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Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles News Bulletin No. 16 December 2012

IAC Wishes You a Happy Holiday

The IAC *Pro Tempore* Secretariat wishes you and your family a happy holiday season and successful New Year in 2013. We are pleased to end the year by sharing with you our bulletin full of the latest activities and achievements of the IAC, thanks to the shared efforts of the members of the Convention.

We look forward to working together over the next year as we move forward in achieving our goal to protect and conserve sea turtles in the Americas.

Verónica Cáceres Chamorro
IAC *Pro Tempore* Secretary

Belinda M. Dick
IAC Technical Assistant

9th Meeting of the IAC Scientific Committee

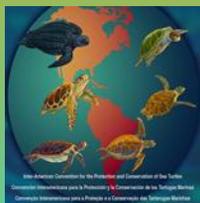
The IAC SC9 was held in Buenos Aires, Argentina from October 24-26 of 2012. Below is a summary of the results and agreements of the meeting:

- The components to be included in the table on important nesting sites of the IAC annual report in order to analyze population trends were identified.
- Final recommendations on the exceptions presented by Panama and Guatemala were given.
- The database for storing information from IAC annual reports was reviewed and approved.
- A list of the types of Turtle Excluder Devices currently being used by IAC Parties was prepared.
- Guidelines for applying the forms to collect field data on sea turtle interactions with gillnets were made.
- The SC agreed to compile information on onboard management practices for handling sea turtles incidentally caught in coastal fisheries, support the Parties in their compliance with the Climate Change Resolution and prepare a model analysis of index beaches to be presented at the COP6.

The final products will soon be available on the IAC website (www.iacseaturtle.org).



Delegates and advisors from the 15 IAC member countries, one representative from the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP) and the following accredited NGOs, attended: Karumbé, Argentina's Regional Program for Sea Turtle Research and Conservation (PRICTMA) and WWF International. We greatly appreciate the invaluable support of our sponsors and host, the Secretary of Environment and Sustainable Development of Argentina, the Department of Environmental Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Relations of Argentina, and the Buenos Aires Zoo.



IAC Member Country Delegates and Accredited Observers

The IAC addresses the need to implement measures harmonized among nations, coordinate multilateral conservation and protection actions, and oversee the implementation of a regional agenda that will lead to the recovery of the 6 species of sea turtles. Achieving this would not be possible without the individuals nominated to represent their Party countries before the Conference of the Parties, Scientific and Consultative Committees as well as the IAC accredited observers. We would like to thank all of those individuals who, year after year, have dedicated their efforts and time to helping the IAC achieve its objectives.

How can I become an IAC observer?
Organizations or individuals of the private sector, scientific institutions and nongovernmental organizations with recognized expertise in matters pertaining to the Convention may solicit their accreditation to participate as observers in the Conference of the Parties, in accordance with Article V (6) of the text of the Convention. [More information available here.](#)

“Within each one of us is the strength necessary to meet the challenges facing sea turtles and search for their solutions, together we can recover their populations”





Regional Meetings

Memorandum of Understanding IAC-Ramsar Convention

The IAC signed an MoU with Ramsar Convention at the Regional meeting of the Americas during Ramsar's COP11 held in Bucarest, Romania on July 8 of 2012. The Ramsar Convention maintains a List of Wetlands of International Importance that includes a number of sites which are located in the Americas and are of great importance for sea turtles species. Therefore, through this MoU, we will work together for the wise use and conservation of wetlands, habitats that are vital for the nesting and foraging of sea turtles and to maintain the biodiversity and the health of wetlands. The joint activities to be undertaken in this new partnership with the Ramsar Convention includes among others the regular exchange of information on relevant activities and actions of the both Conventions, which are of mutual interest and benefit, to enable early detection of threats to sea turtles in Ramsar Sites and to facilitate the studies needed to identify measures for the mitigation of such threats. During the signing of the Memorandum Dr. Anada Tiega, Ramsar's Secretary General, welcomed this cooperation that will significantly increase protection of coastal-marine habitats and the conservation of migratory species biodiversity. The PT Secretariat celebrates this important collaboration and hopes to gain the support of the Contracting Parties through actions that help implement on the ground this Memorandum



Secretary General Ramsar Mr. Anada Tiega and IAC PT Secretary Ms. Verónica Cáceres Ch.
Credit: COP11 Ramsar Adriana Trandafirescu



Standing Committee on Statistics (SCRS) of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas

The IAC PT Secretary participated in the SCRS meeting held in Madrid, Spain from October 1-5 of 2012. Among the recommendations of the SCRS sub-committee on ecosystems, is to undertake an assessment of the impact of ICCAT fisheries on sea turtles collaborating with the IAC to collect data for this purpose. The SCRS recommended that the ICCAT Parties strengthen cooperation and data exchange with the IAC by means of a memorandum of understanding between both organizations. The complete report on this meeting can be found on the ICCAT website [here](#).

Outreach - Colombia

The IAC PT Secretary met in July of 2012 with members of the Ministry of the Environment (Department of Marine-Coastal Affairs), Foreign Ministry of Colombia and WWF, following-up on the interest expressed by Colombia to promote the ratification of the IAC. The next steps to take within the Ministry of the Environment were defined as well as coordination with other governmental entities. WWF –Colombia offered to accompany the government throughout this process and we hope to see favorable results very soon.



IAC PT Secretary with Elizabeth Taylor, Dept. Marine, Coastal and Aquatic Affairs and her team, WWF- Colombia and representative of the Min. of Foreign Affairs.



Turtle News in the IAC Region

WWF Global Marine Turtle Strategy 2012-2020

This strategy outlines WWF's priorities for marine turtle conservation, taking into account their conservation status and needs. From this global strategy, operational strategies and action plans will be developed at regional, multi-country and national levels.

WWF'S GLOBAL MARINE TURTLE STRATEGIES

- Continue to identify critical habitats in each ocean basin, and protect/effectively manage those that are known.
- Develop alternatives to over-exploitation, and reduce illegal trade.
- Reduce bycatch in artisanal and industrial fisheries.
- Support policies to reduce marine turtle mortality and improve implementation of existing agreements and international instruments.
- Implement strategies to reduce the impact of climate change.
- Highlight and strengthen the value of living turtles to the livelihoods of local communities, and to decision-makers.



<http://wwf.panda.org/>

IAC Country in Action- Venezuela

The recent article **Population Estimate and Migration Routes of the Leatherback Turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*) in Cipara and Querepare Beaches, Paria Peninsula, Venezuela between the Years 2000-2006**, presents the results from migration, recapture and morphometric data as well as estimates female growth rate and population size. The article can be found in Spanish in the [Boletín de Investigaciones Marinas y Costeras – INVEMAR](#).

For the first time in Venezuela, a **satellite tracking device has been placed on a male green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) in the Isla de Aves Wildlife Refuge**, home to the second largest population in the entire Caribbean. You can track this turtle by clicking [here](#) or visit www.seaturtle.org.

To read more about this important population see the recent publication **Reproductive activity of *Chelonia mydas* (Testudines: Cheloniidae) in Isla de Aves, Venezuela (2001-2008)** [here](#). Only the summary is available in English.



Cipara, Alejandro Fallabrino



Marco Garcia