

IAC BULLETIN

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

IAC Capacity Building Workshop



Photo: Ana Barragan

The IAC held their first regional capacity building workshop on sea turtle conservation and management techniques for individuals responsible for sea turtle research and protection efforts in Central America. The event was held at the Caribbean Conservation Corporation's Biological Research Station in Tortuguero, Costa Rica from August 31st to September 4th, 2008. Twenty four individuals from Central America, as well as Colombia and Mexico,

participated in the event, which over the course of five days provided hands on training to project leaders and government employees. At the same time, the workshop promoted information exchange, network building and standardized techniques and reporting throughout the region.



Photo: Claudio Quesada

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Some of the workshops main achievements were: the revision of the draft manual on sea turtle management and conservation techniques on Central American nesting beaches, recommendations on key topics, such as standardization of terms, hatchery and egg management and suggested minimum data to be collected on nesting beaches in the region. It is hoped that this event will be the first of a series of future IAC standardization workshops. More information on this workshop will be posted soon the IAC website.



Photo: Claudio Quesada

NEW: IAC TRAINING MANUAL (IN SPANISH)

Manual sobre técnicas de manejo y conservación de las tortugas marinas en playas de anidación de Centroamérica (Propuesta Base)



IN BRIEF:

- **Change in Date for COP4.** Unfortunately, due to budgetary constraints for some of the Contracting Parties, quorum was not reached to hold the COP4 scheduled for this year and will be re-scheduled for March 5th and 6th, 2009.
- **IAC Regional Hawksbill Workshop.** The workshop steering committee has tentatively scheduled the event for the first week of June, 2009 in Mexico. The general objectives of this workshop are to evaluate the current status of hawksbills in the Wider Caribbean and Western Atlantic, as well as the threats for their population integrity and the habitat in the region, with emphasis on evaluating nesting populations, in order to establish the bases for a regional conservation strategy and to encourage regional collaboration among governments, fisheries, tourism and development organizations, among other stakeholders.
- **29th Symposium on Sea Turtle Biology and Conservation.** The symposium will be held in Brisbane, Australia from February 17-19, 2009. This years theme "Creating, Community, Collaborating", will explore issues such as building communication and networking at local, regional, and global scales. For more information: www.turtlesbrisbane2009.org/hm-1-1>WelcomeSearch.htm

IAC Sea Turtle Session at WHMSI 3

The IAC organized a sea turtle conservation session at the 3rd meeting of the Western Hemisphere Migratory Species Initiative (WHMSI) in Asuncion, Paraguay last July. WHMSI is a very important opportunity to inform participants from different sectors regarding the critical state of sea turtle populations in the Western Hemisphere. Cooperation between these

nations is essential for their conservation. During the session, representatives from Karumbe, CONANP and WWF presented aspects regarding hawksbill and leatherback conservation as well as impacts from fisheries. The group focused on two transversal challenges facing these species, climate change and fisheries interactions and recommended specific, tangi-

ble, short term actions to help mitigate them. It was determined that information gaps and capacity building needs exist, coinciding with WHMSI's objective. General recommendations such as, including the actions identified by the group in WHMSI's future planning for capacity building and the inclusion of other marine migratory species into WHMSI.



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5th IAC Scientific Committee Meeting



The 5th IAC Scientific Committee Meeting was held from July 29th to August 1st, 2008 in San Jose, Costa Rica. The meeting began with an overview of the current state of the Convention, followed by presentations of initiatives supporting the Convention's objectives that occurred since the last meeting. The urgent need to establish collaborative links and synergies with others having similar objectives was emphasized. The committee completed the document prepared by the Fisheries

Interactions Working Group during the past meeting. This document will provide concrete recommendations for the Parties, facilitate the implementation of the Resolution "Reduction of the adverse impact of fisheries on sea turtles" and assist Parties in complying with commitments in other international forums. Due to the complexity of regulating fisheries activities outside the jurisdictional waters of the Parties, the Committee recommends Parties support the recent FAO initiative on

measures to be taken to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, and ensure that sea turtle conservation is clearly included in the measure. 2008 Annual Reports were analyzed and recommendations were made in order to simplify the process and improve the usefulness of the information. For further details on this meeting, the full Report of the V Meeting of the Scientific Committee can be found on our website. www.iacseaturtle.org/English/comcien.asp

First Eastern Pacific Hawksbill Workshop

Eastern Pacific Hawksbill Project

www.propeninsula.org

- Initiated in 2007 to promote hawksbill research and conservation and raise awareness in the region.
- El Salvador recorded more than 160 nests (> 65% of all nesting reported in the region), making it possibly the largest nesting site in the Eastern Pacific.
- Helped organize the First Regional Hawksbill Workshop, creating the Eastern Pacific Hawksbill Initiative.
- Satellite tagged 3 hawksbills in El Salvador (including the first hawksbill ever tagged in the Eastern Pacific Ocean) and 3 in Mexico.



Photo: Ingrid L. Yáñez Sadir

The first workshop for the Hawksbill Turtle in the Eastern Pacific was held in Los Cobanos, El Salvador from July 15-17, 2008. Hawksbill turtles were once abundant in the Eastern Pacific Ocean. Today they are among the most endangered sea turtle populations worldwide. Even so, there is little scientific information on these hawksbills which is a major impediment to their recovery. In order to gather data on this species, a group of 25 sea turtle specialists from different countries of the Americas participated in the event. The goals of the workshop were to compile current scientific knowledge, bring focus on

hawksbill conservation to El Salvador, the country with the greatest nesting density registered to date for this population, identify priority research sites and topics, main threats, consolidate multinational alliances and projects for their conservation and establish future goals. All observations shared at the meeting were compiled into a set of summary maps to show current knowledge of hawksbill distribution and relative abundance in the region. According to this information, almost 60% of all nesting observations were reported for El Salvador and 40% for Mexico.

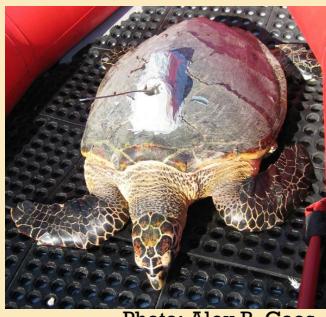


Photo: Alex R. Gaos

Most other countries reported < 10 nests per year. The main threats identified for the Eastern Pacific hawksbills were fisheries bycatch, egg collection and habitat alteration. The full minutes of the meeting are available in Spanish at www.scribd.com/doc/5917204/ICAPO-Memorias-1Reunion.

For updates on satellite tracking of hawksbills tagged in the Eastern Pacific Ocean go to www.seaturtle.org.

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