



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

September 26-28, 2006 – Mazatlán, México

COP3/2006/R-1

Conservation of the hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*)

RECOGNIZING that the hawksbill turtle is or has been an important component of many marine tropical ecosystems and is valued culturally, socio-economically, ecologically, and scientifically;

CONSIDERING that the hawksbill turtle has a broad distribution within the range of action of the Convention;

RECOGNIZING that the hawksbill turtle has a complex life cycle that requires the protection of terrestrial, coastal and marine habitats, in some instances involving the jurisdictional waters of several countries;

CONSIDERING that although the species is classified globally as critically endangered by the World Conservation Union (IUCN), some populations in the Greater Caribbean and Western Atlantic are recovering after several decades of protective measures;

NOTICING that historically the main cause of the hawksbill turtle's decline has been due to over-exploitation to satisfy national and international markets principally for eggs, meat and carapaces in the former, and carapaces in the latter;

RECOGNIZING the persistence of several threats such as incidental capture in fisheries and increasing disturbance of critical feeding and nesting habitats by coastal development, erosion, seismic surveys, pollution, sponge diseases, coral bleaching, and eutrophication, among others;

CONSIDERING that it took many decades of intense conservation and management efforts to achieve a significant level of nesting in the hawksbill in the Yucatan Peninsula;

CONSIDERING that from 2000 to 2004 there was a decrease in hawksbill nesting activity in the main nesting areas of the Yucatan Peninsula, without a clear understanding of the causes of this phenomenon;

CONCERNED that the decline of the Yucatán population may be repeated in other localities in the region unless the causes are discovered and effective mitigation measures are identified;



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

EXHORT the Parties to promote synergies between the IAC and CITES, the SPAW Protocol, CMS, WHMSI, FAO, other pertinent treaties and international organizations, and regional fisheries bodies in order to facilitate regional dialogue on management and conservation of the hawksbill turtle and its habitats;

URGE the Parties to strengthen monitoring of the use and illegal trade of hawksbill turtles and their products, to enforce pertinent legislation and to stop illegal trade;

EXHORT the Parties to support and strengthen the research and monitoring activities required to improve the scientific basis of conservation measures for the hawksbill turtle, particularly in genetics, migratory behavior, location and conservation status of foraging habitats and food prey, population dynamics in feeding sites, interactions with fisheries, social and economic impacts of conservation measures, and integrity of its nesting beaches;

URGE the Parties to evaluate and mitigate incidental capture of hawksbill turtles in their jurisdictional waters in accordance with recommendations emanating from FAO's Technical Meeting on the conservation of marine turtles held in Bangkok 2004 and adopted by the 26th Session of Fisheries Committee of FAO (COFI) ;

EXHORT the Parties to apply the Precautionary Approach until possible impacts can be evaluated and mitigated on seismic surveys near priority marine habitats of the hawksbill turtle;

URGE the Parties to strengthen protection of important hawksbill nesting and foraging habitats by declaration of protected areas and the regulation of anthropogenic activities adversely impacting these habitats;

SUPPORT a working group within the Scientific Committee to keep the Conference of the Parties informed on the status of the species and its habitats in the Area of the Convention;

PROMOTE the exchange of technical capacity and collaborative research on the hawksbill turtle on their habitats among Parties as well as non Parties and other involved organizations in the Area of the Convention, and;

SUPPORT the organization of a workshop with recognized experts to evaluate the current condition of hawksbill populations in the Greater Caribbean and Western Atlantic, and



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present the best available methods of research and conservation for the species in its marine habitats.

Mazatlan, Mexico, September 2006