



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

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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 **July 30th, 2018**.

Part I (General Information)

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

a. Focal Point

Institution	National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration/National Marine Fisheries Service
Name	Alexis T. Gutierrez
Date Annual Report submitted	5 July 2018

b. Agency or Institution responsible for preparing this report

Name of Agency or Institution	National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration/National Marine Fisheries Service
Name of the person responsible for completing this report	Alexis T. Gutierrez
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c._ Others who participated in the preparation of this report

Name	Agency or Institution	E-mail
Ann Marie Lauritsen	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	annmarie_lauritsen@fws.gov



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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.

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	<p>All of the FWS/NMFS recovery plans for sea turtles can be found at https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/document/recovery-plan-us-pacific-populations-green-turtle-chelonia-mydas https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/document/recovery-plan-us-pacific-populations-east-pacific-green-turtle-chelonia-mydas https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/document/recovery-plan-us-pacific-populations-hawksbill-turtle-eretmochelys-imbricata https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/document/recovery-plan-hawksbill-turtles-us-caribbean-sea-atlantic-ocean-and-gulf https://www.fws.gov/kempstridley/Finals/kempstridley_revision2.pdf https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/document/recovery-plan-us-pacific-populations-leatherback-turtle-dermochelys-coriacea https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/document/recovery-plan-leatherback-turtles-us-caribbean-atlantic-and-gulf-mexico https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/document/recovery-plan-us-population-atlantic-green-turtle-chelonia-mydas https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/document/recovery-plan-us-pacific-populations-loggerhead-turtle-caretta-caretta https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/document/recovery-plan-northwest-atlantic-population-loggerhead-sea-turtle-caretta</p> <p>A plan for North Pacific loggerhead sea turtles is under-</p>



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		development.
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	



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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, 2017-April 30, 2018) 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.

New regulations since 2017 Report

NOAA Fisheries Annual Determination –

NOAA Fisheries publishes its final Annual Determination for 2018, pursuant to its authority under the Endangered Species Act. Through the Annual Determination, NOAA Fisheries identifies U.S. fisheries operating in the Atlantic Ocean, Gulf of Mexico, and Pacific Ocean that will be required to take fisheries observers upon NOAA Fisheries' request. The purpose of observing identified fisheries is to learn more about sea turtle interactions in a given fishery, evaluate measures to prevent or reduce sea turtle takes and to implement the prohibition against sea turtle takes. Fisheries identified on the 2018 Annual Determination will be eligible to carry observers as of the effective date of this rulemaking, and will remain on the Annual Determination for a five-year period until December 31, 2022. More information [here](#).

National Legislation		
Type and name of the 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
InterAmerican Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles		2000
Indian Ocean Southeast Asian Marine Turtle MOU		2001

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.*



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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-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?	Yes		Yes. We have a recovery plan for Pacific leatherbacks that includes Eastern Pacific leatherbacks. Further, we launched in 2016 the Species in the Spotlight initiative that highlights East Pacific Leatherbacks. NOAA Fisheries released our five year action plan for Western and Eastern Pacific leatherbacks. The plan and updates on our implementation can be found here .	
1b) Are you implementing these conservation plans and monitoring programs?	Yes		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 Eastern Pacific Ocean to try and reduce leatherback interactions trialing illuminated gillnets in coastal fisheries (e.g., Peru and Chile).	
2. Have you taken conservation measures to eliminate poaching of leatherback turtles?	Yes		Trade of sea turtles and their parts is illegal in the United States. The United States has also taken a very proactive approach to address wildlife trafficking for all species through the creation of a cross-agency task force	



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			to look at wildlife trafficking. Recently, this task force was authorized through the END Wildlife Trafficking Act.	
3. 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?				X
4. Has your country adopted fishing techniques that reduce incidental capture and mortality of this species?	Y		<p>With respect to Western Pacific Leatherbacks, the United States taken significant measures to reduce fishery bycatch. 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 18/0 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 United States has also declared Critical Habitat for leatherback turtles along the U.S. West Coast that can help to further limit anthropogenic impacts to leatherback turtles in the region.</p> <p>The U.S. fleet rarely interacts with Eastern Pacific leatherbacks since they do not often fish in their geographic range.</p>	

(* 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	Yes		Trade of sea turtles and their parts is illegal in the United States. The United States has also taken a very proactive approach to address wildlife trafficking for all species through the creation of a cross-agency task force to look at wildlife trafficking. Recently, this task force was authorized through the END Wildlife Trafficking Act.	
2. Are you enforcing pertinent hawksbill legislation?	Yes		Enforcement efforts at the state and national level are ongoing to enforce the U.S. Endangered Species Act.	
3. Are activities being carried out in order to stop the illegal trade of hawksbill products?	Yes		U.S. enforcement officers work to stop illegal trade of hawksbill products.	
4. Indicate if your country is strengthening the protection of important nesting and foraging habitats by declaring protected areas and regulating anthropogenic activities that adversely impact these habitats		Yes	<p>a) Protection of nesting habitats</p> <p>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%.</p> <p>The two major hawksbill nesting beaches in the U.S. Caribbean, Buck Island Reef National Monument, U.S. Virgin Islands, and Mona Island, Puerto Rico, are protected as a National Park and Commonwealth Protected Area, respectively.</p>	



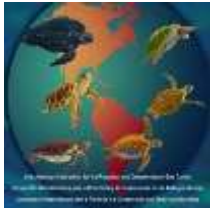
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	b) Protection of feeding habitats	Yes		<p>Critical habitat has been designated for Caribbean hawksbill around Mona Island (Puerto Rico) since 1998.</p> <p>https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-1998-09-02/pdf/98-23533.pdf</p>
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(*) 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-COP7-2015-R3: Resolution on the Conservation of the Loggerhead Sea Turtle (*Caretta caretta*)

ACCORDING TO RESOLUTION CIT-COP7-2015-R3, REPORT WHETHER YOUR COUNTRY:

RESOLUTION DOES NOT APPLY				
IS COMPLYING WITH THE FOLLOWING:	YES	NO	DESCRIBE ACTION (*)	DOES NOT APPLY
1. Has your country created national action plans or monitoring programs to promote loggerhead sea turtle conservation?	Yes		The United States has recovery plans for Northwest Atlantic loggerheads and Pacific loggerheads. After the 2011 regulation applying the distinct population segment policy, the North Pacific loggerhead DPS was listed on the Endangered Species Act. A trinational recovery plan for North Pacific loggerheads is currently under development with Japan, Mexico and the United States.	
2. State if there are plans or recovery programs, or bilateral or regional cooperation.	Yes		The existing recovery plans can be found at the links below. They are national plans. https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/document/recovery-plan-northwest-atlantic-population-loggerhead-sea-turtle-caretta https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/document/recovery-plan-us-pacific-populations-loggerhead-turtle-caretta-caretta	
3. Are these action plans or monitoring programs being implemented?	Yes		The United States is actively implementing its recovery plans. Monitoring programs are a key component of our recovery plans. The recovery plan progress can be tracked at https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp0/profile/species/Profile?slId=1110	
4. Is there protection of the species at a state or federal level?	Both		There are protections at the state and Federal level.	
5. If your country has loggerhead turtles nesting beaches:				
5a. Has your country taken conservation actions to protect nesting beaches and their associated habitats?	Yes		Through state and Federal laws, the United States has worked to protect Northwest Atlantic loggerhead nesting beaches. The United States does not have nesting beaches for North Pacific loggerheads.	



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5b. Are there laws on turtle-friendly lighting in areas impacted by coastal development?	Yes		Yes, in general there are laws to require turtle-friendly lighting in coastal areas where loggerheads nest.	
5c. Is there long-term (minimum 10 years) standardized data available for population trend studies?	Yes		There is extensive data on NW Atlantic loggerheads. More information on nesting trend in one of the management units can be found at http://myfwc.com/research/wildlife/sea-turtles/nesting/loggerhead-trend/	
6. Is there exploitation or direct harvest of loggerhead sea turtles in your country?	No		It is illegal under the U.S. Endangered Species Act to take, kill, harass, harm, etc a listed species.	

(*) 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-R2: Reduction of the adverse impacts of fisheries on sea turtles

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

In the column for “species” please use : Cm (*Chelonia mydas*), Lo (*Lepidochelys olivacea*), Dc (*Dermochelys coriacea*), Cc (*Caretta caretta*), Lk (*Lepidochelys kempii*), Ei (*Eretmochelys imbricata*)

IS COMPLYING WITH THE FOLLOWING:	YES	NO	DESCRIBE ACTION (*)	SPECIES	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 the adverse impact of fisheries on sea turtles					
Collect information by fishery	Yes				
Observer programs	Yes		The National Marine Fisheries Service has a National Observer Program that is composed of six regional observer programs. Each of the programs can be found at https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/topic/fishery-observers#observer-programs		
Research on sea turtle/fishery interactions	Yes		The United States has a very robust program to research bycatch reduction technologies. There are currently sea turtle bycatch reduction technologies in place in the longline fisheries, shrimp otter trawl fisheries and some gillnet fisheries. A summary of some of the recent bycatch reduction projects that were funded can be found at https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/bycatch/bycatch-reduction-engineering-program .		
Information on non-Party vessels	Yes		The United States works through the Regional Fisheries Management Organizations to monitor non-Party vessels. More information on this work can be found at https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/foreign/bycatch/international-protected-species-and-bycatch-mitigation		
Cooperation with non-Party states to obtain information	Yes		The United States works collaboratively with several countries to better understand fisheries interactions with sea turtles. More information on our annual efforts can be found in the following report to the U.S. Congress -- https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/foreign/bycatch/international-protected-species-and-bycatch-mitigation#more-information		
B. Mitigation measures for the following fisheries:					
Long-line			The United States has sea turtle bycatch mitigation restrictions in all Federal pelagic and deep-set longline fisheries. These regulations can be found at http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/species/turtles/regulations.htm .		
Gillnets			The United States has sea turtle bycatch mitigation requirements in many Federally managed gillnet fisheries including the Mid-Atlantic and the California Drift gillnet. Some states have adopted bycatch mitigation reduction requirements in their state fisheries in order to compile with the Endangered Species Act as well. More information on		



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			these requirements can be found at http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/species/turtles/regulations.htm https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/action/incidental-take-permit-north-carolina-division-marine-fisheries-sea-turtles		
Trawling (e.g., 1. TEDs: specify legally approved TEDs, their dimensions, material, and target species for that fishery, 2. time-area closures: specify a geographical area, time of closure and target species for that fishery, 3. tow times and/or 4. other measures)	Yes		The United States requires TEDs in shrimp otter trawls and summer flounder trawls in certain areas. https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2012/05/21/2012-12014/sea-turtle-conservation-shrimp-and-summer-flounder-trawling-requirements See reference above to proposed rule-making to expand the use to Turtle Excluder Device (TED) in non-otter trawl shrimp vessels.		
Other fishing gear (indicate which one(s))	Yes		Poundnets and some dredges are also regulated to reduce sea turtle interactions. Please see http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/species/turtles/regulations.htm .		
Training programs for fisherman about best practices for safe handling and release of sea turtles incidentally caught			Fishermen operating in the pelagic longline fisheries in the Atlantic or the Pacific must take captains training on safe-handling and release techniques. More information can be found at https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/atlantic-highly-migratory-species/safe-handling-release-and-identification-workshops http://www.fpir.noaa.gov/SFD/SFD_psw_index.html		
C. Socio-economic considerations					
Support socio-economic activities that help mitigate adverse impacts of fisheries on sea turtles		N			

(*) 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.)

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.



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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)		Actions
Lo	<input type="checkbox"/> Coastal development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Incidental capture <input type="checkbox"/> Direct use	<input type="checkbox"/> Contamination <input type="checkbox"/> Pathogens <input type="checkbox"/> Climate change	Through the Endangered Species Act regulations and the Section 7 process, the United States works to mitigate the impact of fisheries on sea turtles.
Lk	<input type="checkbox"/> Coastal development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Incidental capture <input type="checkbox"/> Direct use	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Contamination <input type="checkbox"/> Pathogens <input type="checkbox"/> Climate change	<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> <p>The United States is also carrying out an extensive restoration program for Kemp's ridley to address the impacts from the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill. See here for more information.</p>
Dc	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Coastal development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Incidental capture <input type="checkbox"/> Direct use	<input type="checkbox"/> Contamination <input type="checkbox"/> Pathogens <input type="checkbox"/> Climate change	Coastal Development -- 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



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			<p>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 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>
<p>Ei</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Coastal development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Incidental capture <input type="checkbox"/> Direct use</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Contamination <input type="checkbox"/> Pathogens <input type="checkbox"/> Climate change</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,</p>



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			the United States works to mitigate the impact of fisheries on sea turtles.
Cm	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Coastal development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Incidental capture <input type="checkbox"/> Direct use	<input type="checkbox"/> Contamination <input type="checkbox"/> Pathogens <input type="checkbox"/> Climate change	<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 trapping and removal at Merritt Island NWR, Hobe Sound National NWR, and Archie Carr NWR; and feral hog control at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station.</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>
Cc	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Coastal development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Incidental capture <input type="checkbox"/> Direct use	<input type="checkbox"/> Contamination <input type="checkbox"/> Pathogens <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Climate change	<p>Through permit conditions, most direct construction-related impacts are avoided by requiring that non-emergency activities be</p>



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		<p>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, Georgia, and South Carolina to minimize these impacts. Light management plans have also been developed at coastal military installations in Florida. The major nesting beach in South Carolina, Cape Romain NWR, is a barrier island without major light pollution issues. North Carolina has extensive areas of National Seashores that are protected from development.</p> <p>Nest protection programs vary but include 100% nest screening at Canaveral National Seashore; raccoon trapping and removal at Merritt Island NWR, Hobe Sound National NWR, and Archie Carr NWR; feral hog control at Cape Canaveral Air 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>
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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.

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 species.

Research	Specie(s)(Lo, Lk, Cm, Ei, Cc, Dc)
<i>Tagging</i>	All
<i>Migration</i>	All
<i>Genetics</i>	All
<i>Habitat monitoring</i>	All
<i>Fisheries interactions</i>	All
<i>Disease</i>	All

c. _ Other activities

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

Fiscal Year 2017 International Capacity Building Projects funded by the U.S. Marine Turtle Conservation Act Fund

COSTA RICA

MT1756

Grant # F17AP00401

Conservation and monitoring program of leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*) sea turtle nesting in the North Pacific of Costa Rica. In partnership with FUNDECODES. The purpose of this project is to conduct surveys and protect nests in Las Baulas National Park and on adjacent beaches, which host the most important East Pacific leatherback nesting population in Costa Rica. The East Pacific leatherback is the most endangered leatherback population in the world, and the intention of this project is to protect nests from poaching. Project activities involve nighttime patrols throughout the nesting season and relocation of nests to hatcheries.

USFWS: \$34,375 Leveraged Funds: \$1,830



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ECUADOR

MT1718

Grant # F17AP00181

Assessment and mitigation of hawksbill consumption in Ecuador's Jambeli Archipelago. In partnership with Fundación Ecológica Arcoiris. The purpose of this project is develop a community-based conservation program for hawksbills in the Jambeli Archipelago in southern Ecuador, which is a critical foraging site for adult and juvenile hawksbills. Activities include: (1) recruiting and training field personnel to conduct in-water hawksbill surveys; (2) conducting surveys and interviews to assess knowledge and attitudes of local fishers; (3) conducting outreach and education activities with local communities through workshops, website and social media content, and with a press conference.

USFWS: \$12,505 Leveraged Funds: \$2,300

GUATEMALA

MT1763

Grant # F17AP00405

Strengthening sea turtle conservation, adapting to climate change, and assisting in meeting Guatemala's Inter-American Sea Turtle Convention (IAC) commitments. In partnership with Wildlife Rescue and Conservation Association (Asociación Rescate y Conservación de Vida Silvestre, or ARCAS). The purpose of this project is to support a marine turtle conservation program along the Pacific coast of Guatemala. The intent is to improve monitoring of nesting trends, hatchery management, and the legal egg harvest program. Project activities include: (1) training workshops to assist communities and private institutions to implement best management practices for hatcheries; (2) supporting field teams to conduct standardized nest surveys on index beaches; and (3) conducting education and outreach activities with local communities. The grantee will work closely with the Secretariat of the Inter-American Sea Turtle Convention (IAC) and with government institutions to help Guatemala ensure its olive ridley egg harvest meets the criteria under the IAC exceptions clause.

USFWS: \$25,000 Leveraged Funds: \$17,025

MEXICO

MT1704

Grant # F17AP00174

Evaluation of the reproductive biology of the Kemp's ridley sea turtle at Rando Nuevo, Mexico: Implications for conservation and ecology. In partnership with the University of Alabama, and in collaboration with CONANP, SEDUMA, CDEN, the Gladys Porter Zoo, and the National Marine Fisheries Service. The purpose of this project is to continue and expand a long-term collaborative project on the Kemp's ridley sea turtle with an emphasis on evaluating the reproductive output of nesting females at Rancho Nuevo as a method of determining factors affecting nesting trends, and the long-term impact of global climate change on sex ratios and nesting phenology at Rando Nuevo.



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The research conducted for this project will include: (1) ultrasound and hormone analyses of nesting females in order to evaluate potential changes in clutch frequency and fecundity associated with environmental or demographic factors, such as the Deepwater Horizon oil spill; (2) an evaluation of fundamental changes in nesting phenology and hatchling sex ratios associated with global climate change over more than three decades; and (3) studies to address the ecology of the Kemp's ridley, including abundance and habitat use of turtles in near-shore waters using unmanned aerial vehicle technology throughout the nesting season, and the timing of emergence in both corral and in situ nests.

USFWS: \$19,3949 Leveraged Funds: \$28,150

MT1710

Grant # F17AP00177

Reducing Eastern Pacific leatherback bycatch in the tuna fisheries of the Eastern Tropical Pacific. In partnership with Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC). This award supports the convening of a two-day workshop for the IATTC Bycatch Working Group to identify conservation and management actions for the reduction of sea turtles in tuna fisheries and to draft recommended measures for consideration at the 2018 annual IATTC meeting.

USFWS: \$10,00010 Leveraged Funds: \$0

MT1727

Grant # F17AP00187

Strengthening long-term sea turtle conservation programs in the Yucatan Peninsula to improve adaptive management and decision-making. In partnership with Pronatura Peninsula de Yucatan, A.C. The purpose of this project is to conduct nesting beach conservation programs for three key hawksbill nesting sites, which account for 40 percent of hawksbill nesting in the Yucatan Peninsula. The Yucatan Peninsula accounts for about 25 percent of all Caribbean nesting and provides critical hawksbill foraging grounds. Activities include: (1) daily patrols along 80 km of nesting beaches at three locations to deter poachers and protect nests from predation; and (2) outreach and education programs with local communities and schools.

USFWS: \$22,000 Leveraged Funds: \$59,484

MT1751

Grant # F17AP00397

Conservation of the leatherback turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*) in the Mexican Pacific 2017-2018. In partnership with Kutzari Asociación para el Estudio y Conservación de las Tortugas Marinas, A.C. The purpose of this project is to conduct nesting beach conservation programs at three of the four primary leatherback nesting beaches in Mexico, which account for over 40 percent of leatherback nesting in Pacific Mexico. The intent is to protect nests from poaching and depredation. Project activities include: (1) conducting nightly community-based patrols at three nesting beaches of Cahuitan, Tierra Colorada, Mexiquillo, and Barra de la Cruz; and (2) relocating nests to hatcheries to protect them from poaching, depredation, and tidal inundation.

USFWS: \$95,960 Leveraged Funds: \$189,131



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MT1778

Grant # F17AP00412

Initial assessment of potential hawksbill nesting beaches on the Tres Marias Archipelago. In Partnership with George Mason University. The purpose of this project is to assess the status of hawksbill nesting at Islas Tres Marias. The intent is to determine if historic reports of hawksbill nesting at these islands are correct, and, if nesting is occurring, determine threats and priority conservation measures. Project activities include: (1) conducting interviews with community members to identify known nesting sites; (2) surveying nesting beaches to assess the status of nesting; and (3) conducting snorkeling surveys near three potential or known nesting sites.

USFWS: \$13,280 Leveraged Funds: \$4,640

NICARAGUA

MT1725

Grant # F17AP00185

Conserving critically endangered leatherback and hawksbill marine turtles on Nicaragua's Pacific Coast. In partnership with Fauna and Flora International. The purpose of this project is to implement nesting beach conservation programs for one of the three most important East Pacific leatherback nesting populations, and to support an Eastern Pacific hawksbill conservation program at two recently discovered nesting sites at Estero Padre Ramos and Aserradores. The East Pacific leatherback population is at less than one percent of its historical levels and the most endangered leatherback population in the world, and these hawksbill nesting sites account for 40-50 percent of all known East Pacific hawksbill nesting. This project is intended to protect leatherback and hawksbill nests and nesting females from poaching. Activities include: (1) conducting daily community-based patrols to count and protect nests and nesting females and to relocate eggs to hatcheries; (2) providing training workshops for the survey teams; and (3) conducting environmental education and outreach activities with local communities, including a "Day of the Turtle" event in schools and the annual Hawksbill Cup competition with the hawksbill project in El Salvador.

USFWS: \$80,539 Leveraged Funds: \$93,024

MT1786

Grant # F17AP00416

Save Marine Turtles (SmART): Protecting endangered leatherbacks and other nesting marine turtles. In partnership with Paso Pacifico. The intent of this project is to build sea turtle conservation capacity on the Pacific coast of Nicaragua for the protection of leatherback, hawksbill, and green turtle nests. Project activities include: (1) conducting a six-day training workshop for 12 participants from three nesting beach communities to develop leadership skills; (2) conducting skill-building clinics to develop technical skills for monitoring beaches and nest protection; (3) community-based surveys to assess attitudes and monitor progress on protecting sea turtle nests on three beaches during the leatherback nesting season.

USFWS: \$26,000 Leveraged Funds: \$23,720



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PANAMA

MT1701

Grant # F17AP00172

Leatherback and hawksbill turtle research and population recovery in Panama. In partnership with the Sea Turtle Conservancy. The purpose of this project is to restore the Chiriqui Beach, Panama nesting population of hawksbill turtles, once the largest in the Caribbean, in partnership with local indigenous Ngöbe-Buglé community members. The project also supports monitoring and protection of the largest leatherback nesting population in the western Caribbean. This project is intended to protect nests and nesting female hawksbills from poaching and nests from dog depredation. Specific activities include: (1) supporting community-based patrols and development of a nest protection methodology to prevent dog depredation of nests; (2) extensive outreach and education activities with local communities and schools; and (3) working with stakeholder groups to develop sea turtle ecotourism opportunities for local community residents
USFWS: \$52,000 Leveraged Funds: \$249,535

VENEZUELA

MT1765

Grant # F17AP00406

Conservation of endangered southeastern Caribbean hawksbill turtles, *Eretmochelys imbricata*, in Los Roques Archipiélago National Park, Venezuela. In partnership with Provita. The purpose of this project is to conduct a rapid assessment of the status of hawksbills in Los Roques National Park, Venezuela. The intent is to understand current levels of nesting activity and threats to this nesting and foraging hawksbill population. Activities include: (1) conducting early-morning surveys on nine index beaches during a 30-day peak period of nesting; and (2) conducting meetings with local fishers and community members to gather information on attitudes towards the turtle population and threats.

USFWS: \$10,714 Leveraged Funds: \$13,266

MULTIPLE COUNTRIES – CHILE, PERU, AND ECUADOR

MT1747

Grant # F17AP00394

IAC Convention outreach to decision-makers in the IAC member countries to raise awareness and communicate recommendations of actions to mitigate the threats of East Pacific leatherback turtles. In partnership with the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation. The purpose of this project is to raise awareness and support of governments and fishermen from South American Pacific coast countries to address leatherback fisheries bycatch mortality where threats to East Pacific leatherbacks are greatest on foraging grounds and migration routes. Activities include: (1) convening national technical workshops in key Eastern Pacific leatherback foraging ground countries to create local strategies to address fisheries bycatch; and (2) raising awareness by meeting with high-level decision makers of governmental agencies that have authority to address fisheries bycatch on key Eastern Pacific leatherback foraging grounds.

USFWS: \$24,716 Leveraged Funds: \$10,320



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MULTIPLE COUNTRIES – COLOMBIA AND PANAMA

MT1777

Grant # F17AP00411

Building capacity for community-based conservation of the Eastern Pacific Leatherback in the Darien Gap of Colombia and Panama. In Partnership with the World Wildlife Fund. The purpose of this proposal is to assess leatherback nesting and threats and develop conservation efforts for the East Pacific leatherback in the Darien Gap region of Colombia and Panama. The intent is to assess nesting status and reduce poaching and depredation of nests to support Eastern Pacific leatherback recovery. Activities include: (1) training local community members to conduct standardized and systematic nesting beach surveys and protect nests during the peak of leatherback nesting; and (2) promoting binational efforts and collaboration for sea turtle conservation in the Darien Gap region.

USFWS: \$39,205 Leveraged Funds: \$9,800

MULTIPLE COUNTRIES – EL SALVADOR AND ECUADOR

MT1781

Grant # F17AP00414

Vital support for hawksbills in the Eastern Pacific Ocean: Year IV of conservation at top-tier nesting beaches. In partnership with The Ocean Foundation. The purpose of this project is to conduct nesting beach conservation projects for Eastern Pacific hawksbills at four secondary nesting beaches in Los Cobanos and Punta Amapala, El Salvador; Machalilla, and El Pelado, Ecuador, which account for about 25 percent of all known nesting of the Eastern Pacific hawksbill. The intent of this project is to protect nests from poaching, depredation, and tidal inundation. Project activities include: (1) night patrols throughout the nesting season; (2) relocation of nests to safe in-situ sites or hatcheries; and (3) community outreach and education activities.

USFWS: \$52,600 Leveraged Funds: \$55,160

MEXICO

MT1634

Grant # F16AP00286

Conservation of the Japanese-nesting loggerhead turtle: Mortality assessment and conservation outreach at the Baja California Sur, México juvenile foraging area. In partnership with The Ocean Foundation. The purpose of this project is to support conservation programs for the loggerhead foraging population in Baja California Sur, Mexico. The project is intended to collect stranding data to support bycatch mortality reduction from gill net fisheries on this key foraging



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ground. Specific activities include: (1) assessing loggerhead bycatch mortality through continued daily shoreline surveys along 34 km of Playa San Lazaro; and (2) educational enrichment and outreach programs for students in elementary schools in the Bahía Magdalena regions.

USFWS: \$28,85017 Leveraged Funds: \$32,400



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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	Atlantic	Caribbean Sea
Lo	X	X	
Lk		X	
Dc	X	X	X
Ei	X	X	X
Cm	X	X	X
Cc	X	X	X



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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.*
- 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) in Decimal Degrees		Extension of beach monitored (km)	Declared Protected Area (Yes/No)	Annual Nesting Abundance			Tagging Program (FT, 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			
Lk	North Padre Island National Seashore, Texas	April 1	October 31	April 1	October 31	Daily	27.304	-97.340	112.6	No			227	All of the above	Yes	NPS
Dc	Culebra Island, Puerto Rico	April 1	July 31	April 1	July 31	Daily	18.332	-65.289	2.25	Yes			35	FT	No	PR DRNA
	Mainland Puerto Rico (Dorado, Luquillo-Fajardo & Maunabo)	April 1	July 31	April 1	July 31	Daily	18.002	-65.874	28.26	No			521	None	No	PR DRNA
	Vieques Island, Puerto Rico	April 1	July 31	April 1	July 31	Daily	18.157	-65.365	29.11	Yes			76	None	No	PR DRNA



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	Sandy Point NWR, U.S. Virgin Islands	February 1	July 31	February 1	July 31	Daily	17.680	-64.902	3	Yes	28		120	FT and PIT	Yes	NWR
	Florida Index Beaches	March 1	July 31	March 1	July 31	Daily	27.342	-80.235	1327	No			663	FT and PIT (in some areas)	Yes (2 beaches)	FWRI
	Vieques Island, Puerto Rico	April 1	July 31	April 1	July 31	Daily	18.157	-65.365	29.11	Yes			38	None	No	PR DRNA
	Mona Island, Puerto Rico	August 1	December 1	August 1	December 1	Daily	18.057	-67.874	7	Yes			1.120	None	No	PR DRNA
	Sandy Point NWR, U.S. Virgin Islands	June 1	October 31	June 1	October 31	Daily Daily (No data was collected from September 19 - October 07 due to Hurricanes)	17.680	-64.902	3	Yes			117 (surveys did not extend through the whole season)	FT and PIT	Yes	NWR
Ei	Buck Island Reef National Monument, U.S. Virgin Islands	June 1	October 31	June 1	October 31	Daily	17.835	-64.622	1.5	Yes			87	FT and PIT	Yes	
	Main Hawaiian Islands (Āpua Point, Halapē, Kamehame, Pōhue Bay, Kahakahakea, and Punalu'u)	May 1	October 31	May 1	October 31	Daily	19.270	-155.255	14.4	No			69	None	No	NMFS



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Cm	Vieques Island, PR	April 1	July 31	April 1	July 31	Daily	18.157	-65.365	29.11	Yes				None	No	PR DRNA
	Buck Island Reef National Monument, U.S. Virgin Islands	July 1	October 31	July 1	October 31	Daily	17.835	-64.622	1.5	Yes			33	FT and PIT	No	NPS
	Sandy Point NWR, U.S. Virgin Islands	June 1	October 31	June 1	October 31	Daily (No data was collected from September 19 - October 07 due to Hurricanes)	17.680	-64.902	3	Yes			537 (surveys did not extend through the whole season)	FT and PIT	Yes	FWS
	Florida Index Beaches	May 1	October 31	May 1	October 31	Daily								FT and PIT		FWRI
	French Frigate Shoals, Hawaii	May 1	October 31	May 1	October 31	Survey of East Island	23.748	-166.146	26	Yes			564	None	No	NMFS
Cc	Florida Index beaches	May 1	August 31	May 1	August 31	Daily	28.000	-80.524	1318	No			96,912	FT and PIT	No	FWRI
	Georgia Index Beaches	May 1	August 31	May 1	August 31	Daily	31.082	-81.402	164	No			2155	FT and PIT	No	GA DNR
	South Carolina Index Beaches	May 1	August 31	May 1	August 31	Daily	31.427	-81.246	303	No			5233	None	No	SC DNR
	North Carolina Index Beaches	May 1	August 31	May 1	August 31	Daily	34.693	-76.833	531	No			1222	None	No	NC WC