



Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles United States Annual Report 2014

IAC Annual Report General Instructions

Annex IV of the Convention text states that each Contracting Party shall hand in an Annual Report. To complete this Annual Report, Focal Points should consult with various stakeholders involved in sea turtle issues. If you have any questions regarding this Annual Report, please write to the PT Secretariat at secretario@iacseaturtle.org

Please note that the date to submit this Annual Report is **April 30th of 2014**.

Part I (General Information)

Please fill out the following tables. Add additional rows if necessary.

a. Focal Point

| | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Institution | National Marine Fisheries Service |
| Name | Alexis T. Gutierrez |
| Date Annual Report submitted | August 25, 2014 |

b. Agency or Institution responsible for preparing this report

| | |
|---|---|
| Name of Agency or Institution | National Marine Fisheries Service |
| Name of the person responsible for completing this report | Alexis T. Gutierrez |
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c. Others who participated in the preparation of this report

| Name | Agency or Institution | E-mail |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| Ann Marie Lauritsen | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service | annmarie_lauritsen@fws.gov |
| | | |

Part II (Policy and Management)



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a. General description of activities carried out for the protection and conservation of sea turtles

In accordance with Articles IX and XVIII of the text of the Convention, each Party shall establish monitoring programs, policies and plans for implementation at a national level for the protection and conservation of sea turtles and their habitat.

As a result, the Party shall report on the action plans, management plan or other types of instruments, describing their location, the species considered and the actions implemented by governmental, non-governmental and private institutions related to sea turtles.

In addition to the above, please fill out the following tables and explain the level of progress in the comments column.

| | YES/NO/ In Progress | Comments |
|---|--------------------------------|--|
| Does your country have a national plan of action in accordance with Article XVIII? | Yes | We have national recovery plans for each species and in some cases distinct population segment. Links of each of these plans were sent to the IAC Secretariat in 2012. |
| Does your country have policies and programs at local and regional levels in accordance with Article XVIII? | Yes | |
| Does your country have monitoring programs in accordance with Article IX? | Yes | |

b. National legislation and international instruments related to sea turtles adopted in the preceding year

Describe any national regulations, international agreements and other legal instruments adopted during the preceding year (April 30, 2013-April 30, 2014) related to sea turtles and/or relevant activities. Provide a reference and attach the digital file for the legislation and its corresponding number. The laws adopting the international legislation should be included, when they exist.

In 2014, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service designated critical habitat for Northwest Atlantic Loggerhead sea turtles. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service designated approximately 685 miles of nesting beach as critical



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habitat and the National Marine Fisheries Service designated 38 marine areas. Critical habitat is geographic area(s) that contain features essential to the conservation of a threatened or endangered species, which may require special management considerations or protection. Only Federal agencies are impacted by the designation of critical habitat as they must consult with either of the Services on actions that they take in areas designated as critical habitat. More information can be found at http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/species/turtles/criticalhabitat_loggerhead.htm.

June 2014 NOAA Fisheries and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service issued the five-year review for Olive ridley sea turtle issues. The five-year review is required by the Endangered Species Act to ensure that the listing is accurate. The Services recommended that the breeding colony on the Pacific coast of Mexico may warrant reclassification from endangered to threatened. Recommended that an application of the distinct population segment policy be applied to the global population before any reclassification.

| National Legislation | | |
|---|------------------------------------|---|
| Type and name of legal instrument (No.) | Description (Range of application) | Sanctions(s) Imposed |
| Endangered Species Act | Global | Prohibition of take of listed species unless exempted under Section 7 and Section 10 in U.S. waters |
| International Instruments | | |
| Treaty, Convention, Agreements, Memorandum of Understanding | | Year signed and/or ratified |
| InterAmerican Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles | | 2000 |
| Indian Ocean Southeast Asian Marine Turtle MOU | | 2001 |

Note: If this is the first time a country is submitting this information, please include all pertinent national legislation and international instruments currently in force.

c. Actions for compliance with national and international legislation

c.1 IAC Resolutions

Fill in the following tables for each of the IAC Resolutions listed below. In the case that a Resolution does not apply to your country, please mark the box RESOLUTION DOES NOT APPLY, and if a specific question does not apply, please mark the column DOES



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NOT APPLY. If you need more space to describe these actions, please attach additional pages and note the resolution and question number to which you are responding.

Resolution CIT-COP2-2004 R1: Conservation of leatherback turtles (*Dermochelys coriacea*)

ACCORDING TO RESOLUTION CIT-COP2-2004-R1, REPORT WHETHER YOUR COUNTRY:

| | | | RESOLUTION DOES NOT APPLY | |
|---|-----|----|---|----------------|
| IS COMPLYING WITH THE FOLLOWING: | YES | NO | DESCRIBE ACTION (*) | DOES NOT APPLY |
| 1a) Have you created conservation plans and long-term programs that can reverse the critical situation of the leatherback turtle in the Eastern Pacific? | X | | Recovery Plan for Pacific Leatherbacks http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/recovery/turtle_leatherback_pacific.pdf | |
| 1b) Are you implementing these conservation plans and monitoring programs? | X | | Yes, the United States is taking action to minimize interactions with Leatherbacks in domestic fisheries by using gear modifications and, as necessary, time area closures. In addition, we are working closely with several countries in the ETP to try and reduce leatherback interactions by using large circle hooks and whole finfish | |
| 2a) Have you taken conservation measures to significantly reduce the use of leatherback turtle products and by-products? | X | | Trade of sea turtles and their parts is illegal in the United States. | |
| 2b) Do you evaluate these conservation measures? | X | | Yes, the status of the species are formally reviewed on an approximate five-year basis, this review includes an evaluation of the effectiveness of conservation measures. Additionally, the U.S. National Marine Fisheries Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service conduct consultations on all federal actions that may affect sea turtles. During these consultations, conservation efforts are evaluated. | |
| 3a) If your country has leatherback turtle nesting beaches in the Eastern Pacific: Have you taken conservation measures to protect the nesting sites and their associated habitats? | | | | N/A |
| 3b) Do you evaluate the conservation measures taken to | | | | N/A |



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| protect those nesting sites and their associated habitats? | | | | |
| 4. Has your country adopted fishing techniques that reduce incidental capture and mortality of this species? | | | With respect to Western Pacific Leatherbacks, we have taken significant measures to reduce fishery bycatch. The Hawaii shallow-set fishery is managed through 100% observer monitoring and the fishery closes if the annual limit of interaction with leatherbacks is reached. U.S. fishermen are required to use large circle hooks with whole finfish baits in longline fisheries known to interact with Leatherbacks in the Pacific and the Atlantic Ocean, as well as the Gulf of Mexico. Fishers are also provided safe-handling gear to increase turtles' chances of survival post-release. The US has also declared Critical Habitat for leatherback turtles along the US West Coast that can help to further limit anthropogenic impacts to leatherback turtles in the region. | |
| 5a) Is your country collecting information on incidental capture of leatherbacks in the following fisheries: | | | | |
| Artisanal fisheries | | | | |
| i) Long-line | | | | N/A |
| ii) Gillnets | | | | N/A |
| iii) Other fishing gear (indicate which one(s)) | | | | N/A |
| Industrial fisheries | | | | |
| i) Long-line | Y | | http://www.fpir.noaa.gov/OBS/obs_hi_ll_ds_rprts.html http://www.fpir.noaa.gov/OBS/obs_hi_ll_ss_rprts.html | |
| ii) Gillnets | Y | | West Coast Drift Gillnet Report 2012-2013 West Coast Drift Gillnet Report 2013-2014 | |
| iii) Other fishing gear (indicate which one(s)) | | N | | |
| 5b) Have you provided the IAC with information on incidental capture of leatherbacks in the following fisheries: | | | | |
| Artisanal fishing | | | | |
| i) Long-line | | | | N/A |
| ii) Gillnets | | | | N/A |
| iii) Other fishing gear (indicate which one(s)) | | | | N/A |
| Industrial fisheries | | | | |
| i) Long-line | Yes | | See above | |



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|--|-----|--|--|--|
| ii) Gillnets | Yes | | See above | |
| iii) Other fishing gear (indicate which one(s)) | Yes | | See above | |
| 6. Have you established agreements and/or understandings with countries fishing within international waters to adopt fishing techniques that reduce incidental capture of leatherback turtles? List which countries: | Yes | | Through our participation in Regional Fisheries Management Organizations we have worked to secure binding measures to reduce entanglement in FADs and to use large circle hooks in pelagic longline fisheries. These organizations include IATTC, ICCAT and WCPFC. Further we are collaborating with other IAC countries and ENGOs in the region to reduce Leatherback interactions in coastal gillnets. | |
| 7. Have you encouraged other non-Party states to the IAC, carrying out activities that affect leatherback turtles, to adopt measures in favor of their conservation, by means of bilateral, multilateral or regional contacts? | Yes | | We have encouraged several non-Party states to use circle hooks in longline fisheries, TEDs in trawl fisheries and modified gillnets in gillnet fisheries. See annex of work that we do in the region related to sea turtle bycatch mitigation. | |
| 8. Have any cooperative agreements or alliances been established with pertinent organizations? List: | Yes | | Yes, NOAA Fisheries has worked collaboratively with World Wildlife Fund US, Pretoma, Projeto Tamar, Prodelphinus, Propenisula, WWF Greater Mekong, DINARA, CICMAR, Equilibrio Azul, Submon, Kai Marine Services, and several other groups to address sea turtle bycatch issues around the globe. | |

(* Specify actions implemented, name of the project or relevant document, location, objective(s), institutions responsible, contact, financial or other support (optional), results (both positive and negative) and duration.

Resolution CIT-COP3-2006 R-1: Hawksbill turtle conservation (*Eretmochelys imbricata*)

ACCORDING TO RESOLUTION CIT-COP3-2006-R1, REPORT WHETHER YOUR COUNTRY:

| IS COMPLYING WITH THE FOLLOWING: | RESOLUTION DOES NOT APPLY | | DESCRIBE ACTION (*) | DOES NOT APPLY |
|---|---------------------------|----|--|----------------|
| | YES | NO | | |
| 1. Has your country promoted synergies with other | Yes | | We have been a strong advocate of the IAC and CITES collaborating on hawksbill issues. We were supportive of the | |



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| <p>Conventions, treaties, international organizations, and/or regional fisheries bodies on the management and conservation of hawksbill turtles and their habitats? Indicate which one(s).</p> | | | <p>recent collaboration between the IAC and CITES Secretariats as described here http://www.cites.org/eng/cop/16/doc/E-CoP16-59.pdf. Further, we have been strong advocates of collaboration IAC, RAMSAR, SPAW, IATTC and ICCAT.</p> | | |
| <p>2 a) Are you strengthening monitoring of the illegal use and trade of hawksbill turtles and their products?</p> | Yes | | <p>It is illegal to trade hawksbill turtles and their parts in the United States. Further through the Central American Free Trade Agreement we have worked to address illegal hawksbill trade in the Dominican Republic.</p> | | |
| <p>2 b) Are you enforcing pertinent hawksbill legislation?</p> | Yes | | <p>Enforcement efforts at the state and national level are ongoing to enforce the ESA.</p> | | |
| <p>2 c) Are activities being carried out in order to stop illegal trade of hawksbill products?</p> | Yes | | <p>Our enforcement officers work to stop illegal trade of hawksbill products.</p> | | |
| <p>3. Does your country support and strengthen the research and monitoring activities required to improve the scientific basis of conservation measures for the hawksbill turtle? Especially in:</p> | <p>Genetics</p> | Yes | | | |
| | <p>Migratory behavior</p> | Yes | | | |
| | <p>Location and conservation status of foraging habitats.</p> | Yes | | | |
| | <p>Location and conservation status of prey species.</p> | Yes | | | |
| | <p>Population dynamics at foraging sites</p> | Yes | | | |
| | <p>Integrity of nesting habitats</p> | Yes | | <p>The United States supports nesting surveys and nest protection efforts on Mona Island, Puerto Rico, and Buck Island Reef National Monument, U.S. Virgin Islands, the two most important hawksbill nesting sites in the United States. We also protect nesting habitat in Hawaii.</p> | |
| | <p>Others (specify)</p> | | | | |
| <p>4. As indicated in the recommendations from FAO's Technical Meeting on the conservation of marine turtles and fisheries that was held in Bangkok in 2004 and adopted by the 26th Session of FAO's Fisheries Committee (COFI), does</p> | <p>a) Evaluate incidental capture of hawksbill turtles in jurisdictional waters.</p> | Yes | | <p>All of our fisheries observers report all sea turtle information. Hawksbills are encountered less frequently than other turtle species in our fisheries, but they are noted when encountered.</p> | |
| | <p>b) Actions to mitigate incidental capture of hawksbill turtles in their jurisdictional waters.</p> | Yes | | <p>We believe that mitigation measures in longline, gillnet and trawl fisheries will likely also benefit hawksbills.</p> | |



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|---|--------------------------------------|------------|--|--|
| your country carry out any activities mentioned in a) and/or b)? | | | | |
| 5. Does your country apply the precautionary approach when considering proposals for seismic exploration on priority marine habitats of the hawksbill turtle? | | Yes | | Through the section 7 process of the Endangered Species Act, the United States evaluates all seismic activity for its impact on all protected species, including hawksbills. |
| 6. Indicate if your country is strengthening the protection of important nesting and foraging habitats by declaring protected areas and regulating anthropogenic activities that adversely impact these habitats. | a) Protection of nesting habitats | Yes | | <p>Nesting beaches of the southeastern U.S. are a mixture of public and private lands. Public conservation lands include National Wildlife Refuges (NWR), National or State or County Parks, and military installations. In Florida, approximately 40% of nesting beaches have been identified as conservation lands; in Georgia, 71%; in South Carolina, 38%; in North Carolina, 47%; and in Alabama, 22%.</p> <p>The two major hawksbill nesting beaches in the U.S. Caribbean, Buck Island Reef National Monument, U.S. Virgin Islands, and Mona Island, Puerto Rico, are protected as a National Park and Commonwealth Protected Area, respectively.</p> <p>The most important leatherback nesting beaches in the U.S. Caribbean are Sandy Point, U.S. Virgin Islands (protected as a National Wildlife Refuge); Brava and Resaca Beaches, Culebra, Puerto Rico (protected as a Commonwealth Protected Area); Vieques Island, Puerto Rico (protected as a National Wildlife Refuge); Fajardo (Northeast Ecological Corridor) on the main island of Puerto Rico (mixed ownership, only partially protected); and Maunabo on the main island of Puerto Rico (beaches are in public domain, but uplands adjacent to the beaches are privately owned with the potential for future development).</p> |
| | b) Protection of feeding habitats | Yes | | <p>Critical habitat has been designated for Caribbean hawksbill around Mona Island since 1998.</p> <p>http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/fr/fr63-46693.pdf http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/criticalhabitat/hawksbillturtle.pdf</p> |
| 7. Does your country promote exchange of technical capacity and collaborative research on hawksbill habitats among Parties as well as non Parties and other involved organizations in the Area of the Convention? | | Yes | | Our researchers are regularly working with other countries to share information on hawksbills conservation. |

(*) Specify actions implemented, name of the project or relevant document, location, objective(s), institutions responsible, contact, financial or other support (optional), results (both positive and negative) and duration.



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Resolution CIT-COP3-2006-R2: Reduction of the adverse impacts of fisheries on sea turtles

ACCORDING TO RESOLUTION CIT-COP3-2006-R2, REPORT WHETHER YOUR COUNTRY:

| IS COMPLYING WITH THE FOLLOWING: | YES | NO | DESCRIBE ACTION (*) | DOES NOT APPLY |
|---|-----|----|---|----------------|
| 1. Adopted the "Guidelines to Reduce Sea Turtle Mortality induced by fisheries operations", of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), including: | | | | |
| A. Research and monitoring of adverse impact of fisheries on sea turtles | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collect information by fishery | Yes | | See next answer | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observer programs | Yes | | The National Marine Fisheries Service has National Observer Program that is composed of six regional observer programs. On annual basis the National Marine Fisheries Service is observing 40+ fisheries. http://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/observer-home/programs/map/index | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research on sea turtle/fishery interactions | Yes | | The United States has a very robust program to research bycatch reduction technologies. There are currently bycatch reduction technologies in place in the longline fisheries, otter trawl fisheries and some gillnet fisheries. More information on existing regulations can be found at http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/species/turtles/regulations.htm . | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information on non-Party vessels | Yes | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cooperation with non-Party states to obtain information | Yes | | The United States works collaboratively with several countries to better understand fisheries interactions with sea turtles. More information on our annual efforts can be found in the following report to the U.S. Congress -- http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/ia/iuu/msra_page/2013_biennial_report_to_congress_jan_11_2013_final.pdf | |
| B. Mitigation measures for the following fisheries: | | | | |
| i) Long-line | Yes | | All relevant regulations for reducing sea turtle interactions can be found at http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/species/turtles/regulations.htm . | |
| ii) Gillnets | Yes | | All relevant regulations for reducing sea turtle interactions can be found at http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/species/turtles/regulations.htm | |
| iii) Trawling (e.g., 1. TEDs: specify legally approved TEDs, their dimensions, material, and target species for that fishery, 2. time-area closures: specify geographical area, | Yes | | The United States requires TEDs in shrimp otter trawls. More information can be found at http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/species/turtles/regulations.htm . | |



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| time of closure and target species for that fishery, 3. tow times and/or 4. other measures) | | | | |
| iv) Other fishing gear (indicate which one(s)) | Yes | | Poundnets are also regulated to reduce sea turtle interactions. Please see http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/species/turtles/regulations.htm . | |
| C. Training, education and dissemination | | | | |
| • Training, education and dissemination activities | Yes | | We train our observers in safe handling and dehooking. Our training materials for observers in pelagic longline fisheries can be found at http://www.sefsc.noaa.gov/species/turtles/observers.htm . | |
| D. Harmonization of policies and legislation | | | | |
| • Modifications to instruments | Yes | | We develop as necessary regulations to reduce fisheries interactions with sea turtles. | |
| E. Capacity building | | | | |
| • Creation of a national sea turtle committee/network | Yes | | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and NOAA Fisheries have national sea turtle programs that coordinate regularly. | |
| F. Financing | | | | |
| • Financial support obtained to implement guidelines in this resolution | | No | We do not allocate funding specifically to implement the FAO guidelines, but by our recovery actions we often are implementing the guidelines. | |
| G. Socio-economic considerations | | | | |
| • Support socio-economic activities that help mitigate adverse impacts of fisheries on sea turtles | | No | | |
| H. Other aspects | | | | |
| • Environmental impact studies for mariculture projects | Yes | | Any Federally permitted mariculture project would have to undergo an Environmental Impact Statement which would look at the impact on listed species, like sea turtles. | |
| 2. Sent information and documents on sea turtles created by your country to the Secretariat of the Convention? List documents. | Yes | | See information provided above. | |
| 3. Initiated activities that assist the Convention Secretariat in contacting non Party States through established mechanisms, especially in the area of the Convention, so that they may provide, in a cooperative spirit, the Secretariat with available data on incidental sea turtle catches in their fisheries? | Yes | | The United States regularly assists the Secretariat in making contacts in non-Party countries (e.g., Colombia, etc). Further the U.S. has been a very strong supporter of the ICCAT-IAC MOU, which would facilitate such data sharing. | |
| 4. Supports the Convention Secretariat, through established mechanisms, to commence discussions with regional fishery management organizations in order to develop Memorandum of Understandings. | Yes | | The United States has facilitated contact between the Secretariat and the IATTC Secretariat and the ICCAT Secretariat. | |



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(* Specify actions implemented, name of the project or relevant document, location, objective(s), institutions responsible, contact, financial or other support (optional), results (both positive and negative) and duration.

Resolution CIT-COP4-2009-R5: Adaptation of sea turtle habitats to climate change

ACCORDING TO RESOLUTION CIT-COP4-2009-R5, REPORT WHETHER YOUR COUNTRY:

| IS COMPLYING WITH THE FOLLOWING: | YES | NO | DOES NOT APPLY | DESCRIBE ACTION(S) (*) |
|---|-----|----|----------------|--|
| 1) Has your country prepared a plan(s) for adaptation to climate change? If Yes, specify the plan(s). If they are in progress or answer is No, continue to Question 2a. | Y | | | National Fish, Wildlife and Plants Climate Adaptation Strategy -- http://www.wildlifeadaptationstrategy.gov/ NMFS Climate Science Strategy (Draft) Aug 2014 United States Department of Commerce, Strategic Sustainability Performance Plan June 2012 United States, Department of Interior, Strategic Sustainability Performance Plan Fish Wildlife Service Guidance Documents on Climate Change http://www.fws.gov/home/climatechange/ |
| 1a) Have the marine and coastal habitats on which sea turtles depend been included in the plans and national programs on adaptation to climate change? Specify habitats included: | | | | |
| Beaches | Y | | | |
| Mangroves | Y | | | |
| Coral Reefs | Y | | | |
| Seagrasses | Y | | | |
| Others, specify: | | | | |
| 1b) Are components of the plan(s) important to the adaptation of critical sea turtle habitat being implemented? Specify habitats: | | | | |
| Beaches | | | | |
| Mangroves | | | | |
| Coral Reefs | | | | |
| Seagrasses | | | | |
| Others, specify: | | | | |
| 2a) Is environmental research/monitoring being conducted to evaluate the potential impacts of climate change on sea turtles? Specify parameters/research: | | | | |
| Sand Temperature | Y | | | |
| Sea Temperature | Y | | | |
| Coral Bleaching | Y | | | |
| Beach Geomorphology | Y | | | |
| Storm intensity and frequency | Y | | | |



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| Others, specify: | | | | |
| 2b) Is biological research/monitoring being conducted to evaluate the potential impacts of climate change on sea turtles? Specify biological research: | | | | |
| Nesting season | Y | | | |
| Hatching success | Y | | | |
| Recruitment | Y | | | |
| Sex ratio | Y | | | |
| Mortality | Y | | | |
| Others, specify: | | | | |
| 3 a) Are corrective measures and measures on adaptation to climate change included within management plans and/or protection and conservation programs for sea turtles and their habitats? Specify measures: | | | | |
| Nest relocation | Y | | | These activities can occur in the United States, but they are often not happening solely because of climate change concerns. |
| Hatchery establishment | Y | | | |
| Use of incubators | Y | | | |
| Protection of cooler beaches | | N | | |
| Protection of areas landward of nesting sites from coastal development | Y | | | |
| Planting or removal of vegetation | Y | | | |
| Others, specify: | | | | |
| 3 b) Are any of the plan's corrective measures being implemented and/or evaluated? If Yes, please specify. | | | | |
| | Y | | | In the United States, recovery plans and section 7 consultations often drive the sea turtle conservation actions. Climate concerns will be incorporated into these analyses, but often climate will not be the sole driver of these plans. |
| 4. Have you identified organizations or pertinent expert groups as possible partners to work on the topic of adaptation by sea turtles to climate change? Please list these organizations or expert groups. | | | | |
| | Y | | | |
| 5. Has your country hosted capacity building workshops for monitoring techniques and/or adaptation to climate change regarding or focused on Sea turtles and their habitats? | | | | |
| | | N | | |

(*) Specify actions implemented, name of the project or relevant document, location, objective(s), institutions responsible, contact, financial or other support (optional), results (both positive and negative) and duration.

c.2 National and International Mandates

List actions that are being carried out to comply with national and international mandates (Ex: inspections, confiscations, sanctions, etc.)

The United States regularly carries out the mandates of the Endangered Species Act, which prohibits all taking of listed species, unless permitted under the ESA. Through the implementation of regulations we are working to reduce sea turtle incidental capture



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and mortality in fisheries. The United States regulations can be found at <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/species/turtles/regulations.htm>. Further, the United States evaluates all Federal actions that may affect sea turtles through the Section 7 process of the Endangered Species Act, as well as the environmental review process required by the National Environmental Policy Act.

Both NOAA Fisheries and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have enforcement offices that monitor compliance with existing laws and develop cases against those violating the Endangered Species Act.

d. Application[submission] of exceptions established in the Convention

Describe in detail the exceptions allowed in accordance with article IV, item 3(a,b,d) and Annex IV of the text of the Convention, in accordance to the procedure established by the COP (Doc. CIT-COP5-2011-R2). Attach management program.

N/A

Part III (Research information)

a. Threats

*Indicate threats (Coastal development, incidental capture, direct use, contamination and pathogens, and climate change) by species, with information on the area and activities taken to control them in the following table. Lo = *Lepidochelys olivacea*; Lk = *Lepidochelys kempii*; Dc = *Dermochelys coriacea*; Ei = *Eretmochelys imbricata*; Cc = *Caretta caretta*; Cm = *Chelonia mydas*.*

| Species | Threat(s) | | Actions |
|----------------|--|---|---|
| Lo | <input type="checkbox"/> Coastal development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Incidental capture <input type="checkbox"/> Direct use | <input type="checkbox"/> Contamination <input type="checkbox"/> Pathogens <input type="checkbox"/> Climate change | Through the Endangered Species Act regulations and the Section 7 process, United States works to mitigate the impact of fisheries on sea turtles. |
| Lk | <input type="checkbox"/> Coastal development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Incidental capture <input type="checkbox"/> Direct use | <input type="checkbox"/> Contamination <input type="checkbox"/> Pathogens <input type="checkbox"/> Climate change | Through the Endangered Species Act regulations and the Section 7 process, United States works to mitigate the impact of fisheries on sea turtles. |
| Dc | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Coastal development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Incidental capture <input type="checkbox"/> Direct use | <input type="checkbox"/> Contamination <input type="checkbox"/> Pathogens <input type="checkbox"/> Climate change | Coastal Development -- Through permit conditions, most direct construction-related impacts are avoided by requiring that non-emergency activities be performed outside of the nesting and hatching season. However, indirect effects also result from the post-construction presence of structures on the beach, and these impacts can only be minimized to the maximum extent practicable. Light management plans have been successfully developed and |



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|----|--|---|---|
| | | | <p>implemented in most developed coastal counties and communities in Florida to minimize these impacts. Light management plans have also been developed at coastal military installations in Florida. Light pollution issues adjacent to the leatherback nesting beach at Sandy Point, USVI, are still problematic but some efforts have been undertaken to resolve them.</p> <p>Nest protection programs vary but include 100% nest screening at Canaveral National Seashore; raccoon trapping and removal at Merritt Island NWR, Hobe Sound National NWR, and Archie Carr NWR; feral hog control at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station; coyote control in the Florida Panhandle; and mongoose trapping at Sandy Point NWR.</p> <p>Through the Endangered Species Act regulations and the Section 7 process, United States works to mitigate the impact of fisheries on sea turtles.</p> |
| Ei | <input type="checkbox"/> Coastal development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Incidental capture <input type="checkbox"/> Direct use | <input type="checkbox"/> Contamination <input type="checkbox"/> Pathogens <input type="checkbox"/> Climate change | <p>A fence has been constructed as a barrier to hogs at hawksbill nesting beaches on Mona Island, Puerto Rico. Rat control activities have been undertaken on Buck Island Reef National Monument in the USVI.</p> <p>Through the Endangered Species Act regulations and the Section 7 process, United States works to mitigate the impact of fisheries on sea turtles.</p> |
| Cm | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Coastal development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Incidental capture <input type="checkbox"/> Direct use | <input type="checkbox"/> Contamination <input type="checkbox"/> Pathogens <input type="checkbox"/> Climate change | <p>Through permit conditions, most direct construction-related impacts are avoided by requiring that non-emergency activities be performed outside of the nesting and hatching season. However, indirect effects also result from the post-construction presence of structures on the beach, and these impacts can only be minimized to the maximum extent practicable. Light management plans have been successfully developed and implemented in most developed coastal counties and communities in Florida to minimize these impacts. Light management plans</p> |



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| | | | |
|----|--|---|--|
| | | | <p>have also been developed at coastal military installations in Florida.</p> <p>Nest protection programs vary but include 100% nest screening at Canaveral National Seashore; raccoon trapping and removal at Merritt Island NWR, Hobe Sound National NWR, and Archie Carr NWR; and feral hog control at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station.</p> <p>Through the Endangered Species Act regulations and the Section process, the United States works to mitigate the impact of fisheries on sea turtles.</p> |
| Cc | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Coastal development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Incidental capture <input type="checkbox"/> Direct use | <input type="checkbox"/> Contamination <input type="checkbox"/> Pathogens <input type="checkbox"/> Climate change | <p>Through permit conditions, most direct construction-related impacts are avoided by requiring that non-emergency activities be performed outside of the nesting and hatching season. However, indirect effects also result from the post-construction presence of structures on the beach, and these impacts can only be minimized to the maximum extent practicable. Light management plans have been successfully developed and implemented in most developed coastal counties and communities in Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina to minimize these impacts. Light management plans have also been developed at coastal military installations in Florida. The major nesting beach in South Carolina, Cape Romain NWR, is a barrier island without major light pollution issues. North Carolina has extensive areas of National Seashores that are protected from development.</p> <p>Nest protection programs vary but</p> |



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| | | | |
|--|--|--|---|
| | | | <p>include 100% nest screening at Canaveral National Seashore; raccoon trapping and removal at Merritt Island NWR, Hobe Sound National NWR, and Archie Carr NWR; feral hog control at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station and at problem areas in Georgia; and coyote control in the Florida Panhandle.</p> <p>Through the Endangered Species Act regulations and the Section process, the United States works to mitigate the impact of fisheries on sea turtles.</p> |
|--|--|--|---|

b. Research

Describe scientific research that is being carried out in the country relating to sea turtle population assessments including tagging, migration, and genetic studies, as well as those relating to conservation issues including habitat monitoring, fisheries interactions, disease, etc. Provide a list of references for the information used in this report and note how to obtain them when needed.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service initiated a project with the U.S. Geological Survey to: (1) extend and adapt current mark-recapture statistical methodology and software to maximize its utility to sea turtle studies, and (2) evaluate minimum sample sizes needed to achieve desired precision in tagging studies, for a variety of realistic scenarios of population size and fidelity to nesting beach. This development will consider both nesting beach and in-water studies, focusing on the former.

In addition to the above, please fill out the following table on the types of research being carried out in the country and with what specie(s).

Additional survey information for multiple species are below. This list is not exhaustive and is only indicative of some of the efforts in the United States. See the spreadsheet for additional information.

| Year | Season | Platform | Effort | Area |
|-------------|---------------|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 2009 | May-July | Trawler | 580 paired trawls | Winyah Bay, SC to St. Augustine, FL |
| 2009 | Sep-Nov | Pound Net | 769 pound nets | Core and Pamlico Sounds, NC |
| 2009 | Summer | Vessel | | Gulf of Mexico – 20m to US EEZ |
| 2009 | Aug | Plane (Twin | 1,400 km | MA to NC in U.S. waters |



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| | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------|--|
| | | Otter) | | |
| 2010 | Aug-Sep | Plane (Twin Otter) | 9,210 km | MA to Gulf of St. Lawrence, Canada |
| 2010 | May-Sept | Plane | | Deepwater Horizon Response and NRDA - northern Gulf of Mexico |
| 2010 | July-Aug | Plane | 7,944 | Cape May, NJ to Cape Canaveral, FL |
| 2010 | May-Jul | Trawler | 480 paired trawls | Bulls Bay, SC to Nassau Sound, FL |
| 2011 | Feb-Mar | Plane | | Cape May, NJ to Cape Canaveral, FL |
| 2011 | May-Jul | Trawler | | Winyah Bay, SC to St. Augustine, FL |
| 2012 | May-Jul | Trawler | 395 paired trawls | Winyah Bay, SC to St. Augustine, FL |
| 2012 | Jan-Mar | Plane | | Continental shelf waters from FL Keys to Brownsville, TX |
| 2012 | Apr-May | Plane (Twin Otter) | | Continental shelf waters from Cape Canaveral, FL, to Sandy Hook, NJ |
| 2012 | Sep-Oct | Plane (Twin Otter) | | Continental shelf waters from Cape Canaveral, FL, to Sandy Hook, NF |
| 2012 | Oct | Pound net | 1 net x 17 days | Back Sound, NC |
| 2010 to Present | Spring and Fall | Plane/Ship Survey | | Atlantic Marine Assessment Program for Protected Species (AMAPPS) -- http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/psb/AMAPPS/ |

c. Other activities

Include information on: environmental education activities, programs to establish and manage protected areas, and cooperative activities with other Party countries.

See below the most recent U.S. Fish and Wildlife and NOAA Fisheries international capacity building activities.

The following projects were undertaken in the IAC region:

Bycatch Reduction Technology Transfer to Colombian Fishers, Fisheries Managers and Marine Enforcement (\$30,700 in FY2009 funds).

The Southeast Fisheries Science Center, Engineering and Harvesting Branch provided training on use and enforcement of TEDs in the Pacific and Caribbean.

Turtle Excluder Device (TED) Technology Transfer and Development in Uruguay's Coastal Non-Shrimp Trawl Fishery (\$44,000 in FY2009 funds).

The Southeast Fisheries Science Center, Engineering and Harvesting Branch, provided the training.

Continuing sea turtle workshops and offshore radio broadcasts to reach artisanal vessel captains in Peru (\$19,700 in FY2009 funds).

The Southwest Fisheries Science Center assisted in training artisanal fisheries crew members and observers on proper sea turtle dehooking and resuscitation techniques and promoted these practices through radio public service announcements;



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TEDs University (\$50,000 from the CAFTA-DR Environmental Initiative in 2010). This was a comprehensive two-week training in TED technology for five students (from Costa Rica, Panama, Nicaragua, Honduras, and El Salvador), designed to establish TED extension agents in the region.

A two-part project on construction and installation of TEDs in the Uruguayan trawl fishery (\$38,700 in FY 2010 funds) Three visitors from Uruguay attended a workshop in the Pascagoula Laboratory; NOAA experts will visit Uruguay to assist with installation of NOAA-funded TEDs.

Building the Capacity of Central American Countries to Assess Bycatch (\$20,000 in FY2010 funds).

The World Wildlife Fund will collaborate with five Central American governments on use of best fishing practices to reduce bycatch in artisanal longline fisheries. WWF also conducted an introductory workshop in French Guiana in conjunction with its new law requiring TEDs (\$3,200 in FY2009).

Building capacity with Atlantic Canadian pelagic longline fishers (DFO supported). The Southeast Fisheries Science Center participated in a workshop in Nova Scotia in March 2011 to improve Canada's data collection on incidentally captured turtles to be consistent with the US Pelagic Longline Observer Program.

Studies to look at the effect of net illumination on capture rates of sea turtles and other non-target species in Peruvian and Brazilian coastal gillnet fisheries (2011-2012). NOAA Fisheries Pacific Islands Science Center provided \$15,000 to ProDelphinus and Project TAMAR to investigate sea turtle capture rates in illuminated coastal gillnets.

TEDs Inspections and Trainings – FY 11-12

TED Workshops for fishers (in conjunction with DOS, section 609 visits):

- *Costa Rica; Acajutla, Pacific coast with INCOPECSA , October 17-19, 2010*
- *El Salvador; Puntarenas & La Union, with CENDEPESCA, Oct. 20-22, 2010*
- *Panama; Vacamonte, with ARAP January 17-19, 2011*
- *Guatemala; Puerto Quetzal, with UNIPESCA, January 20-22, 2011*
- *Brazil; Belem with IBAMA, April 24-27, 2011*
- *French Guiana; Cayenne, with CRPMEM, April 30-May 4, 2011*
- *Ecuador; Guayaquil, Playas and Manta, with SRA, September 5-9, 2011*
- *Mexico; (Pacific) Mazatlan, Guaymas, November 13-19, 2011*
- *Honduras; Roatan, December 11-16, 2011*
- *Mexico; (Gulf of Mexico) Tampico, Campeche, March 18-27, 2012*

TED Enforcement workshops

- *Central American Regional Marine Law Enforcement Workshop: Turtle Excluder Devices. Sonsonate, El Salvador. August, 2011. CAFTA funds / NOAA I/A*

TED research



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- *Flexible TED for fish trawlers; preliminary trials with fishers. Suriname, with World Wildlife Fund Guianas. May 15-26, 2011*

See annex for the report of the MTCF grants 2012

In 2012, the USFWS awarded 42 grants from the Marine Turtle Conservation Fund totaling \$1,828,495.00, which was matched by \$2,211,533.00 in leveraged funds. Field projects in were 28 countries.

In 2013, the USFWS awarded 45 grants from the Marine Turtle Conservation Fund totaling \$1,746, 987, which was matched by \$2,259,756 in leveraged funds. Field projects were in 26 countries. More information can be found at <http://www.fws.gov/international/wildlife-without-borders/marine-turtle-conservation-fund.html>.

In fiscal year 2014, NOAA Fisheries Pacific Regional Islands funded the following projects in the IAC area.

- *Peru, Pro Delphinus -- Trial lightsticks proven beneficial under experimental conditions in operating gillnet fisheries of Peru to reduce sea turtle interactions and quantify effects of bycatch reduction technologies in-situ*
- *Mexico (Baja) – Ocean Discovery Institute -- To trail gillnet mitigation measures in coastal gillnet fisheries (orange lightsticks) to reduce sea turtle interactions and quantify effects on fish catch rates. Project collaborations with PIFSC and SWRO.*

In fiscal year 2014, NOAA Fisheries Office of Science and Technology supported a \$23,450 project for bycatch reduction in Chilean and Peruvian gillnet fisheries.

Part IV: Annexes

Table 1: Species Present

*Place an X in the box when the species listed is present in the oceanographic basins of your country as established in Article III of the text of the Convention. Lo = *Lepidochelys olivacea*; Lk = *Lepidochelys kempii*; Dc = *Dermochelys coriacea*; Ei = *Eretmochelys imbricata*; Cm = *Chelonia mydas*; Cc = *Caretta caretta*.*

| Species | Pacific Ocean | Atlantic Ocean | Caribbean Sea |
|---------|---------------|----------------|---------------|
| Lo | X | X | |
| Lk | | X | |
| Dc | X | X | X |
| Ei | X | X | X |
| Cm | X | X | X |
| Cc | X | X | X |



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Table 2: Index nesting sites or beaches for sea turtle conservation

- a. *This table is intended to report information on index nesting sites or beaches for each species. For beaches that have multiple species nesting, enter that beach under the list for the primary nesting species. When entering information on nesting site or beaches, information is to be entered for each species independently. Indicate the names of index nesting sites. On a separate sheet of paper, indicate the selection criteria used for identifying the index beach, for example, because it hosts a significant proportion of the overall nesting population within a region or other defined unit or genetic importance.*
- b. *Nesting season: Indicate the starting and finishing date of the nesting season.*
- c. *Monitoring period: Indicate the starting and finishing date of monitoring efforts.*
- d. *Survey frequency: Indicate the frequency with which the surveys are done (daily, weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, among others).*
- e. *Geographic location: Specify latitude and longitude in decimal degrees.*
- f. *Extension of beach monitored: Provide the total length (in Kilometers) of the nesting beach.*
- g. *Declared protection area: Indicate (yes or no) if the area is declared as some type of protected area.*
- h. *Annual nesting abundance: Provide information on the total number of females and/or clutches or nests deposited at the nesting site or beach in real numbers. Provide the exact count of females based on tagged or uniquely identified individuals. If the exact number of clutches is unknown provide total number of nests.*
- i. *Information from tagging program: Indicate if there have been any tagging activities at the nesting beach by using the letters of the type of tagging being done: flipper tagging (FT), passive integrated transponder (PIT) tagging, and satellite telemetry (ST) programs. If possible, on a separate sheet or as attached reference provide greater detail about the type of tagging efforts conducted. Also provide satellite telemetry maps or flipper tag recovery information if available.*
- j. *Tissue sampling: Indicate if there has been tissue sampling conducted at this site. This includes skin, blood, and other body tissues. On a separate sheet, or as attached references, describe these tissue sampling programs in greater detail. For example, were samples collected for genetic, contaminant, and/or stable isotope studies?*
- k. *Indicate what organization or entity is providing the data.*
- l. *When inserting new rows, please copy and paste the drop down menus when applicable.*



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| Spp | Name of Index Nesting Site or Beach | Nesting season | | Monitoring period | | Survey Frequency | Geographic Location (Lat/Long) in Decimal Degrees | | | | Extension of beach monitored (km) | Declared Protected Area (Yes/No) | Annual Nesting Abundance | | | Tagging Program (FT, ST, PIT) | Tissue Sampling (Yes/No) | Organization or entity providing data |
|-----|-------------------------------------|----------------|--------|-------------------|--------|------------------|---|-----------|---------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|--|--|-------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| | | Start | Finish | Start | Finish | | Latitude | Longitude | Females Exact Count | Clutches Exact Count | | | Number of Nests | | | | | |
| Lo | | | | | | | | ° | | ° | | Choose an item. | | | | Choose an item. | Choose an item. | |
| | | | | | | | | ° | | ° | | Choose an item. | | | | Choose an item. | Choose an item. | |
| Lk | | | | | | | | ° | | ° | | Choose an item. | | | | Choose an item. | Choose an item. | |
| | | | | | | | | ° | | ° | | Choose an item. | | | | Choose an item. | Choose an item. | |
| Dc | | | | | | | | ° | | ° | | Choose an item. | | | | Choose an item. | Choose an item. | |
| | | | | | | | | ° | | ° | | Choose an item. | | | | Choose an item. | Choose an item. | |
| Ei | | | | | | | | ° | | ° | | Choose an item. | | | | Choose an item. | Choose an item. | |
| | | | | | | | | ° | | ° | | Choose an item. | | | | Choose an item. | Choose an item. | |
| Cm | | | | | | | | ° | | ° | | Choose an item. | | | | Choose an item. | Choose an item. | |
| | | | | | | | | ° | | ° | | Choose an item. | | | | Choose an item. | Choose an item. | |
| Cc | | | | | | | | ° | | ° | | Choose an item. | | | | Choose an item. | Choose an item. | |
| | | | | | | | | ° | | ° | | Choose an item. | | | | Choose an item. | Choose an item. | |



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Table 3: Important foraging sites for sea turtle conservation

- a. *This table is intended to contain information for foraging sites being studied for each species. For marine habitats that have multiple species present, enter the specific site under the heading for the priority species at that site.*
- b. *Name and geographic location: Provide the name of the site and geographic location in decimal degrees in Lat/Long (one reference point).*
- c. *Area: Indicate the size of the study site (in Kilometers²).*
- d. *Declared protection area: Indicate if the area is declared as some type of protected area.*
- e. *Life stage: Indicate the life stage or stages found in the study area (juvenile, subadult or adult).*
- f. *Information from tagging program: Indicate if there have been any tagging activities at the in-water site by using the letters of the type of tagging being done: flipper tagging (FT), passive integrated transponder (PIT) tagging, and satellite telemetry (ST) programs. If possible, on a separate sheet, or as attached reference provide greater detail about the type of tagging efforts conducted. Also provide satellite telemetry maps or flipper tag recovery information if available.*
- g. *Tissue sampling: Indicate if there has been tissue sampling conducted at this site. This includes skin, blood, and other body tissues. On a separate sheet, or as attached references describe these tissue sampling programs in greater detail. For example, were samples collected for genetic, contaminant, and/or stable isotope studies?*
- h. *Indicate the organization or entity providing the data.*
- i. *When adding new rows, please copy and paste the drop down menus when applicable.*



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| Species | | Description of geographic location | Declared Protection Area | Tagging Program | Tissue Sampling |
|---------|---------------------|--|--------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Lo | In water Occurrence | | | | |
| | Foraging Sites | | | | |
| Lk | In water Occurrence | | | | |
| | Foraging Sites | | | | |
| Dc | In water Occurrence | Central California tagging; Aerial Surveys from Central California, OR and WA | | X | |
| | Foraging Sites | | | | |
| Ei | In water Occurrence | | | | |
| | Foraging Sites | Florida Keys: Snorkel Surveys | | X | |
| Cm | In water Occurrence | San Diego Bay, Los Alamitos Bay, San Gabriel River, Seal Beach NWR (tagging and inwater capture) | | X | |
| | Foraging Sites | | | | |
| Cc | In water Occurrence | | | | |
| | Foraging Sites | Bahia de Ascension, Mexico | | X | |