

**Inter-American Convention for the Protection and
Conservation of Sea Turtles**
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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 30, 2019**.

Part I (General Information)

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

a. Focal Point

Institution	National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration/National Marine Fisheries Service
Name	Alexis T. Gutierrez
Date Annual Report submitted	26 April 2019

b. Agency or Institution responsible for preparing this report

Name of Agency or Institution	National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration/National Marine Fisheries Service
Name of the person responsible for completing this report	Alexis T. Gutierrez
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c._ Others who participated in the preparation of this report

Name	Agency or Institution	E-mail
Ann Marie Lauritsen	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	annmarie_lauritsen@fws.gov



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Part II (Policy and Management)

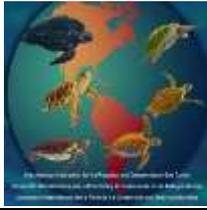
a. General description of activities carried out for the protection and conservation of sea turtles

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.

	YES/NO / In Progress	Comments
Does your country have a national plan of action in accordance with Article XVIII	Yes	All of the FWS/NMFS recovery plans for sea turtles can be found at https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/document/recovery-plan-us-pacific-populations-green-turtle-chelonia-mydas https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/document/recovery-plan-us-pacific-populations-east-pacific-green-turtle-chelonia-mydas https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/document/recovery-plan-us-pacific-populations-hawksbill-turtle-eretmochelys-imbricata https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/document/recovery-plan-hawksbill-turtles-us-caribbean-sea-atlantic-ocean-and-gulf https://www.fws.gov/kempsridley/Finals/kempsridley_revision2.pdf https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/document/recovery-plan-us-pacific-populations-leatherback-turtle-dermochelys-coriacea https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/document/recovery-plan-leatherback-turtles-us-caribbean-atlantic-and-gulf-mexico https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/document/recovery-plan-us-population-atlantic-green-turtle-chelonia-mydas https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/document/recovery-plan-us-pacific-populations-loggerhead-turtle-caretta-caretta https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/document/recovery-plan-



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		northwest-atlantic-population-loggerhead-sea-turtle-caretta A plan for North Pacific loggerhead sea turtles is under-development.
Does your country have policies and programs at local and regional levels in accordance with Article XVIII?	Yes	The Endangered Species Act is the implementing legislation for the IAC. Under this act, we carryout program for the protection and conservation of sea turtles and their habitats.
Does your country have monitoring programs in accordance with Article IX?	Yes	Yes, our state and Federal sea turtle conservation programs carry-out numerous in-water and nesting beach monitoring programs.



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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, 2018-April 30, 2019) 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.

New regulations since 2018 Report

NOAA Fisheries Annual Determination –

NOAA Fisheries will not identify additional fisheries to observe on the 2019 Annual Determination (AD), pursuant to its authority under the Endangered Species Act. Through the AD, NOAA Fisheries identifies U.S. fisheries operating in the Atlantic Ocean, Gulf of Mexico, and Pacific Ocean that will be required to take observers upon NOAA Fisheries' request. The purpose of observing identified fisheries is to learn more about sea turtle interactions in a given fishery, evaluate measures to prevent or reduce sea turtle takes, and implement the prohibition against sea turtle takes. Fisheries identified on the 2015 and 2018 ADs remain on the AD for a 5-year period and are required to carry observers upon NOAA Fisheries' request until December 31, 2019 and December 31, 2022, respectively.

National Legislation		
Type and name of the legal instrument (No.)	Description (Range of application)	Sanctions(s) Imposed
Endangered Species Act	Global	Prohibition of take of listed species unless exempted under Section 7 and Section 10 in U.S. waters
International Instruments		
Treaty, Convention, Agreements, Memorandum of Understanding		Year signed and/or ratified
InterAmerican Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles		2000
Indian Ocean Southeast Asian Marine Turtle MOU		2001

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.*



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

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

RESOLUTION DOES NOT APPLY				
IS COMPLYING WITH THE FOLLOWING:	YES	NO	DESCRIBE ACTION (*)	DOES NOT APPLY
1a) Have you created conservation plans and long-term programs that can reverse the critical situation of the leatherback turtle in the Eastern Pacific?	Yes		Yes. We have a recovery plan for Pacific leatherbacks that includes Eastern Pacific leatherbacks. Further, we launched in 2016 the Species in the Spotlight initiative that highlights East Pacific Leatherbacks. NOAA Fisheries released our five-year action plan for Western and Eastern Pacific leatherbacks. The plan and updates on our implementation can be found here .	
1b) Are you implementing these conservation plans and monitoring programs?	Yes		Yes, the United States is taking action to minimize interactions with leatherbacks in domestic fisheries by using gear modifications and, as necessary, time area closures. In addition, we are working closely with several countries in the Eastern Pacific Ocean to try and reduce leatherback interactions trialing illuminated gillnets in coastal fisheries (e.g., Peru and Chile).	
2. Have you taken conservation measures to eliminate poaching of leatherback turtles?	Yes		Trade of sea turtles and their parts is illegal in the United States. The United States has also taken a very proactive approach to address wildlife trafficking for all species through the creation of a cross-agency task force	



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			to look at wildlife trafficking. Recently, this task force was authorized through the END Wildlife Trafficking Act.	
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?	Y		<p>With respect to Western Pacific Leatherbacks, the United States taken significant measures to reduce fishery bycatch. The Hawaii shallow-set fishery is managed through 100% observer monitoring and the fishery closes if the annual limit of interaction with leatherbacks is reached. U.S. fishermen are required to use large 18/0 circle hooks with whole finfish baits in longline fisheries known to interact with leatherbacks in the Pacific and the Atlantic Ocean, as well as the Gulf of Mexico. Fishers are also provided safe-handling gear to increase turtles' chances of survival post-release. The United States has also declared Critical Habitat for leatherback turtles along the U.S. West Coast that can help to further limit anthropogenic impacts to leatherback turtles in the region.</p> <p>The U.S. fleet rarely interacts with Eastern Pacific leatherbacks since they do not often fish in their geographic range.</p>	

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



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

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

RESOLUTION DOES NOT APPLY				
IS COMPLYING WITH THE FOLLOWING:	YES	NO	DESCRIBE ACTION (*)	DOES NOT APPLY
1. Are you strengthening monitoring of the illegal use and trade of hawksbill turtles and their products	Yes		Trade of sea turtles and their parts is illegal in the United States. The United States has also taken a very proactive approach to address wildlife trafficking for all species through the creation of a cross-agency task force to look at wildlife trafficking. Recently, this task force was authorized through the END Wildlife Trafficking Act.	
2. Are you enforcing pertinent hawksbill legislation?	Yes		Enforcement efforts at the state and national level are ongoing to enforce the U.S. Endangered Species Act.	
3. Are activities being carried out in order to stop the illegal trade of hawksbill products?	Yes		U.S. enforcement officers work to stop illegal trade of hawksbill products.	
4. Indicate if your country is strengthening the protection of important nesting and foraging habitats by declaring protected areas and regulating anthropogenic activities that adversely impact these habitats		Yes	<p>a) Protection of nesting habitats</p> <p>Nesting beaches of the southeastern U.S. are a mixture of public and private lands. Public conservation lands include National Wildlife Refuges (NWR), National or State or County Parks, and military installations. In Florida, approximately 40% of nesting beaches have been identified as conservation lands; in Georgia, 71%; in South Carolina, 38%; in North Carolina, 47%; and in Alabama, 22%.</p> <p>The two major hawksbill nesting beaches in the U.S. Caribbean, Buck Island Reef National Monument, U.S. Virgin Islands, and Mona Island, Puerto Rico, are protected as a National Park and Commonwealth Protected Area, respectively.</p>	



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	b) Protection of feeding habitats	Yes		Critical habitat has been designated for Caribbean hawksbill around Mona Island (Puerto Rico) since 1998. https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-1998-09-02/pdf/98-23533.pdf	
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(*). Specify actions implemented, the name of the project or relevant document, location, objective(s), institutions responsible, contact, financial or other support (optional), results (both positive and negative) and duration.



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

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

RESOLUTION DOES NOT APPLY				
IS COMPLYING WITH THE FOLLOWING:	YES	NO	DESCRIBE ACTION (*)	DOES NOT APPLY
1. Has your country created national action plans or monitoring programs to promote loggerhead sea turtle conservation?	Yes		The United States has recovery plans for Northwest Atlantic loggerheads and Pacific loggerheads. After the 2011 regulation applying the distinct population segment policy, the North Pacific loggerhead DPS was listed on the Endangered Species Act. A trinational recovery plan for North Pacific loggerheads is currently under development with Japan, Mexico and the United States.	
2. State if there are plans or recovery programs, or bilateral or regional cooperation.	Yes		The existing recovery plans can be found at the links below. They are national plans. https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/document/recovery-plan-northwest-atlantic-population-loggerhead-sea-turtle-caretta https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/document/recovery-plan-us-pacific-populations-loggerhead-turtle-caretta-caretta	
3. Are these action plans or monitoring programs being implemented?	Yes		The United States is actively implementing its recovery plans. Monitoring programs are a key component of our recovery plans. The recovery plan progress can be tracked at https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp0/profile/species/Profile?slId=1110	
4. Is there protection of the species at a state or federal level?	Both		There are protections at the state and Federal level.	
5. If your country has loggerhead turtles nesting beaches:				
5a. Has your country taken conservation actions to protect nesting beaches and their associated habitats?	Yes		Through state and Federal laws, the United States has worked to protect Northwest Atlantic loggerhead nesting beaches. The United States does not have nesting beaches for North Pacific loggerheads.	



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5b. Are there laws on turtle-friendly lighting in areas impacted by coastal development?	Yes		Yes, in general there are local lighting ordinances to require turtle-friendly lighting in coastal areas where loggerheads nest.	
5c. Is there long-term (minimum 10 years) standardized data available for population trend studies?	Yes		There is extensive data on NW Atlantic loggerheads. More information on nesting trend in one of the management units can be found at https://myfwc.com/research/wildlife/sea-turtles/nesting/monitoring/	
6. Is there exploitation or direct harvest of loggerhead sea turtles in your country?	No		It is illegal under the U.S. Endangered Species Act to take, kill, harass, harm, etc a listed species.	

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



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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:

In the column for “species” please use : Cm (*Chelonia mydas*), Lo (*Lepidochelys olivacea*), Dc (*Dermochelys coriacea*), Cc (*Caretta caretta*), Lk (*Lepidochelys kempii*), Ei (*Eretmochelys imbricata*)

IS COMPLYING WITH THE FOLLOWING:	YES	NO	DESCRIBE ACTION (*)	SPECIES	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 the adverse impact of fisheries on sea turtles					
Collect information by fishery	Yes				
Observer programs	Yes		The National Marine Fisheries Service has a National Observer Program that is composed of six regional observer programs. Each of the programs can be found at https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/topic/fishery-observers#observer-programs		
Research on sea turtle/fishery interactions	Yes		The United States has a very robust program to research bycatch reduction technologies. There are currently sea turtle bycatch reduction technologies in place in the longline fisheries, shrimp otter trawl fisheries and some gillnet fisheries. A summary of some of the recent bycatch reduction projects that were funded can be found at https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/bycatch/bycatch-reduction-engineering-program .		
Information on non-Party vessels	Yes		The United States works through the Regional Fisheries Management Organizations to monitor non-Party vessels. More information on this work can be found at https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/foreign/bycatch/international-protected-species-and-bycatch-mitigation		
Cooperation with non-Party states to obtain information	Yes		The United States works collaboratively with several countries to better understand fisheries interactions with sea turtles. More information on our annual efforts can be found in the following report to the U.S. Congress -- https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/foreign/bycatch/international-protected-species-and-bycatch-mitigation#more-information		
B. Mitigation measures for the following fisheries:					
Long-line			The United States has sea turtle bycatch mitigation restrictions in all Federal pelagic and deep-set longline fisheries. These regulations for the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans regulations can be found at: https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/action/revised-limits-sea-turtle-interactions-hawaii-shallow-set-longline-fishery https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/action/atlantic-highly-migratory-species-pelagic-longline-final-rule		
Gillnets			The United States has sea turtle bycatch mitigation requirements in many Federally managed gillnet fisheries		



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			including the Mid-Atlantic and the California Drift gillnet. Some states have adopted bycatch mitigation reduction requirements in their state fisheries in order to compile with the Endangered Species Act as well. More information on these requirements can be found at https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/action/california-and-oregon-drift-gillnet-final-rule https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/action/incidental-take-permit-north-carolina-division-marine-fisheries-sea-turtles https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/action/virginia-and-north-carolina-large-mesh-gillnet-final-rule		
Trawling (e.g., 1. TEDs: specify legally approved TEDs, their dimensions, material, and target species for that fishery, 2. time-area closures: specify a geographical area, time of closure and target species for that fishery, 3. tow times and/or 4. other measures)	Yes		The United States requires TEDs in shrimp otter trawls and summer flounder trawls in certain areas. The specifications of the TEDs can be found at the website below, along with the specification geographic area required to use TEDs. https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2012/05/21/2012-12014/sea-turtle-conservation-shrimp-and-summer-flounder-trawling-requirements We are currently working on rulemaking to expand TED requirements into skimmer trawl fisheries in the Southeast United States.		
Other fishing gear (indicate which one(s))	Yes		Poundnets and some dredges are also regulated to reduce sea turtle interactions. Please see https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/action/amendment-virginia-pound-net-regulations		
Training programs for fisherman about best practices for safe handling and release of sea turtles incidentally caught			Fishermen operating in the pelagic longline fisheries in the Atlantic or the Pacific must take captains training on safe-handling and release techniques. More information can be found at https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/atlantic-highly-migratory-species/safe-handling-release-and-identification-workshops https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/pacific-islands/commercial-fishing/pacific-islands-protected-species-workshops		
C. Socio-economic considerations					
Support socio-economic activities that help mitigate adverse impacts of fisheries on sea turtles		N			

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



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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.)

The United States regularly carries out the mandates of the Endangered Species Act, which prohibits all taking of listed species, unless permitted under the ESA. Through the implementation of regulations we are working to reduce sea turtle incidental capture and mortality in fisheries. The United States regulations can be found in the preceding table. Further, the United States evaluates all Federal actions that may affect sea turtles through the Section 7 process of the Endangered Species Act, as well as the environmental review process required by the National Environmental Policy Act.

Both NOAA Fisheries and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have enforcement offices that monitor compliance with existing laws and develop cases against those violating the Endangered Species Act.

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 United States does not have any exceptions to submit to the Convention.



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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 type="checkbox"/> Coastal development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Incidental capture <input type="checkbox"/> Direct use	<input type="checkbox"/> Contamination <input type="checkbox"/> Pathogens <input type="checkbox"/> Climate change	Through the Endangered Species Act regulations and the Section 7 process, the United States works to mitigate the impact of fisheries on sea turtles.
Lk	<input 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 type="checkbox"/> Climate change	<p>Through the Endangered Species Act regulations and the Section 7 process, the United States works to mitigate the impact of fisheries on sea turtles.</p> <p>The United States is also carrying out an extensive restoration program for Kemp's ridley to address the impacts from the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill. See here for more information.</p>
Dc	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Coastal development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Incidental capture <input type="checkbox"/> Direct use	<input type="checkbox"/> Contamination <input type="checkbox"/> Pathogens <input type="checkbox"/> Climate change	Coastal Development -- Through permit conditions, most direct construction-related impacts are avoided by requiring that non-emergency activities be performed outside of the nesting and hatching season. However, indirect effects also result from the post-construction presence of structures on the beach, and these impacts can only be minimized to the maximum



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			<p>extent practicable. Light management plans have been successfully developed and implemented in most developed coastal counties and communities in Florida to minimize these impacts. Light management plans have also been developed at coastal military installations in Florida. Light pollution issues adjacent to the leatherback nesting beach at Sandy Point, USVI, are still problematic but some efforts have been undertaken to resolve them.</p> <p>Nest protection programs vary but include 100% nest screening at Canaveral National Seashore; raccoon trapping and removal at Merritt Island NWR, Hobe Sound National NWR, and Archie Carr NWR; feral hog control at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station; coyote control in the Florida Panhandle; and mongoose trapping at Sandy Point NWR.</p> <p>Through the Endangered Species Act regulations and the Section 7 process, the United States works to mitigate the impact of fisheries on sea turtles.</p>
<p>Ei</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Coastal development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Incidental capture <input type="checkbox"/> Direct use</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Contamination <input type="checkbox"/> Pathogens <input type="checkbox"/> Climate change</p>	<p>A fence has been constructed as a barrier to hogs at hawksbill nesting beaches on Mona Island, Puerto Rico. Rat control activities have been undertaken on Buck Island Reef National Monument in the USVI. Through the Endangered Species Act regulations and the Section 7 process, the United States works to</p>



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			mitigate the impact of fisheries on sea turtles.
Cm	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Coastal development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Incidental capture <input type="checkbox"/> Direct use	<input type="checkbox"/> Contamination <input type="checkbox"/> Pathogens <input type="checkbox"/> Climate change	<p>Through permit conditions, most direct construction-related impacts are avoided by requiring that non-emergency activities be performed outside of the nesting and hatching season. However, indirect effects also result from the post-construction presence of structures on the beach, and these impacts can only be minimized to the maximum extent practicable. Light management plans have been successfully developed and implemented in most developed coastal counties and communities in Florida to minimize these impacts. Light management plans have also been developed at coastal military installations in Florida.</p> <p>Nest protection programs vary but include 100% nest screening at Canaveral National Seashore; raccoon trapping and removal at Merritt Island NWR, Hobe Sound National NWR, and Archie Carr NWR; and feral hog control at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station.</p> <p>Through the Endangered Species Act regulations and the Section 7 process, the United States works to mitigate the impact of fisheries on sea turtles</p>
Cc	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Coastal development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Incidental capture <input type="checkbox"/> Direct use	<input type="checkbox"/> Contamination <input type="checkbox"/> Pathogens <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Climate change	<p>Through permit conditions, most direct construction-related impacts are avoided by requiring that non-emergency activities be performed outside of the</p>



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			<p>nesting and hatching season. However, indirect effects also result from the post-construction presence of structures on the beach, and these impacts can only be minimized to the maximum extent practicable. Light management plans have been successfully developed and implemented in most developed coastal counties and communities in Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina to minimize these impacts. Light management plans have also been developed at coastal military installations in Florida. The major nesting beach in South Carolina, Cape Romain NWR, is a barrier island without major light pollution issues. North Carolina has extensive areas of National Seashores that are protected from development.</p> <p>Nest protection programs vary but include 100% nest screening at Canaveral National Seashore; raccoon trapping and removal at Merritt Island NWR, Hobe Sound National NWR, and Archie Carr NWR; feral hog control at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station and at problem areas in Georgia; and coyote control in the Florida Panhandle.</p> <p>Through the Endangered Species Act regulations and the Section 7 process, the United States works to mitigate the impact of fisheries on sea turtles.</p>
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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.

In addition to the above, please fill out the following table on the types of research being carried out in the country and with what species.

Research	Specie(s)(Lo, Lk, Cm, Ei, Cc, Dc)
<i>Tagging</i>	All
<i>Migration</i>	All
<i>Genetics</i>	All
<i>Habitat monitoring</i>	All
<i>Fisheries interactions</i>	All
<i>Disease</i>	All

c. Other activities

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

Fiscal Year 2018 International Capacity Building Projects funded by the U.S. Marine Turtle Conservation Act Fund

COSTA RICA

MT1851 Award # F18AP00327 Conservation and monitoring program of leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*) sea turtles that nest the North Pacific beaches of Costa Rica: Langosta, Nombre de Jesús, Real, Honda y Zapotill. In partnership with Fundecodes. The purpose of this project is to implement a conservation program for the East Pacific leatherback nesting population in Costa Rica. The East Pacific population was the world’s largest in the 1980s, with an estimated 150,000 nests annually in Mexico and 10,000 nests annually in Costa Rica. The population has declined precipitously due to poaching of nests (and in Mexico nesting females also) and fisheries bycatch. Now fewer than 1,000 nests are recorded each year in Mexico and fewer than 200 in Costa Rica, and this project is critical to preventing the extirpation of this population. The intention of this project is to protect leatherback nests from poaching, predators, and tidal inundation.



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Activities include: (1) training field teams to conduct nighttime nesting surveys and protection patrols at several of the key remaining nesting sites; Playa Langosta, Playa Nombre de Jesús, Zapotilla, Honda, and Real; (2) relocating nests to safe beach hatcheries; and (3) environmental education and outreach in local schools with field trips and a turtle festival. USFWS: \$39,2221
Leveraged Funds: \$2,210

GUATEMALA

MT1846 Award # F18AP00326 Strengthening sea turtle conservation and assisting CONAP in meeting Guatemala's IAC commitments. In partnership with the Wildlife Rescue and Conservation Association (ARCAS). The purpose of this project is to implement a sea turtle conservation program in Guatemala. The intent is to protect sea turtles and their nests from poaching and depredation and to assist the government of Guatemala in complying with its obligations under the Inter-American Sea Turtle Convention (IAC) regarding exceptions for sustainable harvest of eggs. Activities include: (1) conducting nest monitoring surveys at eight index beaches to assess long-term population trends; (2) strengthening hatchery management through capacity building workshops to improve hatching success; and (3) working with the National Council of Protected Areas (CONAP) and the IAC to develop a management plan for the sustainable harvest of olive ridley eggs. USFWS: \$24,9553
Leveraged Funds: \$17,245

MEXICO

MT1800 Award # F18AP00202 Mexico/United States of America population restoration project for the Kemp's ridley sea turtle (*Lepidochelys kempii*), on the coasts of Tamaulipas, Mexico. In partnership with the Valley Zoological Society. The purpose of this project is to support the Mexico-U.S. binational Kemp's ridley sea turtle conservation project in Mexico. This project addresses the threats to nests from poaching, nest depredation, and tidal inundation on the six main nesting beaches in the State of Tamaulipas. Activities include: (1) conducting daily patrols and nest relocation to hatcheries; and (2) assisting the Mexico Commission of Protected Areas with outreach and education activities with local communities. USFWS: \$25,000 Leveraged Funds: \$475,000
MT1804 Award # F18AP00205 Evaluation of the reproductive biology of the Kemp's ridley sea turtle at Rancho Nuevo, Mexico: Implications for conservation and ecology. In partnership with the University of Alabama. The purpose of this project is to support the Mexico-U.S. binational Kemp's ridley conservation project in Mexico. The intent of this project is to assess nesting beach management practices, nesting female reproductive output, and predator threats to nests, to inform and improve management practices and enhance population recovery. Activities include assessing: (1) sex ratios and temperatures in hatchery and in-situ nests; (2) hatching fitness in hatchery and in-situ nests; (3) arribada size, using drones; and (4) predator threats to in-situ nests. USFWS: \$20,3986 Leveraged Funds: \$37,125



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MT1815 Award # F18AP00212 Conservation of the Japanese-nesting loggerhead turtle: Mortality assessment and conservation outreach at the Baja California Sur, Mexico juvenile foraging area. In partnership with Grupo Tortuguero de las Californias. The purpose of this project is to support conservation efforts in Baja California, Mexico to protect a critical loggerhead (*Caretta Caretta*) population. The intent of this project is to monitor sea turtle strandings on the Pacific coast of Baja California, Mexico as a means to assess accidental bycatch mortality in fisheries operating in the Pacific Baja on critical foraging grounds for the Japan-nesting loggerhead population. The data from these surveys are critical to inform management decisions of Baja fisheries that interact with loggerheads on the foraging grounds. The United States, Mexico, and Japan are currently working together on a recovery plan for this population and this project has been identified as a high priority for overall conservation of this population. Activities include: (1) daily beach surveys during May to September and bi-weekly surveys during October-April along 43 km of ocean beaches of Baja Mexico; and (2) sharing results of the surveys and assessment at the annual meeting of Grupo Tortugero. USFWS: \$28,359 Leveraged Funds: \$88,967

MT1831 Award # F18AP00314 Population recovery of leatherback sea turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*) in Michocán. In partnership with Universidad Michoacana de San Nicolas de Hidalgo. The purpose of this project is to implement a conservation program for the East Pacific leatherback nesting population in Mexico during the 2018-19 nesting season. This population was the world's largest in the 1980s but due to killing of nesting females, overharvest of eggs, and accidental capture in gill net and longline fisheries, it has been reduced to less than 1,000 nests each year in Mexico. Mexico historically accounted for 90 percent of the East Pacific nesting population. The intent of this project is to implement a nesting beach conservation program on two key nesting beaches in Mexico to protect nests. Activities include: (1) patrolling Mexiquillo and Las Placitas nesting beaches at night throughout the nesting season to deter poaching and count nests to monitor nesting trends; and (2) relocating nests threatened by poaching and tidal inundation to secure beach hatcheries. USFWS: \$32,000 Leveraged Funds: \$3,000

MT1838 Award # F18AP00320 Conservation of the leatherback turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*) in the Mexican pacific. In partnership with Kutzari, Asociación para el Estudio y Conservación de las Tortugas Marinas. The purpose of this project is to implement a conservation program for the East Pacific leatherback nesting population in Mexico. This population was the world's largest in the 1980s but due to killing of nesting females, overharvest of eggs, and accidental capture in gill net and longline fisheries, it has been reduced to less than 1,000 nests each year in Mexico. Mexico historically accounted for 90 percent of the East Pacific nesting population. The intent of this project is to implement a nesting beach conservation program on three primary and two secondary nesting beaches in Mexico to protect nests from poaching, depredation, and tidal inundation. Activities include: (1) patrolling Tierra Colorada, Cahuitan, Barra de la Cruz, San Juan Chacahua, and Bahía de Chacahua nesting beaches at night throughout the nesting season to deter poaching and count nests to monitor nesting trends; and (2) relocating nests threatened by poaching and tidal inundation to secure beach hatcheries. USFWS: \$66,305 Leveraged Funds: \$423,159



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MT1646 Award # F16AP00614 Population recovery of the black turtle of Michoacan, Mexico. In partnership with the Universidad Michoacana de San Nicolas de Hidalgo. The purpose of this project is to implement a conservation program for the East Pacific leatherback nesting population in Mexico in the 2017-18 nesting season. This population was the world's largest in the 1980s but due to killing of nesting females, overharvest of eggs, and accidental capture in gill net and longline fisheries, it has been reduced to less than 1,000 nests each year in Mexico. Mexico historically accounted for 90 percent of the East Pacific nesting population. The intent of this project is to implement a nesting beach conservation program on two key nesting beaches in Mexico to protect nests. Activities include: (1) patrolling the Mexiquillo and Las Placitas nesting beaches at night throughout the nesting season to deter poaching, and counting nests to monitor nesting trends; and (2) relocating nests threatened by poaching and tidal inundation to secure beach hatcheries.

USFWS: \$22,000 Leveraged Funds: \$5,000

PANAMA

MT1701 Award # F17AP00172 Hawksbill and leatherback turtle research and population recovery in Panama. In partnership with the Sea Turtle Conservancy. The purpose of this project is to support conservation programs for the hawksbill sea turtle nesting population along Caribbean Panama, which historically hosted the largest hawksbill nesting populations in the Caribbean. It is also to protect the largest leatherback sea turtle nesting population in the Western Caribbean. This project is being implemented with local Nogbe community support and participation to protect nests and nesting turtles from poaching and dog depredation of nests. Activities include: (1) daily patrols throughout the nesting season to count nests to assess population trends and to deter poaching; (2) screening of vulnerable nests from dog depredation; and (3) developing community sea turtle watching/ecotourism programs to provide opportunities and benefits to local communities. USFWS: \$66,000 Leveraged Funds: \$271,335

MULTIPLE COUNTRIES: CHILE, COSTA RICA, MEXICO, AND NICARAGUA MT1802 Award # F18AP00204 Strengthening East Pacific leatherback conservation through regional coordination of monitoring, outreach, and policy efforts. In partnership with Conservation Science Partners. The purpose of the project is to strengthen the East Pacific leatherback conservation program throughout its range. The East Pacific leatherback nests in Mexico, Costa Rica, and Nicaragua, and migrates and forages along the East Pacific from Mexico south to Chile. The nesting population was once the largest in the world, with over 150,000 nests estimated in the early 1980s. This has plummeted to fewer than 1,500 nests annually. The intent of this project is to support the East Pacific leatherback conservation network (Laud OPO) in its efforts to improve nesting beach and bycatch reduction projects and to support the Secretariat of the Inter-American Sea Turtle Convention (IAC) in meetings with high-level government decision makers to address bycatch reduction measures in range state countries. Activities include: (1) ensuring that a regional database, website, and online library of best management practices is maintained for the East Pacific leatherback network; (2) facilitating the alignment of the IAC leatherback taskforce priorities with the East Pacific leatherback network as



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Chair of the IAC leatherback task force; (3) accompanying the IAC Secretariat as technical expert to regional fisheries meetings and meetings with high-level government officials to discuss East Pacific leatherback conservation and policy issues and to address leatherback fisheries bycatch; and (4) coordinating one East Pacific leatherback network workshop annually to review ongoing projects and activities and consult about problems and needs. USFWS: \$73,948 Leveraged Funds: \$0

MULTIPLE COUNTRIES: ECUADOR AND EL SALVADOR MT1828 Award # F18AP00313
Vital support for hawksbills in the eastern Pacific Ocean: Year V of conservation at top-tier nesting beaches. In partnership with The Ocean Foundation. The purpose of this project is to implement a conservation program in El Salvador and Ecuador that will contribute to the recovery of the East Pacific hawksbill population, the smallest and most endangered hawksbill nesting population in the world. The intent of this project is to conduct community-based nesting beach conservation projects on four of the most important nesting beaches in El Salvador and Ecuador. Activities include: (1) conducting community-based patrols to deter poaching of nesting females and eggs, and counting of nests to monitor population trends at Los Cobanos and Punta Amapala in El Salvador, and Machalilla and El Pelado in Ecuador; and (2) relocation of nests threatened by poaching or tidal inundation to safe beach hatcheries. USFWS: \$52,600 Leveraged Funds: \$54,560

MULTIPLE COUNTRIES: EL SALVADOR AND NICARAGUA MT1714 Award # F17AP00514
Expanding hawksbill nesting beach protection and bycatch reduction at critical nesting and foraging sites in the Eastern Pacific Ocean. In partnership with The Ocean Foundation. The purpose of this project is to implement hawksbill sea turtle conservation programs at nesting beaches in Bahia de Jiquilisco Biosphere Reserve (Bahia), El Salvador and on foraging grounds in El Salvador and Nicaragua. The intent of this project is to protect nests and nesting females from poaching and also to work with local fishermen to reduce hawksbill bycatch from lobster fisheries. The small Eastern Pacific hawksbill nesting population was thought to have been extirpated until remnant populations were discovered in remote sites in 2008. Bahia accounts for about 40 percent of all hawksbill nesting in the East Pacific. Specific activities include: (1) community-based patrols and relocation of nests to hatcheries; (2) outreach activities, such as a Hawksbill Festival, Hawksbill Cup competition, and "Day of the Hawksbill" events in schools to raise awareness about threats to hawksbills; (3) year-round fisheries bycatch monitoring with onboard observers; (4) LED light trials on lobster nets to determine deterrence effectiveness; and (5) development of local capacity to strengthen a hawksbill ecotourism program for the benefit of local residents. USFWS: \$93,500 Leveraged Funds: \$124,029



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MULTIPLE COUNTRIES – REGIONAL MT1821 Award # F18AP00311 Strengthening regional sea turtle conservation through the support of Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles (IAC). In partnership with the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation. The purpose of this project is to support the implementation of the Inter-American Sea Turtle Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles (IAC) with 15 member Parties including the United States. The intent is to promote regional collaboration and cooperation of sea turtle conservation within the Western Hemisphere. Activities include: (1) convening of a Conference of the Parties in June 2019 and support for associated travel and translation expenses; (2) travel support to meet with high-level governmental decision makers in range state countries of the highly endangered East Pacific leatherback sea turtle to discuss measures to minimize accidental capture of leatherbacks in artisanal and industrial fisheries; and (3) bringing fishermen from foraging ground countries to nesting beaches in Mexico to develop a better understanding of the range-wide conservation efforts underway and the critical importance of fishermen community engagement in solutions to recover the East Pacific leatherback. USFWS: \$52,409 Leveraged Funds: \$29,000



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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	X	
Lk		X	
Dc	X	X	X
Ei	X	X	X
Cm	X	X	X
Cc	X	X	X



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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.*
- 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 a 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 these tissue sampling programs in greater detail. For example, were samples collected for genetic, contaminant, and/or stable isotope studies?*
- k. *Indicate what organization or entity is providing the data.*
- l. *When inserting new rows, please copy and paste the drop-down menus when applicable.*



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Spp	Name of Index Nesting Site or Beach	Nesting Season		Monitoring Period		Survey Frequency	Geographic Location (Lat/Lon) in Decimal Degrees		Extension of beach monitored (km)	Declared Protected Area (Yes/No)	Annual Nesting Abundance			Tagging Program (FT, ST, PIT)	Tissue Sampling (Yes, No)	Organization or entity providing data
		Start	Finish	Start	Finish		Latitude	Longitude			Females Exact Count	Clutches Exact Count	Number of Nests			
Lk	North Padre Island National Seashore, Texas	April 1	June 16	April 1	July 15	Daily	27.304	-97.340	112.6	No			136	FT, PIT	Yes	NPS
Dc	Culebra Island, Puerto Rico	April 1	July 31	April 1	July 31	Daily	18.332	-65.289	2.25	Yes			22	None	No	PR DRNA
	Mainland Puerto Rico (Dorado, Luquillo-Fajardo & Maunabo)	April 1	July 31	April 1	July 31	Daily	18.002	-65.874	28.26	No			800	PIT and FT	No	PR DRNA
	Vieques Island, Puerto Rico	April 1	July 31	April 1	July 31	Daily	18.157	-65.365	29.11	Yes			53	None	No	PR DRNA



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	Sandy Point NWR, U.S. Virgin Islands	March 1	September 15	March 15	September 15	Daily	17.680	-64.902	3	Yes	28		139	FT and PIT	Yes	NWR
	Florida Index Beaches	March 1	July 31	March 1	July 31	Daily	27.342	-80.235	1327	No			949	FT, ST, and PIT	Yes (2 beaches)	FWRI
	Vieques Island, Puerto Rico	January 1	December 31	August 8	December 10	Daily	18.157	-65.365	29.11	Yes			76	None	No	PR DRNA
	Mona Island, Puerto Rico	January 1	December 31	August 8	December 10	Daily	18.057	-67.874	7	Yes			1,176	FT	No	PR DRNA
	Sandy Point NWR, U.S. Virgin Islands	January 1	December 31	July 15	December 10	Daily	17.680	-64.902	3	Yes			159	None	No	NWR
Ei	Buck Island Reef National Monument, U.S. Virgin Islands	July 1	October 31	July 23	November 9	Daily	17.835	-64.622	1.5	Yes			64	FT and PIT	Yes	
	Main Hawaiian Islands (Hawaii Island, Molokai, Maui, and Kauai)	May 1	October 31	May 1	October 31	Daily	19.270	-155.255	14.4	No			93	FT, ST, and PIT	Yes	NMFS
Cm	Vieques Island, PR	September 1	December 31	November 1	December 31	Daily	18.157	-65.365	29.11	Yes			81	None	No	PR DRNA



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	Buck Island Reef National Monument, U.S. Virgin Islands	July 1	October 31	July 23	November 7		17.835	-64.622	1.5	Yes			62	FT and PIT	No	NPS
	Sandy Point NWR, U.S. Virgin Islands	June 1	October 31	July 1	December 31	Daily	17.680	-64.902	3	Yes			1395	None	No	FWS
	Florida Index Beaches	May 1	October 31	May 1	October 31	Daily	28.000	-80.524	1318	No			4,545	FT and PIT		FWRI
	French Frigate Shoals, Hawaii	April 1	August 31	April 20	September 22	Survey of East Island and Tern Island	23.748	-166.146	26	Yes			451	FT, ST, and PIT	Yes	NMFS
Cc	Florida Index beaches	May 1	August 31	May 1	October 31	Daily	28.000	-80.524	1318	No			91,451	FT and PIT	No	FWRI
	Georgia Index Beaches	May 1	August 31	May 15	October 15	Daily	31.082	-81.402	164	No			1,735	FT and PIT	Yes	GA DNR
	South Carolina Index Beaches	May 1	August 31	May 1	October 15	Daily	31.427	-81.246	303	No			2,767	None	No	SC DNR
	North Carolina Index Beaches	May 1	August 31	May 1	August 31	Daily	34.693	-76.833	531	No			766	None	No	NC WC