

Report of the Third Meeting of the Scientific Committee

I) Summary of the meeting activities:

After adopting the agenda and program, the first morning was spent in plenary, reviewing the general responsibilities and mandates of the Committee, pending tasks from the Second Meeting of the Committee, and tasks recently assigned by COP 2 and the First Meeting of the Consultative Committee. Much of the remainder of the meeting was dedicated to specific working groups, which met individually, and reported back in plenary when their work was completed, then reassembling into subsequent working groups. Depending on composition, these groups worked in either English or Spanish (Annex 1 and 2).

Eight working groups met for periods varying from several hours to several days, and produced reports: 1) Follow-up to the resolution on conservation of *Dermochelys coriacea*, 2) the status of *Eretmochelys imbricata*, 3) Fisheries interactions with marine turtles, 4) Recommendations regarding Turtle Excluder Devices, 5) Including socio-economic dimensions in the work of the Convention, and 6) Annual Reports and standardization.

The meeting was attended by all 11 national representatives; the Chair of the Consultative Committee; a representative of the Permanent Commission of the South Pacific; 2 representatives of INCOPECA, of the Government of Costa Rica; 7 observers (2 of whom are members of the Consultative Committee), including 5 from Costa Rica, 1 from Mexico, and 1 from Australia; and 5 people working for the Secretariat (Annex 13).

II) Information documents consulted during the meeting:

Sources of information consulted during the meeting included 17 documents deriving from previous meetings of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies, annual reports from 10 Parties for 2005, and annual reports from 6 Parties for 2006 (Inf-01). Two new reports on the situation of the hawksbill turtle in the Yucatán peninsula were also made available and consulted (Inf-05, Inf-06); and other web-based information was consulted, and NGO pamphlets and brochures were distributed to participants.

III) Documents and Recommendations produced by the meeting:

1) Follow-up to the resolution on conservation of *Dermochelys coriacea* (Annex 3)

Revision of the annual reports revealed that no specific information is being provided that relates to concrete measures to implement resolution COP2CIT 001 on the conservation of *Dermochelys coriacea*. The Scientific Committee recommends that COP 3, in accordance with Article IV (4) of the Convention, declare a state of emergency regarding *D. coriacea* in the east Pacific. Consistent with the policy that “every turtle counts” adopted by the IATTC and other organizations, it is further recommended that all interactions with and manipulation of this species, including conservation and research activities, comply with the Precautionary Principle, and employ known best practices that provide long-term benefits to recuperation of the species.

An operational plan, based on 4 action points of resolution COP2CIT 001, is presented: curb extractive uses of the species; protect nesting sites; reduce mortality from incidental capture;

and strengthen alliances and synergies with other organizations. A mechanism for following-up is based on 6 types of indicators: compliance, scope of application, institutional involvement, civil society involvement, availability of resources, and reduction of mortality. The Committee recommends that these points be included within the Annual Report form so that each Party reports specifically on the measures that it has taken each year to implement the resolution.

2) Conservation status of *Eretmochelys imbricata* (Annex 4)

A review of the status of information shows the urgent need to standardize methodologies and monitoring procedures. Despite decades of work on hawksbills in the Yucatán Peninsula, there are still many gaps in basic knowledge, which complicates the interpretation of apparent trends in nesting activity. While directed take, particularly for the tortoise-shell trade, seems to no longer be of major importance, incidental capture in small-scale coastal fisheries in Campeche may be significant sources of mortality.

A comprehensive research program for the Yucatán Peninsula is proposed, including assessing impacts (on both hatchling recruitment and sex ratios) of egg management activities, past and present; studies of incidental capture in coastal fisheries; satellite tracking; long-term monitoring of foraging ecology at index sites; reproductive physiology; recruitment rates from neritic to benthic environments; ecology and pathology of key prey items (e.g., sponges); evaluation of oceanographic parameters over the past decade and their relationships with reported nesting trends; and establishment of stranding networks. As recommended earlier by the Scientific Committee, it is essential to comply with the Precautionary Principle with regard to anthropogenic activities that are likely to have negative impacts on hawksbills and their habitats: in particular, it is recommended that seismic exploration in priority turtle habitats be stopped until adequate information on environmental impacts of these activities is available.

In lieu of the regional workshop recommended previously by the Second Meeting of the Scientific Committee, the working group proposed a mini-symposium, or a regional meeting with invited international specialists, to address a number of key issues in the development of research and monitoring activities for the Yucatán hawksbill. It is requested that the Secretariat and Chair of the COP provide support for the development of this initiative, and further recommended that the initiative be coordinated in collaboration with other organizations in the region to develop alliances and synergies.

As requested by the Consultative Committee, a draft resolution is provided (Doc-06).

3) Guidelines for evaluation and mitigation of the impact of sea turtle interactions with fisheries (Annex 6)

Numerous international agreements include measures to eliminate, reduce, and mitigate negative effects of incidental capture of sea turtles in various fisheries. Because Parties to the IAC are also Parties to several organizations that have agreed on mitigation measures, major advances can be made by simply implementing the measures promoted by these other accords, which in many cases are binding. These include a variety of activities including onboard observer programs; training, capacity building, and sensitization of conservation priorities; promotion of research in key issues; standardization of procedures; regulation of marine pollution and habitat

perturbation; use of time-area closures, gear modifications, and alternate practices to avoid interactions with turtles; and creation and sharing of data bases.

Key elements of the proposed guidelines include: characterization of fisheries and their impacts on marine turtles; development of onboard observer programs; research; standardization of fisheries data; compiling information from non-Parties as well as from Parties; application of mitigation measures; and training and capacity building. Standardization of procedures and data gathering is of the utmost importance for data interpretation and regional, collaborative activities. A major challenge is to obtain reliable information from non-Parties, and to this end the Committee recommends that each Party provide in its Annual Report information on the operation of fleets fishing in the waters under its jurisdiction as well as those that make use of its ports.

As requested by the Consultative Committee, a draft resolution is provided (Annex 7).

4) Recommendations regarding Turtle Excluder Devices (TEDs) (Annex 8)

An attempt, based on incomplete information, was made to provide an initial listing of types of TEDs used by the Parties. Evidently, the Super Shooter is the most commonly used device, known to be employed by at least six Parties. The Committee recommends that fisheries organizations in the Parties conduct research on the effectiveness of TEDs, with the possibility of adapting the devices to local conditions, and increasing sea turtle exclusion while increasing retention of target species. A major challenge in much of the Convention Area is to convince trawler crews to employ TEDs properly. Although the fisheries are formally categorized as “shrimp trawl”, in fact they are multi-species fisheries, for there is substantial economic dependence on landing and marketing non-shrimp species.

Without adequate information provided by each of the Parties, the Scientific Committee will be unable to advance much farther, and complete its work in reviewing and evaluating TED use. Hence, it is respectfully requested that each Focal Point provides information relevant to TED use in their country, as mandated by Annex III (7, b) of the Convention.

5) Incorporating the socio-economic dimension in the work of the Convention (Annex 9)

The text of the Convention, Terms of Reference for both the Subsidiary Bodies, and various responsibilities and tasks involving the Scientific Committee call specifically, or implicitly, for information and evaluations directly relevant to the socio-economic arena. Yet, the Committee notes that there is a lack of basic information on socio-economic values of sea turtles, as well as on the costs and benefits of various activities promoting the conservation of turtles and their habitats. Complex socio-economic interactions must be understood and dealt with adequately to resolve root issues.

The Scientific Committee recommends 6 steps needed to be taken by the Parties to initiate greater integration of socio-economic issues in the work of the Convention: document and evaluate the socio-economic impacts of conservation activities for sea turtles and their habitats; provide relevant information and references in the Annual Reports; identify where conservation measures cause negative socio-economic impacts, and implement mitigation measures; integrate

socio-economic approaches into conservation initiatives and the evaluation of these activities; include experts in socio-economic issues in the Scientific Committee; and consider traditional knowledge of coastal communities in the design and implementation of conservation initiatives.

The level of concern among all members of the Scientific Committee about this issue resulted in drafting a proposed resolution (Annex 10).

6) Annual Reports and standardization (Annex 11)

The first portion of the Annual Report format (parts 1 through 3) was revised by an English-speaking working group, and the second portion (parts 4 through 10), by a Spanish-speaking working group. Numerous suggestions were made for improving the clarity and completeness of both the format and relevant instructions. Of particular relevance is the need to provide more precise information for a number of subjects. Two detailed matrices were added to gather information on implementation of national legislation as well as implementation of measures called for in resolutions adopted by the Parties, beginning with the resolution on the conservation of *Dermochelys*. There is also a need to include in the Report systematic information relevant to incidental capture in various fishing activities, particularly those identified as high priority by the fisheries working group.

Concomitantly, the instructions for completing the format were revised, with extensive changes to clarify and make more precise the information required. The section on threats will require additional work to provide better organized and prioritized criteria. In several places in the format it would be invaluable to link certain questions with specific sources of information on standardized procedures, such as handbooks and manuals.

Because of the length and complexity of both the format and the instructions, there needs to be a careful and meticulous homogenization between English and Spanish. It is proposed that an electronic format, with drop-down menus and options, be developed to simplify and standardize the work of filling in and evaluating the Annual Reports. Where open responses are possible it may be necessary to limit the size of the response. There is a continuing need for each Party to provide a glossary of acronyms that are used.

Although the Annual Report is the most important document for assessing and monitoring implementation of the treaty, these documents are not provided in a timely fashion. In this light it is strongly advised that each Party establish a multi-sectorial, multi-institutional working group and/or committee responsible for providing information and completing the format on time. Of particular importance is involving – with adequate advance notice – relevant representatives from the subsidiary bodies, as well as specialists from the involved sectors (academic, fisheries, management, scientific, etc.) in the completion of each Party's Annual Report. It was proposed that at some point in the near future an exemplary copy of the Annual Report be distributed to each Focal Point, so that the different organizations and specialists in each Party can have a better idea of what sort of information is needed and in what form.

IV) Draft resolutions:

Draft resolutions for consideration at COP 3 were produced by three of the working groups.

1) Conservation of hawksbill turtles, *Eretmochelys imbricata* (Annex 5)

The draft resolution on hawksbills identifies the need for the Parties to: develop alliances and synergies; strengthen monitoring of use and trade as well as stop illegal traffic; support and strengthen research and monitoring activities on a wide range of population, genetic, ecological, fisheries, environmental, and social aspects; mitigate incidental capture in fisheries; apply the Precautionary Principal and carry out environmental impact assessments, particularly with regard to seismic surveys; create protected areas and regulate anthropogenic activities that adversely impact habitats; promote the exchange technical information and capacity through collaborative activities; and support the organization of a specialist meeting on hawksbills in the Greater Caribbean and Western Atlantic. There is also a need for the constitution and support of an established (“permanent”) hawksbill sub-committee within the Scientific Committee.

2) Reduction of the adverse impacts of fisheries on sea turtles (Annex 7)

This draft resolution asks the Parties of the IAC to take five actions: adopt the Guidelines for evaluation and mitigation of the impact of sea turtle interactions with fisheries; sign MoUs with RFMOs; share with the IAC Secretariat any and all technical documents related to sea turtles that are provided to other organizations; instruct the IAC Secretariat to request Non-Parties to share information and technical documents related sea turtles and their incidental capture, that have been provided to other organizations; and promote greater inter-sectorial collaboration to enhance the conservation of sea turtles and their habitats. It is important to point out that all of these actions are totally consistent with measures that the Parties have agreed to previously in other agreements, many of them binding.

3) Strengthen the capacity of the Scientific Committee to provide specialist counsel on socio-economic matters (Annex 10)

After summarizing the basic lack in capacity to deal with complex socio-economic issues, the draft resolution calls for the Parties to undertake 4 actions: provide information and references on socio-economic values of marine turtles and their habitats, as well as socio-economic impacts of conservation actions; promote studies on socio-economic aspects of sea turtle conservation; task the Scientific Committee to give adequate attention to socio-economic issues; guarantee that at least one specialist in social sciences is an active member of the Scientific Committee.

V) Proposed work plan of the Scientific Committee (Annex 12):

In recognition of the fact that the Scientific Committee receives unprogrammed tasks from the COP, Parties, and the Consultative Committee, it was decided to keep the work plan focused on 11 fundamental responsibilities: review and evaluate of Annual Reports; prepare summaries of Annual Reports; promote standardization; propose high priority projects for support; follow up on advances in implementation of resolutions and guidelines; support development of web-based meta-databases; foster long-term development of a web-based database for all relevant information from the Convention Area; promote alliances and synergies; help the development of a digital library on the website; respond to COP and Consultative Committee requests for specific information, technical advice, and preparation of draft resolutions; and include specialists in the social sciences in the meetings and deliberations of the Scientific Committee (Doc-15).

1) Inter-sessional working groups:

In addition to the primary responsibilities identified in the work plan, 4 discrete tasks will be dealt with between sessions by different working groups:

- 1) The working group on Annual Reports will continue discussions through e-mail to explore ways to include key information from fisheries interactions in the format, together with relevant instructions (this need derives from the recent results of the Fisheries working group).
- 2) This working group, or a component of it, will also explore the possibility of producing summaries of the biological information in the Annual Reports.
- 3) The Hawksbill working group agreed to continue work and discussions via e-mail to help the development of a regional workshop.
- 4) The fisheries working group agreed to continue discussions via e-mail, in response to topics or questions requiring further work.

5) General recommendations:

There is a pressing need to create and strengthen national and local committees and working groups.

6) Future meetings of the Scientific Committee:

Given the number of tasks that have been assigned to the Scientific Committee, it was agreed that two meetings a year would be appropriate. In some cases, it may be useful to convene a meeting of just one or more working groups, and not necessarily the entire committee. A meeting of the Scientific Committee, or just some of the working groups, before COP 3 could be useful for preparations for the meeting of the Parties.

The benefits of convening a meeting of the Scientific Committee in a place other than Costa Rica were discussed. It was proposed that the Committee meet in a place where its activities could facilitate greater interest in additional States participating with the Convention, and/or promote greater implementation of the measures of the treaty.

7) General concerns:

Regardless of the frequency or venue of meetings, it was repeatedly remarked during the Third Meeting of the Scientific Committee that the lack of basic information from the Parties, particularly Annual Reports, presents a major handicap to the Committee and to the implementation of the treaty – some members remarked that to some extent the Committee meetings are a waste of time and money if all the Annual Reports are not received on time. This problem exists despite the terms of the Convention, as mandated in Article XI (1 & 2), which clearly charge each Party to submit an Annual Report in a timely fashion. It was also observed that only 2 of 11 Parties have provided even basic information on Turtle Excluder Devices, despite the fact that this is mandated by Annex III (7, b) of the Convention.

8) Election of Chair, Vice-Chair, and Rapporteur:

Although the section in Terms of Reference for the Scientific Committee concerning terms of the chair, vice-chair, and rapporteur are still under negotiation, it was decided to have a new election

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to select these three positions for the next two-year period. The Chair and Vice-chair, Dr. J. Frazier and Dr. René Márquez, were reelected unanimously, and the rapporteur, Ing. José Alío, was reelected by a majority.

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Annex 1

PROVISIONAL AGENDA

- 1) Inauguration of the Meeting
- 2) Adoption of the agenda and work program
- 3) Summary of the Second Meeting of the Scientific Committee
 - A) Results
 - B) Pending tasks
- 4) Progress made after the Second Meeting of the Scientific Committee
 - A) Summary of the First Meeting of the Consultative Committee of Experts
 - i) Results
 - ii) Pending Tasks
 - iii) Recommended activities for the Scientific Committee
 - B) Report of the Pro Tempore Secretariat concerning the work of the Scientific Committee
 - i) Submission of 2006 annual reports
 - ii) Advances on the Strategic Plan concerning the Scientific Committee
 - iii) Advances in cooperation initiatives with organisms concerned with the work of the Scientific Committee and possible future cooperation
 - iv) Report on publications, website, communications and other initiatives
- 5) Preparations for COP3
 - A) General pending issues from COP2
 - B) Specific tasks requested of the Scientific Committee:
 - i) By the Convention and Terms of Reference (Functions of the Scientific Committee)
 - ii) By the COP2
 - iii) By the Consultative Committee
 - C) Priorities of the Scientific Committee for the COP3
- 6) Main issues to be addressed in the Third Meeting of the Scientific Committee
 - A) Follow up on the 'Resolution on the Conservation of the leatherback turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*)' (Resolution COP2CIT-001)
 - i) Presentation and analysis of information concerning the status of *Dermochelys coriacea* in the Convention area
 - ii) Assessment of the implementation status of the Resolution by the Parties
 - iii) Create recommendations to the Consultative Committee and the COP3
 - iv) Considerations on establishing an inter-session working group
 - B) Updating the status of the hawksbill turtle, *Eretmochelys imbricata*, in the Convention Area

- i) Presentation and analysis of information concerning the status of *Eretmochelys imbricata*
 - ii) Creation of recommendations to the Consultative Committee and the COP3
 - iii) Creation of a draft resolution for Consultative Committee analysis and the COP3's eventual approval
 - iv) Considerations on establishing an inter-session working group
- C) Interactions between fisheries and sea turtles
- i) Presentation and analysis of information on incidental fishing, with emphasis in the area of the Convention
 - ii) Finalize the working groups report created at the Second Meeting of the Scientific Committee
 - iii) Creation of recommendations to the Consultative Committee and the COP3
 - a) Prioritize actions to reduce incidental fishing
 - b) Create guidelines for incidental fishing data collection and analysis
 - c) Organize training workshops for on-board observers
 - iv) Revision and finalization of the draft resolution on "Reducing adverse impacts of the fisheries on sea turtles", to be analyzed by the Consultative Committee and to be eventually approved by the COP3
 - v) Considerations on establishing an inter-session working group
- D) List of recommended sea turtle excluder devices (TEDs)
- i) Information submitted by the Parties
 - ii) Analysis and evaluation of TEDs
 - iii) Creation of recommendations to the Consultative Committee and to the COP3
 - iv) Considerations on establishing an inter-session working group
- E) Standardization of terms, criteria as well as data collection, analysis and presentation
- i) Analysis and assessment of the situation concerning standardization
 - ii) Creation of recommendations based on the information presented in the annual reports
 - a) Creation of standardization guidelines
 - b) Organization of training workshops for the technical-scientific personnel of the Parties
 - iii) Creation of recommendations to the Consultative Committee and to the COP3
 - iv) Considerations on establishing an inter-session working group
- F) Exceptions indicated in Article IV (3) (b)
- i) Development of basic indicators for assessing the status of sea turtle populations and their habitats, especially in those circumstances subject to the exceptions indicated in Article IV (3) (b)
 - ii) Creation of recommendations to the Consultative Committee and to the COP3
 - iii) Considerations on establishing an inter-session working group
- G) Research on sea turtles and their habitats in the Convention area

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- i) Studies on the relationship between these species and their habitats
 - ii) Establishment of definitions and/or a series of characteristics of the sea turtle migratory routes
 - iii) Creation of recommendations to the Consultative Committee and to the COP3
 - iv) Considerations on establishing an inter-session working group
- H) Fundamental socio-economic aspects for the conservation of sea turtles and their habitats
- i) Economic considerations concerning sea turtles
 - ii) Community participation and volunteer programs
 - iii) Environmental education
 - iv) Tourism and coastal development
 - v) Socio-cultural aspects (traditions, rites, beliefs, consumption/extraction uses, etc.)
 - vi) Analysis of information required for decision making
 - vii) Creation of recommendations to the Consultative Committee and to the COP3
 - viii) Considerations on establishing an inter-session working group
- I) Annual Reports from the Parties (Art. XI of the Convention)
- i) Assessment of the situation concerning Annual Reports
 - ii) Revision and analysis of the Annual Reports submitted for 2006
 - iii) Revision of the Annual Report format and modifications
 - iv) Establishment of definitions for the Annual Report phases (Point 1.1)
 - v) Summary of the contents of Annual Reports
 - vi) Creation of recommendations on Annual Reports to the Consultative Committee and to the COP3
 - vii) Considerations on establishing an inter-session working group
- 7) 2007-2008 Scientific Committee Work Plan
- A) Prioritize topics, tasks and activities
 - B) Determine responsibilities
 - C) Chronogram
 - D) Development of concrete projects and their corresponding budgets
 - E) Interaction between the Scientific Committee and the Secretariat
- 8) Preparing the Fourth Meeting of the Scientific Committee
- A) Provisional Agenda
 - B) Date and place of Meeting
- 9) Other matters
- 10) Adoption of the report of the Third Meeting of the Scientific Committee
- 11) Closing

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Annex 2

WORK PROGRAM

Tuesday, June 6

Order of Agenda	Time	Activity	Responsible person(s)	Documents*
	08:00-08:30	Registration of participants	<i>Pro Tempore</i> Secretariat	List of participants
1	08:30-09:00	Opening of the Meeting and welcome	Chairman of the Scientific Committee and <i>Pro Tempore</i> Secretariat	
2		Adoption of the agenda and work program	Plenary	Doc-01, Doc-02
3		Summary of the Second Meeting of the Scientific Committee Results and pending tasks	Chairman of the Scientific Committee	[1], [2], [17]
4	09:00-09:30	Progress following the Second Scientific Committee A) Summary of the First Meeting of the Consultative Committee of Experts B) Report of the Secretariat on the work of the Scientific Committee	Chairman of the Consultative Committee <i>Pro Tempore</i> Secretariat	[3] [18]
5	09:30-10:45	Preparations for the COP3 A) General topics pending since COP2 B) Tasks requested of the Scientific Committee C) Priorities of the Scientific Committee for COP3	Chairman of the Scientific Committee Work group coordinators of the II Meeting of the Scientific Committee and the Plenary	[4], [18] [5], [6], [7]
	10:45-11:00	Recess: refreshments/ coffee		
5	11:00-13:30	C) Priorities of the Scientific Committee for COP3 (continuation) Creation of working groups	Plenary	
	13:30-14:30	Lunch		
6	14:30-16:45	Main issues to be addressed at the Third Meeting of the Scientific Committee	Work groups 6, A –	[2], [8]

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		A) – <i>Dermochelys</i> B) – <i>Eretmochelys</i> C) – Fisheries	<i>Dermochelys</i> 6, B – <i>Eretmochelys</i> 6, C – Fisheries	[2], [9], [10] [11] – [15]
	16:45- 17:00	Recess: refreshments/coffee		
6	17:00- 17:30	Continuation: A, B and C topics	Work groups: A, B and C	
6	17:30- 18:30	Submit work group outcomes A) – <i>Dermochelys</i> B) – <i>Eretmochelys</i>	A and B work group coordinators before the Plenary	Doc-03 Doc-04
	18:30- 19:30	Dinner		

Wednesday, June 7

Order of Agenda	Time	Activity	Responsible person(s)	Documents
	08:30- 08:45	Summary of previous day News and general information Creation of working groups	Chairman of the Scientific Committee and <i>Pro Tempore</i> Secretariat	
6	08:45- 10:45	Main issues to be addressed at the Third Meeting of the Scientific Committee D) – List of TEDs E) – Standardization F) – Exceptions	Work groups 6, D(=C) – List of TEDs 6, E – Standardization 6, F – Exceptions	[5] [2] [3], [5]
	10:45- 11:00	Recess: refreshments/coffee		
6	11:00- 13:30	Continuation: topics D, E and F	Work groups: D, E and F	
	13:30- 14:30	Lunch		
6	14:30- 16:45	Continuation: topics D, E and F	Work groups: D, E and F	
	16:45- 17:00	Recess: refreshments/coffee		

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	17:00-18:30	Presentation of results from working groups C) – Fisheries D) – List of TEDs E) – Standardization F) – Exceptions	C, D, E and F work group coordinators before the Plenary	Doc-05 Doc-06 Doc-07 Doc-08
	18:30-19:30	Dinner		

Thursday, June 8

Order of Agenda	Time	Activity	Responsible person(s)	Documents
	08:30-08:45	Summary of previous day News and general information Creation of working groups	Chairman of the Scientific Committee and <i>Pro Tempore</i> Secretariat	
6	08:45-10:45	Main topics to be addressed in the Third Meeting of the Scientific Committee G) – Research done H) – Socio-economic aspects I) – Annual Reports	Work groups 6, G – Research 6, H – Socio-economic 6, I – Annual Reports	[3], [4] [16], [17]
	10:45-11:00	Recess: refreshments/coffee		
6	11:00-13:30	Continuation: G, H and I topics	Work groups: G, H and I	
	13:30-14:30	Lunch		
6	14:30-16:45	Continuation: G, H and I topics	Work groups: G, H and I	
	16:45-17:00	Recess: refreshments/coffee		
6	17:00-18:30	Presentation of working group results G) – Research done H) – Socio-economic aspects	G and H work group coordinators before the Plenary	Doc-09 Doc-10
	18:30-19:30	Dinner		

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Friday, June 9

Order of Agenda	Time	Activity	Responsible person(s)	Documents
6	08:30-09:45	Presentation of working group results I) – Annual Reports	Coordinator of Work group I before the Plenary	Doc-11
7	09:45-10:45	2007-2008 Scientific Committee Work Plan Final editing of documents produced by the meeting Creation of working groups	Work groups	[1], [18]
	10:45-11:00	Recess: refreshments/coffee		
7	11:00-13:30	Continuation: Work Plan and Editing	Work groups	
	13:30-14:30	Lunch		
7	14:30-15:30	Continuation: Work Plan and Editing	Work groups	
7	15:30-16:45	Submit results from the working group concerning the Work Plan Deliver final documents to the Secretariat	Work group coordinators	Doc-12
	16:45-17:00	Recess: refreshments/coffee		
8 9 10 11	17:00-18:30	Prepare the IV Meeting of the Scientific Committee Other issues Adoption of the minute of the III Meeting of the Scientific Committee	Chairman of the Scientific Committee	Doc-13 Doc-14
	18:30-19:30	Dinner		

* Documents in bold type such as “[X]” refer to those inputs described in the “List of documents required for the meeting” (Inf-01).

Documents in bold type such as “Doc-XX” refer to those products pertaining to the Third Meeting of the Scientific Committee.

Annex 3

Report of the *Dermochelys* Working Group

I) Introduction

The *Dermochelys coriacea* working group had the task of providing follow up to the Resolution for the conservation of this species, as well as to analyze, based on the information obtained from the Annual Reports, its conservation status.

After analyzing the annual reports from 2005 and 2006 it was evident that although the Parties have reported actions towards the protection and conservation of the *Dermochelys* sea turtle, these activities have not been developed explicitly to comply with the Resolution. Therefore, due to the lack of information, this committee is unable to find any evidence that leads them to conclude any sort of the recovery of the populations of this species.

It was recommended during the II Scientific Committee Meeting that a state of emergency¹ be declared for Eastern Pacific leatherback populations, based on article IV, paragraph 4, of the text of the Convention and in response to Resolution COP2CIT-001. To date, the subsidiary bodies, Parties and Secretariat have not given continuation to this declaration, therefore, this Working Group recommends, urgently and with no more delay that this declaration be issued by the COP3.

In the same meeting there was also discussion on issues pertaining to experimentation and manipulation activities that can cause mortality of leatherbacks. To date, there has not been any evident interest from the Convention to solve this problem. Therefore, following the Precautionary Principle, this group recommends that any manipulation of *Dermochelys* and their eggs and habitat, for any reason, including conservation and research purposes, should comply with the best practices for this species, and any management practice or experimental use of this species and its habitat that may affect its biological and ecological attributes should be restricted to those that have, or probably have, long-term benefits to the recovery of this species.

Based on that written in points 3-5 of INF-29-05, as part of the minutes of the II meeting of the Scientific Committee, the recommendation of forming a specific sub-Committee to follow-up on the *Dermochelys* issue, was not implemented. It is once again recommended that it be formed and put into operation, with an initial push and coordination from the Presidency of the Scientific Committee and the Secretariat. Due to the nature of this committee, it should be compensated.

II) Operative Plan for the Parties

¹ A State of Emergency is understood as recognizing the urgency that this species has to be conserved and therefore the Party State, due to the availability of measures, can give it more attention, resources and logistics that correct the impacts that threaten their survival; this state of emergency can be declared through an administrative tool that each Party decides. This is in agreement with the intentions of Resolution COP2CIT-001.

Recommendation: *This working group suggests that the Parties, to attain the adequate development of the following Conservation Plan should take advantage of and strengthen the structures and activities already existing in their countries. It is further recommended that they form a national working group to carry out this plan. In addition, to achieve the proposed objectives, the Parties should take into account those actions which facilitate the coordination and strategic operation of the Plan, and that include topics such as direction, information, training and communication to the public (e.g. information signs in nesting beaches and coastal zones), training and alternative production (livelihood), and last, but not least, the search for funding (e.g. alliance with NGO's to develop proposals and fundraising, and other sort of mutual support).*

II.A. Conservation Plan (based on Resolution COP2 CIT-001)

1. Control of consumptive use

1.a. Objective: Reduce the mortality generated by activities of extraction, use and trade of this species.

1.b. Priority Activities

- i. Develop monitoring activities that control anthropogenic impacts.
- ii. Apply the legislation efficiently, and where it is non-existing, establish and apply it.
- iii. Establish a certification program for commercial places that ceased the sale and trade of *Dermochelys* and other sea turtle products.
- iv. Develop training activities on the legal framework of sea turtles, at judicial and court levels.
- v. Involve coastal communities and other sectors of the society in training, control and monitoring activities on the trade of sea turtle products.

1.c. Those responsible:

- i. Ministries of Security and Governance (police and coast guards)
- ii. Ministries of the Environment, Fisheries and similar
- iii. Local governments and local organized groups.
- iv. Educational entities
- v. Judicial entities

2. Protection of nesting beaches

2.a. Objective: Preserve habitats critical to the reproduction of the leatherback turtle.

2.b. Priority Activities:

- i. Establish and apply guidelines about the public use of the coastal zone and marine areas nearby.
- ii. Prioritize nesting beaches and associated habitats in order to establish protection categories to places critical in the life cycle of this species.

- iii. Protect nesting females and nests.
- iv. Develop management activities of nests that will increase the hatching success rate, whenever it is necessary.
- v. Tackle direct impacts to nests and nesting females (e.g. domestic animals, etc).
- vi. Establish and strengthen working groups or national committees on specific issues to manage and direct this problematic.

2.c. Those responsible:

- i. Ministries of the Environment and similar entities.
- ii. Organizations related to planning and development of coastal areas.
- iii. NGO's, academic and research centers.
- iv. Other government entities relevant to the topic
- v. Community groups.

3. Bycatch

3.a. Objective: Evaluate and reduce mortality resulting from the fishing industry.

3.b. Priority Activities:

- i. Compile, systemize and analyze relevant information.
- ii. Promote the establishment of onboard observer programs.
- iii. Promote changes in fishing technology and the use of better practices.
- iv. Implement and/or develop relevant legislation.
- v. Develop case studies with an ecosystemic approach on the impact of fisheries.
- vi. Guarantee that fishing vessels of non-party countries that operate in the area under the jurisdiction of the countries of CIT adopt the measures established by the last.
- vii. Provide assistance and technical information to the non-party countries responsible for fishing fleets operating in areas where leatherbacks are found, through the Secretariat and cooperative agreements

3.c. Those responsible:

- i. Authorities in charge of regulating fisheries.
- ii. Ministries of the Environment and similar entities.
- iii. Customs and ports of disembarkation.
- iv. Private fisheries sector.
- v. Fishing communities.
- vi. NGOs.
- vii. Secretariat.

4. Alliances, synergies and agreements

4.a. Objective: Increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the actions to undertake.

4.b. Priority Activities:

- i. Identify potential agreements and organizations who work in conformity with the purpose of the convention.
- ii. Develop mutual agreements with such organizations.
- iii. Execute and strengthen communal projects.
- iv. Establish links with private sectors for funding and logistical support.
- v. Develop lobbying actions in order to attract non-party countries to join the IAC.
- vi. Facilitate other agreements with non-party countries in search of achieving the goals of the IAC.
- vii. Seek that the Parties develop agreements and internal cooperation actions that aim to achieve the goals of this plan.

4.c. Those responsible:

- i. Secretariat.
- ii. Focal Points.
- iii. Foreign Affairs Offices.
- iv. Relevant ministries.
- v. NGOs

II.B Follow up mechanisms:

This group proposes that the Parties establish the following follow-up mechanism to evaluate the fulfillment of this Conservation Plan. The indicators to be used and the assessment matrix should be integrated in the format of the annual report, in such a way that the progress resulting from this resolution can be easily assessed.

1. Compliance: level of compliance with the objectives and activities of each component of this Plan.

- ▶ 100% compliance
- ▶ 75% compliance
- ▶ 50% compliance
- ▶ 25% compliance

2. Scope of application: level of the application of these activities, including all nesting beaches and their related issues, achieving the protection of this species in all pertinent national areas.

- ▶ 100% of the necessary level reached
- ▶ 75% of the necessary level reached
- ▶ 50% of the necessary level reached
- ▶ 25% of the necessary level reached

3. Institutional involvement: level of involvement (information to third parties, their participation and communal actions) of the institutions responsible of the specific topic; it

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measures the level of effort for working in alliance, to involve various levels, instances and to manage the topic from various fronts, if necessary

- ▶ 100% of the institutions involved
- ▶ 75% of the institutions involved
- ▶ 50% of the institutions involved
- ▶ 25% of the institutions involved

4. Involvement of civil society: level of involvement and participation of key stakeholders in society, measures the number of key stakeholders who participate in the conservation actions established by this Plan, as compared to the number who participated in conservation actions before the Plan was initiated.

- ▶ 100% of the key stakeholders are participating.
- ▶ 75% of the key stakeholders are participating
- ▶ 50% of the key stakeholders are participating
- ▶ 25% of the key stakeholders are participating

5. Resource availability: Determine availability of resources assigned by the Party, or its level of effort in the acquisition of these funds; it also determines the efforts towards the administrative needs of the Plan.

- ▶ 100% of the funding available
- ▶ 75% of the funding available
- ▶ 50% of the funding available
- ▶ 25% of the funding available

6. Reduction of mortality: refers to the magnitude or quantity of organisms of all life stages that have been saved due to the execution of the actions proposed in this Plan.

- ▶ 100% reduction of the mortality recorded prior to the Plan
- ▶ 75% reduction of the mortality recorded prior to the Plan
- ▶ 50% reduction of the mortality recorded prior to the Plan
- ▶ 25% reduction of the mortality recorded prior to the Plan

	Compliance	Scope of application	Institutional Involvement	Involvement of civil society	Availability of resources	Reduction of mortality
100%						
75%						
50%						
25%						

II. C. Verifiers: these verifiers and others that the Parties consider necessary should be included as part of the national report.

- # of females and nests protected.
- Area recovered of critical habitat.

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Percentage of beaches protected and kilometers covered.
Percentage of beaches free from light pollution
Percentage of beaches free from other sources of contamination
Percentage of control and monitoring activities executed during the period.
Percentage of J hooks removed
Percentage of fishing vessels with onboard observers
Quantity of printed material produced
Percentage of educational activities produced
Percentage of training activities executed
Percentage of people participating in the activities of the Plan
Percentage of local groups participating in the execution of the Plan
Other verifiers: _____

Annex 4

Report of the Working Group on the Status of the Hawksbill Turtle

Participants of the Working Group on the Hawksbill Turtle *Eretmochelys imbricata*:

Members: Alberto Abreu (chair), Carlos Drews and Joanna Hancock (rapporteurs), Milani Chaloupka, Julia Horrocks, Neca Marcovaldi, Isaias Majil, Juan Carlos Cantú

Work documents:

- Proposal by the Working Group on the Status of the Hawksbill Turtle of the Scientific Committee, 2nd Meeting of the Sc.C. [INF-24-05]
- Proceedings of the Telchac meeting: “Rumbo a la COP 3: Diagnóstico del estado de la tortuga carey (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) en la Península de Yucatán y determinación de acciones estratégicas” (2005) [Comité Científico III/9]
- “Generalidades acerca del consumo y tráfico de tortugas marinas en la costa oriental del estado de Yucatán” by Viviana Labarthe and Eduardo Cuevas (2006) [Inf-05]
- “Comercio y trafico de Carey en México y la Península de Yucatán” by J.C. Cantú and Sánchez (2006) [Inf-06]

I) Update

Taking into account that recommendations coming out of the Telchac meeting in Mexico and the previous meeting of the Scientific Committee (SC), included priority actions in the Yucatan Peninsula, a review of work made in the country was presented by Alberto Abreu to allow an impression of the progress achieved in reaching new insights into the issue.

Highlights of the advances:

- Major shifts in the field methodologies were implemented immediately in the next season (2006) to overcome the serious technical deficiencies identified in Telchac
- Among these, double tagging has now been adopted in all monitoring programs and saturation tagging at selected index beaches.
- Database and population parameters that are registered by all working groups have now been standardized. This will guarantee region-wide compatibility in measurements that will facilitate the long-term monitoring of the species' status.
- In theory, one of the possible causes for the observed decline in nesting abundances could be impacts on the food resources of breeding hawksbills that would result in density effects and a lowering of fecundity (fewer nests/turtle/season or longer remigration intervals). Besides the better publicized coral die-offs in the region (which could also be affecting hawksbills) evidence of increasing spread of sponge diseases in the Mexican Caribbean (Disease Threatens Caribbean Sponges: Report and Identification Guide by E. R. Gammill [-egammill@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:egammill@tampabay.rr.com)) could be correlated to the decline in nests. Entire research will need to be carried out to explore this hypothesis.
- A persistent obstacle to follow research on impacts and population dynamics at major foraging sites is simply that their location is unknown. Modest funding has been obtained

in Campeche to deploy three satellite tags to identify post-nesting migratory pathways and foraging site destinations during the current nesting season (2006). Further support is being sought to obtain more satellite transmitters.

- Monitoring of tagged juveniles recaptured in various types of fishing gear in Campeche (V. Guzman, unpublished results) have indicated incidental take (with unevaluated mortality levels) in certain gillnets of coastal fisheries (corvina, robalera).
- Direct take and traffic of hawksbill products was evaluated over the past year and preliminary results were presented by Juan Carlos Cantú. These suggest that large scale direct take and traffic could be ruled out as a major cause of the Yucatan decline. Further, according to a 2005 Defenders of Wildlife survey on seizures by the authorities, there was great difficulty in finding any hawksbill products in trade at all, and former traders expressed fear of going to jail because of the illegality of such trade. Also a decline in trade over the years has been seen and no correlation between nesting trends and seizures were observed.
- While sea turtle consumption has been observed in some coastal communities in Yucatan it tends to occur at a very low level (Labarthe and Cuevas, 2005) with no evidence of wide-scale extraction or traffic in the region. Stranded hawksbills are left alone, not used as in the past. In Campeche there is some direct take for food when fishing is bad. These results also support the notion that large scale extraction is unlikely to be a major factor in the decline although cumulative effects of long-term, low-scale take at local communities cannot be ruled out entirely and needs to be further considered.
- Nest data suggest a region wide (Campeche to Quintana Roo) slowing of the declining trend, with a slight increase in the 2005 season. Nonetheless, there is no indication of recovery of the former abundances registered in 1999.

The above studies were made possible thanks to the increased interest placed on addressing the hawksbill decline, augmented by the attention placed on the issue by the IAC, and a great deal of effort and resources spent by the local biologists to improve and correct monitoring protocols. To a large extent, these efforts have made it impossible to organize the technical workshop under the original timeline as recommended by the Scientific Committee. The working group considers it prudent to await results from the ongoing research and utilize these as input to the meeting which could now be held in 2007 instead.

II) Outlook in other regions

Since Mexico's research has not encountered signs of declines of the magnitude seen in the Yucatan except in Belize, the SC member from this country past information was asked to provide a brief outline of status there.

- *Belize*: the main nesting area is in Manatee Bar. It's an isolated beach, with little poaching, but significant natural predation takes place. Major problem are impacts of storms/hurricanes and steady loss of nesting beach due to erosion. Steady decline in number of nests over the last decade is believed to be explained by the erosion rate; although slight increase in 2005-06 season. Nesting currently in the order of <100 nests year.

III) Recommendations

The group recognized significant advances seen in the efforts applied in Mexico and provided recommendations for further or pending urgent actions needed to gain insight into critical aspects of population dynamics and ecology that are essential to identify and monitor root causes of the decline in Mexico. These should be seen as specific actions to fit within the recommendations included in the Draft Resolution on *Eretmochelys* produced during this meeting.

- Implement surveys to evaluate levels of both incidental capture in fisheries and mortality rates to understand if the mortality here occur at levels that could compromise the status of the species
- Carry out satellite tracking of Yucatan hawksbills to detect major migratory corridors and foraging sites. Once the major foraging sites are identified, their locations will be instrumental to carry out key studies (some are included below) but also to evaluate potential impacts from anthropic activities
- Implement foraging ecology studies at identified foraging sites and establish a network of index foraging sites for long-term monitoring, in line with international recommendations (e.g. CITES hawksbill dialogue)
- Use laparoscopy at foraging grounds to obtain an accurate picture of the proportion of breeding activity and possible association of cycles with environmental and/or food-associated phenomena
- Monitor recruitment rates into the index foraging sites from the oceanic phase to the benthic phase
- Given the possible association with fecundity, but also the general importance to the trophic web relationships in the Caribbean, implement monitoring of sponge and coral diseases
- Analyze the possible negative population consequences of nest translocations carried out in the last two decades. Implement indices to measure hatchling viability that would help make better choices of the most adequate incubation practices
- Look at pivotal temperatures and determine if past translocations could have impacted sex-ratios
- Look for correlations between sub-regional oceanographic conditions over the last 10 years and the reported nesting trends
- Establish stranding networks in the Yucatan Peninsula which would provide additional, independent information on changes in mortality

IV) Recommendations pending from last meeting

Analyzing the recommendations coming out of this committee on this subject at the previous meeting, the group noted that significant actions to address the knowledge gaps have been implemented or are under way. However, there are some points remaining which should still be implemented. The working group suggests that these and the above recommendations be incorporated into the Draft Resolution to be considered at COP3.

1. Apply the precautionary principle and halt seismic exploration in priority hawksbill range areas until its impact on the species is known.
2. Organize a regional technical workshop suggested in the previous ScC meeting with characteristics and objectives mentioned below

V) Regional technical meeting or mini-symposium

The Scientific Committee of the Convention will promote, through the appropriate channels, the organization of a technical meeting to analyze the factors that may be contributing to the decline of hawksbills in the Yucatan peninsula in Mexico, best available methodology for the monitoring of critical population parameters particularly in foraging populations, and, given their migratory nature, a review of their population status and threats in the Wider Caribbean and the Western Atlantic.

Specific goals:

1. Update the information on status of hawksbill populations in different sub-regions of the Caribbean.
2. Identify the remaining gaps in terms of information, capacity and resources that hinder efforts to address the main threats to hawksbills;
3. Evaluate and gather information on Hawksbill fisheries interactions in the different sub-regions.
4. Evaluate impacts on habitats in regional hawksbill rookeries especially by native and alien predator species and features of coastal development (specially artificial lighting)
5. Update the information of the genetic structure of populations in the region.
6. Involve experts from various fields other than sea turtle biology (e.g. coral reefs, sponges, climate change) to seek correlations with phenomena in Mexico and other locations.
7. Organize a follow-up process to monitor the implementation of mitigation actions and other recommendations;
8. Present methodologies available for monitoring population parameters at hawksbill foraging sites that should be widely implemented in the region
 - a. recruitment rates
 - b. population structure
 - c. laparoscopy to detect breeding status
 - d. trophic ecology
 - e. population modeling as a management tool

Two modes for the workshop were suggested by the working group as feasible to achieve the goals. One would be a specific workshop or, alternatively, a “mini-symposium” to be held within the next International Sea Turtle Symposium to be held in South Carolina in the Spring of 2007. The decision of the two alternatives could not be taken by the group and will need to be followed up by the SC on the basis of a feasibility study that Alberto Abreu will be carrying out.

a) Specific workshop.

- Participant profile: hawksbill specialists from the region with broad geographic and thematic representation, as well as experts in relevant areas (fisheries, coral reefs, physical oceanography, climate change, among others);
- Number of participants: maximum 30 people;
- Duration of the meeting: 3-4 working days;
- Tentative site of the meeting, to be decided; Mexico is recommended given its experience in the Yucatan;
- Tentative date for the technical meeting: September 2007.

- DISADVANTAGE- resources to bring and provide living expenses to invited specialists

b) Mini-symposium within the 2007 Sea Turtle Symposium (March 2007)

- Would involve key presentations on the subjects mentioned above, each one by an invited specialist
- Sessions over a max of 1-2 days?
- Two options: 1-2 days prior to the symposium, or 1 day long-session as part of the Symposium time schedule
- ADVANTAGE- may reduce or eliminate the travel and living costs of some of the invited speakers for those who would be attending the ST Symposium anyway
- DISADVANTAGE- focus may be lost

VI) Preparative work for the workshop to include, inter alia:

- synergies with other organizations
- determine possibility of mini-symposium within the 2007 Sea Turtle Symposium (need to check with Michael Coyne)
- identify costs and negotiate financial support
- within the IAC:
 - the SC makes the proposal to the Secretariat to facilitate the technical meeting, indicating its urgent nature and supported by the Secretariat's mandate to establish ties with other relevant treaties and forums;
 - The SC asks the Secretariat to notify the Parties (according to rule 5.5 of the Rules of Procedure) regarding the actions for immediate implementation recommended by the SC, in matters concerning the hawksbill;
 - The Presidency of the Convention will request the Parties' approval and logistical support for this meeting
 - The formation of a subgroup is proposed to follow up on the points here agreed.

VII) Other considerations:

The technical meeting should not be hosted solely by the IAC, but by an alliance of international forums that include the IAC, and should encompass all countries of importance to the hawksbill in the Wider Caribbean and Western Atlantic.

Annex 5

Draft Resolution for COP3IAC

*Conservation of the hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*)*

RECOGNIZING that the hawksbill turtle is an important component of marine tropical ecosystems and is valued culturally, socio-economically, ecologically, and scientifically;

CONSIDERING that the hawksbill turtle has a broad distribution within the area of the Convention,

RECOGNIZING that the hawksbill turtle has a complex life cycle that requires the protection of terrestrial, coastal and marine habitats, in some instances involving the jurisdictional waters of several countries;

CONSIDERING that although the species is classified globally as critically endangered by the World Conservation Union (IUCN), some populations in the Greater Caribbean and Western Atlantic are recovering after several decades of protective measures;

TAKING NOTE that historically the main cause of the hawksbill turtle's decline has been due to over-exploitation to satisfy national and international markets principally for eggs, meat and carapaces in the former, and carapaces in the latter;

RECOGNIZING the persistence of several threats such as bycatch in fisheries and increasing perturbation of critical feeding and nesting habitats by coastal development, erosion, seismic surveys, pollution, sponge diseases, coral bleaching, and eutrophication, among others;

CONSIDERING that for the Yucatan peninsula hawksbill population to increase to levels representing about 43% of all registered nestings in the Greater Caribbean and becoming one of the four largest rookeries in the world, required implementing protective legislation as well as conservation and research programs for over three decades;

ALARMED that the population of the Yucatan Peninsula experienced a dramatic decline in scarcely five years (2000-2004) without certainty on the causes, in spite of continued conservation efforts on nesting beaches and without similar declines in any of the remaining regional populations;

CONCERNED that the dramatic decline in the Yucatan population illustrates the vulnerability of the hawksbill turtle and indicates serious knowledge gaps on its biology and threats, particularly in marine habitats and throughout the scope of application of this Convention;

WORRIED that hawksbills are caught incidentally in some of the coastal fisheries in the Yucatan Peninsula but the mortality levels remain unknown;

NOTING that hawksbills may be affected by seismic surveys used in petroleum prospecting;

CONCERNED that the decline of the Yucatán population may be repeated in other localities in the region unless the causes are discovered and effective mitigation measures are identified

THE THIRD CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES OF THE INTER-AMERICAN CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION OF SEA TURTLES RESOLVES TO,

EXHORT the Parties to promote synergies between the IAC and CITES, the SPAW Protocol, CMS, WHMSI and other pertinent treaties and international organizations in order to facilitate regional dialogue on management and conservation of the hawksbill turtle;

URGE the Parties to strengthen monitoring of the use and trade of hawksbill turtle products, the application of pertinent laws and to stop illegal traffic;

EXHORT the Parties to support and strengthen the research and monitoring activities required to improve the scientific basis of conservation measures for the hawksbill turtle, particularly in genetics, migratory behavior, location and conservation status of foraging habitats and food prey, population dynamics in feeding sites, interactions with fisheries, social and economic impacts of conservation and protection measures, and stability of its nesting beaches;

URGE the Parties to mitigate incidental capture of hawksbill turtles in their jurisdictional waters in accordance with recommendations emanating from FAO's Technical Meeting on the conservation of marine turtles held in Bangkok 2004;

EXHORT the Parties to apply the Precautionary Principle and carry out environmental impact studies on seismic surveys near priority marine habitats of the hawksbill turtle before authorizing them;

URGE the Parties to strengthen protection of important hawksbill nesting and foraging habitats by declaration of protected areas and the regulation of anthropogenic activities adversely impacting habitats;

CREATE a working group within the Scientific Committee to keep the Conference of the Parties informed on the status of the species and its habitats in the hemisphere;

PROMOTE the exchange of technical capacity and collaborative research on the hawksbill turtle among Parties, and,

SUPPORT the realization of a workshop with internationally recognized experts to diagnose the population decline of the hawksbill in the Yucatan Peninsula, evaluate the current condition of remaining populations in the Greater Caribbean and Western Atlantic, and present the best available methods of research and conservation for the species in its marine habitats.

Annex 6

Guidelines for Evaluation and Mitigation of the Impact of Sea Turtle Interactions with Fisheries [DRAFT] Report of the Fisheries Working group

Executive Summary

Technical elements are presented offering support to the Parties in order to take actions or adopt strategies that reduce incidental capture of sea turtles due to their interactions with different fisheries. In this regard, advancements within the framework of other organizations and international conventions that promote responsible fisheries are internalized, such as the FAO, IATTC, ICCAT, among others, and offer general guidelines as tools that the Parties can use when planning research at a national level. The recommendations include specific actions to characterize fisheries and their impacts on sea turtles and prioritize them, estimating fishing effort and the variables that should be taken into account when describing it, guidelines to develop national onboard observer programs, suggest directing research within the confines of four areas: measures that avoid interactions between sea turtles and fishing gear, improve the detection of fishing gear by sea turtles, promoting the use of gear that avoids the capture of sea turtles and developing techniques for the most efficient and least traumatic release of sea turtles in gear in which they may get caught. Standardization of the information provided from the fisheries is promoted as a tool acting as an integrated focus for the region, as well as the compilation of information from diverse sources and countries. Finally, the adoption of a series of actions to mitigate incidental fishing is proposed and training on priority issues identified for the implementation of the proposed measures.

Participants:

Second meeting of the Scientific Committee: José Alió and Jorge Zuzunaga (coordinators), Randall Arauz, Luis Briceño, Gerardo Chaves, Martin Hall (**ScC-II-Doc-05**)

Third meeting of the Scientific Committee: José Alió and Jorge Zuzunaga (coordinators), Marco Solano, René Marquéz, Diana Arauz, Mario Jolón, Miguel Medina

I) Background

There are several international agreements that establish measures for eliminating, reducing and mitigating negative impacts on sea turtles caused by different fishing activities. Such agreements include, among others, the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), some of the recommendations by the technical advising group organized by the FAO Fisheries Department for the conservation of sea turtles and fisheries (Bangkok, 2004), Resolutions C-04-05 and C-04-07 of the Inter American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), the meeting report of the By-Catch Sub-Committee of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) and ICCAT Resolution 03-11 on sea turtles, not to mention numerous general instruments such as the UN

General Assembly resolutions, the most recent of which is resolution 59/25 of January 17, 2005, on Sustainable Fishing

The Party States of the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles are also FAO Parties, and many are also IATTC and ICCAT Parties as well; therefore, it is fundamental to emphasize that such previously mentioned measures have already become binding commitments.

In general, these agreements promote, among the crews of the fishing fleets within member countries, the adoption of techniques for the immediate release of sea turtles incidentally caught in fishing nets; reporting such incidents to the corresponding commissions and creating data bases with such information, as well as reporting those events that deteriorate sea turtle living conditions, such as phenomena disturbing nesting beaches or the presence of excessive plastic debris, which may eventually be ingested by such animals.

On the other hand, the FAO promotes amongst countries in general:

- a) Promotion of ample study programs on sea turtle populations and their migratory sites;
- b) Creation of on-board observer programs, with the capacity to monitor the capture of sea turtles by different fishing gears, and
- c) Training the crews on the adequate techniques for manipulation, recovery and release of captured turtles, according to already published protocols.

II) General Guidelines

1. Create awareness to convert fishermen to become responsible (idea).
2. Determine mechanisms so that the fishing industry and, most importantly, crews, internalize the topic of the conservation of living marine resources.
3. Collect data through standardized forms and, use specialized software programs for its processing.
4. Define strategies that will allow a reduction in the impact of fisheries over the sea turtles populations in various lines of action.
5. Avoid interaction between sea turtles and fishing operations, through temporary closures to fishing in particular regions, during the seasons in which there are high densities of turtles.
6. Identify/Research the location of protected areas and/or closure periods that cover areas of critical importance for populations, and prioritize the cases of endangered species such as; *Dermochelys coriacea*, *Eretmochelys imbricata* and *Lepidochelys kempii*, and implement time area closures outlined here.
7. Develop alternative technologies, taking into consideration impacts on other species.
8. Standardize manipulation, recovery and sea turtle liberation protocols.
9. Promote experimental mitigation methods in a way that consolidates the results covering specific fisheries, areas and periods.
10. Identify sites where information gaps exist.
11. Document the efficiency of measures to reduce incidental fishing in function of the established measures (follow-up and evaluation).

12. Study the possibility of establishing the maximum permissible incidental capture of individual sea turtles by species (specify fishery, species, geographic areas, -revision).

III) Topics and recommendations for future actions

1. Characterization of fisheries and their impact on sea turtles

It has been agreed that each country should establish priorities for their fisheries according to their possible eventual impact on sea turtle populations, both in international waters and in other regions where their fishing fleets operate, in agreement with each country's compromise within the framework of their Action Plan for Illegal, Undeclared and Unregulated Fishing and the United Nations Resolution to reduce long lining effort (Fish Stocks Agreement). Likewise, the behavior of the different sea turtle species should be taken into consideration, as well as their relationship to specific fishing fleet operating sites.

The different types of fishing gear include the following:

- a. Trawlers (includes shrimp trawlers);
- b. Surface/Bottom longline;
- c. Vertical net fishing: gill nets, trammel nets, drift nets, etc.;
- d. Fishing with purse seines, set nets (FADs);
- e. Pots and traps;
- f. Other local fishing systems used

Fisheries characterization chart

Type of fishery (industrial/ artisanal)	Target Species	Fishing gear	Effort (approximate)*	Location (fishing site)	Impact (approximate)*						Source of Information	
					Estimated number of turtles captured* sp./ rate of capture*sp.	Dc	Lk	Lo	Ei	Cc		Cm

*Estimation – Investigate standardization of effort and impact

2. Suggestions for estimation and reporting effort in different fisheries:

- a) The following data should be recorded according to each one of the fisheries:
 - i. *Trawling*: number of ships/fishing zone, structure of fleet size, width of the mouth of the net (based on the headrope), number of nets per ship (1,2,4), hours of trawling/year or sea days/year, depth stratification, stratification by bottom or middle waters.
 - ii. *Surface/bottom longline*: hooks/year, bait, hook types and sizes, timetables, fishing zones, number of ships, characteristics of fishing lines.
 - iii. *Vertical or purse seine netting*: fishing types, number of vessels, gear used and characteristics (mesh size, net length and height, construction materials, depth, location).
 - iv. *Pots*: number of pots, characteristics (dimensions, width of mouth), location, depth.

- b) Create spatial-seasonal sea turtle distribution maps and their relation to fishing activities (location and concentration of fishing efforts) that allows decisions to be made for sea turtle conservation considering the status of existing populations.

3. Onboard observer Programs

Onboard observer is understood as the person in charge of collecting data on the biological-fishing information of sea turtle interactions with fisheries. Developing on-board observer training is linked to specific training needs, where the challenge will be to generate personnel with adequate knowledge and standardized skills. The objectives of the observer program include, among others:

- a) Estimate incidental sea turtle mortality in each type of fishery and find a way to represent this parameter in the fleets. The information generated would justify future actions to be adopted by individual fleets, depending on their level of knowledge and information.
- b) Test modifications to traditional fisheries systems that reduce incidental capture of sea turtles, in which the observer would become the verifying authority for the effectiveness of such modifications.
- c) Integrate and systematize information provided by observer programs previously established by other fisheries relating to sea turtles.

4. Research

It is suggested that all research efforts by the Party states should be directed to deal with the following aspects, in order of priority relating to the knowledge of the biology of sea turtle populations, and the adoption of mechanisms and strategies for reducing the impact of fishing operations on such populations:

- a) Modification of fishing gear in order to reduce incidental capture and mortality of sea turtles, as well as to evaluate its impact of these modifications on the capture of target species and other incidentally captured species:
 - i. To determine the effectiveness of the use of circular hooks, different types of bait, fishing depths, fishing gear characteristics and operation practices, and other measures.
 - ii. To explore modifications in mesh nettings of different kinds.
 - iii. To determine the effectiveness of TEDs by considering the fact that their characteristics have to adjust to sea turtle species and populations, as well as to the particular conditions of the local fisheries.
 - iv. To determine the impact of the bottom longlines and pots in areas where turtles are found.
- b) Migratory, behavioral and ecological studies of target species and those species caught incidentally;
- c) Studies about the location of productivity zones and sea turtle aggregation and transit zones;
- d) Spatial distribution studies;

- e) Studies of relative abundance in different fisheries, a topic related to the work of on-board observers;
- f) Develop standardized surveys to document interactions between sea turtles and fisheries at the following levels:
- g) Specific information on incidents of sea turtle capture in local fishing techniques.
- h) General information on the presence of sea turtles in a geographic range.

5. Standardization of fisheries data

One of the main problems for the adequate analysis of the information on fisheries is its lack of uniformity. It is necessary to have information that will allow for data comparison between the different countries, in order to develop an integral approach to the regional outlook. As a basis, data standardization is based on the definition of fishery terminology, including experimental fishing gear, baits, etc. This will allow the development of information gathering tools (forms, for example) to collect information in the different fisheries and under diverse conditions.

6. Compiling information from Party and Non-Party states

According to Article XI of the Convention, each Party shall prepare an Annual Report according to the format approved by the Consultative Committee, whose format should include information about fisheries based on the ideas discussed in preceding paragraphs: characterization of fisheries and their impact on sea turtles, existence and outcomes of on-board observers and research programs. This recommendation is specifically intended for the Consultative Committee, which is in charge of reviewing their format.

It is recommended that the Party States provide the *pro tempore* Secretariat with information on the operation of international fleets in areas of national jurisdiction or that fish on high seas and discharge in the Parties' ports.

In addition, the Party States should report on the percentage of fleet operations they were able to place observers on.

It is requested that the Consultative Committee explores the proper mechanisms for obtaining information from fisheries in countries that are not Parties of the Convention.

7. Mitigation measures / application of measures

There are many mitigation measures for incidental fishing currently being used or recognized. Their effectiveness depends on their adequate implementation, as well as on their adaptation to each site's particular characteristics. Such measures should be subject to constant assessment and should undergo a corresponding follow up. Parallel to this, research for developing new measures should continue, and awareness and motivation for implementing such measures by relevant stakeholders of the different fisheries must be

promoted. Maintain economic viability (responsible fishing) of the fisheries. Finally, there should be cost analyses performed for such measures, as well as an evaluation of their economic impact.

Among the different mitigation measures, we strongly recommend the following:

- a) Avoid the capture, in regions where the species is in critical condition, by temporary closure of fisheries in areas of high interaction.
- b) Based on research outcomes, some mitigation measures can be adopted, such as the use of circle hooks, whenever outcomes would present such measures as effective in reducing turtle mortality and as a viable alternative for fishermen.
- c) Request that the crew of fishing boats release any incidentally captured sea turtles in the shortest time, and least possible damage, following protocols and using the different devices for their protection in the different types of fisheries:
 - i. Use of Turtle Excluder Devices (TEDs) in trawl nets and promote their use among the Non-Party states.
 - ii. Implement specific measures to be applied in the case of trapped or entangled sea turtles:
 - iii. Provided a sea turtle is observed in the net, all reasonable efforts should be made to rescue the specimen before getting entangled in the net, and, if necessary a boat should be used.
 - iv. Should a turtle become entangled, stop pulling the net up once the turtle has come out of the water, this action should not be reinitiated until the turtle is freed from the netting and released into the sea.
 - v. Should a turtle be carried on board of the vessel, all appropriate efforts should be made in aiding the turtle to recover before returning her to sea.
 - vi. Release all turtles entangled in Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs) or in any other fishing gear.
- d) Promote alternative fishing techniques when the results demonstrate it as an effective measure for reducing sea turtle mortality and as a viable alternative for fishermen.
- e) Prohibit fishing vessels to dispose of any trash at sea, particularly plastics, mesh nets, floating solids, among others.
- f) Comply with regulations regarding the recovery of fish aggregating devices (FADs) when not being used for fishing.
- g) Take necessary measures, including providing assistance, in order to ensure that longline vessels carry the necessary equipment on board for the appropriate release of incidentally captured sea turtles (for example, dehookers, line cutters and fishing nets).
- h) Incorporate compensations for fishermen that lose fishing gear when releasing sea turtles (presence of observer is required).

8. Suggestions for training activities

Some high priority topics have been identified for training government authorities, researchers, observers, fishermen and other actors related to such resources that should be promoted. Such topics include the following:

- a) Training in sample design and analysis of data obtained for estimating incidental mortality:
- b) Training in experimental design and analysis of results for testing mitigation methods and their application.
- c) Training activities for onboard observers and promote the distribution of appropriate guides and handbooks.
- d) Training vessel crews and observers in reducing incidental capture and management, in releasing and resuscitation techniques, including appropriate handling, oriented towards turtle survival after release.
- e) Communicate and disseminate information among the following sectors: fishermen, scientific community, local communities, conservationists, administrators, government officers, politicians, among others, arranged in a Dissemination and Extension Program.
- f) Organize workshops with fishermen, among others, for reducing the incidental capture of sea turtles and for the appropriate handling of incidentally caught sea turtles by improving their survival possibilities.
- g) Creation and distribution of specific informative materials for the different groups of stakeholders.
- h) Use of Geographic Information Systems.

All training activities must be taught according to a standardization format for methods, concepts, terms, analyses and data presentation.

IV) General recommendations

- a) Recommend that the Parties include relevant measures to implement the Convention in their legislation, in particular measures that prevent and mitigate sea turtle interactions with fisheries.
- b) Comply with the resolutions and decisions agreed on by intergovernmental instruments previously mentioned and those related to this convention.
- c) Provide the IAC with a copy of any reports sent to these instruments.
- d) Sign the memorandums of understanding or cooperation between the IAC and FAO, IATTC, CPPS (Lima Convention), ICCAT, Cartagena Convention and other regional agreements.
- e) In case of taking appropriate measures, an analysis should take place to evaluate the socio-economic impacts of the implementation of such measures to coastal communities involved in fisheries practices with a high level of interaction with sea turtles.

V) Proposed Resolution for the Third Conference of the Parties

Based on the different resolutions and recommendations of international agreements and organizations, a draft resolution text was proposed: “Reduction of the adverse impact of fisheries on sea turtles”, to be analyzed by the Consultative Committee and later on by the COP3 for its possible adoption.

VI) References

- 1) Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries from the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
- 2) Recommendations for sea turtle protection from the technical consultation group organized by the FAO Fisheries Department (Bangkok, 2004)
- 3) IATTC Resolutions:
 - a. Resolution C-04-05 – Consolidated Resolution on Incidental Capture.
 - b. Resolution C-04-07 – Resolution on a Three-year Program for Mitigating the Impact of Tuna Fishing on Sea Turtles
- 4) Report from the By-Catch Sub-Committee of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT)
- 5) ICCAT Resolution on Sea Turtles 03-11.
- 6) Disposition for the elaboration of Action Plans on Bycatch, Not declared and Not regulated of the UN Food and Agriculture (FAO).

Annex 7

Proposed Resolution for the Third Conference of the Parties

Reduction of the adverse impacts of fisheries on sea turtles

Considering the possible impacts of fishing on sea turtle populations caused by incidental capture and mortality;

Taking into account that some Parties of the IAC Convention are also Parties to the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) and the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), which have adopted measures to regulate the impact of tuna fisheries on sea turtles, such as Resolutions IATTC C-04-05 (Modified) of the year 2005 and C-04-07 of the year 2004, and Resolution ICCAT 03-11 of 2003.

Acknowledging that the Minutes of the 4th Meeting of the IATTC Incidental Capture Working Group reports incidental capture of sea turtles and their mortality in longline fisheries in the Eastern Pacific Ocean basin;

Taking into account that the Fisheries Committee (COFI) of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) approved the Technical Consultation on sea turtle conservation and fisheries during their 26th session held in Bangkok of 2004 and urged their members and the Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMO) to immediately apply the recommendations outlined in the document Guidelines to Reduce Sea Turtle Mortality Caused by Fishing;

Considering the Party States have established the mandatory use of Turtle Excluder Devices (TEDs) for shrimp trawling in their respective legislations and that the use of such devices has been effective in reducing the incidental capture of sea turtles in trawl fisheries;

Whereas some of the Parties are carrying out experiments with circular hooks and baits in longline fisheries that have shown tendencies to reduce incidental capture and mortality of sea turtles; and

Considering that these actions are in agreement with the objectives of the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles;

The Conference of the Parties of the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles resolve to:

- I. Adopt the recommendations described in the document: "Guidelines for evaluating and mitigating the impact of sea turtle interactions with fisheries" created by the IAC Scientific Committee during their Third Meeting.
- II. Sign a Memorandum of Understanding with multilateral regional organisms involved in the management, conservation and protection of fishing resources.
- III. Request that the Party States send copies of any technical documents related to sea turtles that are sent to the multilateral organisms to the Convention's Secretariat.

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- IV. Instruct the Secretariat of the Convention to request interested non-Party states to share available data on incidental capture of sea turtles in fisheries operating within the Convention area, as well as copies of any technical documents related to sea turtles that are sent to multilateral organisms.

- V. To promote the gathering, communication and development of productive and close bonds between governmental, fishing and scientific sectors, non-governmental organizations and the general community interested in the conservation of sea turtles and their habitats.

Annex 8

Recommendations on the Use of Sea Turtle Excluder Devices (TEDs)

Report of the Fisheries Working Group

Participants: José Alió and Jorge Zuzunaga (coordinators), Diana Arauz, Mario Roberto Jolon Morales, Miguel Ángel Medina Ramos, Antonio Porras

Background

Article VII clause d of the text of the Convention literally designates the Consultative Committee to “Evaluate the efficiency of the different measures proposed to reduce incidental capture and mortality of sea turtles, as well as the effectiveness of the different types of sea turtle excluder devices (TEDs)” and as indicated in Annex III numeral 7 clauses a to c on recommendations for the use of TEDs by the Party States. It is recognized that to date the information gathered is not complete, calling attention to the lack of response from some of the Parties which interferes with their proper analysis by the Scientific Committee and later by the Consultative Committee of Experts.

Information Review

The following list of types of TEDs used within the region was prepared using the annual reports

TED type	Belize	Brazil *	Costa Rica	Guate- mala	Hond- uras	Mexico	USA	Venezuela	Ecuador *
Super-shooter 4 inch				X	X	X	X	X	
Super-shooter 6 inch			X						
Saunders Grid						X	X		
Georgia Jumper 4 inch						X	X		
Georgia Jumper 6 inch			X						
Anthony Weedless	X					X	X	X	
FED-INP						X			

*Information not available at this time

Notes:

1. Manual techniques are used in Peru to recover shrimp nets; therefore, fishermen are not required to use TEDs.
2. There are no shrimp fisheries in the Netherlands Antilles.

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Although there are many different types of TEDs available, the most common device used according to the information obtained is the Super Shooter. This may be related to the ease with which this device frees solid elements (organic waste, rocks, etc) from the net. However, this device may cause a 5-20% (2, 3) loss of shrimp and 50% or more loss of other species of commercial interest (4).

In case a country wishes to adapt the structural characteristics of the TED to meet the specific conditions of their trawl fisheries, it should carry out research that clearly indicates that the TED modification ensures an effective release of sea turtles in a determined area of at least 97% (1). In this light, it would be useful to provide the Parties with a protocol for the evaluation of TEDs, and this task could be added to the Plan of Work of the Scientific Committee.

In 1996, Costa Rica requested before the US government to permit the use of modified TEDs, with a space of 6 inches between the bars instead of the required 4 inches. The Costa Rican government argued that the modification decreased shrimp loss without affecting sea turtle capture. However, there was opposition to the proposal due to the concern that this modification would possibly capture juvenile turtles. Further research demonstrated that in Costa Rica shrimp fleets only interact with adult *Lepidohelys olivacea* and *Chelonia mydas* sea turtles, and that a space of 6 inches between the bars guarantees an effective release of 97% of the sea turtles. The modification was officially accepted in July of 2000.

Conclusion:

The Scientific Committee acknowledges the lack of information to make a more detailed recommendation in respect to the type of TEDs that should be used. Suggestions of a special type of TED will depend on doing comparative studies on the efficiency of those devices, considering biological and hydrological characteristics of each country, using standardized methods.

Recommendation:

Request the Parties to provide publications and research that provides information on the efficiency of TEDs to exclude turtles and retain target species.

References

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Arauz, R., I. Naranjo, R. Rojas and R. Vargas. 1996. Evaluation and technology transfer of the Turtle Excluder Device in the Pacific shrimp fishery of Costa Rica. University of Costa Rica. Unpublished.

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Araya, H. 1999. INCOPECA Technical Report: Effectiveness of TEDs with 6-inch bar spacing on retaining catch and excluding turtles. Costa Rican Fisheries and Aquaculture Institute (INCOPECA), Puntarenas, Costa Rica. LS No. 0892485-B, 25 pp. June.

Borras, L. 1999. INCOPECA Technical Report: Effectiveness of TEDs with 8-inch bar spacing on retaining catch and excluding turtles. Costa Rican Fisheries and Aquaculture Institute (INCOPECA), Puntarenas, Costa Rica. LS No. 0892485-C, 22 pp. June.

2. Marcano, L.A., Alió, J.J. and Lozada, R.M. (2000). Impact on captures by the use of the turtle excluder device (TED) in the industrial shrimp fishery in Venezuela. In: F.A. Abreu-Grobois, R. Briseno-Duenas, R. Marquez and L. Sarti (Compilers), Proceedings of the Eighteenth International Sea Turtle Symposium. U.S. Dept. of Commerce. NOAA Technical Memorandum NMFS-SEFSC-436, 293 pp. p. 107.
3. México Report.
4. Watson, J.W. and Taylor, C.W. (1991). Research on selective shrimp trawl designs for penaeid shrimp in the United States: A review of selective shrimp trawl research in the United States since 1973. Proceedings of the fisheries conservation engineering workshop, Publ. Rhode Island Sea Grant Coll. Program, pp. 50-59

Annex 9

Incorporating the socio-economic dimension in the Convention's objectives Recommendations to the Parties for considering socio-economic issues in the conservation of sea turtles and their habitats

Report of the working group on socio-economic dimensions

Participants: Juan Carlos Cantú, Marvin Araya, Patricia Zárate, Antonio Porras, Julia Horrocks, Milani Chaloupka, Neca Marcovaldi, Carlos Drews.

Recognizing that:

- In the Party States there is awareness regarding the cultural, aesthetic, recreational, economic and scientific value of sea turtles and their habitats.
- There is little information that strongly supports the different values of sea turtles and their habitats within the range of the Convention.
- There is little information on the socio-economic impact, positive or negative, on the conservation of sea turtles and their habitats.
- The mitigation measures for incidental capture, habitat conservation and sea turtle protection cause socio-economic effects that are not always being documented
- Actions of socio-economic situations that can lead to pressure on sea turtles have not been systematized (for example, the collapse of fisheries sometimes obligate fishermen to look for other natural resources to substitute them, such as sea turtles)
- Informed decision making regarding conservation measures on sea turtles and their habitats implies considering socio-economic variables of the communities involved, as well as the different values of turtles and their habitats for these societies.

The Scientific Committee recommends to the Parties:

1. Evaluate through research, documentation and dissemination the socio-economic impact of the conservation of sea turtles and their habitats
2. Include in the annual reports references of publications or case studies that document (1) the socio-economic value of sea turtles and their habitats and (2) the socio-economic impact of the conservation effort.
3. In those cases where the conservation of sea turtles and/or their habitats cause negative socio-economic impacts, design and implement mitigation measures, as pertinent.
4. Implement integral tools to evaluate socio-economic changes resulting from the conservation of sea turtles and their habitats, analyzing the various developmental pillars, such as social relationships, the economy, human resources, infrastructure, cultural values, political capacity and natural resources.
5. Include experts on socio-economic issues regarding the conservation of sea turtles and their habitats within the Scientific Committee
6. Consider traditional knowledge of coastal communities on sea turtles in creating conservation actions related to sea turtles and their habitats, whenever relevant.

The systematization of the value of sea turtles and their habitats, as well as the socio-economic impact on their conservation, should consider those inputs already provided by the Parties in the Annual reports.

Annex 10

Draft Resolution for COP 3

RESOLUTION TO STRENGTHEN THE CAPACITY OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE OF THE INTER-AMERICAN CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION OF SEA TURTLES TO PROVIDE SPECIALIST COUNSEL ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC MATTERS

Recalling that the objective of the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles emphasizes the fundamental importance to consider “environmental socioeconomic and cultural characteristics of the Parties,”

Observing that a major reason why sovereign States have become Parties to this convention is because of their recognition that marine turtles and their habitats have substantial and unique aesthetic, cultural, economic, recreational, and scientific values,

Recognizing that any successful conservation and management program must have the competence to gather, compile, synthesize, analyze, and evaluate, information from a wide variety of sources, on a wide variety of topics that are the usual domain of the “social sciences”, including – but not limited to - anthropological, communications, cultural, development, economic, educational, psychological, and sociological aspects – disciplinary areas outside the aegis of the natural sciences,

Concerned that many complex socio-economic aspects related to the conservation of marine turtles and their habitats are frequently not evaluated or understood, including such activities as the regulation of resource use, regulation of access to coastal and marine areas, bycatch mitigation measures, ecotourism, cultural and traditional activities, and educational and research activities,

Recognizing that a substantial number of basic issues that the Scientific Committee deals with clear and fundamental relationships to the social sciences,

Concerned that – despite the high caliber of scientific expertise that is represented in the Scientific Committee – no specialist from any of the social sciences is included, and as a result the efficiency and capacity of the Scientific Committee is severely limited,

Recognizing that informed decision making about measures relating to the conservation of marine turtles and their habitats require the careful consideration of a wide range of socio-economic aspects relating to communities, cultures, societies, and economic systems, as well as the diverse values of marine turtles and their habitats to these societies.

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The Parties of the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles resolve to:

Provide, through its Secretariat, the Consultative Committee of Experts and the Scientific Committee, bibliographic information from studies, research, and other sources of information relevant to the socio-economic values of marine turtles and their habitats, as well as the socio-economic impacts of activities related to the conservation of marine turtles and their habitats;

Promote socio-economic investigations in relation to conservation activities focused on marine turtles and their habitats;

Charge the Scientific Committee to include in its work plan adequate attention to socio-economic issues, in particular for the preparation of technical guidelines and recommendations to the Parties in matters related to socio-economic issues;

Guarantee that at least one specialist in one of the social sciences is an active member of the Scientific Committee.

Annex 11

Annual Reports

General comments:

Each Focal Point should be supported by the operation of a national multi-institutional committee that facilitates the elaboration of the report.

The scientific sector, and in particular the scientific representative, must have access to the Report at least 30 days before handing in the report to provide information and make comments.

The Secretariat should emit a “warning” to the members of the Scientific Committee, Consultation Committee and Focal Point of the deadlines for the presentations of the reports.

Evaluate the possibility of filling the reports electronically.

Use of terminology:

Note that there are differences in the instructions between the English and Spanish for point 4.4, that hampers the way the list is compiled.

Evaluate the possibility of establishing a word maximum word for open responses (e.g. 6.2).

Include a glossary of all acronyms whenever necessary. THIS IS NOT BEING CARRIED OUT

Annex 12

Scientific Committee Work Plan (2007) (Proposal)

- 1) Review and evaluate the annual reports each year and suggest changes and updates to the instructions and format as appropriate*.
- 2) Support and promote workshops and other activities on the standardization of methods to determine sea turtle nesting status and trends in each of the IAC countries.
- 3) Foster the development of a web-based meta-database of all relevant data sources for each IAC Party State relating to sea turtles and their habitats, resources and other information sources compiled by other agencies, organizations or individuals.
- 4) Foster in the longer term a web-based IAC sea turtle information database using all relevant information derived from each IAC country's annual report.
- 5) Propose high priority projects for funding and other forms of support for implementing the strategic objectives of the Treaty.
- 6) Follow-up on advances in the implementation of resolutions and application of guidelines adopted by the Parties.
- 7) Promote alliances and synergies with relevant organizations and specialists, in support of the tasks outlined by the Work Plan.
- 8) Include specialists in the social sciences in the meetings and deliberations.
- 9) Prepare summaries of the Annual Reports, based on the compilations prepared by the Secretariat.
- 10) Help the development of a digital library on the website, compiling pertinent information from the Parties and other sources.
- 11) Respond to COP and Consultative Committee requests for specific scientific and technical advice and prepare any requested resolutions.

Inter-sessional working groups:

In addition to the major tasks identified for the work plan, 4 discrete tasks will be dealt with inter-sessionally by different working groups:

- 1) The working group on Annual Reports will continue discussions through e-mail to explore ways to include key information from fisheries interactions in the format, together with relevant instructions (this need derives from the recent results of the Fisheries working group).
- 2) This working group, or a component of it, will also explore the possibility of producing summaries of the biological information in the Annual Reports.
- 3) The Hawksbill working group agreed to continue work and discussions via e-mail to help the development of a regional workshop.
- 4) The fisheries working group agreed to continue discussions via e-mail, in response to topics or questions requiring further work.

* The ability of the Scientific Committee to respond adequately to this task is subject to its members receiving all country reports no less than 30 days prior to the scheduled annual Scientific Committee meeting.

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Annex 13

List of Participants / Lista de Participantes

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Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles
 III MEETING OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE
 San José, Costa Rica, June 6-9, 2006

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