



Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles
9th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties
12 – 14 June 2019, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

CIT-COP9-2019-R2

Conservation of the Northwest Atlantic Leatherback Turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*)

RECOGNIZING that there are seven leatherback turtle Regional Management Units (RMU) and that the Northwest Atlantic RMU is one of them;

CONSIDERING that the study *Northwest Atlantic Leatherback Turtle (Dermochelys coriacea) Status Assessment*, reported declining annual nest/female counts in the Regional Management Unit from 1990 to present;

CONSIDERING the recommendations from the aforementioned study to address the decline;

RECOGNIZING that the foraging grounds and nesting beaches for Northwest Atlantic leatherbacks overlap with part of the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles (IAC) area of application;

NOTING that conservation actions are already being implemented by IAC Parties;

RECOGNIZING that important habitats for the Northwest Atlantic Leatherback are located in countries that are currently not Parties, but that are eligible to be Parties, such as French Guiana, Guyana, Surinam, Trinidad & Tobago, and Canada;

RECOGNIZING that to recover the Northwest Atlantic leatherback population, collaboration on critical conservation actions is necessary by all of the countries in its range;

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

1. The Secretariat *Pro Tempore* and the Parties will reach out to Canada, Guyana, French Guiana (and France on its behalf), Trinidad & Tobago, and Suriname to inform on the critical situation of the population.
2. The Secretariat *Pro Tempore* and the Parties will encourage them to accede the treaty, as well as partner with the IAC on priority conservation activities, in particular, related to reducing fisheries bycatch, protecting key nesting beaches, and improving in-water and nesting beach monitoring programs.

3. The IAC Parties should strengthen their existing fishery observer programs or develop them if none exist, in order to improve monitoring Northwest Atlantic leatherback interactions and use the minimum standards for scientific observer coverage that have been established by pertinent Regional Fishery Management Organizations.
4. The IAC Parties commit to implement the “Guidelines to Reduce Sea Turtle Mortality in Fishing Operations” of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), through measures to mitigate bycatch and ensure safe handling and release of Northwest Atlantic leatherbacks.
5. The IAC Parties will endeavor to increase enforcement of laws and regulations related to Northwest Atlantic leatherback conservation, particularly related to fisheries bycatch and marine protected areas.
6. The IAC Secretariat *Pro Tempore*, in consultation with the Parties, will endeavor to establish a Memorandum of Understanding with the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) to improve cooperation between the two agreements.
7. The IAC Scientific Committee will develop a data sheet for the IAC Parties with fleets that interact with the Northwest Atlantic leatherbacks to report their interactions. To the extent possible, this data sheet should be harmonized with existing data reporting requirements in ICCAT. This data sheet shall be incorporated into the IAC Annual Report in time for the 2020 report. Sensitive information will be kept confidential. For additional information, the procedures defined in Resolution CIT-COP9-2019-R4 should be followed.
8. The IAC Scientific Committee, according to the best scientific information available, will identify new areas critical to the NWA leatherback in the Convention area, and will recommend, through the Consultative Committee, that the Parties consider the protection of these areas.
9. The IAC Parties should increase and strengthen the protection on their NWA leatherback nesting beaches from poaching and other threats.
10. The IAC Parties should increase and strengthen their monitoring and tagging programs on the nesting beaches of the NWA leatherback.