Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles
11th IAC Consultative Committee of Experts Meeting (CCE11)
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SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE 14th IAC SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE MEETING

This document is a summary of the recommendations from the 14th IAC Scientific Committee meeting held in Panama City on October 18-20, 2017. The summary is presented by the IAC Scientific Committee Chair Dr. Diego Albareda and it comprises three sections submitted for the consideration of the IAC Consultative Committee of Experts.

Section 1 includes modifications suggested for inclusion in the IAC Annual Report, specifically the tables on the implementation of *Caretta caretta*, *Eretmochelys imbricata*, and Fisheries Resolutions. **Section 2** includes the pilot Project proposal and instructions to report environmental parameters in nesting index beaches; and **Section 3**, includes the Scientific Committee strategy to work with RFMOs.

SECTION 1 – SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS CHANGES TO THE IAC ANNUAL REPORT

1.1 Table on Loggerhead Turtle Resolution Compliance

The Scientific Committee adopted the table to be included in the IAC Annual Report, including the questions to monitor compliance with the Resolution for the Conservation of the Loggerhead Turtle prepared by the working group, coordinated by Brazil.

Resolution CIT-COP7-2015-R3: Conservation of the Loggerhead Sea Turtle (*Caretta caretta*)

ACCORDING TO RESOLUTION CIT-COP7-2015-R3, REPORT WHETHER YOUR COUNTRY:

	RESOLUTION DOES NOT APPLY			
IS COMPLYING WITH THE FOLLOWING:	**YES**	**NO**	**DESCRIBE ACTION (*)**	**DOES NOT APPLY**
1. Has your country created national action plans or monitoring programs to promote loggerhead sea turtle conservation?				
2. State if these are plans or recovery programs, or bilateral or regional cooperation.				
3. Are these action plans or monitoring programs being implemented?				
4. Is there protection of the species at a state or federal level?				
5. If your country has loggerhead turtles nesting beaches:				
5 a. Has your country taken conservation actions to protect nesting beaches and their associated habitats?				
5b. Are there laws on turtle-friendly lighting in areas impacted by coastal development?				
5c. Are there long-term (minimum 10 years) standardized data available for population trend studies?				
6. Is there exploitation or direct harvest of loggerhead sea turtles in your country?				

(*) Specify actions implemented, the name of the project or relevant document, location, objective(s), institutions responsible, contact, financial or other support (optional), results (both positive and negative) and duration

1.2 Table on Hawksbill Resolution Compliance

Considering the modifications in the Hawksbill Resolution made at COP8, the Scientific Committee reviewed the current table on Hawksbill Resolution compliance, and recommended including an additional question (question 5) corresponding to the changes in the Resolution. The Scientific Committee did not reach consensus on that question and request the Consultative Committee their recommendation on the matter.

Resolution CIT-COP3-2006 R-1: Hawksbill turtle conservation *(Eretmochelys imbricata)*

ACCORDING TO RESOLUTION CIT-COP3-2006-R1 REPORT WHETHER YOUR COUNTRY:

		RESOLUTION DOES NOT APPLY			
IS COMPLYING WITH THE FOLLOWING		**YES**	**NO**	**DESCRIBE ACTION (*)**	**DOES NOT APPLY**
1. Are you strengthening monitoring of the illegal use and trade of hawksbill turtles and their products?					
2. Are you enforcing pertinent hawksbill legislation?					
3. Are activities being carried out in order to stop the illegal trade of hawksbill products?					
4. Indicate if your country is strengthening the protection of important nesting and foraging habitats by declaring protected areas and regulating anthropogenic activities that adversely impact these habitats.	a) Protection of nesting habitats				
	b) Protection of feeding habitats				
5. Does your country support or strengthen protection measures causing social and economic impacts (positive or negative)? **Suggested for consideration**					

(*) Specify actions implemented, the name of the project or relevant document, location, objective(s), institutions responsible, contact, financial or other support (optional), results (both positive and negative) and duration.

Question No.5 is pending for approval as there is no consensus among the members of the Scientific Committee because it is not clear what the question is asking for. The Consultative Committee should decide on it.

1.3 Table on Fisheries Resolution Compliance

The Scientific Committee recommended including a new table below the Fisheries Resolution Compliance table, showing which species of sea turtles are impacted by particular fisheries.

Table to identify which species of sea turtle is impacted by particular fisheries, annexed to the Fisheries Resolution Table in the IAC Annual Report

Resolution CIT-COP3-2006-R2: Reduction of the adverse impacts of fisheries on sea turtles

ACCORDING TO RESOLUTION CIT-COP3-2006-R2, REPORT WHETHER YOUR COUNTRY:

IS COMPLYING WITH THE FOLLOWING	YES	NO	DESCRIBE ACTION (*)	DOES NOT APPLY
Adopted the "Guidelines to Reduce Sea Turtle Mortality induced by fisheries operations", of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), including:				
A. Research and monitoring of adverse impact of fisheries on sea turtles				
• Collect information by fishery				
• Observer programs				
• Research on sea turtle/fishery interactions				
• Information on non-Party vessels				
• Cooperation with non-Party states to obtain • information				
B. Mitigation measures for the following fisheries:				
i. Long-line				
ii. Gillnets				
iii. Trawling (e.g., 1.TEDs: specify legally approved iv. TEDs, their dimensions, material, and target species for that fishery, 2. Time-area closures: specify geographical area, time of closure and target species for that fishery. 3. tow times and/or 4. other measures)				
v. Other fishing gear (indicate which one(s))				
vi. Training programs for fishermen about best practices for safe handling and release of sea turtles incidentally caught.				
C. Socio-economic considerations				
• Support socio-economic activities that help mitigate adverse impacts of fisheries on sea turtles				

(*) Specify actions implemented, the name of the project or relevant document, location, objective(s), institutions responsible, contact, financial or other support (optional), results (both positive and negative) and duration.

1.3.1 Table suggested by the Scientific Committee for consideration

Based on the table above, indicate which actions are taken per species, to reduce the adverse impacts according to each fishery, using the following codes:

RM - Research and Monitoring
MT Mitigation measures
SE Socio-Economics activities

	Longline	Gillnets	Trawling	Others
CC				
LO				
DC				
CM				
EI				
LK				

SECTION 2 - PILOT PROJECT PROPOSAL TO REPORT ENVIRONMENTAL PARAMETERS IN NESTING INDEX BEACHES

2.1 Pilot Project Proposal

The Climate Change Working Group on Climate Change and Sea Turtles, under the coordination of the Caribbean Netherlands, developed a form with instructions to report environmental data collected at index nesting beaches to be submitted to the IAC Conference of the Parties in 2019. This form was adopted by the Scientific Committee.

The Scientific Committee agreed on the following requests to the IAC Parties:

- That the Parties with nesting sea turtle populations be invited to participate in a pilot study, where each Party will select at least ONE representative index beach (i.e. a beach where monitoring of nesting sea turtles is already occurring) to report environmental data from the same beach using the instructions and the form developed by the IAC Scientific Committee.
- For the pilot study, every year from 2019-2023, the Parties will receive the form to report environmental data along with the IAC Annual Report request, to be submitted on the same date as the Annual Report.
- The Scientific Committee will analyze the information and prepare a report for the Parties after five years. Based on the results, the SC will recommend the procedures to follow in compliance with the Climate Change Resolution.

The Scientific Committee agreed on submitting the form to report the environmental data, the instruction sheet, and rationale for the request of this information from the Parties every year, after consideration of the next Consultative Committee CCE11.

2.2 Instructions for reporting Environmental data collected from Index Nesting Beaches

Index beaches are typically those with high use by nesting turtles. Environmental quality of index beaches should be recorded because changes in beach quality can directly affect numbers of females nesting, sex ratio of hatchlings, hatching success, and mortality of hatchlings. This applies to all sea turtle species.

Please complete the form for an index nesting beach (es) in your country where environmental data are being recorded.

Recommendations on what environmental data to collect and suggested methodologies can be found in CIT-CC12-2015-Tec.10. *Mitigation strategies to reduce the impact of climate change on nesting beaches.*

Three environmental characteristics of index beaches are particularly important to monitor: Hinterland (behind the beach) habitat type and land use because this may affect nesting turtles and hatchlings; Beach width because it is an indicator of the area of dry beach available for nesting; and Sand Temperature because it affects incubation success and sex ratio.

For purposes of detecting trends on beaches over years, consistency of monitoring is critical. Data must be taken at the same location, at the same time, and with the same methodology.

NOTES TO ASSIST COMPLETION

The form consists of 4 sections. The cells are expandable to allow space needed and more rows can be added.

A. General information

Months of the nesting season: Please indicate between which months nesting occurs on the index beach.
Physical description of nesting beach: Please indicate color of sand, substrate type (coralline, siliceous, etc.), natural/re-nourished, high or low wave energy.
Hinterland: This information will indicate to what extent the index beach is affected by human alteration of the land inland from the beach. Human impacts in the hinterland may affect the stability of the beach in the long term. Please indicate what % of the total length of index beach consists of natural versus human-altered habitats. Enter 0 for habitat types not found at the index beach. If there is another land use that is not listed, please add under "Others", as required.

B. Dry beach width. This section is to be completed if you are measuring dry beach width on the index nesting beach. Otherwise, please leave blank.

This is a measurement of the beach from the normal high tide line landwards to where the substrate becomes unusable for nesting. The beach is normally dry, i.e. only washed over by high storm swells. Comparison of beach widths at the same place at the same tidal/lunar cycles can allow long term increases or decreases in dry beach available for nesting to be detected.

Bench marks are permanent markers (e.g., a post, a specific built structure, a large tree) used to define the landward boundary when measuring beach width. The use of bench marks ensures that the location where beach width is measured is constant. Please provide a GPS position of the bench mark.
Date: This is the date of measurement (dd/mm/yy).
Trends in dry beach width: What trends in beach width (if any) have been detected on the index nesting beach. Please indicate if the beach was unusually affected by a hurricane, storm, other erosional/accretional events, unusually heavy rainfall, etc. at times when measurements were taken.
Respondents may add more bench marks as needed.

C. Sand temperature. This section is to be completed if you are measuring sand temperature on the index nesting beach. Otherwise, please leave blank.

Location: Please provide GPS for location sampled. Add more locations as needed.
Depth: Please indicate at what depth sand temperature is measured. **If data came from a temperature datalogger positioned in a clutch of eggs, please indicate.**

Frequency of measurement: Are temperatures recorded hourly, daily, weekly, monthly, or at longer intervals at this location?
Start and end date of monitoring: the date that temperature measurements began and the date that they finished.
Temperature should be expressed as Mean temperature (^{o}C ±SD) per calendar month. Please also report Mean Maximum temperature (±SD) per calendar month, if available.

D. Please list any studies/reports/theses that have included environmental data collected on the index nesting beach(es).

Country:	
Year of report:	
A. Index beach description	
Name and Lat-Long of Index beach:	
Length of index beach (km):	
Physical description of nesting beach (e.g. sand characteristics, wave energy):	
Species nesting:	
Description of hinterland (the land lying inland from the beach)	% dunes:
	% coastal forest:
	% lagoon, wetland
	% buildings (hotels, houses):
	% sea wall:
	% roadway, boardwalk:
	% Other:

B. Dry beach width			
Bench mark	**Date (dd/mm/yy)**	**Width (m)**	**Trend(s) in dry beach width; Comments on storms and other impacts that may affect beach dynamics**
Bench mark 1			
Bench mark 2			
Bench mark 3			

C. Sand temperature	Location	Depth	Frequency of measurement (hourly, daily, weekly, monthly, other)	Start and end date of monitoring	Temperature (°C)	Trend(s) in temperature; Comments on storms and other impacts that may affect temperature
Year 1	1					
	2					
	3					
	4					
Year 2	1					
	2					
	3					
	4					
Year 3	1					
	2					
	3					
	4					
Year 4	1					
	2					
	3					
	4					
Year 5	1					
	2					
	3					
	4					

D. Please list studies of environmental characteristics of index nesting beach(es) that have been published in the last 5 years.

SECTION 3 – STRATEGIES TO WORK WITH INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, SUCH AS REGIONAL FISHERIES MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATIONS (RFMOS)

The Scientific Committee adopted the strategy proposed by the Working Group formed by Argentina and the United States. The strategy is a guide for this committee to provide technical inputs into the Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) measures that are relevant to the IAC objectives, such CIAT, ICCAT, among other.

3.1 Scientific Committee Strategy to Work with RFMOs

i. Identify meetings and review agenda priorities to assess relevance to the IAC

ii. Identify priority topics relevant for the IAC

iii. Evaluate feasibility and value of participation by IAC Secretariat *PT* (or a designate).

iv. Clarify the product or outcome, such as letters of support, lobbying for MoU, etc.

v. Identify appropriate personnel to assist in the development of the products identified.