



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

News Bulletin No. 17

May 2013

6th Meeting of the IAC Consultative Committee of Experts

The 6th Meeting of the IAC Consultative Committee of Experts (CCE) took place via video conference, on March 13-15, 2013. This was the first time the modern technology of video conference was used with the intention of increasing the participation and significantly reducing the costs for the IAC Party countries. This technology successfully resulted in the attendance of 10 countries and representatives from the scientific, NGO and private and productive sectors. Below is a summary of its results:

- The 2013-2014 CCE Work Plan was updated.
- A draft Resolution on the “Economic Subsistence Exceptions under Article IV (3 a and b) of the Text of the IAC Convention by Guatemala and Panama for *Lepidochelys olivacea* Egg Harvesting” was prepared to be presented at the 6th Conference of the Parties (COP6).
- The document “Guidelines for Preparing Sea Turtle Action Plans for IAC Party Countries” was approved and will be presented to the COP6 in the form of a technical document.
- A report on the Compliance by Party Countries with IAC Resolutions was prepared and will be presented at the COP6.
- The task force for the recovery of the Eastern Pacific leatherback prepared a report and recommendations to the COP6 on how to improve compliance with the Resolution on leatherback turtle conservation (CITCOP2-2004-R1).

We would like to thank the Department of State of the United States of American government for organizing the video conference from their office and Mr. Paul Hoetjes, Chair and Mr. Joca Thomé, Vice-Chair of the CCE for their guidance in producing solid documents that will be taken to the next Conference of the Parties for discussion. The meeting report can be found [here](#) on the IAC website..



Delegation (left to right): USA , Chair CCE (the Netherlands), IAC Secretary, USA and NGO Sector



Delegation (left to right): Peru , Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, México and Brazil

Upcoming IAC Meeting

Sixth Conference of the Parties

The Sixth Conference of the Parties (COP6) will take place from June 26 - 28 of 2013 on Santa Cruz Island, Galápagos, Ecuador. More information is available on our web site www.iacseaturtle.org.



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Climate Change and Sea Turtles

During the fifth meeting of the IAC Consultative Committee of Experts, the Committee analyzed compliance with IAC Resolutions and noted a low level of compliance with Resolution CIT-COP4-2009-R5: Adaptation of sea turtle habitats to climate change. The CCE5 recommended that the IAC Parties begin taking appropriate actions considering the possibility of available international resources and the work being done by organizations like WWF, which has become a leading organization on this topic.

Following-up on this recommendation, WWF provided the IAC with technical assistance in preparing an online survey in order to help us better understand the challenges faced by IAC Parties in implementing actions to monitor climate changes and its affects on sea turtles. We would like to thank those delegates of the Consultative and Scientific Committees who participated in our survey since, based on their results, the WWF expert Marianne Fish was able to give a webinar to the IAC Scientific and Consultative Committee members, which was held on March 18. The objective of this webinar was to identify specific activities that can be carried out in collaboration with WWF to guide IAC Parties on how to improve their implementation of the Climate Change Resolution. The following activities were proposed:

- ❖ Promote research and monitoring of sea turtles and their habitats
- ❖ Include marine and coastal habitats in climate change adaptation programs
- ❖ Identify and implement corrective measures and adaptation to climate change within management plans and sea turtle conservation
- ❖ Execute mitigation measures for non-climatic threats to improve the conservation status of sea turtle populations and their habitats so that they are better able to respond to the impacts of climate change
- ❖ Promote technological transfer and technical capacity between countries, other conventions and organizations involved in this topic within the area of the Convention



Moving forward with tackling climate change: climate adaptation and marine turtles
Marianne Fish
mfish@wwfcanada.org

Click [here](#) to see the online webinar on climate change and sea turtles. Available in Spanish only.

Climate change and its effects on sea turtles is a highly complex issue and we greatly appreciate the collaboration of WWF and their willingness to share their expert knowledge on the topic and to continue working together with the IAC.



We recommend that you visit the [WWF](#) website and check out their adaptation to climate change for marine turtles project (ACT). The ACT project is examining how coastal ecosystems and marine turtles are affected by climate change and the best ways to reduce their vulnerability to changing environmental conditions. On their website you will find information and tools on this topic, including:

- ❖ **Adaptation to Climate Change Toolkit for Coasts** – includes reports and manuals in order to help incorporate climate change into existing conservation, research and management programs.
- ❖ **Monitoring:** how to monitor the impacts of climate change on the coast.
- ❖ **Science:** latest publications on marine turtles and climate change and a study on hawksbill turtles as indicator species for climate change.
- ❖ **Capacity Building:** provides materials on capacity-building, webinars and much more.



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Achievements and Activities in the IAC Region

Economic Valuation of the Environmental Services Provided by the Caribbean Wetlands Used by Marine Turtles in Venezuela

Dr. Joaquín Buitrago of the Margarita marine research station, La Salle Foundation of Natural Sciences, identified the main functions of marine turtle life history that help maintain ecosystem services and presented options for their economic valuation, using data obtained along the Caribbean of Venezuela. The article can be found in Spanish [here](#).

Sharks and Manta Rays Receive Protection Under CITES

We congratulate our IAC delegate, Eduardo Espinoza, who represented Ecuador in the 16th Meeting of the [Conference of the Parties to CITES](#), that was held in Bangkok in March of 2013. The CITES Parties took decisive action to protect these vulnerable shark and ray species from over-exploitation for international trade and to help maintain sustainable fishery resources.



Puerto Rico Declared Leatherback Turtle Nesting Site Protected Area

The area, known as the [Northeast Ecological Corridor](#), covers more than 1,200 hectares (2,900 acres), which protect different types of ecosystems from subtropical dry forest to tropical rain forest in addition to being one of the most important nesting sites for the leatherback turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*) in the United States. We congratulate our Puerto Rican colleagues who have supported this initiative for many years and made it a reality.

Sea Turtles at the Embassy Tour 2013 – Nicaraguan Embassy

The IAC received an invitation to participate in the “Embassy Tour –Nicaragua 2013” that was held on May 4th at the Nicaraguan Embassy in Washington, DC. During the event, informative brochures were handed out and videos were played on the protection and conservation of sea turtles in the IAC region. The Nicaraguan embassy received approximately 2,000 visitors during the occasion, which made it an excellent opportunity to educate the public and raise awareness to plight of sea turtles in the Americas.





Meetings in the IAC Region

“Turtles 2013” 4th Turtle Project Meeting in Cuba

The 4th meeting of the turtle project and immunopotentiality in aquaculture will be held in October of 2013 in Cuba in order to increase opportunities for scientific exchange in various topics of interest related to the conservation and management of these species. Main turtle topics for discussion: 1. Ecotourism and communities, 2. Monitoring in different areas, 3. Threats and their prevention, 4. Achievements and shortcomings of ex situ conservation, 5. Immunobiology, fibropapillomas and sex determination and 6. Vaccines and probiotics. For further details contact Ms. Rocmira Pérez: inmunobyc@finlay.edu.cu.

Latin American Congress on the Recovery of Marine Fauna in Argentina

The Marine World Foundation is organizing the 3rd Latin American Congress on the Recovery of Marine Fauna, which will be held in the month of April of 2014, in San Clemente of Tuyú, Province of Buenos Aires, Argentina, in the Marine World installations. The objective of the Congress is to continue sharing experiences between institutions and individuals working on topics related to the recovery of marine fauna, updating us on the work being carried out, exchanging information and experiences. For more information on the Marine World Foundation please go to: www.fundmundomarinero.org.ar or e-mail congresos@fundmundomarinero.org.ar.

New IAC Technical Documents

The following IAC technical documents are now available on the [IAC website](http://www.iacseaturtle.org):

- ❖ **CIT-CC8-2011-Tec.1:** Conservation status and habitat use of sea turtles in the Eastern Pacific Ocean
- ❖ **CIT-CC8-2011-Tec.2:** Manual of Management Techniques for Sea Turtle Conservation at Nesting Beaches
- ❖ **CITCIT-CCE5-2012-Tec.3:** Eastern Pacific Leatherback Turtles (*Dermochelys coriacea*): a Summary of Current Conservation Status, Challenges and Opportunities
- ❖ **CIT-CCE5-2012-Tec.4:** Guidelines for Preparing Sea Turtle Action Plans for IAC Party Countries



Lets Celebrate World Sea Turtle Day!

The IAC would like to draw the attention of all countries in the region to take actions to raise awareness and celebrate these charismatic species during World Sea Turtle Day celebrated on June 16th.

Please share any photos or information on your activities celebrating this important day by sending them to the PT Secretariat at secretario@iacseaturtle.org so they may be included in our next bulletin!