olivacea* eggs in the national territory, coming from Ostional National Wildlife Refuge, Guanacaste. The documents to be used in each activity involving massive arrivals (photographs, official documents, receipts forms) are also including, and it also contains the 3 sub-procedures with their corresponding activities, all of them described in the document attached.

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Part III (Research information)

a._ Threats

Indicate 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)		Action(s)
Lo	☒Coastal development ☒Incidental capture ☒Direct use	☒Contamination ☒Pathogens ☒Climate change	Pacific *Coastal Development:* In some of the protected areas buffer zones there is more control on homing projects in terms of lighting, noise, tourism, activities on the beach, among other. For instance, there are instruments that should be used properly in order that its implementation is not a threat to sea turtles nesting habitat, such as environmental feasible from SETENA and coastal regulation plans considering sea turtles. *Incidental Capture*: MINAE and MAG have legal mechanisms to regulate incidental capture through the tuna zoning decree (No. 38681-MAG-MINAE). Additionally, some marine protected areas have measures in their management plans and regulations. *Direct use:* There is Egg poaching, mainly outside the protected areas, therefore diurnal and nocturnal patrols are carried out in addition to other protection activities (hatcheries). *Contamination*: Most of the pollution comes from the river mouth, natural debris or littering and organic trash.

			Beach cleaning takes place, and there are management programs for solid waste in different sites. *Pathogens*: In natural conditions, nests are exposed to pathogens. When required hatcheries are built and nest relocation is done respecting best practices. More information and research are required. *Climate Change*: Change in the river mouths dynamics, erosion and higher temperatures in the beach are associated with climate change affecting nesting and nests survival. When required, hatcheries are used to avoid these impacts, respecting appropriate temperatures for the development of the egg.
Lk	☐Coastal development ☐Incidental capture ☐Direct use	☐Contamination ☐Pathogens ☐Climate change	
Dc	☒Coastal development ☒Incidental capture ☒Direct use	☒Contamination ☒Pathogens ☒Climate change	*Pacific and Caribbean* *Coastal Development:* In some of the protected areas buffer zones there is more control on homing projects in terms of lighting, noise, tourism, activities on the beach, among other. For instance, there are instruments that should be used properly in order that its implementation is not a threat to sea turtles nesting habitat, such as environmental feasible from SETENA and coastal regulation plans considering sea turtles. In the specific case of Las Baulas, there are two SETENA resolutions regarding guidelines to build up that developers should consider the request of environmental feasibility. Likewise, there is a series of recommendations provided by Camaronal RNVS Administration to its neighbors. *Incidental Capture:* MINAE and MAG have a legal mechanism to regulate incidental catches through tuna

			zoning decree (No. 38681-MAG-MINAE). Additionally, some marine protected area have measures within their management plans and regulations. *Direct use:* Permanent patrols for control and nest protection during nesting season. Regular and permanent monitoring of nests. Outside the protected areas activities reduced poaching, but more support is required. *Contamination*: Beach cleaning takes place, and some places have solid waste management programs. *Pathogens*: Best practices to work with sea turtles and their nests. More information and research are required. *Climate Change*: Temperature monitoring.
Ei	☒Coastal development ☒Incidental capture ☒Direct use	☒Contamination ☒Pathogens ☒Climate change	*Pacific and Caribbean* *Coastal Development:* In some of the protected areas buffer zones there is more control on homing projects in terms of lighting, noise, tourism, activities on the beach, among other. For instance, there are instruments that should be used properly in order that its implementation is not a threat to sea turtles nesting habitat, such as environmental feasibility from SETENA and coastal regulation plans considering sea turtles. In the case of PNM Las Baulas, there are two resolutions of the National Technical Environmental Secretary regarding the guidelines to build, these are current and must be considered at the request of environmental viability. Likewise, there is a series of recommendations provided by the Management of RNVS Camaronal and RNVS Ostional to their neighbors.

		Outside the protected areas, control is more difficult; however, groups responsible for conducting biologic monitoring make conservation efforts. *Incidental Capture:* MINAE and MAG have a legal mechanism to regulate incidental catches through tuna zoning decree (No. 38681-MAG-MINAE). Additionally, some marine protected areas have measures within their management plans and regulations. *Direct use:* Control and protection patrols take place during nesting season. There is an increased risk outside the protected area, however, the activities reduce poaching but require institutional support. Organizations concerned by illegal trafficking and SINAC, organize inspections in markets and places selling hawksbill products to control the trade. *Contamination*: Beach cleaning takes places and some sites have solid waste management programs. *Pathogens:* Use of best practices to manage sea turtles and their nests. More information and research are required. *Climate Change*: Temperature monitoring.
Cm	☒Coastal development ☒Incidental capture ☒Direct use ☒Contamination ☒Pathogens ☒Climate change	*Pacific and Caribbean* *Coastal Development:* Most important sites are outside protected areas, this requires defining, formalizing, and implementing an instrument for better control of threats coming from homing projects, such as buildings, condos, and hotels. These threats can come from lighting, noise, tourism, activities with several people in the beach, among other. Some individuals show injuries indicating interaction with boats, there are no actions to deal with this issue. There is work in a better control of tourist activities in beaches

			without a management category, such as good practices implementation for sighting sea turtles as is the case of Nombre de Jesús. *Incidental Capture:* MINAE and MAG have legal mechanisms to regulate incidental catches through a tuna zoning decree (No. 38681-MAG-MINAE). Also, there are the above mentioned INCOPESCA agreements. Additionally, some marine protected areas have measures within their management plans and regulations. *Direct use*: Regular and permanent monitoring of nests. *Contamination*: Beach cleaning takes place. *Pathogens*: Best practices to work with sea turtles and their nests. More information and research are required. *Climate Change*: Beach profile and temperature monitoring (nests and sand).
Cc	☐Coastal development ☐Incidental capture ☐Direct use	☐Contamination ☐Pathogens ☐Climate change	

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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.

Overall, governmental, academic and non-governmental institutions are investing time and resources in research, monitoring, and protection of the sea turtles nesting in Costa Rica.

There are important efforts in monitoring and research, such as Tortuguero the area with the world´s longest-running research on a green sea turtle population. The green turtle tagging and monitoring program began with Dr. Archie Carr in the 50´s, a renown expert, and Sea Turtle Conservancy (STC), previously Caribbean Conservation Corporation. Tagging and monitoring of leatherbacks in Gandoca and Playa Grande, and of olive ridleys in Ostional, Nancite, and Camaronal began in the 80´s. Sea turtle research and conservation in Costa Rica throughout the years has not only increased our knowledge of their biology but has also provided information to assess the status of populations in the region to evaluate and implement effective conservation measures. It is important to highlight that nowadays there is a big effort to carry out sea turtle monitoring and/or tagging programs in almost all of the nesting beaches in the country inside and outside protected areas, providing information on the population trend of the five species of sea turtles found in Costa Rica. Most of the projects also assess hatching success and possible factors affecting it.

With the purpose of understanding sea turtles migratory movements and habitat use, several organizations have placed satellite transmitters on sea turtles shells and reported information in national reports. An important amount of information has been obtained regarding migratory routes and vertical movements, habitat use during inter-nesting periods and horizontal movements, as well as marine surface environmental characteristics and movement patterns influenced by climate conditions.

In the Caribbean, organizations such as STC, Sea Turtle Station, EPI, WIDECAST, Tropical Scientific Center, ASTOP, and COTERC are strengthening due to their sea turtle monitoring and research projects.

In the other side of the country, specifically in the South Pacific, the Sea Turtle Conservation Network was formed, developing important efforts of monitoring and research. Northwards, organizations such as CREMA and Turtle Trax continue with research and monitoring of hawksbill, olive ridley and green turtle in Coco Island, Coyote Beach, San Miguel Beach, Corozalito and Costa de Oro. Also, there is work in the Nicoya Peninsula with two associations of artisanal fishermen, the Association of Fishermen in Punta Coyote and The Association of Fishermen in Bejuco, aiming to monitor incidental captures, including sea turtles while promoting sustainable fishing good practices. There is

a recent publication regarding these efforts (Andrew B. Bystrom. 2016. Analysis of small-scale fishery development within Costa Rica's MPA system. http://www.fao.org/3/a-i6742e.pdf.)

Some projects are in the process of implementing management measures regarding climate change impact, and to continue or start a permanent record of key indicators such as temperature, precipitation, beach slope, beach profile, among others.
Since 2006 until now, the transect method by Gates & Valverde is implemented to estimate the nesting size during massive arrivals in Ostional and Nancite nesting beaches (Valverde et al., 2012) (Orrego, 2015, Orrego, 2016). Recently, Orrego and Rodriguez published the paper "The positive relationship between the Ostional community and the conservation of olive ridley sea turtles at Ostional National Wildlife Refuge in Costa Rica". Marine protected areas: Interactions with fishery livelihoods and food security http://www.fao.org/3/a-i6742e.pdf.

Between 2011 and December 2016, and according to the transect method estimations, 5.559.399 olive ridleys arrived at Ostional, laying their eggs massively. During this same period, 4671 individuals laid their eggs solitarily.

MINAE-SINAC national wildlife program will build in 2017 a virtual platform for wildlife management where sea turtles are included as part of reptiles. This platform will provide us with the information for managing wildlife *in situ* and *ex situ*, by knowing the situation of fauna and flora species, including their status, population size, research, monitoring sites, national and international regulations such as CITES, IUCN, CBD, IAC, among other. It also will allow identifying information gaps, sites of interest for conservation inside and outside Wildlife Protected Areas. This will provide the government with information to establish institutional alliances to prioritize critical sites and to create innovative models of governance and participative management for the protection, management and use of wildlife.

Note. By the date, this report was submitted information from several projects on monitoring, research, and extension, among others, was still pending to be submitted.

In addition to the above, please fill out the following table on the types of research being carried out in the country and with what specie(s).

Research	**Species (Lo, Lk, Cm, Ei, Cc, Dc)**
Genetics	*Cm, Ei*
Tagging	*Lo, Cm, Ei, Cc, Dc*
Migration	*Cm, Dc, Ei*
Habitat monitoring	*Cm, Dc, Ei, Lo*
Fisheries interactions	*Cm, Lo, Dc, Ei*
Disease	

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c._ Other activities

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

Efforts to assist sea turtle strandings throughout the Country. There is a coordination to assist emergencies through SINAC wildlife coordination.

Environmental education is a strong component of the Protected Areas Management Plans and other key stakeholders' sea turtle conservation programs. There are talks, field tours, booklets delivery, and activities such as the Leatherback Festival, Carate Sea Turtle Festival, Punta Banco and El Progreso de Drake in OSA Conservation Area.

During the celebration of National Parks day, on August 24th, 2016, Costa Rica Post service dedicated a special edition of stamps to Las Baulas Marine National Park and the leatherbacks. Within the protected areas, and even in the projects, there are opportunities for kids to visit the monitoring and research programs. Also, there is training and certification for local guides from communal associations, and national and international volunteer programs are strengthened.

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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		
Lk			
Dc	X		X
Ei	X		X
Cm	X		X
Cc			X

Table 2: Index nesting sites or beaches for sea turtle conservation

a. *This table is intended to report information on index nesting sites or beaches 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 site or beaches, information is to be entered for each species independently. Indicate the names of index nesting sites. On a separate sheet of paper, indicate the selection criteria used for identifying the index beach, for example, because it hosts a significant proportion of the overall nesting population within a region or other defined unit or genetic importance.*
b. *Nesting season: Indicate the starting and finishing date of the nesting season.*
c. *Monitoring period: Indicate the starting and finishing date of monitoring efforts.*
d. *Survey frequency: Indicate the frequency with which the surveys are done (daily, weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, among others).*
e. *Geographic location: Specify latitude and longitude in decimal degrees.*
f. *Extension of beach monitored: Provide the total length (in Kilometers) of the nesting beach.*
g. *Declared protection area: Indicate (yes or no) if the area is declared as some type of protected area.*
h. *Annual nesting abundance: Provide information on the total number of females and/or clutches or nests deposited at the nesting site or beach in real numbers. Provide the exact count of females based on tagged or uniquely identified individuals. If the exact number of clutches is unknown provide a total number of nests.*

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i. *Information from tagging program: Indicate if there have been any tagging activities at the nesting beach by using the letters of the type of tagging being done: flipper tagging (FT), passive integrated transponder (PIT) tagging, and satellite telemetry (ST) 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.*

j. *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?*

k. *Indicate what organization or entity is providing the data.*

l. *When inserting new rows, please copy and paste the drop-down menus when applicable.*

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Spp	Name of Index Nesting Site or Beach	Nesting Season		Monitoring period		Survey Frequency	Geographic Location (Lat/Lon)		Extension of monitored beach (km)	Declared Protected Area (Yes/No)	Annual Nesting Abundance			Tagging Program (FS, ST, PIT)	Tissue Sampling (Yes/No)	Organization or entity providing data
		Start	Finish	Start	Finish		Latitude	Longitude			Females Exact Count	Clutches Exact Count	Number of Nests			
Lo	Nancite	Throughout the year	Throughout the year	Jul 1st, 2016	Mar 30th, 2016	Daily	10.804811	85.669346	1.05	Yes	26871	59386		FS	No	Biocenosis Marina
	Naranjo						10.775138	84.971067	4.00	Yes						There was no project this season
	Playa Hermosa						9.5727856 °	84.5869478	8.0	Yes						There is no established monitoring program
	Playa Camaronal	Jan 1st, 2016	Dec 31st, 2016	Jan1st, 2016	Dec 31st, 2016	Daily	9.862519	85.444192	3.00	Yes	4670	3287	3287	FT	No	Nelson Espinoza (Sinac-ACT)
	Refugio de Vida Silvestre Río de Oro	Jun 2016	Dec 2016	Jul 1st, 2016	Dec 31st, 2016		8.427143	83.418502	4.8	Yes	697		2435			Fundación Corcovado
	Ostional (massive arrivals x transect)	Jan 2016	Dec 2016	Jan 2016	Dec 2016	During massive arrivals	9.993913	85.700403	7.00	Yes	556313	556313	556313	FT	Yes	Carlos Mario Orrego V. – SINAC-MINAE
	Ostional (solitary)	Jan	Dec	Jan	Dec	Daily	9.993913	85.700403	7.0	Yes	727	727	727	FT	Yes	Carlos Mario Orrego V. SINAC-MINAE

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Dc	Playa Grande	Oct 1st, 2016	Mar 30th, 2016	Oct 1st, 2016	Mar 30th, 2016	Daily	10.334675		85.847822		3.6	Yes	12	92		PIT	No	Maria del Pilar Santidrian-Tomillo (TLT)
	Playa Langosta	Oct 1st, 2016	Mar 30th, 2017	Oct 1st, 2016	Mar 15th, 2017	Daily	10.290453		85.8502471		1.3	Yes	8	13		PIT	No	Elizabeth Vélez (KUEMAR) and Rotney Piedra (SINAC ACT)
	Playa Camaronal	Oct 1st, 2016	Mar 15, 2017	Oct 1st, 2016	Mar 15th, 2017	Daily	9.862519		85.444192		3.00	Yes	-	26		No	No	Nelson Espinoza (SINAC-ACT)
	Playa Cabuyal	Sep 8, 2016	Mar 10, 2017	Sep 6, 2016	Mar 10, 2017	Daily	10.6738815		85.6542719		1.4	No	6	28		FT and PIT	No	Maria del Pilar Santidrian (TLT)
	Tortuguero	Mar 01st, 2016	Jul 01st, 2016	Mar 05th, 2016	Jun 20th, 2016	Daily	10.586675[9]		83.522247[9]		29	Yes	14		16			Sea Turtle Conservancy
	Playa Norte					Daily	10.615947		83.534036		5							Information is not available - Canadian Organization for Tropical Education and Rainforest Conservation (COTERC)
	Pacuare Norte					Daily	10.244813		83.299166		7.1	No						LAST
	Playa Mondonguillo	Mar 1st, 2016	Jul 30th, 2016	Mar 15th, 2016	Jul 31st, 2016	Daily	10°9'54.69"		83°13'54.36"		3	No	190	258	x	FS	No	Estación Las Tortugas
	Playa Mondonguillo (Pacuare Reserve)	Feb 29th, 2016	Jul 31st, 2016	Feb 29th, 2016	Jul 31st, 2016	Daily	10.18.2438		83.245296		5.8	Yes, partially	204	434				Pacuare Reserve
Ei	Cahuita[4]						9.4527		82.5179		10.45	Yes						No report for this year
	Tortuguero			Mar 1st, 2016	Nov 01st, 2016	Daily	10.5866759		83.522479		29	Yes	21		45	FS	No	Sea Turtle Conservancy

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Cm	San Jose Island (Murciélagos Archipelago)	Throughout the year	Throughout the year	Oct1st, 2016	Feb 28th, 2016	Daily	10,855792		85,911412		0.35	Yes	34	127				Luis Fonseca
	Naranjo					Daily	10.775138		10.775138		4.00	Yes						There was no project during this season
	Playa Cabuyal	Sep 8th, 2016	Mar 10th, 2017	Sep 6th, 2016	Mar 10th, 2017	Daily	10.6738815		85.6542719		1.4	No	8	40		FS and PIT	No	Maria del Pilar Santidrian (TLT)
	Nombre de Jesús - Zapotillal	Jan 1st, 2016	Dec 31st, 2016	Jan1st, 2016	Dec 31st, 2016	Daily	10.3942333		85.8359831		0.9	No	151	453		FS	No	Elizabeth Vélez (KUEMAR) and Rotney Piedra (SINAC ACT)
	Tortuguero	Apr 01st, 2016	Nov 1st, 2016	Jun 9th, 2016	Nov 1st, 2016	Daily	10.586675		83.522247		29	Yes	2727		136,989	FS	No	Sea Turtle Conservancy
Cc	Tortuguero		-	March 1st, 2016	November 1st, 2016	Variable[8]	10.586675		83.522247		29	Yes	0	-	-	-	-	Sea Turtle Conservancy