



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

10th Conference of the Parties

June 15-17, 2022 - Panama

Resolution CIT-COP10-2022-R3

**Exceptions under Article IV (3a and b) for Subsistence Harvesting of *Lepidochelys olivacea*
Eggs in Panama**

RECALLING that Article IV of the Convention, paragraph 2a requires Parties to prohibit the intentional capture, retention or killing of, and domestic trade in, sea turtles, their eggs, parts or products;

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

NOTING that the fifth Conference of Parties, adopted the procedures for cases where exceptions exist (CIT-COP5-2011-R2);

CONSIDERING that *Lepidochelys olivacea* is classified by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) as vulnerable;

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

RECOGNIZING that *Lepidochelys olivacea* on the beaches of the Eastern Pacific (Mexico to Panama) is the only turtle species that can withstand a carefully controlled amount of egg harvesting, and only when the population to be harvested has demonstrated the status of “recovered or verifiably stable”;

CONSIDERING that these extraction activities existed prior to Panama becoming a Party to the IAC, and today continue to be regulated by the relevant governmental organizations;

RECOGNIZING that Panama has informed, in its IAC Annual Reports over the last five years, sustained efforts in the implementation of the recommendations in Resolution CIT-COP6-2013-R1 on Exceptions under Article IV (3a and b) for Subsistence Harvesting of *Lepidochelys olivacea* Eggs in Guatemala and Panama;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the recommendations to Panama by the IAC Scientific Committee and Consultative Committee of Experts at the 14th meeting of the Consultative Committee of

Experts (Meeting Report CIT-CCE14-2021-Doc.9), regarding Panama's five year report on the implementation of the Resolution CIT-COP6-2013-R1, that indicates that some measures in Panama have already been implemented, while others need to be evaluated for feasible implementation, and that it is necessary to develop specific Resolutions to the exception, that are in accordance with the national reality of each country included in the initial Resolution;

CONSIDERING that to support the continuous implementation of conservation measures for the species in the exception, Panama has to finalize the process of preparing and establishing a management plan for the exception in accordance to IAC Article IV (3a and b) of IAC.

THE TENTH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES OF THE INTER-AMERICAN CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION OF SEA TURTLES RESOLVES THE FOLLOWING MEASURES TO PANAMA TO MEET THE REQUIREMENTS OF ARTICLE IV (3) REGARDING EXCEPTIONS:

1. The Government of Panama commits to formally establish an Exception Management Plan for the Harvest of *Lepidochelys olivacea* Eggs on Cañas Island within a maximum of three (3) additional years, from the date this resolution is approved, in accordance with this resolution.
2. The Exception Management Plan should include the recommendations from the IAC Scientific Committee and Consultative Committee of Experts adopted at 14th Consultative Committee of Experts Meeting in Annex I of this resolution.
3. Recommend that Panama applies the precautionary approach, in the interim, by implementing the protection measures in Annex 1 to be included in the Exception Management Plan, in accordance with the national laws, and continue to consult with the IAC Scientific Committee and Consultative Committee of Experts while the country establishes its Exception Management Plan so that the exception meets the requirements of Article IV (3) of the Convention.
4. Panama must continue to report on its exception in the IAC Annual Report.
5. The IAC Scientific and Consultative Committees will continue to review the progress of the implementation of this resolution and will report to the Conference of Parties on this progress, every five years.
6. Panama will present a draft of its Exception Management Plan to the IAC Scientific Committee in 2022. This should be consulted with the Consultative Committee of Experts. Both Committees should provide a final review on the Exception Management Plan within the following four (4) months. Panama will take into account any final recommendations and modify the Exception Management Plan as applicable.

7. The Exception Management Plan should be assessed every 5 years by the IAC Scientific Committee and Consultative Committee of Experts; thus Panama must prepare an Assessment Report for the Exception Management Plan including the status of implementation and compliance with the plan and report timely any modifications to the information presented.
8. The IAC Scientific Committee and Consultative Committee of Experts will develop a form with the minimum information and data contents to be included in the Assessment Report for the Exception Management Plan.
9. Urge the Government of Panama to secure and assign in the short term, the human and financial resources necessary for the implementation of the Exception Management Plan for Cañas Island.

This resolution repeals and replaces the IAC Resolution on Exceptions under Article IV (3a and b) for Subsistence Harvesting of *Lepidochelys olivacea* eggs in Guatemala and Panama CIT-COP6-2013-R1 in its entirety.

ANNEX I: The Exception Management Plan for the harvest of *Lepidochelys olivacea* eggs on Cañas Island should include:

1. Objectives and indicators for the monitoring of the population of *Lepidochelys olivacea* and the actions of the harvest of its eggs in Cañas Island for the bodies of this Convention, to obtain reliable data that allow the population trend analysis to be used in establishing an adaptative management program to have the best scientific information for decision making for the management of the exception.
2. A description of the criteria for the selection of the natural nesting protected area (1 km of the beach where most nesting is concentrated, which would be assessed to increase it or change its location, to consider the variability of the nesting process), describe the selection criteria for the nests that are protected and those that are harvested by the community, include an analysis of data of population trends using the selected indicators, and the implementation of measures to reduce in water threats such as bycatch of sea turtles.
3. A nesting survey protocol that includes standardized monitoring of sea turtle nesting activity (nesting and hatching success), and the number of hatchlings produced in protected nests in hatcheries and *in situ*). The data should be used to analyze nesting trends, in order to demonstrate the sustainability of the harvesting and assess the stability of the population over the long-term. This protocol must be evaluated every five years, and changes made as needed.
4. An egg harvest protocol that includes monitoring of the nesting population and the level of *Lepidochelys olivacea* eggs being harvested and those levels should prove to be sustainable, and therefore, monitoring protocols must be in place to assess the stability of the population over the long-term. This protocol must include the criteria for assigning eggs to the community (family census, IDs, among others). The level of sea turtle eggs harvested should prove to be sustainable.
5. Actions to strengthen the co-management of the harvest with the Cañas Island community, including training of participants.
6. Efforts to increase activities to strengthen sea turtle protection efforts, through alternative livelihood productive activities for non-consumptive use, nest and nesting female protection, and best practices for the hatcheries operating in communities surrounding Cañas Island.
7. The recommendations from the Scientific Committee and Consultative Committee in the 14th Meeting of the Consultative Committee included in report CIT-CCE14-2021-Doc.9.