



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

November, 16 – 18, 2004 – Isla de Margarita, Venezuela

COP2/2004/R-1

Resolution for the Conservation of Leatherback Turtles (*Dermochelys coriacea*)

WHEREAS leatherback sea turtles have existed on the face of this Earth since approximately ten million years ago;

WHEREAS leatherback sea turtles are an important component of marine ecosystems of the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans and the Caribbean Sea;

WHEREAS leatherback sea turtles are valued for cultural, socioeconomic, ecological and scientific reasons;

CONSIDERING that this species is listed on Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Flora and Fauna (CITES), Appendix II of the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife in the Wider Caribbean Region (SPAW) of the Cartagena Convention, Appendices I and II of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), furthermore, is considered among the conservation priorities of various intergovernmental organizations such as the FAO, as well as being listed as critically endangered by IUCN (The World Conservation Union);

CONSIDERING that the nesting data obtained along the coast of the Eastern Pacific has shown a decrease in the population of more than 90% from 1980 to 2004;

RECOGNIZING the existence of data that suggest a decrease in some nesting colonies in the Wider Caribbean;

CONSIDERING that the principal threats to the leatherback turtles have been identified as long-line and gillnet fisheries, unsustainable exploitation of eggs and turtles, as well as the destruction or alteration of nesting habitat;

RECOGNIZING that the international community has expressed concern over the use of flags of convenience, as well as illegal fishing, lacking control, and lacking regulation, including pirate fishing, which are just some of the problems faced by the marine ecosystems on which the leatherback sea turtle depends;

CONSIDERING that the implementation of responsible fishing measures to protect leatherback sea turtles at sea may also benefit a broad spectrum of marine species of economic value to the fishery, tourism and other sectors;



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CONSIDERING the approval of resolutions C-04-05 and C-04-07 directly relating to sea turtle conservation, which were created during the 72nd Meeting of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission of (IATTC), carried out in Lima from June 14th to the 18th, 2004;

CONSIDERING that the decline in leatherback sea turtle populations is undermining the cultural and economic benefits to the coastal communities which have a religious nature or represent a tourist attraction; and

RECALLING that the first Conference of the Parties of the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles, taking into consideration the critical state of the leatherback sea turtle, agreed to “request each one of the Parties to consider as a matter of high priority whining their territories, the immediate search for solutions that could revert this situation, following the mandates included in the text of the Convention”.

THE SECOND CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES OF THE INTER-AMERICAN CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION OF SEA TURTLES RESOLVES TO:

REQUEST that as a priority, Parties elaborate and/or implement conservation plans and long-term programs that can reverse the critical situation of the leatherback sea turtle in the Eastern Pacific;

URGE the Parties to acquire and evaluate the pertinent measures of conservation to significantly reduce the use and consumption of the products and by-products of the “leatherback” sea turtle;

URGE the Parties with “leatherback” sea turtle nesting beaches in the Eastern Pacific to acquire and evaluate the pertinent conservation measures for the protection of the nesting sites and their associated habitats, in accordance with Articles IV and Annex II of the Convention;

EXHORT the Parties to adopt fishing techniques that reduce incidental capture and the mortality of this species, in accordance with Article IV(h) of the Convention;

EXHORT the Parties to collect and facilitate information to the Convention, regarding the incidental capture of the leatherback sea turtle in long-lines, gillnets, and other fishing gear used by the artisanal as well as industrial fisheries, in order to evaluate and adopt fishing techniques that reduce their impact on this species;

REQUEST that the Parties establish agreements and/or understandings with countries fishing within international waters, so that they receive the initiative of this Convention to adopt fishing techniques that reduce the incidental capture of leatherback sea turtles;



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URGE the Parties to encourage other non-Party states to IAC, whose activities affect the “leatherback” turtles, to adopt measures similar or equal to those encompassed in the present Resolution, by means of bilateral, multilateral or regional contacts, or other mechanisms; and

EXHORT the Parties, in accordance with Articles XII and XX of the Convention and by means of the Secretariat, to establish and strengthen cooperative agreements and alliances with pertinent organizations that help in the conservation of the leatherback sea turtle.

Isla de Margarita, Venezuela, November 2004