



**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-R5

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

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 at the 5th Conference of the Parties, adopted the procedures for cases where exceptions exist were adopted (CIT-COP5-2011-R2);

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

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

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

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

CONSIDERING that the IAC Conference of the Parties approved the exception in Costa Rica by resolution CIT-COP7-2015-R1;

CONSIDERING that Costa Rica has a Five-Year Plan for the Management and Conservation of Olive ridleys turtle in the Ostional Wildlife Refuge (Management Plan), that is evaluated, updated and authorized by the Costa Rican State every five years;

CONSIDERING that Costa Rica has selected and implements the sampling method to monitor indicators that allow the determination of the population status of Olive ridleys (*Lepidochelys olivacea*);

CONSIDERING that the technical information presented by Costa Rica in its Progress Report on the implementation of the exception for 2015-2020 reviewed by the IAC Scientific Committee in their 17th meeting, and the IAC Consultative Committee of Experts (CCE) in their 14th meeting, determined that Costa Rica has fulfilled the four measures established in Resolution CIT-COP7-2015-R1;

CONSIDERING that the Scientific and Consultative Committees recommended new measures to improve the implementation of the Exception in Costa Rica.

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

1. The Government of Costa Rica will continue managing its exception according to their five-year plan Management Plan. This Exception Management Plan includes the recommendations given by the Scientific Committee, and the Consultative Committee of Experts in its 14th meeting (CCE Meeting Report CIT-CCE14-2021-Doc.9) and Annex I in this resolution.
2. The Exception Management Plan should be assessed every 5 years by the IAC Scientific Committee and Consultative Committee; thus Costa Rica must prepare an Assessment Report for the Exception Management Plan with the status of implementation and compliance with the plan and report timely on any modifications.
3. Costa Rica when pertinent, will prepare data analysis of population trends, and the population indexes addressed, and will provide recommendations and conclusions regarding the exception management in its five-year Assessment Report for the Exception Management Plan to present to IAC.
4. In order to determine the status of the nesting population of *L. olivacea* in Ostional and the impact of the egg harvest, Costa Rica will continue to monitor additional indicators including: estimate of the number of hatchlings, and hatching success/reproductive output of the clutches. Costa Rica will implement a five-year evaluation and make the pertinent adjustments to ensure the egg harvest is sustainable.
5. In order to maintain its social and health responsibility, as *L. olivacea* eggs are sold for human consumption, Costa Rica will undertake every five years, a microbiological and biochemical study about the sanitary viability of *L. olivacea* eggs for human consumption.
6. Costa Rica must continue to report on its exception in the IAC Annual Report.

7. 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.
8. The IAC Scientific Committee and Consultative Committee of Experts will develop a form with the contents and minimum data to be included in the Assessment Report for the Exception Management Plan.
9. Urge the Government of Costa Rica to continue to secure and assign human and financial resources necessary for the implementation of the Exception Management Plan.

This resolution repeals and replaces the IAC Resolution on Exceptions under Article IV (3a and b) for Subsistence Harvesting of *Lepidochelys olivacea* eggs in Costa Rica CIT-COP7-2015-R1 in its entirety.

ANNEX I: Recommendation from the IAC Scientific Committee and Consultative Committee of Experts regarding the management of the Exception in Costa Rica

1. The Exception Management Plan must include a budget and a cost analysis to ensure the implementation of the Plan.
2. The Exception Management Plan must include the description of selection criteria for the *arribadas* and nests that can be harvested, with estimated number of nests that can be harvested, and the implementation of measures to reduce in water threats such as bycatch of sea turtles.
3. To prevent illegal trade of eggs from other *L. olivacea* populations and other sea turtle species, Costa Rica must continue with the process of development, implementation, and evaluation annually of the traceability plan from the beach to the final distributor.
4. In its Assessment Report for the Management Plan Costa Rica will report on the investment of the economic resources generated by the commercialization of eggs on the human wellbeing, improvements to the community, and the total number of beneficiaries that are involved in the *arribada* process, as well as the requirements for participation and compliance with the established measures in the exception Management Plan.