

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

Honduras

Annual Report 2017

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, 2017**.

Part I (General Information)

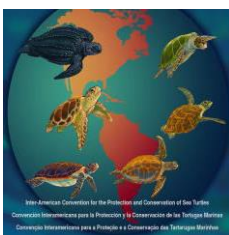
Please fill out the following tables. Add additional rows if necessary.

a._ Focal Point

Institution	Foreign Affairs Secretary
Name	Denis E. Espinal
Date of Annual Report submitted	June 20th, 2017

b._ Agency or Institution responsible for preparing this report

Name of Agency or Institution	Dirección General de Biodiversidad de MiAmbiente
Name of the person responsible for completing this report	Belkis Carolina Montalván Torres
Address	Ave. Tiburcio Carías Andino, Col. Alameda
Telephone (s)	(504) 2239-8161
E-mail	carolmontalvan1568@gmail.com



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

Honduras

Annual Report 2017

c._ Other who participated in the preparation of this report

Name	Agency or Institution	E-mail
Marcio Aronne	Fundación Cayos Cochinos	marcioaronne@gmail.com
Maria Arteaga	BICA/Utila	maria@bicautila.org
Luis Turcios	Proyecto ProGolfo/MiAmbiente	lurotu@yahoo.com
Oscar Navarro	Proyecto binational	Oscar.navarro@giz.ed
Consulta pagina en linea	Protector ONG	www.turtleprotector.org



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

Honduras

Annual Report 2017

Part II (Policy and Management)

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

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.



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

Honduras

Annual Report 2017

	YES/NO In Progress	Comments
<p>Does your country have a national plan of action in accordance with Article XVIII?</p>	<p><i>Yes</i></p>	<p><i>A National Strategy for the Conservation of Sea Turtles and its Action Plan developed by Honduras Sea Turtle Technical Committee, based on two consultancies: Sea Turtle in Honduras Diagnosis and National Strategy for the Conservation of Sea Turtles and its Action Plan, both funded by USAID.</i></p>
<p>Does your country have policies and programs at local and regional levels in accordance with Article XVIII?</p>	<p><i>Yes</i></p>	<p><i>Monitoring of the project for <i>Lepidochelys olivacea</i> closure in the South of the country where the Golfo de Fonseca Verification Commission has been formed (CVC-Golf). This local organization is supported by a ministerial decree and budget allocation by the government, to implement the 25-day closure from September 1st to 25th every year, apart from private companies and NGOs technical support for the implementation of the closure which involves the community, organized in 5 camps in the area. There is no governmentally supported program in the North of the country, but NGOs such as Cayos Cochinos and BICA Utila include sea turtle monitoring reporting the occurrence of <i>Eretmochelys imbricata</i> and <i>Caretta caretta</i>. Cayos Cochinos has trained communities found near the protected area, and in la Mosquita, visited by leatherback turtles.</i></p>



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

Honduras

Annual Report 2017

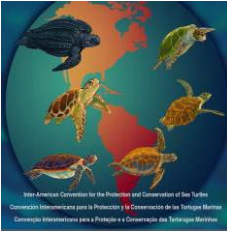
<p>Does your country have monitoring programs in accordance with Article IX?</p>		<p><i>There is no structured program. The Navy carries out patrols and has seized sea turtles found in vessels, which has been released. There are also patrols with the fisheries authority DIGIPESCA, which also issues sea turtle research permits. Recently, sea turtles have been included in the coastal and marine areas management plan as conservation targets; however there are still issues regarding research, conservation and management that are in process of development.</i></p>
---	--	---

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, 2014-April 30, 2015) 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.

c. Actions for compliance with national and international legislation

- At a regional level meetings were held with the Inter-Institutional Technical Committee for The Conservation of Sea Turtles (COTTOM in Spanish). The North Regional Committee established its work plan highlighting the development of a draft of monitoring protocol. A supporting scientific committee was formed, consulting the COTTOM that has been working on the protocol, which is currently under review. The objective of the protocol is to have a guide in the country contributing to the collection of standardized data, providing robust information to national institutions.



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

Honduras

Annual Report 2017

In the North Coast

- The project Marine Landscape was implemented by Foundation Cayos Cochinos with the support of a number of partners and a volunteer's network; there was also training for young people called "Guides for Conservation" developing activities such as: beach cleanups, awareness on cultural rescue, sea turtle monitoring and bird watching. Also, there were environmental education and cultural rescue activities during the first Gárraru Festival. This Festival was a space to rescue Garífuna cultural traditions and for the conservation of hawksbills.
 - There were meeting with the Community Commission to talk about fishing rights.
 - The sea turtle monitoring program was developed, with a predominantly number of hawksbills. A total of 30 nests were counted for July – November season.
- Utila Sea Turtle Program, Implemented by: Bay Islands Conservation Association (Asociación para la Conservación de las Islas de la Bahía) BICA

There were monitoring activities and nests exhumation

Pumpkin Hill Beach was selected for night camps and nesting monitoring.

Criteria:

- Ongoing monitoring between 2011 and 2016
- Previous nesting events
- Fewer resources to obtain information
- Identified by locals as a nesting beach
- Dial patrols by Glenn Pedersen in previous years (he lives close to the beach)

Photos of the night camp are available in the Spanish version of this report

There was also monitoring and nests exhumation in other beaches and cays such as South West Cay, Airport Beach, Public Beach (Chepes), and Big Rock, among other.

Tagging

Two hawksbills were tagged in Pumpkin Hill and one in the public beach Chepes, with the following numbers:

U-035-16 BBQ-281(FR) BBQ-160 (RR)

BBQ-229 (RR)

U-036-16 BBQ-264 (FR)

U-037-16 BBQ-320(FR) BBQ-172(RR)

Frequency:

This nesting season one sea turtle that nested in this same beach in 2011 returned, ID number (U-005), it nested during the same period. During the night camps, it was observed that nesting frequency decreased notably and severely.



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

Honduras

Annual Report 2017

Nests removal and relocation:

To this date, 13 nests have been removed from different beaches in Utila, with a total of 1178 of hawksbill and 55 of loggerhead hatchling alive. There was an observation of 11 of these nests while nesting was taking place, with 2 nests still pending to remove and other that are probably nests, approximately 5.

-Three nests were relocated this season, two in Pumpkin hill and one in Chepes public beach.

Other activities:

A turtle stranded in South West Cay rocks and two hatchlings held as pets were released.

- Strengthening through financial and technical support by the binational project “Biological Diversity Conservation and Local Development in the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor” of Plaplaya Sea Turtle Conservation Committee, La Mosquitia. Committee Strengths and weaknesses analysis has been carried out, seeking to reinforce the committee. Training was carried out along with a restructuring of the Sea Turtles committee. Logistic support for meetings, training and the rearrangement of the committee were also provided, along with training on financial sustainability, and on actions of inclusion of youngsters and women.
- The 25-day closure was implemented in the South of the country for *Lepidochelys olivacea*. This activity is done in coordination with the Gulf of Fonseca Enforcement and Verification Commission with the are governmental, private and NGO's support. Five communities are involved and in charge of collecting and placing the eggs in nesting sites prepared to protect the species.

General Chart of Collection and Production per Turtle Camp in 2016					
Number	Camp	Nests	Eggs collected	Turtles released	Turtles dead
1	Punta Ratón	94	8025	6,821	1,204
2	Punta Condega	40	3746	3,184	562
3	Cedeño	37	3190	2,711	479
4	Boca de Rio Viejo	27	2418	2,055	363
5	Carretales	17	1389	1,180	209
Total de videos		215			
Total de huevos		18,768		15,951 (85%)	2,817 (15%)
Turtle patrollers directly benefited		150 Fishermen(woman)		# Indirectly benefited during the closure in 2016	750 People

Source: ProGolfo/MiAmbiente Nov.2016



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

Honduras

Annual Report 2017

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-COP7-2015-R2: Conservation of the Eastern Pacific Leatherback Turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*) VOY AQUÍ

ACCORDING TO RESOLUTION CIT-COP7-2015-R2, REPORT WHETHER YOUR COUNTRY:

IS COMPLYING WITH THE FOLLOWING:	RESOLUTION DOES NOT APPLY		DESCRIBE ACTION(*)	DOES NOT APPLY
	YES	NO		
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
1b) Are you implementing these conservation plans and monitoring programs?				X
2. Have you taken conservation measures to eliminate poaching of leatherback turtles?				X
3. 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
4. Has your country adopted fishing techniques that reduce incidental capture and mortality of this species?				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.



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

Honduras

Annual Report 2017

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

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

IS IT COMPLYING WITH THE FOLLOWING:		YES	NO	RESOLUTION DOES NOT APPLY	DOES NOT APPLY
				DESCRIBE ACCIÓN (*)	
1. Are you strengthening monitoring of the illegal use and trade of hawksbill turtles and their products?		X		Inspection and training continues in airports for the staff of these transit sites. Inspections are carried out in main tourist places to avoid trading of sub-products.	
2. Are you enforcing pertinent hawksbill legislation?		X		Through compliance with CITES	
3. Are activities being carried out in order to stop illegal trade of hawksbill products?		X			
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	X		The main sites where hawksbill occurs in Honduras have been declared as protected areas: Marine National Park, Islas de la Bahía, Cayos Cochinos	
	b) Protection of feeding habitats	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.



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

Honduras

Annual Report 2017

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				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect information by fishery 	x		Control of fishing and aquaculture activities in its different stages by DIGEPESCA through the control and inspection department.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observers Program 	x		Organized by DIGEPESCA with the support of regional bodies located in the coastal zone	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research on sea turtle/fishery interactions 	x		Not directly but implementing the Fishing Law and the regulatory use of TEDs, and a new program to register fishermen, implemented with the support of the Center for Marine Studies (CEM in Spanish), and through a database to better control fishing activities.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information on non-Party vessels 		X	DIGEPESCA is part of OSPESCA a central American RFMO establishing communication and integration regarding fishing and aquaculture in the Central American isthmus. This information is generated through the Merchant Marine General Direction.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperation with non-Party states to obtain information. 		X	Through regional agreements such as CITES, and OSPESCA cooperation and exchange of information is accomplished at a central American level.	
B. Mitigation measures for the following fisheries:				
i) Long-line				
ii) Gillnets				



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

Honduras

Annual Report 2017

iii) Trawling, for example: 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		The only TED approved by the Fishing Law is the type Hard Ted. Each vessel should bring a minimum of 6 trawling nets with Its respective TED. The mesh size shouldn't be less than 2 inches except for the end of it. An indefinite closure has been declared for all shark species in Honduras, which is a Shark Sanctuary. Indefinite closure for all sea cucumber species. Closure for the white shrimp <i>Litopenaeus schmitti</i> , the brown shrimp <i>Farfantepenaeus aztecus</i> and the pink shrimp <i>Farfantepenaeus duorarum</i> . Six months closure for the Cameo helmet snail <i>Cassi madagariensis</i> ..	
iv) Other fishing gear (indicate which one(s))				
v) Training programs for fishermen about best practices for safe handling and release of sea turtles incidentally caught.			Carried out by NGOs in different areas of the countries where sea turtles occur and there is monitoring and conservation. Currently outreach is being implemented as part of the National Strategy for the Conservation of Sea Turtles.	
C. Socioeconomic considerations				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support socioeconomic activities that help mitigate adverse impacts of fisheries on sea turtles. 			Through DIGIPESCA and international cooperation projects such as tilapia farming as a social and economic alternative.	

(*) 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.)



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

Honduras

Annual Report 2017

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 with the procedure established by the COP (Doc. CIT-COP5-2011-R2). Attach management program.



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

Honduras

Annual Report 2017

Part III (Research Information)

a. Threats

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

Species	Threat(s)		Actions
Lo	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Coastal Development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Incidental Capture <input type="checkbox"/> Direct Use	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Contamination <input type="checkbox"/> Pathogens <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Climate Change	Municipal ordinances and resolutions in protected areas and on wildlife, defining the construction of infrastructure to 100 m from the high tide line.
Lk	<input type="checkbox"/> Coastal Development <input type="checkbox"/> Incidental Catches <input type="checkbox"/> Direct Use	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Contamination <input type="checkbox"/> Pathogens <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Climate Change	
Dc	<input type="checkbox"/> Coastal Development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Incidental Catches <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Direct Use	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Contamination <input type="checkbox"/> Pathogens <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Climate Change	Environmental education and awareness activities addressing no-consumption of turtle meat and protection of eggs.
Ei	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Coastal Development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Incidental Catches <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Direct Use	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Contamination <input type="checkbox"/> Pathogens <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Climate Change	Training the community, schools and public in general on the respect and no-consumption of the species.
Cm	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Coastal Development <input type="checkbox"/> Incidental Captures <input type="checkbox"/> Direct Use	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Contamination <input type="checkbox"/> Pathogens <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Climate Change	
Cc	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Coastal Development <input type="checkbox"/> Incidental Captures <input type="checkbox"/> Direct Use	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Contamination <input type="checkbox"/> Pathogens <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Climate Change	Training the community, schools and public in general on the respect and no-consumption of the species.



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

Honduras

Annual Report 2017

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.

Research activities by the NGO Protector

Implementation of a sightings program with the participation of the general public. Diving centers were provided with maps and the online app to integrate the information. Comparison of information from diving centers with data provided by researchers was conducted, with minimum biases. Therefore the tool and public participation has been considered as a low cost and acceptable tool to obtain information from places where sea turtles occur in Utila and Roatan.

Impacts of recreational diving on hawksbill turtle (Eretmochelys imbricata) in a marine protected area. 2016

The hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) is an endangered species found by recreational divers in marine protected areas (MPAs). Little research has been done on the impact of recreational diving on the hawksbill behavior. In 2014, records of sea turtles and 14 records of diving operations were compiled along with 61 observations of hawksbills in the waters of Roatan, Honduras, to determine if the differences in the use of the diving sites by divers affected hawksbill behavior in Roatan's Marine Park. The distribution of observations did not vary with diving effort during the 82 days of the study. We found that the amount of time that sea turtles spend eating, searching and breathing was less when approached by divers. Our results suggest that interactions with divers negatively affect the sea turtles behavior. However, it is unknown if with time recreational diving has a negative accumulative effect on sea turtles. We recommend that MPAs managers implement monitoring programs that evaluate the impacts of tourism on natural resources. We have established hawksbill sea turtle monitoring, considering that is a representative of an MPA marine habitat, with the potential of being highly impacted by diving tourism, and providing recommendations for the continuous monitoring of the resource.

Source www.turtleprotector.org

In addition to the above please fill out the following table on the type of research being carried out in the country and with what species(s).

Research	Specie(s) (Lo, Lk, Cm, Ei, Cc, Dc)
<i>Migration</i>	<i>Ei</i>
<i>Habitat monitoring</i>	<i>Ei</i>



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

Honduras

Annual Report 2017

c. _ Other activities

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

- A workshop with 8th member of the Navy was conducted by BICA/Utila, to understand the importance of protecting sea turtle. The training was given by the coordinator (Gisella Morales) and by the environmental education coordinator (Suriel Dueñas).
- There were strengthening and exchange activities such as the visit to Foundation Cayos Cochinos to follow up on the workshop about developing a project to obtain standardized results around the country, involving organizations that are already conducting similar projects on sea turtles.
- As there is environmental education in schools of Utila and Cayitos, there is also education and learning at different diving centers (this activities were carried out by the environmental educator and volunteers from the organization).



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

Honduras

Annual Report 2017

Part IV Annexes

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	Atlantic	Caribbean Sea
Lo	X		
Lk			
Dc			X
Ei	X		X
Cm			X
Cc			X

Table 2: Index nesting sites or beaches for sea turtle conservation

- a) *This table is intended to report information on index nesting sites or beaches 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 site or beaches, information is to be entered for each species independently. Indicate the names of index nesting sites. On a separate sheet of paper, indicate the selection criteria used for identifying the index beach, for example, because it hosts a significant proportion of the overall nesting population within a region or other defined unit or genetic importance.*
- b) *Nesting season: Indicate the starting and finishing date of the nesting season.*
- c) *Monitoring period: Indicate the starting and finishing date of monitoring efforts.*
- d) *Survey frequency: Indicate the frequency with which the surveys are done (daily, weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, among others).*
- e) *Geographic location: Specify latitude and longitude in decimal degrees.*
- f) *Extension of beach monitored: Provide the total length (in Kilometers) of the nesting beach.*
- g) *Declared protection area: Indicate (yes or no) if the area is declared as some type of protected area.*



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

Honduras

Annual Report 2017

- h) *Annual nesting abundance: Provide information on the total number of females and/or clutches or nests deposited at the nesting site or beach in real numbers. Provide the exact count of females based on tagged or uniquely identified individuals. If the exact number of clutches is unknown provide total number of nests.*
- i) *Information from tagging program: Indicate if there have been any tagging activities at the nesting beach by using the letters of the type of tagging being done: flipper tagging (FT), passive integrated transponder (PIT) tagging, and satellite telemetry (ST) 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.*
- j) *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 this tissue sampling program in greater detail. For example, were samples collected for genetics, pollutants, and/or stable isotope studies?*
- k) *Indicate what organization or entity is providing the data.*

When inserting new rows, please copy and paste the drop down menus when applicable.



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

Honduras

Annual Report 2017

Table 3. Important foraging sites for sea turtle conservation

NOTE: This section of the report has been removed by the decision of the IAC Scientific Committee during its 13th meeting. Instead, the information about foraging sites will become part of a technical document, making the information easier to access for the users. The document will include the following:

- a) List of foraging sites per Party, b) People working in the corresponding foraging areas, c) Threats in foraging areas, among other. This document will be updated every 5 years.