



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

Venezuela

Annual Report 2012

IAC Annual Report General Instructions

Annex IV of the Convention text states that each Contracting Party shall hand in an Annual Report. To complete this Annual Report, Focal Points should consult with various stakeholders involved in sea turtle issues. If you have any questions regarding this Annual Report, please write to the PT Secretariat at secretario@iacseaturtle.org

Please note that the date to submit this Annual Report is **April 30th of 2012.**

Part I (General Information)

Please fill out the following tables. Add additional rows if necessary.

a._ Focal Point

Institution	Environmental Ministry of Popular Power / National Biological Diversity Office
Name	Dr. Jesús Manzanillo Puppo
Date Annual Report submitted	

b._ Agency or Institution responsible for preparing this report

Name of Agency or Institution	National Biological Diversity Office/ Endangered Species Conservation Unit
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Part II (Policy and Management)

a._ General description of activities carried out for the protection and conservation of sea turtles



Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles Venezuela Annual Report 2012

In accordance with Articles IX and XVIII of the text of the Convention, each Party shall establish monitoring programs, policies and plans for implementation at a national level for the protection and conservation of sea turtles and their habitat.

As a result, the Party shall report on the action plans, management plan or other types of instruments, describing their location, the species considered and the actions implemented by governmental, non-governmental and private institutions related to sea turtles.

In addition to the above, please fill out the following tables and explain the level of progress in the comments column.

	YES/NO/ In Progress	Comments
<p>Does your country have a national plan of action in accordance with Article XVIII?</p>	<p><i>In Progress</i></p>	<p>The 2010-2020 National Biological Diversity Conservation Strategy (ENCDB) contains the fundamental guidelines that direct conservation actions during the United Nations' decade for Biological Diversity. It includes seven strategic guidelines, which act as technical elements to confront the current situation of the loss of biodiversity, and seven transversal axes encompassing the necessary political and social elements that guarantee conservation with social compromise. These guidelines are comprised of a general objective and various specific objectives and their activities. The latter are the foundation for creating Action Plans, through which specific actions, indicators, goals and stakeholders are defined so that the ENCDB may be applied at a national, regional and local scale. The joint creation of the National Action Plan for the Conservation of Biological Diversity is in its final stage.</p> <p>This plan does not deal solely with the conservation of sea turtles, but does so as part of an integrated strategy that sees conservation as an integration of various strategic guidelines (L1 Management of Biological Diversity Information, L2 Endangered Species Conservation, L3 Strategic Conservation Areas and L7 Preventing and Managing Illegal Trafficking and Trade of Species) and all the transversal axes of the National Strategy (E1 Ecosocialist Ethics, E2 Sovereignty, E3 Social Inclusion and Justice, E4 Conservation Education, E5 Environmental Legislation, E6 Conservation Management and E7 International Management and Politics). This integrative vision for the Planning of conservation policies is the only guarantee for the success of conservation plans.</p> <p>The Plan for the Development and Integrated Management of Coastal Zones (POGIZC) is also included within the national environmental policies. This plan establishes a spatial and temporal point of reference that guarantees the conservation, sustainable use and exploitation of coastal areas and allows for the improvement of the quality of life of the inhabitants. The</p>



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

Venezuela

Annual Report 2012

		<p>plan is being carried out in 14 coastal States: Anzoátegui, Aragua, Carabobo, Delta Amacuro, Falcón, Miranda, Mérida, Monagas, Nueva Esparta, Sucre, Vargas, Yaracuy and Zulia and the Federal Dependencies.</p> <p>The guidelines followed by the plan are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conserve natural, landscape, historic, archeological and sociocultural resources. 2. Strengthen environmental planning and development of coastal areas. 3. Prevent, control, correct and mitigate the causes that generate pollution in coastal areas. 4. Guarantee the right to public use of Public Domain of the coastal areas through an integrated management. 5. Reduce the population's vulnerability against natural or sociocultural phenomenon in the coastal areas. 6. Strengthen the public organizations administrative processes and actions and establish coordination, follow-up and control mechanisms. 7. Strengthen environmental education and community participation. 8. Guide and promote scientific and technological research in coastal areas. 9. Permanently reinforce environmental security and control. <p>The plan has been foreseen to cover a 20 year period, in other words until the year 2030. However, and despite the fact that this coastal planning has a time-frame, it is considered to be an ongoing process and, therefore, it requires a permanent nature, so its actions at a national, state and local level are carried out over the short, medium and long term in order to obtain results that support environmental legislation.</p> <p>As an example of one of the activities carried out by the program in 2011 is the evaluation of coastal developments with the purpose of correctly using the coastline's construction zone, reorganize the waste water system, build water collectors and protect the associated ecosystems in the Vargas state with the help of the Environmental Ministry of Popular Power, the Capital and Vargas Environmental State Office, the Tourism Ministry, Hydrocapital, the government of the state of Vargas and the community of the Bahía de los Niños.</p>
<p>Does your country have policies and programs at local and regional levels in accordance with Article XVIII?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>In progress</i></p>	<p>At a regional level, the design of the National Project for the Conservation of Sea Turtles has advanced, which encompasses all the marine, coastal and insular bioregions of Venezuela. This project seeks to apply the 2010-2020 National Biological Diversity Conservation Strategy to the conservation of sea turtles, integrating strategic guidelines and transversal axes in sea turtle conservation, providing a systematic response to the complex problem of the threats to sea turtle populations.</p> <p>The planning tools used at a local level are the Local Action Plans, which constitute the application of the 2010-2020 National Biological Diversity Conservation Strategy in specific areas, administered by one or more organized communities (for example cooperatives, community councils, student councils,</p>



Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles Venezuela Annual Report 2012

		<p>fishermen’s councils, university community, institutions, etc.). They are formed on a strong structural foundation and based on a real diagnosis of the problems linked to each of the Strategy’s guidelines and axes, thus creating a plan that addresses the local problem of loss of biodiversity in a global and structured manner. This tool allows the communities to decide how the National Biological Diversity Conservation Strategy will be applied in their community, utilizing their own local knowledge. In this way, the National Strategy becomes the object of debate that seeks to generate a global and integrated outlook of the problems and solutions, and in the process generating new men and women, and a different reality.</p> <p>Local action plans are currently being created. The Local Action Plan for the Wildlife Refuge and the Laguna de Boca de Caño Fishing Reserve are highlighted here since sea turtle conservation was one of the problems identified and, therefore, a plan is being prepared based on the 7 strategic guidelines and transversal axes of the National Biological Diversity Conservation Strategy.</p>
<p>Does your country have monitoring programs in accordance with Article IX?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Yes</i></p>	<p>The same National Action Plans, Local Action Plans and National Projects are also considered to be planning and monitoring tools.</p>

In Venezuela, we worked together to create the 2010-2020 National Biological Diversity Conservation Strategy, within the framework of the National Simon Bolivar Project, the first Socialist Plan for the Nation’s Social and Economic Development 2007-2013. This Strategy is based on the humanistic conception that promotes a different kind of relationship between human beings and Mother Earth, in order to encourage an alternative development model based on ecological, cultural, social and political sustainability.

The 2010-2020 National Biological Diversity Conservation Strategy was created with the simultaneous participation from many of society’s sectors (academic, public service workers, aficionados and social organizations) through numerous workshops that took place over the course of 18 months. More than 1600 people participated in these workshops nationwide, encouraging its discussion and enriching its diagnosis with different points of view. During the first stage, the main causes of loss of biodiversity were identified on three levels: direct causes (those that directly affect the loss of biodiversity), intermediate causes (those that cause the direct causes) and structural causes (those linked the development model).

As a result of the analysis of the participatory diagnosis of the threats to the Biological Diversity, seven Strategic Guidelines were established, as technical elements to deal with the current situation of the loss of biodiversity and seven transversal axes, which respond to principles established in the Constitution, the Laws and the National Simon Bolivar Project 2007-2013 and were identified as necessary political and social elements that guarantee conservation with a social commitment. Of these transversal axes, the first three are characterized as Fundamental Principles in order to guarantee conservation with a social commitment in the framework of building up Socialism in the XXI century.

This powerful method of working together to create the 2010-2020 National Biological Diversity Conservation Strategy allowed the different stakeholders participating to be involved in developing State



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

Venezuela

Annual Report 2012

policies, generating an emerging conscience while reality is transformed and vice versa, building a successful implementation of the Strategy and guaranteeing *a priori* the compliance of national and international goals for the United Nations' decade of Biological Diversity.

The 2010-2020 National Biological Diversity Conservation Strategy (ENCDB) contains the fundamental guidelines that direct conservation actions during the United Nations' decade for Biological Diversity. It includes seven strategic guidelines, which act as technical elements to confront the current situation of the loss of biodiversity, and seven transversal axes encompassing the necessary political and social elements that guarantee conservation with social compromise. These guidelines are comprised of a general objective and various specific objectives and their activities. The latter are the foundation for creating Action Plans, through which specific actions, indicators, goals and stakeholders are defined so that the ENCDB may be applied at a national, regional and local scale.

The Action Plans are the result of collaborative efforts using as its foundation, Participative Strategic Planning, a tool that allows the conceptualization, design, execution and evaluation of plans, programs and projects. It is based on two main principles: in the first place: planning in order to ensure that the guidelines of the 2010-2020 National Biological Diversity Conservation Strategy become a reality, and in second place, the propagandistic participation of various sectors of society. The second principle is accomplished through the *Investigación Acción Participativa (Participative Research Action)*, that gives the same relevance to the scientific and social work that accompanies each process. This method represents an alternative to the current methods of production and information exchange that have become a barrier for the inclusion and expression of societies' transformations. At the same time, it is way to solve problems from the bottom up and for the people, the missing link between human beings and nature. In this way, *Participative Strategic Planning*, as a tool for the creation of Action Plans, joins the State and the people through thinking, reflecting and acting on a way to deal with the threats to Biological Diversity at different levels, promoting a humanistic conception based on equality between humans and Mother Earth.

Under this scheme, the National Project for the Conservation of Sea Turtles in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is being collectively built.

b. National legislation and international instruments related to sea turtles adopted in the preceding year

Describe any national regulations, international agreements and other legal instruments adopted during the preceding year (April 30, 2010-April 30, 2011) related to sea turtles and/or relevant activities. Provide a reference and attach the digital file for the legislation and its corresponding number. The laws adopting the international legislation should be included, when they exist.

National Legislation		
Type and name of legal instrument (No.)	Description (Range of application)	Sanctions(s) Imposed
Resolution for restructuring the RAMSAR Committee	An update of the legal framework that accompanies the management of the wetlands was needed in order to keep the management of the wetlands within the new Country model defined by the National Simon Bolivar Project, First Socialist Plan for the Nation	



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

Venezuela

Annual Report 2012

	2007-2013 and as expressed in the 2010-2020 National Biological Diversity Conservation Strategy as a way to guarantee a true sustainable and participative administration of the wetlands not only as strategic areas of conservation, but as an integral part of current water management systems, a place of settlement for many of the county's cultures.	
International Instruments		
Treaty, Convention, Agreements, Memorandum of Understanding		Year signed and/or ratified
NO CHANGES		

Note: If this is the first time a country is submitting this information, please include all pertinent national legislation and international instruments currently in force.

c. Actions for compliance with national and international legislation

c.1 IAC Resolutions

Fill in the following tables for each of the IAC Resolutions listed below. In the case that a Resolution does not apply to your country, please mark the box RESOLUTION DOES NOT APPLY, and if a specific question does not apply, please mark the column DOES NOT APPLY. If you need more space to describe these actions, please attach additional pages and note the resolution and question number to which you are responding.

Resolution CIT-COP2-2004 R1: Conservation of leatherback turtles (*Dermochelys coriacea*)

ACCORDING TO RESOLUTION CIT-COP2-2004-R1, REPORT WHETHER YOUR COUNTRY:

IS COMPLYING WITH THE FOLLOWING:			RESOLUTION DOES NOT APPLY	DOES NOT APPLY
	YES	NO	DESCRIBE ACTION (*)	
1a) Have you created conservation plans and long-term programs that can reverse the critical situation of the leatherback turtle in the Eastern Pacific?	X		The 2010-2020 National Biological Diversity Conservation Strategy and its National Action Plan, through Line 2: Endangered Species Conservation, this establishes the development of a National Sea Turtle Conservation Project that is in its final stage of construction.	
1b) Are you implementing these conservation plans and monitoring programs?	X		The collective construction of the ENCDB allowed participants to be involved in developing the Strategy, generating an emerging conscience,	



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

Venezuela

Annual Report 2012

			<p>contributing to the transformation of reality as the individual transforms, and vice versa.</p> <p>The National Action Plan and the Sea Turtle Conservation Project will allow the articulation of actions for the execution and follow-up of the ENCDB.</p>	
2a) Have you taken conservation measures to significantly reduce the use of leatherback turtle products and by-products?	X		<p>The National Biological Diversity Office created the Illegal Trafficking Control and Prevention Unit, which advances actions directed at strengthening mechanisms for preventing illegal trafficking and trade, implements rapid command actions, promotes the rehabilitation of specimens rescued from illegal trafficking.</p> <p>Conservation initiatives are supported including safe guarding beaches in order to reduce hunting of nesting females and poaching of nests.</p>	
2b) Do you evaluate these conservation measures?	X		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Illegal Trafficking Control and Prevention Unit is consolidating a system for the prevention and management of illegal trafficking of species, based on research, security, rapid command actions and systems for rehabilitating live animals. • Inspections are carried out on the beaches and in commercial establishments in order to verify and confirm the illegal sale of sea turtles. • Advice is provided and workshops are given on prevention of trade and illegal trafficking of sea turtles and their products. 	
3a) If your country has leatherback turtle nesting beaches in the Eastern Pacific: Have you taken conservation measures to protect the nesting sites and their associated habitats?				X
3b) Do you evaluate the conservation measures taken to protect those nesting sites and their associated habitats?	X		<p>One of the strategic guidelines of the National Biological Diversity Conservation Strategy, is structured around the planning of “Strategic Areas for Conservation,” whose main objective is to preserve and manage spaces of territory that contain natural</p>	



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

Venezuela

Annual Report 2012

			<p>elements that make them strategic for the Nation due to the social benefits that derive from its conservation and their contribution to the everlasting Supreme Social Happiness. This guideline contains two objectives: 1) Guaranteeing the conservation of habitats and ecosystems and 2) Designing and implementing programs to mitigate impacts and restoration of deteriorated and fragmented ecosystems and strengthen the existing ones. These objectives are articulated into general actions, which are the basis for the Action Plan for the conservation of strategic Areas, which include the primary habitats of endangered species.</p> <p>All the conservation measures within the framework of the National Biological Diversity Conservation Strategy are being systemized as part of its follow-up.</p>	
4. Has your country adopted fishing techniques that reduce incidental capture and mortality of this species?	X		Prohibition of industrial trawling fisheries in all the waters of the Venezuelan territory (Extraordinary Official Gazette N° 5.877, of 03/11/2009), which protects the diversity and the ecosystemic sustainability in 562,000 square kilometers of the Caribbean Sea.	
5a) Is your country collecting information on incidental capture of leatherbacks in the following fisheries:	X		Under the framework of the National Sea Turtle Conservation Program, a template for reporting basic data is being validated, including data on sea turtle bycatch in fisheries.	
Artisanal fisheries				
i) Long-line				
ii) Gillnets				
iii) Other fishing gear (indicate which one(s))				
Industrial fisheries				
i) Long-line				
ii) Gillnets				
iii) Other fishing gear (indicate which one(s))				
5b) Have you provided the IAC with information on incidental capture of leatherbacks in the following fisheries:				
Artisanal fishing				
i) Long-line				



Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles Venezuela Annual Report 2012

ii) Gillnets				
iii) Other fishing gear (indicate which one(s))				
Industrial fisheries				
i) Long-line				
ii) Gillnets				
iii) Other fishing gear (indicate which one(s))				
6. Have you established agreements and/or understandings with countries fishing within international waters to adopt fishing techniques that reduce incidental capture of leatherback turtles? List which countries:				
7. Have you encouraged other non-Party states to the IAC, carrying out activities that affect leatherback turtles, to adopt measures in favor of their conservation, by means of bilateral, multilateral or regional contacts?		X		
8. Have any cooperative agreements or alliances been established with pertinent organizations? List:		X		

(*) Specify actions implemented, 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.

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

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

IS COMPLYING WITH THE FOLLOWING:	RESOLUTION DOES NOT APPLY		DESCRIBE ACTION (*)	DOES NOT APPLY
	YES	NO		
1. Has your country promoted synergies with other Conventions, treaties, international organizations, and/or regional fisheries bodies on the management and conservation of hawksbill turtles and their habitats? Indicate which one(s).		X		
2 a) Are you strengthening monitoring of the illegal use and trade of hawksbill turtles and their products?	X		Currently the Illegal Trafficking Control and Prevention Unit of the National Biological Diversity Office in coordination with the Venezuelan armed forces are patrolling different areas of the territory that have resulted in the confiscation of hawksbill products.	
2 b) Are you enforcing pertinent hawksbill legislation?	X			
2 c) Are activities being carried out in order to stop illegal trade of hawksbill products?	X		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Permanent operatives to detect illegal trade are being 	



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

Venezuela

Annual Report 2012

			<p>coordinated together with the Bolivarian National Guard and Public Ministry.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice is provided and workshops are given on prevention of trade and illegal trafficking of sea turtles and their products. • Training of Environmental Protection employees to identify pieces made from hawksbill shells and desiccated turtle specimens. 	
<p>3. Does your country support and strengthen the research and monitoring activities required to improve the scientific basis of conservation measures for the hawksbill turtle? Especially in:</p>	Genetics	X	Identified among one of the research and funding priorities through the National Science and Technology Fund (FONACIT)	
	Migratory behavior	X	Identified among one of the research and funding priorities through the National Science and Technology Fund (FONACIT). Research need: Natural history, status and trends in change of the abundance and distribution of species and priority populations due to their endangered status.	
	Location and conservation status of foraging habitats.	X	Identified among one of the research and funding priorities through the National Science and Technology Fund (FONACIT). Research need: The impact human activities have on biological diversity in the strategic conservation areas, areas under management and sustainable exploitation (forest, agricultural, aquaculture and tourist) and areas not under management. Las Majaguas (Edo. Miranda) Beach was evaluated in order to determine a sea turtle protection zone. The results of this evaluation are currently being reviewed.	
	Location and conservation status of prey species.	X	Identified among one of the research and funding priorities through the National Science and Technology Fund (FONACIT). Research need: Natural history, status and trends in change of the abundance and distribution of species and priority populations due to their endangered or endemic status.	



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

Venezuela

Annual Report 2012

	Population dynamics at foraging sites	X	Identified among one of the research and funding priorities through the National Science and Technology Fund (FONACIT). Research need: Natural history, status and trends in change of the abundance and distribution of species and priority populations due to their endangered or endemic status.	
	Integrity of nesting habitats	X	Identified among one of the research and funding priorities through the National Science and Technology Fund (FONACIT). Research need: Natural history, status and trends in change of the abundance and distribution of species and priority populations due to their endangered or endemic status.	
	Others (specify)			
4. As indicated in the recommendations from FAO's Technical Meeting on the conservation of marine turtles and fisheries that was held in Bangkok in 2004 and adopted by the 26th Session of FAO's Fisheries Committee (COFI), does your country carry out any activities mentioned in a) and/or b)?	a) Evaluate incidental capture of hawksbill turtles in jurisdictional waters.	X	A template is being designed to report basic data, which includes aspects on incidental capture of sea turtles in fisheries.	
	b) Actions to mitigate incidental capture of hawksbill turtles in their jurisdictional waters.	X	Prohibition of industrial trawl fisheries in all waters of the Venezuelan territory and Economic Exclusive Zone.	
5. Does your country apply the precautionary approach when considering proposals for seismic exploration on priority marine habitats of the hawksbill turtle?		X	The Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela establishes in Article 129, that "All activities at risk of causing damage to ecosystems must be previously accompanied by environmental and sociocultural impact studies", which both the Environmental Organic Law and the Management of Biological Diversity Law also establish. Therefore, any activity capable of degrading the Environment requires and Environmental Impact Study, as established in Decree 1257 that contains the Regulations for Environmental Evaluation of Activities Susceptible to Degrading the Environment (Official Gazette No. 35.946).	



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

Venezuela

Annual Report 2012

<p>6. 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.</p>	<p>a) Protection of nesting habitats</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>Through the Plan for the Development and Integrated Management of Coastal Zone (POGIZC), the 585 thousand square kilometers of marine areas are systematically studied. The integrative planning and management of the coastal areas linked to environmental, social, cultural and economic aspects that describe a broad and dynamic process, by which the temporal and special interrelations of the systems are understood, as well as the identification of policies for the conservation and sustainability of the coastal ecosystems. In this sense, the implementation of the Venezuela's POGIZC, agrees with the governing principles of the Economic and Social Development Plan for the Nation and the National Territorial Development Plan, especially in regards to the achievement of Supreme Social Happiness and the principles of environmental sustainability, due to the fact that increasing the quality of life within this space is strategically important because it involves 18.20% of the total population and for the fact that it constitutes an important organizational bridge between the aquatic and terrestrial space, as well as containing innumerable and important environmental variables (natural and socioeconomic) of regional, national and international connotation.</p> <p>Surveillance of beaches is carried out with the purpose of guaranteeing the compliance of what is established in the Decree having the equivalent authority of an Organic Law of Coastal Zones, which protects a strip of 80 meters starting from the high-tide line.</p>	
	<p>b) Protection of feeding habitats</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>Same as the one before</p>	



Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles Venezuela Annual Report 2012

7. Does your country promote exchange of technical capacity and collaborative research on hawksbill habitats among Parties as well as non-Parties and other involved organizations in the Area of the Convention?		X		
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(*). Specify actions implemented, 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.

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
1. 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		X	The 2010-2020 National Biological Diversity Conservation Strategy considers the management of information on biological diversity to be very important in the design of the National Sea Turtle Program. A template is being designed to report basic data, which includes aspects of the adverse impacts of fisheries on sea turtles.	
• Observer programs		X		
• Research on sea turtle/fishery interactions		X		
• Information on non-Party vessels		X		
• Cooperation with non-Party states to obtain information		X		
B. Mitigation measures for the following fisheries:				
i) Long-line	X		The 2010-2020 National Biological Diversity Conservation Strategy considers the need to have wildlife rehabilitation centers for their reintroduction to their natural environment later on. In the state of Zulia, the Sea Turtles of the Gulf of Venezuela Working Group carries out rescue, rehabilitation and reintroduction activities with the sea turtles in Gulf of Venezuela.	
ii) Gillnets		X		
iii) Trawling (e.g., 1. TEDs: specify legally approved 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)		X	Prohibition of Industrial Trawl Fisheries	



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

Venezuela

Annual Report 2012

iv) Other fishing gear (indicate which one(s))	X	The Decree with Range, Value, and Force of Organic Law of Fisheries and Aquaculture establishes in Article 26 that technologies and fishing gears developed and available will be studied and analyzed in order to reduce the effects on other live resources different from the fishing objective.	
C. Training, education and dissemination			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training, education and dissemination activities 	X	<p>The 2010-2020 National Biological Diversity Conservation Strategy recognizes in its transversal axis conservation education, the need to promote the development of awareness on Biological Diversity through the diffusion and creation of spaces for debate on its social value as national heritage and fundamental resource for the development of the Nation, their threats, and the management policies for their conservation in our country. At the same time, strategic guideline 1 guarantees access to information on biological diversity in order to promote the implementation of the strategic guidelines and transversal axes of the Strategy.</p> <p>In May of 2011, the II National Congress on Biodiversity was held, where posters on sea turtles were presented, reporting on the progress being made and results of conservation actions while bringing attention to these endangered chelonids.</p> <p>The IX Ecological Venezuelan was held, among the events was the Symposium called “Scientific Expeditions of Aves Island” where they presented projects dealing with the conservation of green turtles in their Refuge. Within this same congress, the symposium “Veterinary Aspects of Sea</p>	



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

Venezuela

Annual Report 2012

		<p>Turtles and Cetaceans” was held, presenting works related to tools for monitoring the health of wild ST populations, strandings, recovery and ST rehabilitation. A course-workshop was done on sea turtles in Venezuela, sharing information on their biology, ecology, population status, and conservation classification and techniques. 30 people attended this course-workshop (tourism operators, fishermen, members of the communal counsels of coastal zones and university students.)</p>	
D. Harmonization of policies and legislation			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modifications to instruments 		<p style="text-align: center;">X</p> <p>The 2010-2020 National Biological Diversity Conservation Strategy recognizes in its transversal axis Environmental Legislation, the need to define and update the Legal Framework that regulates Biological Diversity Management as essential element for the collective and individual sustainable development directed at achieving everlasting Supreme Social Happiness. Currently we are in the final stage of preparing the National Action Plan for Conservation Legislation.</p>	
E. Capacity building			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of a national sea turtle committee/network 		<p style="text-align: center;">X</p> <p>The coordination of the National Projects aligned with the 2010-2020 National Biological Diversity Conservation Strategy is visualized from multidisciplinary work groups with representation from all the sector involved (civil servants, fishermen, students, professors, academics, aficionados, etc.). In this sense, the Sea Turtle Conservation work group will be created in due time.</p>	
F. Financing			



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

Venezuela

Annual Report 2012

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial support obtained to implement guidelines in this resolution 	X	<p>Funding has been obtained from the Environmental Ministry of Popular Power, the Science, Technology and Intermediate Industries Ministry of Popular Power through FONACIT and the Zoo and Aquariums Foundation.</p>	
G. Socio-economic considerations			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support socio-economic activities that help mitigate adverse impacts of fisheries on sea turtles 	X	<p>The Bolivarian Missions have been constituted as the fundamental strategy to achieve social inclusion in a massive and accelerated manner, with the purpose of surpassing social inequalities and poverty, which is one of the challenges for the conservation of the Biological Diversity, as well as promoting the responsible and rational use of the ecosystems satisfying social needs, as the only way to conserve the ecosystems and the species. Also within the National Food Security Strategy and National Biological Diversity Conservation Strategy the exploitation of the diversity was discussed. It is one of the essential links between the human being and the rest of nature and when it this occurs in a sustainable way, it is the basis for sovereignty and collective and individual development of present and futures generations. In this sense, State policies link the topic of biological diversity conservation to food, territorial and agroecological sovereignty. For the Bolivarian Government, the eradication of poverty, without sovereignty over natural resources, without political autonomy and under new schemes of neocolonialism, is unfeasible. The capture of rent that benefits small groups and expands the exclusion to majorities submerged in the web of global regulations is intolerable and threatens the</p>	



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

Venezuela

Annual Report 2012

		<p>principle of sovereignty. Starting from this premise, the collection of strategies, plans and projects that are being promoted, are framed within a development proposal that “bases its roots in the fusion of the most advanced values and principles of socialism’s humanist trends and the historical heritage of Simon Bolivar’s thoughts” in order to achieve a “inclusive social structure and new social, productive, humanistic, and endogenous model” that is the First Socialist Economic and Social Development Plan of the Nation” for the 2007– 2013 period. These guidelines combine the eradication of poverty, social inclusion and democratic values with the protection of nature by proposing a new relationship between the human being and Mother Earth, participating in the decisions, productive models with low environmental impact, territorial restructuring so that it responds to the environmental historic and cultural realities, and new international relations where sovereignty becomes an essential value and relationships with other countries are based on mutual respect.</p>	
H. Other aspects			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental impact studies for mariculture projects 		X	<p>All of the Aquiculture Projects in Venezuelan territory require an Environmental Impact Study.</p>
2. Sent information and documents on sea turtles created by your country to the Secretariat of the Convention? List documents.			
3. Initiated activities that assist the Convention Secretariat in contacting non Party States through established mechanisms, especially in the area of the Convention, so that they may provide, in a cooperative spirit, the Secretariat with available data on incidental sea turtle catches in their fisheries?		X	
4. Supports the Convention Secretariat, through established mechanisms, to commence discussions with regional fishery management		X	



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

Venezuela

Annual Report 2012

organizations in order to develop Memorandum of Understandings.					
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(* **Specify actions implemented, 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.**

Resolution CIT-COP4-2009-R5: Adaptation of sea turtle habitats to climate change

ACCORDING TO RESOLUTION CIT-COP4-2009-R5, REPORT WHETHER YOUR COUNTRY:

IS COMPLYING WITH THE FOLLOWING:	YES	NO	DESCRIBE ACTION (*)	DOES NOT APPLY
1 a) Have marine and coastal habitats on which sea turtles depend been included in national plans and programs for adaptation to climate change? Specify habitats and plans	X		<p>The Environmental Ministry of Popular Power, through the Hydrographic Basins Office, published in 2005 the “First National Communication on Climate Change of Venezuela.” This report made it possible to determine the country’s climatic vulnerability, associated impacts and adaptation measures.</p> <p>Currently, the national climate change mitigation program is being constructed, which is meant to be promoted as a collective construction similar to the one done for the current 2010-2020 National Biological Diversity Conservation Strategy. One of the key programs for the integrated management of the costal zones is the Adaptation to Climate Change in Coastal Areas.</p> <p>On the other hand, the National Biological Diversity Conservation Strategy considers it necessary to generate information on the immediate and future impact of climate change on Biological Diversity, which includes detecting vulnerabilities and the implementation of adaptation and mitigation plans. A convincing step for the adaptation and mitigation in all</p>	



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

Venezuela

Annual Report 2012

			ecosystems was the one obtained in the climate change negotiations by the ALBA block that was discussed in Cancun 2010, as well as the active participation in the World's People Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of the Mother Earth.	
1 b) Are these plans for adaptation to climate change being implemented?		X	In the planning process	
2 a) Are corrective measures and measures on adaptation to climate change included within management plans and/or protection and conservation programs for sea turtles and their habitats?	X		Yes, the National Plan of Action considers as a specific action the identification of species and ecosystems sensitive to the effects of climate change and mitigation and adaptation measures.	
2 b) Are you evaluating the corrective measures and measures on adaptation to climate change included within management plans and/or protection and conservation programs for sea turtles and their habitats?		X	In the planning process	
3. Have you identified any organizations or pertinent expert groups as possible partners to work on the topic of adaptation by sea turtles to climate change? Please list.	X		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sea Turtles of the Venezuelan Gulf Work Group (GTTM-GV) • Margarita Marine Research Station (EDIMAR) • VIDA Y MAR • SEA VIDA • Social Institute for Fisheries and Aquiculture (INSOPESCA) • Foundation for the Defense of Nature (FUDENA) • BIOCOSTAS • Fish Research Laboratory "Dr. Lino Jesús Hernández Correa" (FEC-LUZ) • Venezuelan Biodiversity Conservation (ConBIVE) • Sea Turtle Research and Conservation Center (CICTMAR) • Los Roques Scientific Foundation (FCLR) • La Tortuga Foundation • National Agricultural Research Institute– Agricultural Research Institute of Sucre and Nueva Esparta (INIA Sucre y Nueva Esparta) 	



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

Venezuela

Annual Report 2012

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comité Conservación Tortuga en Resistencia • Oceanographic Institute of Venezuela– Eastern University, Núcleo de Sucre (UDO-IOV) • Venezuelan Scientific Research Institute. Ecological Center. Ecological and Population Genetics Laboratory (LEGP-CE-IVIC) • National Parks Institute (INPARQUES). • Environmental Ministry of Popular Power (Minamb). • Science, Technology and Intermediate Industries Ministry of Popular Power (MCTI). • Advanced Studies Institute (IDEA). • National Universities • Las Delicias Zoo • Sea Turtle Work Group Nueva Esparta (GTTM-NE). • Social Battle Room Josefa Camejo de la Comuna in construction Fuerza Chaquetía Revolucionaria. • La Sabana community, Vargas state. • Macuro community, Sucre state. 	
4. Have you carried out research and monitoring to improve knowledge of the effects on, and vulnerability of sea turtles and their habitats, to climate change?	X	Research has not been performed yet, however, we are searching for funding at a government level as well a non-governmental in order to perform studies that will create a base line in order to learn the effects and vulnerabilities of sea turtles against climate change.	
5. Has your country hosted capacity building workshops for monitoring techniques and/or adaptation to climate change?	X	Currently, the national climate change mitigation program is being constructed.	
6. Has your country implemented mitigation measures for non-climatic threats as a way to improve the resilience of populations to the impacts of climate change? Specify which ones.	X	The Coastal Areas Development and Management Plan (OGIZC) contains a Recovery and Sanitation Program for all the coastal areas that seeks to restore the	



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

Venezuela

Annual Report 2012

		<p>characteristics of the elements of the coastal environment that have been altered or deteriorated by human or natural causes. It also treats coastal erosion in a systematic manner, adopting long term measures with an emphasis on rehabilitating the coastal wetlands and mangroves, and if it is necessary, the establishment of soft protective structures (artificial foraging in beaches, dune management and recovery of the public domain). For the project, 67 coastal localities have been identified where immediate actions will be carried out in integrated development and management plans for coastal areas.</p>
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(*) Specify actions implemented, 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.

c.2 National and International Mandates

List actions that are being carried out to comply with national and international mandates (Ex: inspections, confiscations, sanctions, etc.)

d. _ Application[submission] of exceptions established in the Convention

Describe in detail the exceptions allowed in accordance with article IV, item 3(a,b,d) and Annex IV of the text of the Convention, in accordance to the procedure established by the COP (Doc. CIT-COP5-2011-R2). Attach management program.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela does not carry out any program that contemplates the extractive use of sea turtles due to the fact the existing legal regulations do not allow the consumptive use of these species.

Part III (Research information)

a. _ Threats

*Describe threats (Coastal development, incidental capture, direct use, contamination and pathogens, and climate change) by species, with information on the area and activities taken to control them in the following table. Lo = *Lepidochelys olivacea*; Lk =*



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

Venezuela

Annual Report 2012

Lepidochelys kempii; Dc = *Dermochelys coriacea*; Ei = *Eretmochelys imbricata*; Cc = *Caretta caretta*; Cm = *Chelonia mydas*.

These actions and threats were the result of various workshops carried out over the course of 18 months with the participation of 1600 people, where discussion was encouraged and the diagnosis enriched by different points of view. The objective of these workshops was to create the 2010-2020 National Biological Diversity Conservation Strategy. In this sense, the threats and their correlation with the strategic guidelines and transversal axis of the ENCDB are shown, indicating the conservation actions needed to ensure the conservation of sea turtles.

Species	Threat(s)	Actions
Lo	<p>Direct threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Destruction, degradation and fragmentation of ecosystems • Non-sustainable exploitation of Biological Diversity • Illegal trafficking <p>Intermediary threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social exclusion and unequal distribution of benefits • Ignorance of the importance of Biological Diversity • Weaknesses in the legal framework of Biological Diversity • Weaknesses in Biological Diversity Conservation Management <p>Structural threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development Model 	<p>Strategic Guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Conservation Areas • Sustainable Exploitation • Prevention and administration of illegal trafficking and sale of species <p>Transversal Axes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Inclusion and Justice • Conservation Education • Environmental Legislation • Conservation Management • International Management and Politics <p>Principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ecosocialist ethics • Sovereignty • Social Inclusion and Justice
Lk	<i>Idem</i>	<i>idem</i>
Dc	<i>Idem</i>	<i>idem</i>
Ei	<i>Idem</i>	<i>idem</i>
Cm	<i>Idem</i>	<i>idem</i>
Cc	<i>Idem</i>	<i>idem</i>

* The information summarized in this table on threats corresponds to new reports. In previous annual reports, information regarding this aspect was also presented.

b. Research

Describe scientific research that is being carried out in the country relating to sea turtle population assessments including tagging, migration, and genetic studies, as well as those relating to conservation issues including habitat monitoring, fisheries interactions, disease, etc. Provide a list of references for the information used in this report and note how to obtain them when needed.

Monitoring and Conservation of Green Turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) Population in the Aves Island Wildlife Refuge (Federal Dependencies)



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

Venezuela

Annual Report 2012

Environmental Ministry of Popular Power.
National Office of Biodiversity.
Coordinator: Luis Rodriguez
lrodriguez@minamb.gov.ve

Aves Island is a small island measuring about 580 meters long and its width varies between 30 and 120 meters, and is located about 650 kilometers to the northeast of the port of La Guaira and approximately 200 kilometers from Dominica in the eastern Caribbean. The island as well as its insular platform and its corresponding territorial waters, were declared a wildlife refuge in August of 1972, mainly for its large colony of green turtles.

At a national level, the island is the most important sea turtle nesting site in the country and second to only Tortuguero (Costa Rica) in the entire Caribbean region, specifically for the nesting of green sea turtles (*Chelonia mydas*). In addition, it is considered to be an index beach to help measure effects to the global population of this species.

Due to the importance and large number of animals, monitoring and consequential tagging of these animals was initiated by private organizations at the beginning of the 70's and, therefore, it is one of the longest running projects with the most information in the Caribbean.

Between 1998 and 2000 activities were interrupted, but since then, the Environmental Ministry of Popular Power reinstated these same activities through a project called "Monitoring and Conservation of the green sea turtle population in the Aves Island Wildlife Refuge" which provides monitoring and conservation for the green turtle in this protected area and has so far produced the following results:

Table: Results from the last few nesting season for *Chelonia mydas* (Cm) in Aves Island

Year	Turtles Tagged	Recaptures	Total Number of Turtles
2001	60	23	83
2002	179	28	207
2005	338	46	384
2006	394	46	440
2007	392	49	504
2008	784	286	1070
2009	171	37	208
2010	704	466	1170
2011	359	64	423
Total:	3,381	1,045	4,489

From 2001 until now, 3,381 green turtles have been tagged and 1,045 have been recaptured. During 2011, 677 clutches were recorded from which approximately 60,930 hatchlings hatched.

Sea Turtle Conservation in the Gulf of Paria

Environmental Ministry of Popular Power
National Office of Biodiversity
Coordinator: Clemente Balladares Castillo
cballadares@minamb.gob.ve

5 species of sea turtles are found in Venezuela: leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*), green (*Chelonia mydas*), hawksbill (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), loggerhead (*Caretta caretta*) and Olive Ridley (*Lepidochelys olivacea*), which are classified as endangered and of the 5 species, all except the Olive Ridley, nests along our coasts. In framework of the 2010-2020 National Biological Diversity



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

Venezuela

Annual Report 2012

Conservation Strategy, specifically the strategic guideline on Conservation of Endangered Species that contemplates the development of specific actions directed at the recovery of their populations. Since 2002, the Sea Turtle Conservation Project has been carried out by the Environmental Ministry of Popular Power in the beaches adjacent to the town of Macuro (Sucre state) with the participation of local communities, where throughout a long nesting season (March – September) three species of chelonians lay eggs: *Dermochelys coriacea*, *Eretmochelys imbricata* and *Chelonia mydas*. The objective of the project is to promote the conservation and management of these species in the Gulf of Paria. 100 females of these three species lay eggs each year on the beaches of Yacua, Cerezo, Obispo, Silvano and Los Garzos, this last one receiving the most nests. The highest number of nesting turtles occurs in July, with an average of 24.6 nests. Nests that are endangered by floods or predators are relocated to a protected area in the town of Macuro. The total number of hatchlings released in 2011 reached 31,605 individuals, with an annual average hatching success of 24.31% minimum and 52.07% maximum. The project also includes giving talks on conservation, beach cleanups, training of local assistants and hatchling release activities along with the macureña community. Personnel from other environmental state offices also participate in the development of the project.

Table: Results from the last few nesting seasons on beaches adjacent to the Macuro, Sucre State population.

Year	Nests		Relocated Nests		Hatchlings Released	
	Ei	Dc	Ei	Dc	Ei	Dc
2006	29	19	18	0	2,471	167
2007	53	43	53	43	4,542	765
2008	95	12	76	9	4,395	153
2009	143	69	102	65	5,202	1,054
2010	114	16	102	14	2,314	239
2011	147	27	132	12	7,549	558
TOTAL	581	186	483	143	26,473	2,936

Sea Turtle Conservation in the State of Vargas.

Environmental Ministry of Popular Power
National Office of Biodiversity
Capital and Vargas Environmental State Department
Coordinator: Marvin Jiménez
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Since 2009, the Environmental Ministry of Popular Power together with local communities and governments, regulator entities and other local stakeholders have been creating citizen associations and Environmental Education activities in the community of La Sabana, Vargas state, for the purpose of working together in favor of sea turtle conservation, consolidating activities to develop a Ministry-Community run project that forms part of the National Sea Turtle Program. Among the activities carried out in 2011 were:

- 16 nests were rescued at Canal and La Sabana Beaches.
- A total of 1,000 Ei and Dc turtle eggs were relocated so that they may be incubated in a safe place due to threats of predation. The hatchlings (See Table 1) were released in the appropriate nesting area for these species.
- Two beach cleaning activities were organized in order to facilitate the nesting process for turtles.
- Nightly patrols in turtle nesting areas with the objective of protecting and rescuing nests.
- Meetings with the participation of local inhabitants of La Sabana and neighboring areas and representatives of different State entities to evaluate and formulate the project's activities.



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

Venezuela

Annual Report 2012

Table 1. Sea Turtles Released at La Sabana, Vargas state.

Speices	Year	No. Hatchlings Released
Dc	2010	0
	2011	143
Ei	2010	14
	2011	108

Towards a socially integrated ecosystem between the inhabitants of La Sabana Parroquia Caruao, Edo. Vargas and their sea turtles

Marina de Jesús Blanco; Marina Blanco and Yolimar Rodríguez

Environmental Conservation Brigade of La Sabana

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Objective: Incorporate the inhabitants of La Sabana in the construction of a Sea Turtle Management Program. Background: Community organizations from this locality in 2005 formed an Integrated Network for the Conservation of Sea Turtles in order to watch over their habitats due to nest aggressions as well as standings of specimens from different species in the Boca de Santa Clara (Playa Paraíso), La Boca and La Canal Beaches located in La Sabana. Actions carried out by the community: 1) Link with the National Biological Diversity Office of the MINAMB in order to design a Sea Turtle Conservation Program for the sector, 2) Community-Institution Integration meetings on conservation activities for this species in the sectors: Macuro, Isla de Aves, Los Testigos and Edo. Vargas, 3) Presentation of the National Sea Turtle Conservation Plan to the Costal Area Work Committee of Vargas state and to the Mayor of the Vargas Municipality, 4) “La Primavera” (Spring) Parade, as a traditional activity, highlighting the values for the protection of sea turtles, and the development of murals around this theme, 5) the Turtle Conservation Brigade identifies, guards and transfers embryos in artificial nests until the turtles are released with the support of the Capital and Vargas Environmental State Office. Socioenvironmental importance for the community: Brigades formed by inhabitants promote integration activities directed at the protection of the species and they become permanent guardians of the reproduction conditions of the turtles. Benefits obtained: A community volunteer program has been formed that is articulated in the Environmental Ministry of Popular Power in the variety of actions for the conservation of sea turtles.

Oritapo Project: Community monitoring and conservation of sea turtles

Draichir A Cabello G; Vanessa Ilukewitsch; Alejandro Moreno; Moisés Gamero; Eliana Blanco; Rafael Escobar and Saúl Gutiérrez

ConBiVe Civil Association – Conservation of Venezuelan Biodiversity

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There are currently 7 species of sea turtles worldwide, of which 5 are reported in Venezuela. In the beaches east of Edo. Vargas, the hawksbill (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*), green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) and loggerhead (*Caretta caretta*) have been reported nesting. The area studied is in the Oritapo locality, Vargas state, where evaluations will be carried out from month of March to October during these species’ reproductive season. In Vargas, a very important impact of anthropic origin and other physical and biologic factors has been reported affecting sea turtles, for which a dramatic reduction in the number of turtles laying eggs and the loss of a great number of nests per season has been seen. This leads to the current project proposal for the conservation of sea turtles with the purpose of determining the impact on these species aimed at devising pertinent conservation strategies with the local community support. In order to do this, sea turtle nesting beaches on the coasts of Parroquia Caruao, Edo. Vargas are monitored with the purpose of characterizing these spaces, information that will allow for the systematic evaluation of the reproductive process of these species



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

Venezuela

Annual Report 2012

during nesting season. Along with other biological data of interest, the causes that affect the survival and ecological equilibrium of sea turtles and the ecosystem will be determined. In the same way, environmental education activities will be carried out with the community including talks, workshops, practical courses and work tables, adding to the participation of local inhabitants, professionals, students, institutions and individuals identified with the mission of this conservation initiative. Allowing the communities of the coast of Edo. Vargas to be directly involved in the conservation of an something of incalculable value, like the Venezuelan biodiversity is and the healthy balance of our ecosystems from which important factor depend which have been very affected during the past years like fisheries, our town's sustenance.

Management, conservation and monitoring of the sea turtle populations on the Complejo Petroquímico Morón, Carabobo state coastline.

Pedro David Vernet Paravisini and Arelis Quintero
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Since 2008, Pequiven S.A. and Palmichal S.C., taking into account the importance of these highly endangered species, have implemented a project along 11 km of coast between the mouths of the Morón and Yaracuy rivers with the purpose of carrying out sea turtle conservation and monitoring works including: base line, monitoring populations, activities to mitigate impacts, environmental education and training involving the community. In this way, 4 of the 7 strategic guidelines of the ENCDB are included in an ethical, sovereign and inclusive manner, managing and educating in conservation processes. In order to do this, beach surveys were done through periodically walking the beach and direct observation, as well as training activities and information exchange, and solid waste collection campaigns on nesting beaches. In 2011, 43 nesting events were recorded on the beaches, between the Moron and Yaracuy river mouths. The nest distribution by species was one nest for Cc (2.33%), 20 Ei nests (46.51%) and 22 Dc nests with 51.16%, making it the most common.

Sea Turtle research and conservation in the Paria (Cipara and Querepare), Sucre state.

Hedelvy Guada
Sea Turtle Research and Conservation Center (CICTMAR)
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This project's objectives are: protection of females and their nests, document biological information of nesting females like shell measures, general conditions, reproductive data, identification and tagging of the nesting females, improve public conscience on the endangered condition of sea turtles. Training sessions were carried out with students, teachers and residents for the research and conservation work and promoted economic alternatives to generating income like creating handcrafts and ecotourism. In 2011, new females were tagged (46 Dc, on the beaches of Cipara locality and 21 Dc in Querepare). In Cipara, 13 nests were left *in situ*, 28 were relocated on the beach and 15 were relocated to a hatchery, for a total of 92 nests in the 2011 season. On the other hand, in Querepare, 1 nest was left in situ, 11 were relocated on the beach and 89 were relocated to a hatchery, for a total of 101 nests for the 2011 season. A total of 2,571 Dc hatchlings were released in Cipara and 3,106 Dc hatchlings were released in Querepare.

2011 Sea Turtle Monitoring and Conservation Project on the Coasts of Aragua

14 sandy beaches located in the buffer zone of the Henri Pittier National Park, in the state of Aragua, were evaluated as nesting sites for the 4 species of sea turtles nesting in Venezuela: Leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*), Hawksbill (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), Green (*Chelonia midas*) and Loggerhead (*Caretta caretta*). Of the 14 beaches evaluated, 11 had beaches with previous reports confirming them as



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

Venezuela

Annual Report 2012

nesting sites. A trip by boat was made, getting off to walk 8 beaches of particular interest, and because of technical-logistical constraints, observations from the boat were made for the 6 remaining beaches. When signs of nesting were found, the species of sea turtle nesting was identified based on direct observation of the nesting evidence as well as the characteristics of the track/nest left behind. Lastly a study was done on the main threats caused by humans or native or introduced species that are exerting pressure on sea turtle populations in the state of Aragua.

Of the 14 beaches studied in 2011, reproductive activities were reported on 10 of them and, of these beaches, it was the first time that Mayita was confirmed in the field as a nesting site. The beaches reporting higher nesting activities along the coast of Aragua were: Valle Seco, Uricaro and Mayita. In terms of anthropogenic activities representing threats to sea turtles, they found vehicles and tents in the sand close to the shoreline present in nesting areas and during nesting season, as well as the presence of lots of tourists on some nesting beaches during peak nesting and legal and illegal constructions that harm the sea turtles on the edge of the National Park. Similarly problems with inappropriate sources of artificial light that harm nesting and/or hatchling survival were seen on various beaches. Furthermore, a direct intervention of humans through illegal taking of turtle eggs and/or hatchlings was also verified.

Photographs and measurements of mammal and bird tracks were taken in order to identify possible natural predators and are currently being processed. Among the domestic animals found were domestic or feral dogs on various beaches, as well as the presence of cattle (*Bos taurus*) on beaches even though the Regulation and Use Plan (PORU) of the Henri Pittier National Park prohibits domestic animals.

Authors:

Ernesto Pulgar Hahn (INPARQUES, Las Delicias Zoo)

Hedelvy Guada (CICTMAR)

María Fernanda González Rivero (El Pinar Zoo)

Cesar Fischer (Puerto Escondido Dive Center)

Sponsors: PROVITA and Puerto Escondido Dive Center

c. Other activities

Include information on: environmental education activities, programs to establish and manage protected areas, and cooperative activities with other Party countries.

II National Congress on Biodiversity.

The **II National Congress on Biodiversity** was held from May 22 – 24, 2011 and was organized by the Environmental Ministry of Popular Power together with the Bolivarian University of Venezuela. The event provided a forum for exchanging knowledge and experiences on Biodiversity conservation with a social commitment, between institutions, groups, producers, scientific, community, and military representatives as well as fans and the general public, within the framework of the 2010-2020 National Biological Diversity Conservation Strategy, with the objective of socializing knowledge and promoting social inclusion and justice, guaranteeing the conservation of our biodiversity as natural patrimony of the Nation. More than 2700 people participated in this Congress, coming from 62 public institutions, 72 organizations, 33 universities or academic institutions and 305 studies were presented in the form of posters and 30 were given as oral presentations. Furthermore 4 forums were held, including the participation of 12 speakers that achieved linking the global crisis of capitalisms with the environmental crisis and the reality of Venezuelans and locals, generating a debate with over 1300 of the participants. A couple of permanent expositions were also in place for products and experiences on sustainable use of Biodiversity with a social commitment from public institutions and organized communities. There was a room set aside for Environmental Conservation where 500 people participated in workshops given on



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

Venezuela

Annual Report 2012

recreational activities, like creating artisanal paper, painting with earth, origami, among others. 12 documental and 4 conservational videos were projected contributing to the debate on the physical cause of the environmental global crisis, in which 450 people participated. We progressed on the joint building of the National Action Plan of the National Biological Diversity Conservation Strategy, in a workshop with 11 working groups and the participation of 302 people. 2 activities were offered prior to the congress and 14 courses after the congress which more than 400 people attended. Posters on sea turtles were presented, reporting on the progress being made and results of conservation actions while bringing attention to these endangered chelonids.

Posters presentations at the Congress included topics related to the progress made and results of actions developed within Venezuela's territory for sea turtle conservation and brought attention to the challenges faced by these species.

POSTERS:

- Reports on the presence of sea turtles in the Federal Dependencies Las Aves de Sotavento Archipelago and Barlovento, La Orchila, and La Blanquilla. Lenin Ivanock Parra Montes de Oca; Henio Briceno; Paul Granado; Pablo Velozo; Augusto Ruiz; Luz Sanchez. Center for Environmental Studies
- Estimation of the carrying capacity of the sea turtle conservation beach. Parguito Beach. Tourism Services Sector. Antolin del Campo Municipality. Isla de Margarita. Estado Nueva Esparta. Venezuela. Nieves Torres Gonzalez; Carmen Heredia; Alfredo Arvelo and Luis Bermudez. Environmental Ministry of Popular Power (Minamb)
- Management, conservation and monitoring of sea turtle populations in the coastal zone of the Petrochemical Complex Moron, state of Carabobo. Pedro David Vernet Paravisini; Arelis Quintero
- Conservation of sea turtles in the Gulf of Paria. Clemente Balladares Castillo; Nesvic Mata and Eva Dubois. Environmental Ministry of Popular Power.

ORAL PRESENTATIONS

- Towards a socially integrated ecosystem between the inhabitants of La Sabana Parroquia Caruao, Edo. Vargas and its sea turtles. Marina de Jesus Blanco; Yolimar Rodriguez Environmental Conservation Brigade of La Sabana.
- Oritapo Project: Community monitoring and conservation of sea turtles. Draichir A Cabello G; Vanessa Ilukewitsch; Alejandro Moreno; Moises Gamero; Eliana Blanco; Rafael Escobar and Saul Gutierrez. Asoc. Civil ConBiVe – Venezuelan Biodiversity Conservation.

Symposium on Veterinary Aspects of Sea Turtles and Marine Cetaceous

Held from November 25 of 2011, under the framework of Venezuela's IX Ecological Congress at the Corporate University SIGO, in Isla de Margarita.

CICTMAR and WIDECAS, in association with other institutions (INPARQUES-Zoo Las Delicias, Sea Vida and CIC-NE) organized (with support from many collaborators) this "Symposium on Veterinary Aspects of Sea Turtles and Marine Cetaceous"



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

Venezuela

Annual Report 2012

The international invited guest was Ana Negrete Phillipe, DVM of Xcaret Park (Cancún, México), who has ample experience in the topics mentioned. In addition, presentations were given by María Rincón, DVM, Prof. Mary Cruz Alvarado (LUZ), Marine Biologist Jaime Bolanhos (Sea Vida Ecological Society), Lic. Luis Bermúdez (CIC-NE, Minamb) and Lic. Erika Simonaro (Vida y Mar A.C.).

There were 53 registered participants even though many more people were in the meeting room.

Awareness and community outreach in La Sabana, Vargas Municipality, Vargas State.

Under the framework of the Sea Turtle Conservation project in the state of Vargas, a series of activities were carried out directed at raising awareness, community participation and strengthening control of sea turtle nesting sites, highlighting the following activities:

1.- Meetings took place in educational centers and communities of Vargas state.

- In the educational unit “Liceo Bolivariano Caruao”, with the purpose of exchanging experiences with the Sea Turtle Environmental Education Program that the ONDB carried out in the La Sabana community and the rest of the entities in the State.
- Meeting with the personnel from the educational unit “Liceo Bolivariano Caruao” la Sabana population, with the purpose of planning activities related to the “Spring Day” (activity that is carried out the first Friday of June and that in 2010, primarily focused on biological diversity and the conservation of sea turtles).
- Meeting with the Oritapo community in order to discuss and plan strategies concerning Surveillance and Control of sea turtle nesting beaches.

2.- Elaboration of Environmental Murals allusive to sea turtles.

3.- Execution of the first environmental education workshop and creation of handcrafts with recycled material, sea turtle posters.

4.- Participation on the parade along with the La Sabana community, Vargas state, in commemoration of Spring Day, tradition kept by this varguense population.

5.- Thanks to the intervention of the community, a nest of 40 hawksbill (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) turtle eggs which had been poached by local residents was rescued and 14 hatchlings were saved.

6. – Organized and promoted participation in the first workshop held by the National Socialist Institute for fishing and aquiculture (Insopesca): “Workshop on Venezuela’s aquiculture”, with the objective of training communities in raising marine species, as an alternative activity for fishing communities to reduce sea turtle bycatch.

Environmental education activities and community outreach

During 2010, CICTMAR emphasized the fact that the “International Biological Diversity Year” was being celebrated worldwide and the importance that in the Arismendi Municipality, sea turtle protection activities have been carried out for many years. 35 activities were carried out in schools from 13 communities, in which 846 students, 61 teachers and 12 Comprehensive Education interns participated.

In 2010, 3 talks were offered to military personnel in San Juan de Las Galdonas and in Río Caribe with a total of 37 participants. On July 7, 2010, the “I Short Course on Sea Turtles for Civil and Military Authorities” was taught with 22 participants in Comando de Guarnición de Carúpano. In 2010, talks were held with 10 communities with a total of 22 participants where important contacts were established and interest towards sea turtle protection activities was detected.

Informative Brochures



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

Venezuela

Annual Report 2012

PETROLEOS DE VENEZUELA (PDVSA), through Public Affairs Department, prepared an informational brochure about the correct behavior in a sea turtle nesting beach. The brochure was prepared in Spanish and “*patois*”. The objective of the visit called “Ecological Patrol” was to create environmental awareness in the employees. In 2010, various groups from PDVSA performed a second “Ecological Patrol” day.

Courses

Among the activities carried out after the II National Congress on Biodiversity, was a course given by the Environmental Ministry of of Popular Power on Basic Techniques for Sea Turtle Conservation that provided information on sea turtle biology, ecology and population status, conservation classification and conservation techniques. 30 people assisted this course (tour operators, fishermen, members of the community counsels in coastal areas and university students).

Sea turtle biology and conservation course in foraging grounds taught by Zulia University, Experimental Faculty of Science, and Biology Department. Responsible: Héctor Barrios. It was taught in 2010 in Maracaibo, Zulia state.

Sea turtle conservation genetics and medicine course. Course taught by the non-profit civil association VIDA Y MAR. Date: August 20-22, 2010. Place: Zulia state, Maracaibo. Objective: teach basic knowledge about conservation medicine, biology (ecology and genetics applied to sea turtles) and biosecurity.

Venezuelan sea turtle biology and conservation course taught by the Sea turtle Research and Conservation Center (CICTMAR) since 1993 until the present. Responsible: Hedelvy Guada.

Course on Biomedical Attention and Rehabilitation of Sea Turtle Strandings

Held from November 26 - 27 of 2012, in the Veterinary Science Faculty of the Central University of Venezuela and in the Las Delicias Zoological Park. The main instructor of the course was Ana Negrete Phillipe, DMV of the Xcaret Park (México). Ana presented different aspects critical to the success of the recovery of stranded or sick sea turtles. She also distributed informational material from Xcaret Park and all participants received a CD with numerous relevant bibliographies. Presentations were also given by Ernesto Pulgar (Las Delicias Zoological Park) on the work done since 2010 in Aragua state and by Hedelvy Guada (CICTMAR WIDECAS) on sea turtle conservation in Venezuela.

The course was co-sponsored by different institutions, Las Delicias Zoological Park-INPARQUES, Government of Aragua state, FUNDAPARQUES, FCV-UCV, H2O Tratamiento I C.A., Virginia Aquarium, CICTMAR and WIDECAS. This inter-institutional support was extremely valuable to ensure the participation of Dr. Ana Negrete and other specific organizational aspects of the course.

Informative articles

Articles in magazines: The encounter of a community with Sea Turtles. Magazine: Sala de Espera Venezuela (Waiting Room Venezuela). Date: April 4, 2011. Topic: Tells the story of the beginnings and accomplishments of this sea turtle conservation initiative in Costa del Estado Vargas, primarily the Oritapo population. Project Oritapo. Convive.

Television and Radio



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

Venezuela

Annual Report 2012

Media: Radio y Televisión Española a la carta (rtve.es). Program: Acción directa. Date: April 3, 2011. Topic: Tell the story of a group of young Venezuelans that have created a sea turtle protection group in the Costa del Estado Vargas, primarily the Oritapo population. Project Oritapo. Convive.

Publications

Rondón Médicci, M., J. Buitrago y H. J. Guada. 2010. Biología reproductiva de la tortuga cardón (*Dermochelys coriacea*) en las playas Cipara y Querepare, Península de Paria, Venezuela, durante las temporadas de anidación 2000-2006. *Interciencia*, April.

Buitrago, J., H. J. Guada, V. de Los Llanos. 2010. Efectos del traslado de nidadas a viveros en el éxito reproductivo de tortugas marinas en el Caribe. Pp: 105-112. En: R. De Oliveira-Miranda, J. Lessmann, A. Rodríguez-Ferraro y F. Rojas-Suárez (eds.). *Ciencia y conservación de especies amenazadas en Venezuela: Conservación Basada en Evidencias e Intervenciones Estratégicas*. Provita, Caracas, Venezuela, 234 pp.

Part IV: Annexs

Table 1: Species Present

*Place an X in the box when the species listed is present in the oceanographic basins of your country as established in Article III of the text of the Convention. Lo = *Lepidochelys olivacea*; Lk = *Lepidochelys kempii*; Dc = *Dermochelys coriacea*; Ei = *Eretmochelys imbricata*; Cm = *Chelonia mydas*; Cc = *Caretta caretta*.*

Species	Pacific Ocean	Atlantic Ocean	Caribbean Sea
Lo			X
Lk			X
Dc			X
Ei			X
Cm			X
Cc			X



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

Venezuela

Annual Report 2012

Table 2: Important nesting sites for sea turtle conservation

- a. *This table is intended to report information on the priority nesting beaches (for example, sites with greater abundance, endemism, genetic importance, others) for each species. For beaches that have multiple species nesting, enter that beach under the list for the primary nesting species. When entering information on nesting beaches, information is to be entered for each species independently. Indicate the names of nesting sites and the nesting season months for each site.*
- b. *Geographic location: Specify latitude and longitude in degrees, minutes and seconds - provide one or two points of reference for nesting sites (if available).*
- c. *Extension: Provide the total length (in Kilometers) of the nesting beach.*
- d. *Declared protection area: Indicate if the area is declared as some type of protected area.*
- e. *Protection measures: Indicate if any type of protection measures are in place at the nesting site (For example, turtle safe lights).*
- f. *Annual nesting abundance: Where possible, provide information on the total number of females and/or nests deposited at the nesting beach. If a specific value is not available, please provide a range for annual number of nesting females or nests deposited. If data are unavailable, enter 'unknown' or 'unavailable'. The ranges for annual number of females are: 0-10, 11-100, 101-500, 501-1000, 1001-5000, 5001-10000, 10001-50000, 50001-100000, >100000. The ranges for annual number of nests are: 0-10, 11-100, 101-500, 501-1000, 1001-5000, 5001-10000, 10001-100000, 100001-500000, >500000. On a separate sheet, provide a brief description/justification on why each site that was mentioned is considered important (sites with greater abundance, endemism, genetic, others). Include historical information (graphic and/or tables) showing the population status of each species present at the site.*
- g. *Information from tagging program: Indicate if there have been any tagging activities at the nesting beach. This includes flipper tagging, passive integrated transponder (PIT) tagging, and satellite telemetry programs. If possible, on a separate sheet or as attached reference provide greater detail about the type of tagging efforts conducted. Also provide satellite telemetry maps or flipper tag recovery information if available.*
- h. *Tissue sampling: Indicate if there has been tissue sampling conducted at this site. This includes skin, blood, and other body tissues. On a separate sheet, or as attached references, describe these tissue sampling programs in greater detail. For example, were samples collected for genetic, contaminant, and/or stable isotope studies?*



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

Venezuela

Annual Report 2012

	Cipara (62°42'O, 10°45'N)	March- Agust 2010	0	1	"	N	0	1	"	W	to	0	1	"	N	0	1	"	W	2,06	No	Nest Protection	4*		Yes	No
	Macuro	March- Octobre 2010	0	1	"	N	0	1	"	W	to	0	1	"	N	0	1	"	W		No	Nest Protection		4	No	No
	Cipara (62°42'O, 10°45'N)	March- August 2010	0	1	"	N	0	1	"	W	to	0	1	"	N	0	1	"	W	2,06	No	Nest Protection		5	Yes	No
	Querepare (62°52'O, 10°42'N)	March- August20 10	0	1	"	N	0	1	"	W	to	0	1	"	N	0	1	"	W	1,8	No	Nest Protection	1*	3	Yes	No
Cc	Beaches between the Morón and Yaracuy Rivermou ths	March- Sept. 2011	3 0	5 0	N	6 8	1 0	5 0	W	A	to	3 5	0 0	N	6 8	1 0	3 2	W	1 0	Aprox. 11	No	Beach cleaning		1	No	No

* New females tagged in 2011.



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

Venezuela

Annual Report 2012

Table 3: Important in-water sites for sea turtle conservation

- a. *This table is intended to contain information for the priority in-water sites for each species. For marine habitats that have multiple species present, enter the specific site under the heading for the priority species at that site. Indicate whether or not there is in water occurrence and/or foraging sites for that species.*
- b. *Geographic location: Describe the in-water site in general, providing the name of the site and points of reference at sea, when available. If possible add the geographic location in Lat/Long coordinates.*
- c. *Declared protection area: Indicate if the area is declared as some type of protected area.*
- d. *Information from tagging program: Indicate if there have been any tagging activities at the in-water site. This includes flipper tagging, passive integrated transponder (PIT) tagging, and satellite telemetry programs. If possible, on a separate sheet, or as attached reference provide greater detail about the type of tagging efforts conducted. Also provide satellite telemetry maps or flipper tag recovery information if available.*
- e. *Tissue sampling: Indicate if there has been tissue sampling conducted at this site. This includes skin, blood, and other body tissues. On a separate sheet, or as attached references describe these tissue sampling programs in greater detail. For example, were samples collected for genetic, contaminant, and/or stable isotope studies?*

Species		Description of geographic location	Declared Protection Area	Tagging Program	Tissue Sampling
Lo	In water Occurrence				
	Foraging Sites				
Lk	In water Occurrence				
	Foraging Sites				
Dc	In water Occurrence	Waters of the Gulf of Venezuela and Guajira Peninsula (Northwest of Venezuela)	No	No	No
	Foraging Sites				
Ei	In water Occurrence	Rocky coasts of the state of Vargas between Los Caracas and Caruao	No	No	No
	Foraging Sites				
Cm	In water Occurrence				
	Foraging Sites				
Cc	In water Occurrence				
	Foraging Sites				