



IAC BULLETIN

PUBLISHED BY THE PRO TEMPORE SECRETARIAT OF THE INTER-AMERICAN CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION OF SEA TURTLES (IAC)

IV Meeting of the IAC Scientific Committee



The Fourth Meeting of the IAC Scientific Committee was held July 24th–27th, 2007 in the city of Antigua, Guatemala, declared a world cultural heritage site by UNESCO. Although the agenda was quite full, the Committee reached agreements on the many tasks previously assigned during the IAC COP 3. The main points of the agenda were to provide follow-up and recommendations on the implementation of the three technical Resolutions — Conservation of the Leatherback Turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*),

Conservation of the Hawksbill Turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) and Reduction of the Adverse Impacts of Fisheries. In addition to discussing the Hawksbill Resolution's implementation, the Committee provided recommendations for organizing a technical workshop on the conservation status of this species in the Wider Caribbean and Western Atlantic. IAC Annual Reports were also analyzed and emphasis was placed on the reporting mechanisms for specific Resolutions. Another working group focused on standardizing methods and formulas used within the IAC. This group recommended adopting existing manuals (for example, the one by the IUCN Marine Turtle Specialist Group). To conclude, the 2007-2008 Scientific

Committee Work Plan was defined, indicating specific activities to be carried out as well as continuing with inter-session working groups. Finally, by way of the host organization, the National Council for Protected Areas of Guatemala (CONAP) an extraordinary meeting was held to recognize the work of the IAC and its committees, during which the mayor of the Municipality of Antigua declared the members of the Scientific Committee "Distinguished visitors". The results of the meeting will be posted on our website shortly.



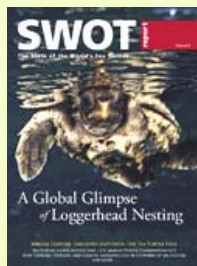
IN BRIEF:

- **Uruguay has ratified the IAC!** It is our pleasure to inform you that on May 8th, 2007 Uruguay ratified the Convention in their national legislation (Law No. 18.129). A copy of that instrument is being sent to Republic of Venezuela, the official depository of the IAC. Once it is delivered, the Convention will enter into force. We congratulate all of those whose efforts have made this possible.
- During the **14th meeting of the CITES COP** (Netherlands, June 2007) a decision was made to support the IAC and SPAW Protocol in carrying out a technical meeting on hawksbill turtles in the Wider Caribbean region—CITES Document CoP14 Com. I. 11. (www.cites.org).
- A new report "**Turning the Tide: Exploitation, Trade and Management of Marine Turtles in the Lesser Antilles, Central America, Columbia and Venezuela**" by A. Bräutigam and K. Eckert is now available from TRAFFIC (www.traffic.org/content/952). This report was commissioned by the CITES Secretariat and emphasizes the challenges facing management and conservation strategies for this species in the Wider Caribbean region.

SWOT State of the World's Sea Turtles

The State of the World's Sea Turtles "SWOT" is a coalition of worldwide conservationists offering a solution to the lack of a centralized resource for global sea turtle data. The goal of SWOT is to gather and synthesize data and openly share it with all audiences. Sea turtle conservationists can contribute and compare their data in an

interactive global database, emphasizing *Dermochelys coriacea* and *Caretta caretta* sea turtles. Each year their results are published in the *SWOT*



Report, which include the current worldwide status of sea turtle populations, gaps in research and priorities and recommendations. SWOT also provides an outreach toolkit and outreach grants for campaigns involving SWOT Reports. For more information check out their website www.seaturtlestatus.org

COMING SOON:

The IAC Website is being re-organized. After listening to feedback from frequent IAC website users and considering that the IAC is growing in number of meetings, documents and publications (we currently have 12 publications available), we hope to offer a more user friendly site enabling visitors to find specific documents, reports, approved resolutions or general sea turtle information. The site has over 5,000 visitors per month and is on the rise. We hope this new organization is useful and look forward to your comments.



28th Sea Turtle Symposium



The 28th Annual Symposium on Sea Turtle Biology and Conservation will be held from January 19-26, 2008 in Loreto, Baja California Sur, Mexico. This year's theme is "Native Oceans", or indigenous conservation. Indigenous conservation is a key component of international conservation efforts, as native people are often those living closest with the natural environment, have some of the deepest cultural ties to sea turtles and have a direct

need to coexist with them. This theme will carry over into the symposiums scientific papers as authors consider the historical composition of natural marine systems, pre-exploitation populations and the shifting baseline concept as it relates to sea turtles.

Regional meetings, such as RETOMALA (Latin American Sea Turtle Specialists Meeting - www.ciidirsinialoa.ipn.mx/vidasilvestre/retomalaxv.htm), will commence on the 19th in con-

junction with the Grupo Tortugero meeting. Grupo Tortugero (www.grupo.tortugero.org) is a global network of individuals, communities, organizations and institutions dedicated to sea turtle conservation in Mexico.

For more information or to register for the Symposium: www.seaturtle.org/symposium/

Abstract Deadline and Early Registration: **September 15th, 2007**

Report on the Effectiveness of Circle Hooks

One of the largest threats to sea turtles is incidental capture in commercial fishing gear. Therefore, scientists, fishermen and conservationists are working together to develop successful mitigation measures to avoid this threat. Replacing traditional fishing hooks with wider, circular hooks has been mentioned as a promising new conservation tool. However, the few

research studies have shown varying results. The current article "Do circle hooks reduce the mortality of sea turtles in pelagic longlines" examines available studies regarding the effects of replacing traditional hooks with circle hooks for loggerhead and leatherback sea turtles. The author concludes that circle hooks have the potential to reduce sea turtle mortality

in some, but not all pelagic longline fisheries and that they should first be field tested in that fishery to ensure the reduction in incidental capture. If you would like a copy of the Lenfest Ocean Program Research Series report summarizing the study's findings please contact info@lenfest.org or view the article on their website www.lenfestocean.org.

Species Update . . .

The leatherback turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*) is once again the focus of a special issue from *Chelonian Conservation and Biology* (www.chelonian.org), the International Journal of Turtle and Tortoise Research. Eleven years ago a special issue called attention to the urgent need for the recovery of this species, generating significant positive actions. This year's issue details the latest in research efforts to restore the *Dermochelys* populations across the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. 22 con-

tributions from 76 authors address five major areas: conservation planning, population status, stock structure, demography, and fisheries interactions. We hope this will be of interest and value to all those working in sea turtle conservation matters. To see this issue's full introduction "Refocusing on Leatherbacks: Conservation Challenges and Signs of Success" go to the following webpage: www.allenpress.com/pdf/ccab-06-01-23_1_6.pdf.

Contact Information:

National Parks Foundation
C/O IAC Pro Tempore Secretariat
P.O. Box 1108-1002, San Jose,
Costa Rica

Tel. +506 257 2239
Fax +506 222 4732
www.iacseaturtle.org

