



# Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles

## News Bulletin No. 15

June 2012

## 5th Meeting of the IAC Consultative Committee of Experts

The 5th Meeting of the Consultative Committee of Experts (CCE) was held in West Virginia, USA from May 30 – June 1 of this year. A summary of the results of this meeting is provided below:

- Analysis of compliance with four IAC resolutions (conservation of hawksbill (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) and leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*) turtles, fisheries bycatch and climate change).
- Revision and recommendations made on the exceptions presented by Panama and Guatemala in their 2011 annual reports.
- Completion of a document on guidelines for preparing sea turtle action plans.
- Recommendations made on the issue of Eastern Pacific leatherback conservation.
- Preparation of the document CIT-CCE5-2012-Tec.3 “Eastern Pacific Leatherback Turtles (*Dermochelys coriacea*): A summary of Current Conservation Status, Challenges and Opportunities.”

We would like to thank our sponsor, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, who provided us with the use of their National Conservation Training Center for the meeting. We also thank the CCE Chair, Mr. Paul Hoetjes and the Vice-Chair, Mr. Joca Thomé, for their leadership to achieve great results. Honduras has graciously offered to host the next Consultative Committee meeting and, thus we would like to offer our sincere gratitude to the Honduran Focal Point. The final documents will be available soon on the IAC website ([www.iacseaturtle.org](http://www.iacseaturtle.org)).



Plenary CCE5



Delegation (left to right): Scientific Committee Chair, CCE Vice-Chair (Brazil), CCE Chair (The Netherlands), IAC Secretary



Delegation (left to right): Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico, USA



Consultative Committee of Experts (CCE5)CCE5, National Conservation Training Center, West Virginia, USA

## Next IAC Meeting– 9th Scientific Committee Meeting

The 9th Meeting of the IAC Scientific Committee is tentatively scheduled to be held in October of 2012. More information will be available soon on our webpage [www.iacseaturtle.org](http://www.iacseaturtle.org)



# Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles

News Bulletin No. 15

June 2012

## World Sea Turtle Day Celebration

**Venezuela Joins the IAC in Celebrating World Sea Turtle Day.** On Monday, June 4th, the Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in Washington, DC organized in its Bolivarian Hall, a group of experts to discuss how “Sea Turtles Connect Us” as a part of the Oceans week celebration and world sea turtle day, which is celebrated on June 16. The goal of the event was to increase public awareness on the activities of the IAC and sea turtle conservation in the Americas.

The invited speakers were Ms. Edis Solórzano, the Venezuelan delegate of the IAC Consultative Committee, Mr. Earl Possardt of the USFWS and USA IAC Consultative Committee delegate and Ms. Verónica Cáceres Chamorro the IAC PT Secretary. The panel discussed topics such as the history of turtles and their connections during their life cycle since turtles act as ambassadors of the sea by uniting people and countries, the conservation status of species in the Americas, their challenges and threats as well as their conservation successes in recovering sea turtle populations after many hard years of work. For example, some populations have shown recovery after many hard years of work as in the case of the olive ridley turtle (*Lepidochelys olivacea*). In addition to the presentations, videos were shown, educational materials were distributed to participants, a drawing for prizes like books and turtle related items was held and after the event, the Venezuelan Embassy held a reception.

We would like to thank Dr. Ángelo Rivero Santos, Charge D’Affaires of the Venezuelan Embassy, and his team for providing us with this opportunity, the Venezuelan Focal Point and all of those who provided us with excellent educational materials to distribute among the participating public. We especially recognize the collaboration of the Comisión Nacional de Áreas Protegidas-México, Projeto Tamar –Brazil,, USFWS- USA, WIDECAS and Humane Society.

We invite you to read the press release on the website of the Venezuelan Embassy as well as on the IAC website for more information on the event:

[World Sea Turtle Day Celebration at the Venezuelan Embassy](#)



Ms. Clara Rodríguez, Dr. Ángelo Rivero and Verónica Cáceres





# Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles

News Bulletin No. 15

June 2012

## Strengthening Efforts Through Our MOU's

### Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC)

The U.S. Delegate of the IAC Scientific Committee, Jeffrey Seminoff, presented the technical document "Conservation Status and Habitat Use of Sea Turtles in the Eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO)" before the third meeting of the IATTC Scientific Advisory Committee held in La Jolla, California (USA) from May 15-18, 2012. The IAC signed an MOU with IATTC in June of 2011 at the 5th IAC Conference of the Parties. Under this agreement, the IAC took the first step to strengthen potential collaborations by providing the IATTC with technical information prepared by the IAC Scientific Committee on the conservation status, habitat use, and movements of sea turtles in the EPO. This document can be downloaded from [the IAC website](#). The MOU presents an excellent opportunity for both organizations to strengthen their work in order to find creative and effective solutions for the challenges faced by sea turtles at sea. The IAC is very optimistic in continuing to develop joint activities with regional fisheries management organizations.

### Latin American Organization for Fisheries Development (OLDEPESCA)

The IAC PT Secretary gave a presentation in the XXII Conference of the Ministers of OLDEPESCA that was held May 17-18 in La Habana, Cuba. During the IAC presentation, the Secretary alerted the participants to the critical status of some species of sea turtles like the Eastern Pacific leatherback and the need to collaborate with the fisheries sector to work together on specific activities to help this population recover. She highlighted the importance of renewing cooperative efforts in topics of common interest, such as sustainable fisheries, biodiversity conservation and climate change. The IAC signed an MOU with OLDEPESCA in November of 2004.

## IAC Outreach

- ❖ **Outreach to Cuba.** The IAC PT Secretary attended a meeting at the Department of Foreign Affairs of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment in La Habana, Cuba on May 18th in order to increase awareness on the Convention and its activities as well as explore possibilities for Cuba's participation in the IAC. Dr. Enrique Moret, Director of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Osvaldo Ruiz, advisor, and a representative from the Fisheries Research Center participated in the meeting. Cuba expressed interest in participating as an observer in the IAC meetings in order to familiarize themselves further with our work and to find synergies that would allow us to continue to negotiate their becoming a party country in the near future. Furthermore, they offered their technical support by exchanging scientific information on sea turtles that inhabit and nest in Cuban waters.
- ❖ **UNEP Workshop.** The IAC participated in the "Inter-regional Workshop on Long-term Marine Spatial Planning and Transborder Management of Marine Mammals" held in Panama in May. During the meeting the topic of the importance of including other migratory species like sea turtles and sharks in transborder management was discussed, since these species migrate between borders of different nations and, furthermore, they are important to the local economy, play a significant ecological role and, as keystone species, have a large impact on the conservation of ecosystems in general. See [news and events](#) for more information.
- ❖ **Cooperation with ACAP.** The IAC was invited to participate as an observer in the fourth Meeting of the Parties to the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels, which was held in April in Lima, Peru. The importance of finding synergies with ACAP stems from the fact that albatrosses and petrels face similar threats as sea turtles when longline fisheries are in operation and, therefore, it would be advantageous to work together to find solutions to mitigate bycatch of these species with methods favorable to both sea turtles and birds.