

INTER-AMERICAN *Convention*
for the Protection and Conservation
of Sea Turtles



First Conference of the Parties

COP1CIT

Final Report

San José, Costa Rica

2003

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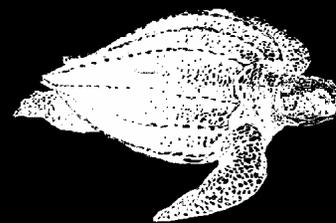
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Presentation



After myriad efforts on the part of a great number of people representing different States and organizations, on **May 2001** the **Inter-American Convention for the Conservation and Protection of Sea Turtles** came into force. Currently, eleven countries are Contracting Parties as follows: **Belize, Brazil, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Holland, Honduras, Mexico, Peru, United States of America and Venezuela**. Two others, **Nicaragua** and **Uruguay**, have delivered their instruments of adhesion before the government of Venezuela, the depository country.

Addressing the petitions of several Contracting Parties and local conservationist organizations, the **Ministry of the Environment and Energy of Costa Rica** accepted, together with a local **Organizing Committee**, to convene the **First Conference of the Contracting Parties** in San José, Costa Rica in August 6th, 7th and 8th, 2002.

Included in the achievements of this first **Conference of the Parties**, are the following: the approval of the **Resolution** in regard to the **Rules of Procedure**; the **Resolution to Promote Synergy and Cooperation with the CITES Convention**; the creation of a **Pro Tempore Secretariat** implemented for two years (whose seat is at the **National Parks Foundation**), in addition to the establishment of a **Special Fund** administered by the **National Parks Foundation**. In August 2002, the approved **Agenda for COP1CIT** could not be covered. Therefore, a decision was made to suspend the meeting with the view to re-instate it at a later date.

The **second part of COP1CIT** was again convened in San José in August 19-22, now organ-

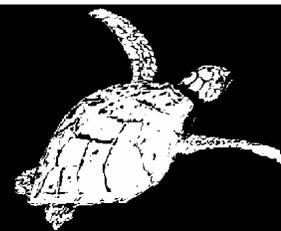
ized by the **Pro Tempore Secretariat**, with the support of the **Ministry of the Environment and Energy, INCOPECA, the Embassy of the United States of America and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, inter alia**. At this meeting, the pending item of the **Resolution of the Rules of Procedure** was finalized, the **Terms of Reference for the Consultative Committee of Experts** were approved; the basic text for the **Terms of Reference of the Scientific Committee**; the Work Plan for 2004 and the **Report of the Secretariat** covering the accomplishments for the entire year. Two very important issues in regard to the leatherback sea turtle *Dermodochelys coriacea*, were approved as well as guidelines for the international cooperation. Venezuela will be acting on the COP2CIT Chairmanship, as the host country for the next meeting.

As a country, it has represented a real honour for us to act as the **Chair of COP1CIT** during the year 2003. We are grateful to the Parties for having honoured us with their trust, giving us the opportunity to fully support this important process, which is the beginning for the consolidation of the **Inter-American Convention**. We are indebted to the **Government of the United States of America** for its valuable financial contributions, representing a key factor at this time, when otherwise, if these contributions had not become available, it would have been impossible to achieve the current accomplishments. Likewise, we acknowledge the contribution of **the Embassy of the Netherlands** in funding the **Minutes of COP1CIT**.

Lic. Allan Flores,
Chair of COP1CIT



Explanatory Note on the Documents



During the **Conferences of the Contracting Parties (COP's)**, a series of documents in both working languages, English and Spanish, are generated. These documents are created before, during and after these events, but are not equally significant in regard to their content and use. They are addressed and organized as per their different categories and depending on each organism.

In the case of the **Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles**, the documents have been organized as follows:

- Working documents identified with the prefix **CIT-000**;
- Information documents identified as **INF-000**;
- The COP Resolutions identified as: **Resolution COP1CIT-000**;
- Meeting reports identified as **Minutes**.

This **Final Report** was created based on the documents available in digital format, and with these the printed document has been assembled. As per the **Working Documents** identified with the prefix **CIT-000**, some are not included in the documents we are herewith presenting because they evolved into other documents like the **Resolutions**, or else the **COP** reached a decision regarding some particular document, which is registered in the corresponding **Minutes**. Therefore, that original

document was not included as such in the present **Final Report**.

In the case of information documents identified as **INF-000**, these represent inherent characteristics for providing information on issues related to the Convention, and in many instances paper copies previously edited such as booklets or short reports are distributed, together with corresponding digital copies. This is the reason behind why not all **INF-** documents are included in the present document. If someone requires a document available under these conditions, he or she may contact the Secretariat for additional information.

Following is the **General List of Documents of the Two COP1CIT Meetings**, where the code for each document may be identified and the availability of the document in digital format is indicated. As previously stated, those documents missing from that format have not been included in the report.

We hope this document is of use, wherein you will find information on the different issues analyzed during the **First Conference of the Contracting Parties of the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles**.

Marco A. Solano
Pro Tempore Secretariat



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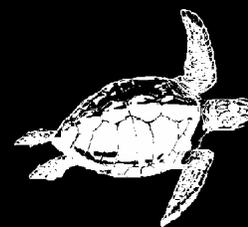


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General List of Documents



General List of Documents from the Two COP1CIT Meetings

Document Code	Document Name	Digital Format
	COP1CIT-MINUTES (1st part)	
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RESOLUTIONS COP1CIT		
COP1CIT-001	Establishment of the <i>Pro Tempore</i> Secretariat	yes
COP1CIT-002	Guidelines for the Operation of the Inter-American Convention Special Fund	yes
COP1CIT-003	Cooperation and Synergy between the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles and the Convention on the International Trade of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)	yes
COP1CIT-004	Rules of Procedures for the Meetings of the Parties of the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles	yes
COP1CIT-005	Terms of Reference for the Consultative Committee of the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles	yes
CIT DOCUMENTS		
CIT-1/1	Provisional Agenda COP1CIT (1st part)	yes
CIT-1/2	Provisional Agenda COP1CIT (2nd part)	yes
CIT-001	Rules of Procedure for the Meetings of the Parties to the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles and its Subsidiary Bodies (Proposal CR/USA)	yes
CIT-002	Rules of Procedure for Meetings of the Parties to the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles (Mexican Proposal)	yes
CIT-003	Guidelines for the Operation of the Inter-American Convention Special Fund	yes
CIT-004	Program of Work for the Parties of the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles	yes
CIT-005	Establishment of an Interim Secretariat	yes
CIT-006	Proposed Resolution for the Conservation of the Leatherback Sea Turtle (<i>Dermochelys coriacea</i>), in the Eastern Pacific	yes
CIT-007	Report from Ecuador on the Proposal for Synergy and Collaboration between the IAC and CITES	yes
CIT-008	Terms of Reference of the Scientific Committee of the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles	yes

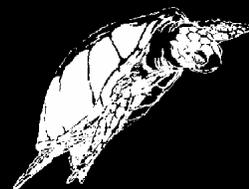


CIT-009	Terms of Reference for the Consultative Committee of the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles NOTE: Has become COP1CIT-005.	yes
CIT-010	Guidelines for International Cooperation	yes
CIT-011	Proposal Work Plan for the Year 2004	yes
CIT-012	Report of the <i>Pro Tempore</i> Secretariat August 2002-August 2003	yes
CIT-013	The Work Plan for 2003	yes
CIT-015	Proposal for the Constitution of the Consultative Committee	yes
CIT-016	Proposal for the Constitution of the Scientific Committee	yes
INF. DOCUMENTS		
INF-001	Global Status of Sea Turtles by Peter C.H. Pritchard	yes
INF-002	Informe Nacional de Acciones de Protección y Conservación de Tortugas Marinas Guatemala NOTE: Not available in English.	no
INF-005	OLDEPESCA Note: Not available in English.	
INF-006	Crisis de las Tortugas Baula del Pacífico Oriental Note. Not available in English.	
INF-007	ONG's Meeting Report	no
INF-008	Informe de las ONG's ante las Partes de la Convención Interamericana para la Protección y Conservación de las Tortugas Marinas NOTE: Not available in English.	no
INF-009	XXIV Annual Sea Turtle Symposium on the Biology and Conservation of Sea Turtles	no
INF-010	Information on Dates of the Coming into Force of the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles	no
INF-011	Summary of the Resolution of the Twenty-Third Annual Symposium on the Biology and Conservation of Sea Turtles of the International Sea Turtle Society – Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. March 17 through 21, 2003	yes
INF-012	General Document List of COP1CIT	yes
INF-013	Declaration of the Non-governmental Organizations before the CIT Delegates on the Conservation of Sea Turtles	
INF-014	Transcripción de la Primera Sesión Plenaria NOTE. Not available in English.	yes

Note: Interested persons may request from the Secretariat a paper copy of those documents not available in digital format. Some CIT documents are not included in the annexes because they have evolved into the various Resolutions.

ANNEXES MINUTES

COP 1 - Minutes



Minutes of the First Meeting of the Conference of the Parties of the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles COP1 August 6th through 8th, 2002 Hotel Irazú, San José, Costa Rica

1. Inauguration

Responding to the invitation of the Ministry of the Environment and Energy of Costa Rica, the First Conference of the Parties of the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles was inaugurated, with the participation of representatives from the Parties: Brazil, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico, Netherlands Antilles, Peru, United States of America and Venezuela, including Nicaragua and Uruguay, who have deposited their instruments for participation with the government of Venezuela, depositary of the Convention, as well as observers and participants. The Conference was installed with the participation of the Lawyer, Mr. Manuel Antonio Bolaños, Vice Minister of the Environment and Energy of Costa Rica, who welcomed the Delegates and pledged his best intentions and efforts to attain positive resolutions facilitating the achievement of the objectives of this summons. Additionally, Mrs. Ligia Castro, Chairman of INCOPESA (Costa Rica's Fisheries Institute), and Mr. Marco Antonio Solano, General Coordinator of the Conference, were present at the main table.

2. The Election of the Chairman

The Parties approve and support Mexico's proposal

to confer the Chairmanship of the First Conference of the Parties, to Mr. Manuel Antonio Bolaños.

Immediately thereafter, the Chairman yields the floor to the delegation of the United States of America and the Ambassador of the United States of America, Mr. John J. Danilovich, who expresses his gratitude and pleasure to Costa Rica and the Parties for their participation in COP1 and its opportune celebration in Costa Rica. Likewise, he indicates that he speaks in the name of the US Department of Justice, of the National Marine Fisheries Service and NOAA, which confer priority to biodiversity and recognize the efforts of the international community in these matters. Ambassador Danilovich emphasized that international cooperation and participation are essential to achieve the recovery of sea turtles, which are threatened with extinction.

Several proposals were made to fill in the Vice Chairmanship. However, none of the Delegations accepted the nomination. By consensus, the Parties agreed that the Delegation of Costa Rica assume the Chairmanship and Mr. Luis Torres, Delegate from Ecuador, act as the Rapporteur..

3. Discussion of the Provisional Agenda

Before discussing and approving the provisional



agenda, the Chairman invited the delegations to introduce its members. The Observers were also invited to introduce themselves. After several delegations expressed their points of view, the Chairman, with the approval of the Parties, made the following changes.

a) Points #5, **Preliminary National Reports**, and, #16, **Request for Annual Reports to the Parties**, should be discussed jointly at COP2.

b) Points #10, **Reception of Nominations for the Scientific Committee**, and #12, **Reception of Nominations for the Consultative Committee**, are postponed until after COP1 in order to coincide with discussions on the committees' terms of reference.

c) Point #6 of the Agenda, **Introduction, Discussion and Approval of the Working Program for the First COP**, shall be discussed after point #8, **Discussion and Adoption of the Rules of Procedure for the Meetings of the Parties and the Subsidiary Committees**.

4. RESOLUTION COP1-CIT004, Rules of Procedure for the Meetings of the Conference of the Parties of the Inter-American Convention

The Chairman invited the delegations to acknowledge the Mexican proposal regarding the Rules of Procedure for the Meetings of the Conference of the Parties of the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles, included in Document CIT-002. The Chairman suggested that this document could serve as a basis for discussion on this agenda item. The Chairman also noted that the Mexican proposal was not available in English. The Mexican Delegation was requested to deliver a summarized version of its contents for the benefit of the English speaking delegations.

Following the introduction of the proposal by the Delegation of Mexico, the United States of America noted that its delegation would need to have an English version of the document in order to engage in substantive discussion on this topic. In addition, the United States suggested that the COP may also want to consider CIT-001, another proposal on rules of procedure which was developed by the United States and Costa Rica, in order to produce a text to the satisfaction of all Parties.

After some discussion, the COP decided to focus on the proposal of the Mexican Delegation, entitled "Rules of Procedure for the Meetings of the Conference of the Parties of the Inter- American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles" (document CIT-002), as the basis for discussion on this agenda item but to also refer to the U.S.-Costa Rica proposal, entitled "Rules of Procedure for the Meetings of the Parties of the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles and its Subsidiary Bodies" (document CIT-001). Documents CIT-001 and CIT-002 are appended as Annex I and Annex 2, respectively. The Parties were able to reach agreements taking into account the mandates of the Convention, on nearly all aspects of the draft rules of procedure (document CIT-002). It was not possible to reach consensus on the terminology of Rule 11 "Observers". Therefore, it is agreed to take up this issue again during the second part of COP1. It was also agreed that Rule 8, "Voting on Procedural Matters" and Rule 20, "Secretariat", would not be included in the revised draft document CIT-002, to be consistent with the Convention and because the issue of a Secretariat is the subject of an independent resolution. The revised Rules of Procedure document, with Rule 11 in brackets (draft document CIT-002), is appended in the resolution COP1-CIT004.



5. The *Pro-tempore* Secretariat

The Conference of the Parties decided that it was not possible at this time to take a decision regarding a permanent Secretariat for the Convention. However, it was agreed that in order to carry out its necessary work in the period between sessions, the COP had need of interim secretariat arrangements. As a result of its deliberations, the COP adopted Resolution COP1-CIT001, accepting the generous offer of Costa Rica to serve as the host country for an interim or *Pro Tempore* Secretariat for the Convention, for a term of two years. Resolution COP1-CIT001 is appended in the resolutions.

6. Financing the Secretariat and the Establishment of a Special Fund

The Delegation of the United States of America introduced document CIT-003, proposing to establish a special fund. The United States also indicated that in the coming year it would be in a position to contribute financially to the Special Fund contemplated in its proposal, which could be used to support the *Pro Tempore* Secretariat and the work of the meetings of the parties until a decision regarding a permanent Secretariat and financing mechanisms can be made.

The Delegation of Costa Rica emphasized that the funds should be administrated with fluency to avoid obstructing the disbursements and proposed that the National Parks Foundation, a private entity with a public mandate, serve as the administrator of the Special Fund, if the Parties approve the US proposal. Brazil noted that the proposal should include guidelines regarding assistance to developing countries with their sea turtle protection and conservation projects, consistent with Article XIII(1)(b) of the Convention.

Based on comments from this and other Parties on how to improve and streamline the document, the COP approved (CIT-003 (revised)) “Guidelines for

the Operation of the Inter-American Convention Special Fund,” (Resolution COP1CIT-002 is appended in the resolutions); pursuant to this resolution, a special fund will be created for the Inter-American Convention to be financed through direct contributions from Parties or non-governmental organizations. The National Parks Foundation of Costa Rica will be the administrative entity of the fund created for the Inter-American Convention, in accordance with the adopted Guidelines.

7. Program of Work for the Conference of the Parties of the Convention

The delegate of the United States of America introduced document CIT-004, regarding a Program of Work for the COP for the next three years. Based on the discussions and views of several delegations, the document was revised with regard to national reports, the source of information for use in discussing conservation and management needs, the importance of establishing contacts with organizations and like-minded institutions and the possibility of examining the actions of Non-parties to the Convention. In addition, it was clarified that the working program would be advisory in nature. The COP adopted document CIT-004 (revised), which is appended in the CIT’s documents.

8. Cooperation and Synergy with the CITES Convention and other Conventions

The delegate of Ecuador introduced document INFO-004 on the subject of cooperation between the Secretariat of the CITES Convention and the Inter-American Convention. This recommendation is supported by the delegate of the Netherlands Antilles who emphasizes the long history of addressing the protection and conservation of marine turtles in the Wider Caribbean by the Caribbean Environment Program (CEP) and its SPAW Protocol (Specially Protected Areas and



Wildlife Protocol). Consequently, close cooperation and synergy with CEP and SPAW protocol should be considered.

This draft resolution was approved with some modifications. The adopted resolution document COP-CIT003, is appended as Annex Resolution.

9. Non-governmental Organizations Report

Ms. Annabella Barrios presented the non-governmental report to the Inter American Convention COP, which was developed during a one-day meeting of those non-governmental organizations participating in the COP, which was held on 5 August. The text of the report (document INFO-007) is appended in the informative documents.

10. Other Agreements of the Conference of the Parties

a) Suspension of the First Conference of the Parties, COP1, to be Resumed in 2003.

The Parties decided that because there was not sufficient time to complete the tasks that are required by the Convention to be accomplished during the First Conference of the Parties, the work of the First Conference of the Parties would be suspended on 8 August, 2002. The First COP will be resumed at the first opportunity at the start of the year 2003.

b) Leatherback Sea Turtles (*D. coriacea*) of the Eastern Pacific

The Costa Rican Delegate introduced a draft resolution exhorting the Parties to acknowledge the critical status of the leatherback sea turtle (*D. coriacea*), of the eastern Pacific. The draft Resolution CIT-006, also requests Parties to collect information on incidental by-catch of leatherback turtles by commercial fisheries using pelagic long-

lines and gillnets in the eastern Pacific, so as to evaluate and reduce the impact of these fisheries on the species. The Parties agreed that there was not sufficient time to discuss the draft resolution at this session of the First COP and agreed to include this item on the agenda when COP1 is resumed at the start of 2003. The draft resolution is appended as CIT-006.

c) Venue for COP2

The government of Venezuela offered to host COP2, which was unanimously approved by the Parties and the Observers. The date and place of COP2 is to be announced.

d) Focal Points

In order to ensure that the relevant government agencies for each Party are informed of Meetings of the Parties and receive all documents in a timely manner, it was agreed that each Party would submit to the Interim or *Pro-tempore* Secretariat an interim point of contact, or “focal point”, at this session of the COP and update that information as appropriate.

Mr. Manuel Antonio Bolaños closed the first part of COP1. It follows that the pending issues will be analyzed at the start of 2003 at the resumed meeting of COP1.

Pending Issues for the Provisional Agenda for the Next Meeting of COP1

(D. Rules of Procedure, Rule 11 “Observers”.

- Terms of Reference, Nominations and Selections for the Scientific Committee and the Consultative Committee.
- Establishing the Format, Scope, and Content of the National Reports.
- Costa Rica’s proposed resolution regarding the leatherback sea turtles (*D. coriacea*), of the eastern Pacific.



- Coordination with other international organizations.
- Election of the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Rapporteur for COP2.

Ing. Luis Torres N.
Rapporteur COP1CIT

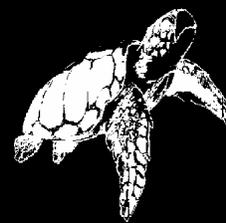
Lic. Manuel A. Bolaños
Chairman COP1CIT/1



Delegates from Brazil Benedicto Fonseca and Ricardo José Soavinski,, Belize Isaias Majil and Netherland Antilles Paul Hoetjes



COP 1CIT - Second Part



Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles First Conference of the Parties: Second Part 19-22 August, 2003 San José, Costa Rica

FIRST CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES Second Part COP1

1. OPENING AND WELCOME

In San José, Costa Rica, according to that determined in the **First Part of the First Conference of the Parties**, and in consideration to the summons of the *Pro tempore* Secretariat of the Convention at the 09:00 hours of August 19th, 2003, Mr. Allan Flores Moya, Vice-Minister of the Environment and Energy, acting as Chair of the **Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles**, upon initiating the meeting, first expressed his gratitude to the distinguished Delegations from the Parties and the NGOs, for choosing, once again, Costa Rica as the host country, and at the same time, on behalf of his country's government, extended a warm welcome to each participant, committing his best efforts towards the accomplishment of the objectives of this **Second Part of the COP1**.

He also declared this forum of particular interest to Costa Rica because both its coastlines exhibit nesting sites for six species of sea turtles: the green turtle, the black turtle, the hawksbill turtle, the olive ridley turtle, the loggerhead turtle, and the leatherback turtle.

The Vice-Minister indicates that the Ministry of the Environment and Energy of Costa Rica, governing body of wildlife conservation, has

prioritized the protection of sea turtles, issuing appropriate and timely legislation. In addition it has strengthened the national system of conservation areas, increasing and protecting the nesting sites of these marine species.

For this purpose, by means of an executive decree, a **“Technical Commission”** will be created with the objective of supporting the definition, the revision, and the modification of the technical guidelines required for the conservation, administration, and use of sea turtles.

2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Immediately thereafter, the **Provisional Agenda for COP1 Second Part**, was submitted to the Floor, with the modifications introduced by the Contracting Parties at the informal preparatory meeting that took place on Monday, August 18th, and which includes 14 Agenda items. The Agenda was accepted and approved unanimously.

3. REPORT FROM THE *PRO TEMPORE* SECRETARIAT

Following, Agenda item No. 3 of the latter, the **Report from the *Pro tempore* Secretariat August 2002 to August 2003**, included in the document previously distributed by the *Pro tem-*



pro Secretariat, numbered **CIT-012 and CIT-013**, was considered.

The *Pro tempore* Secretary, Mr. Marco A. Solano, expressed that although the report had been submitted well in advance, he will proceed to detail the most significant activities that transpired during the time he had the honor of executing the sensitive commission delegated on him by the Parties, to whom he acknowledges their permanent collaboration. Likewise, he emphasizes the fact that in order to comply with his full time duties, the government of Costa Rica extended a special license that expires in October of the current year; therefore, during the present meeting, a decision must be made as to who will continue performing the responsibilities after that date.

After delivering a schematic exposition of the **Minutes from the First Conference of the Parties of the Convention, (INF-012)**, wherein he emphasized the adoption of the **Rules of Procedure for the Meetings of the Conference of the Parties**; the **Establishment of the Special Fund of the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles**, and its operation; the **Work Program and the Cooperation and Synergy with the CITES Convention**, among other items. Likewise, Mr. Solano informed that **Guatemala** had ratified before the government of **Venezuela** the **Instruments of Adhesion** to the Convention, whereas, at this time, eleven (11) Contracting Parties are constituents, and, therefore, it follows that the distinguished **Delegation from Guatemala** was invited to join the Table.

In closing, he once more expressed his appreciation for the trust bestowed upon him as *Pro tempore* Secretary.

The **Venezuelan Delegation**, in yielding the Floor, acknowledged **Costa Rica** for its hospitality and for volunteering as the host country, expressing sincere recognition for the work accomplished by Mr. Marco A. Solano, to whom it mani-

festated its concern about the temporality of his functions. Likewise, it expressed the need for his support in organizing the COP2, and appealed to the other Delegations to, inclusive in the scope of the Conference, seek a solution to this situation.

The **Venezuelan Delegation** emphasized the need to officially establish **National Competent Authorities** for the Convention and to renovate the **Focal Points**, transitory up to the present, as well as the need to address the Convention's financial issues. On the other hand, the Delegation requested the Secretariat to clarify Mr. Solano's statement regarding the need for each one of the Parties to report within a month the cost of activities performed to protect the sea turtles, due to the United States need for justifications to back its financial contributions to date.

Mr. Solano indicated that with this report and the itemization of the in-kind contributions from each Party State for the achievement of the objectives of the Convention, it is pretended to demonstrate that the Parties are conducting significant efforts, particularly financial, to conserve sea turtles, when performing conservation actions pursuant to the objectives of the Convention, and in no instance should this be interpreted as a rendering of accounts to a determined State, but as the Parties contributions towards the objectives of the Convention.

Regarding this issue, the Delegate from the United States further elaborated the information, indicating that the funds for the constitution of the **Convention's Special Fund**, issue from financial resources donated by the State Department in his country, and that justifications are required that will support these contributions, but not necessarily financial, that the Delegation from his country will contribute with elements allowing for demonstrating before his government and the corresponding governmental instances, the significant contributions of the Parties, in such a way that it is understood that all the Contracting Parties contribute to the Convention, which significant contributions



from the Parties without a doubt will encourage his government to continue assisting with financial resources. The Delegate ended his intervention indicating that he can gladly provide any additional explanation to any Party requiring it.

The Delegations from Brazil and Honduras conveyed their appreciation to the government of Costa Rica for hosting the Conference, and at the same time expressed a deserving recognition to the work of Mr. Solano.

In closing the interventions, the *Pro tempore Secretariat's Report* included in **Documents COP1CIT-012** and **COP1CIT-013**, was approved.

4. RULES OF PROCEDURE : RULE 11 OBSERVERS

Taking on Item 4 relative to **Rule 11 on Rules of Procedure for the Observers, Document COP1CIT-004**, the Parties agreed to establish a **Work Group** with the participation of official Delegations only. After one and one half days of sessions, the **Group** reached a unanimous agreement in regard to the participation of the observers.

The approved text is included in **Resolution COP1CIT-004, Rules of Procedure for the Meetings of the Conference of the Parties of the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles.**

Included in the criteria unanimously approved for this rule in regard to the accreditation of the observers participation, the experience of the observers in the subject of the Convention is emphasized; the processing and timing required by the procedures for the respective accreditation; the payment of reasonable fees to participate, and the possibility that the accreditation may be withdrawn from an observer following the request from one of the Parties, which must be documented.

On this last point, it is pertinent to highlight the statements issuing from two representatives of the observers group, who, during the Closing of the Conference, expressed the possibility that the Parties consider the amendment in the future of this rule, allowing for the right of answering to the observer whose accreditation has been withdrawn.

5. TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS

When the Plenary reconvened, the Chair requested the Secretariat to present **Document CIT-009(Revised), Terms of Reference for the Consultative Committee of Experts**. After analyzing the document, several of the Delegations expressed concern about the need to avoid repetitiveness when transferring the texts from the Convention to the **Terms of Reference**. If necessary, it would suffice to make reference to the corresponding article, in agreement with the guidelines of the Convention as the COP must at all time be in concordance with the Convention's guidelines. To this effect, the introductory paragraphs of the work document were reformed.

An ample debate was generated when discussing the functions of the **Consultative Committee** with the active participation of all Delegations; among these the interventions of the United States of America, Peru, Mexico, the Netherlands Antilles and Brazil were outstanding. At the end of the session, which was concluded at 18:45, the Parties did not reach an agreement on the content and wording of the functions of the **Consultative Committee**, ending the day's work at 18:45. The Chair encouraged all Parties to develop alternative proposals to present to the Table that could be acceptable to all the Delegations, developed by means of informal conversations.

On Wednesday, August 20th, when the Plenary was reinstated at 09:00, the Delegation of Mexico presented **Document CIT-009**, before the Floor. The **Mexican** proposal was accepted as the



working document, and amply and profoundly analyzed. By means of modifications, addendums and paragraph elimination, at the end of the day the Parties reached an agreement on the content and the functions of the **Consultative Committee**, attempting for balance and consensus of criteria. In collaboration with the **Mexican** Delegation, the Secretariat was conferred the task of presenting a revised final draft.

Following the afternoon recess, at 16:30, the Plenary went on to discuss the next item of **Document CIT-009**, which is the **Structure of the Consultative Committee**, and to that effect, a lively discussion ensued in regard to the **Sectorial Representatives**, and the **Parties Representatives**, as well as the qualifications of these in regard to academic degrees and specific experience, duration in the position, the manner of the relationship, the accreditations, etc. The Delegations emphasized the need for the representatives of the Committee to carry experience in the subject theme of the Convention, with emphasis on the geographic area of its application; that is, that their trajectory and experience are based in a profound knowledge of the situation of the conservation and the protection of sea turtles in the American Continent.

Finally, the primary commitment of the Parties was emphasized to comply in a time frame no greater than 60 days after the closing of COP2 (August 22nd, 2003), with the designation of the official and sectorial representatives before the **Consultative Committee of Experts**, which must be notified to the Secretariat by means of each **National Focal Point**.

The **Delegation of Brazil** highlighted the need to adopt an internal mechanism for the election of the sectorial representatives before COP2, bearing in mind the intention that the Consultative Committee meet previously.

Document CIT-009, used at the beginning as the basis for these discussion, evolved during

these debates bringing about the final **Resolution COP1CIT-005, Terms of Reference for the Consultative Committee of Experts of the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles**.

6. VICE CHAIR FOR COP1

At 18:20, the Delegation of Costa Rica presented the proposal that **Venezuela** fulfill the position of **Vice Chair for COP1**. The proposal, having the support of Brazil, the United States of America and Peru, was approved unanimously.

Consultative Committee of Experts (continued)

At 15:25 on August 21st, the Plenary is reinstated, presided by the Vice Chair of the COP1, Madam Aleidi Beatriz Sangronis.

The revision of the functions of the **Consultative Committee** followed, pursuant to the new draft provided by the **Mexican Delegation** and modified, which modifications were accepted by all the Parties.

Immediately thereafter the Chair invited the Floor to consider the paragraphs relative to the **Structure of the Consultative Committee of Experts**, and to this effect, presented before the Plenary the four proposals in regard to this theme drafted by the **Delegations of Peru, Brazil, the United States** and the **Non-governmental Organizations**.

The contribution of the **United States** was accepted as a base model document because the three other proposals are, in general terms, included therein. Appreciation for this contribution was expressed to the representative of the **United States**, immediately initiating the one on one analysis of the following paragraphs.

- * The procedure for the designation of the **Official Representatives**;
- * The procedure for the designation of the



Sectorial Representatives;

- * The interim procedure for facilitating the contributions and the funding for the first meeting of the **Consultative Committee**;
- * That which pertains to the meetings of the **Consultative Committee**;
- * In closing, following the recommendation of the **Mexican** Delegation, a paragraph was included in regard to the compliance with the principles of ethics and confidentiality pertaining to the data and documents made available to the **Delegates** and the **Sectorial Representatives**.

The interventions of the various Delegations in regard to this subject were enriching, focused and with a practical orientation to facilitate the operational aspects of the designation mechanisms for the **Representatives**, their accreditation, their duration in their functions, the ordinary and the extraordinary meetings, and, identical as with the previous discussions, the principles of confidentiality.

Likewise, emphasis was placed on the need that members of the **Consultative Committee**, regardless of which Party they represent, carry sound knowledge of the geographic area of the Convention, as well as acknowledged expertise on the bio-aquatic resources involved in the Convention, especially sea turtles and their different biological phases.

7. THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

The Plenary initiated its work on the afternoon of August 21st, with the acknowledgement and analysis of the **Costa Rican Proposal on the Terms of Reference for the Scientific Committee of the Convention, CIT-008 (Revised)**, of August 21, wherein that already included in the **Text of the Convention** was eliminated, as follows:

- * The objective;
- * The functions of the **Scientific Committee**;
- * The calendar and the closing of the **Meetings** and the **Procedures**;
- * The functioning rules;
- * The observer scientific organizations;
- * Confidentiality (pursuant to identical criteria as agreed for the **Consultative Committee of Experts**).

In revising the document, the criteria agreed upon for the **Consultative Committee** was considered in concordance to that established in **Article VII** of the Convention,

In this regard, the additional proposal of the **Delegation of the United States** is emphasized, relative to those consensual designations of other scientists (additionally to those nominated by each Party), to integrate the **Committee**, and which are included in the **Final Document on the Terms of Reference**, to be submitted to the **Scientific Committee** during its first meeting, for its analysis and observations, with the view to obtain criteria and suggestions for the guidance of the **Contracting Parties of the Convention** for its discussion at **COP2**.

8. GUIDELINES FOR THE INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

At 09:00 hours of its last day of sessions, and following the order of the **Items of the Agenda**, the Chair invited the Delegations to pursue Item 7, that is, **Guidelines for the International Cooperation (Document CIT-010)**.

Mr. Solano delivered a general explanation about this document, noting that it is necessary to follow guidelines for the application of that expressed in **Article XII** of the Convention; he noted that **OLDEPESCA** is interested in subscribing a cooperation agreement with our Convention.

Upon taking the Floor, the Delegations expressed their concern on the real need for this issue to require a Resolution from the COP, inas-



much as the first three paragraphs should be accepted as clauses, if such were the case.

Mexico and **Peru** agreed in expressing that a Resolution does not represent the best alternative for providing guidelines, suggesting that it appear instead as a mandate and a part of the report, and indicating thereof the COP knows and recommended to the Secretariat to require of the Parties case consultations on the possibilities of cooperation and the intention to work with one or any other qualified organization or entity, as well as the advances and results of such cooperation.

The Secretariat should also support the Parties in the drafting, orientation and presentation of cooperation projects before funding entities for the best compliance with the objectives of the Convention. It was then decided that such **Guidelines for the International Cooperation (Document CIT-010)**, become not a Resolution but part of the report, taking into consideration the contributions of the Delegations. The Agreement on International Cooperation is included as **Annex I** in this document.

9. PROPOSAL WORK PLAN FOR THE PRO TEMPORE SECRETARIAT FOR THE YEAR 2004

Item No. 8 of the **Agenda, Proposal Work Plan for the Pro tempore Secretariat for the year 2004 (Document CIT-011)**, was presented by Mr. Solano, who upon reading the document's explanatory commentaries emphasized that for the year 2004 it is deemed necessary to have a **Work Plan** available, previously analyzed and approved by the Parties, wherein continuity is provided to those activities developed in the year 2003 and to those others necessary for the compliance of the objectives of the Convention, all understood in the context of the reduced funding available at present and for the future.

He emphasized the support for the planning and execution of **COP2** and **COP3**, the functioning of the subsidiary organs of the Convention, the updating of the **CIT Web Site**, as well as the funding proposals allowing for the execution of the various projects, the **COP Resolutions** and the representation of the Secretariat of the Convention in other international fora inherent to the Convention, and as an organ of the Contracting Parties. Mr. Solano presented the **Proposal for the Budget of the Year 2004**, wherein he emphasized one more time the reduced funding available for the *Pro tempore* Secretariat of the Convention to comply with its mandates.

The Party Delegations, in thanking for the drafting of the document, express their questions, as follows:

- * The absence of budget items for the funding of the **Consultative and Scientific Committees**;
- * The absence of expense prioritization for disbursements. It was noted that no funding is budgeted for COP2.

The Room decided to approve the **Work Plan** and the **Budget**, and recommended priorities be considered, to strengthen the search for funding and donations, and to include a budget item to publicize the work being done by the Parties, in addition to a budget item for COP2 which was estimated at approximately US\$20,000.

With the view to facilitate the reports of the Contracting Parties, **Mexico** offered to submit for future distribution a **National Report Format**, which will include those financial efforts conducted by the Parties to protect and preserve sea turtles and also will provide support that the government of the United States of America maintain and strengthen its assistance and economic contributions to the Special Fund of the Inter-American Convention.



10. RESOLUTION PROPOSAL FOR THE CONSERVATION OF LEATHERBACK SEA TURTLES

Item No. 9 of the Agenda, relative to a **Resolution Proposal for the Conservation of the Leatherback Sea Turtle (CIT-006)**, was presented by the Delegation of Costa Rica, and it was agreed to present the document to the Scientific Committee at its first meeting for analysis and for the Committee to issue pertinent recommendations during COP2. **Brazil** proposes **Item 4** of the document be amended in regard to the mention of the sea turtle *Dermochelys coriacea*, in Appendix I of CITES.

The agreement in question is included as Annex II in these Minutes.

11. COSTA RICAN REPORT ON THE TWENTIETH FOURTH ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM ON THE BIOLOGY AND CONSERVATION OF SEA TURTLES

Item No. 10 of the Agenda, Twenty-fourth Annual Symposium on the Biology and Conservation of Sea Turtles (INF-009), was discussed by the Floor. The Chair yielded the floor to the Delegation of **Costa Rica** to further expound information about this event, which was accomplished. For additional information, see attached **Document INF-009**.

The Parties, by means of their Delegations, took note of the invitation to transmit to their respective States and promote the participation of their fellow citizens in the Symposium.

At the start of the afternoon work, Mr. Allan Flores re-assumed the Chair of the Plenary.

12. VENEZUELA REPORTS ON THE ORGANIZATION OF COP2

Venezuela, undertaking **item No. 11 of the Agenda**, expressed appreciation for the trust in that this country organize and convene **COP2**, although the final regional meeting place is not yet identi-

fied and that, in regard to the dates of the meeting, their government wishes to convene this conference during the second half of the year 2004.

Likewise, the Delegation emphasized that the national entity responsible to conduct all pertinent responsibilities for COP2, will be the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources; therefore, at the end of the year 2003, the *Secretary Pro tempore* shall be advised of which government department pertaining to that Ministry will be responsible to conduct such pertinent responsibilities. The Delegates, additionally, expressed the need to guarantee the financial resources for the organization of the meeting, and finally appealed for the support of the *Pro tempore* Secretary to assist their government in the search for the international financial cooperation required. The Room thanked **Venezuela** for its positive disposition and coincided that the best months to summon COP2 would be between July and September of the year 2004. It is estimated that the subsidiary organs would have met by then.

13. THE AGENDA ITEM “OTHER MATTERS”

Complying with the proposal of **Peru**, the Agenda item **Other Matters** was pursued, prior to the nomination of dignitaries.

The motion thus accepted, the **Delegate of Peru** proposed, as the first point in the **Agenda Item Other Matters**, that Mr. Solano continue as the *Pro tempore Secretary* up to **COP2**, which proposal was upheld by the United States that one more time emphasized and expressed appreciation for the work accomplished by Mr. Marco Solano. Unanimously and by means of an applause vote, Mr. Solano was confirmed in his position.

One second Item included in **Various Matters** was related to **Funding**. It was indicated that up to the present, and as a result of the generous contribution of the **United States**, two **COP** meetings (first and second parts), have been convened, and that it is time now to establish a minimum



voluntary contribution from each Party, which could have a basis of US\$2,000, and which could be accounted for in the efforts each Party conducts to protect the sea turtles. The proposal was supported by the **Delegations**, on the premise that these would be voluntary contributions taking into consideration the budgetary constraints.

The **United States**, on expressing its agreement with this proposal, added that up to the present it has been a privilege and an honor to be able to fund these two meetings of the COP, and that his country is politically committed to do this and shall continue to do so; however, he cannot guarantee that this may continue because of reasons of policy of the Department of State, where the funds are approved, and that they need to have reasonable justifications. Therefore, he invites all the Parties to make direct contributions working in their countries towards this end, and also funding the assistance of their representatives, as well.

One third Item included in **Other Matters**, was related with the **Report Format**, and an appeal was presented to the Parties so that at **COP2**

the guidelines of the **National Reports** be interchanged, which appeal was accepted.

Finally, the nomination of dignitaries was performed with the Chairmanship befallen on **Venezuela** and the Vice Chairmanship on **Peru**. The Rapporteur will be nominated at the start of COP2.

14. THE CLOSING

The Closing was conducted by Mr. Allan Flores Moya, Vice Minister of the Environment and Energy of Costa Rica.

The Delegations expressed their appreciation for each and all the attentions and hospitality of the people and the government of **Costa Rica**.

The meeting was adjourned at 16:45.

Ing. Luis Torres N. **Lic. Allan Flores Moya**
Rapporteur COP1IAC Chairman COP1IAC/2

Annex I



The Conference of the Parties, during the Second Part of COP1, in relation to the International Cooperation (Article XII), agrees to request the following to the Secretariat:

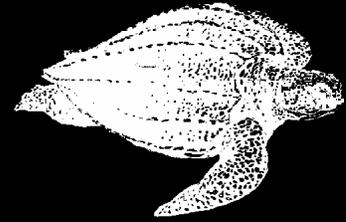
- a. To identify, promote and address all requests forthcoming from international organisms who express their interest in establishing coordination and cooperation mechanisms related with issues of the Convention;
- b. To inform the Conference of the Contracting Parties or its subsidiary organs as pertinent, about actions in this regard;
- c. To establish contact with those scientific and conservationist entities, specializing in the fields

of research, protection and conservation of sea turtles, with the objective to request their support for the achievement of the objectives of this Convention;

- d. To analyze pursuant to the mandate of the Convention, the scope of the objectives and possible commitments, and inform the Contracting Parties in relation to these activities;
- e. To support the Contracting Parties in their requests for financial and technical resources before cooperation entities, with the view to achieve the objectives of the Convention;
- f. To encourage and coordinate the technical cooperation among the Contracting Parties.



Annex II



The Conference of the Contracting Parties, considering that the population of leatherback sea turtles of the Eastern Pacific has been reduced to a point where it is now considered as critically threatened with extinction, and that included among the most significant threats for these sea turtle populations are the long-line and gillnet fisheries,

the non-sustainable exploitation of eggs and the destruction or alteration of nesting habitat, **Agrees** to request each one of the Parties to consider as a matter of high priority within their territories, the immediate search for solutions that could revert this situation, following the mandates included in the text of the Convention.



ANNEXES

Agendas





**Inter-American Convention for the Protection and
Conservation of Sea Turtles
First Conference of the Parties: First Part**

6-8 August, 2002 San José, Costa Rica

CIT-COP 1/1 Agenda (eng)

**AGENDA COP1 – FIRST PART
August 6th, 7th and 8th, 2002
Hotel Irazú
San José, Costa Rica**

1. Registration of Participants (0800 – 0900).
2. Opening of the Meeting by Mr. Manuel Antonio Bolaños, Vice Minister of the Environment and Energy of Costa Rica.
3. Nomination of the Chairman Vice Chairman and Rapporteur.
4. Discussions on the Rules of Procedure for the Meetings of the Conference of the Parties of the IAC.
5. Discussions on the Establishment of the *Pro Tempore* Secretariat.
6. Discussions on the Guidelines for the Operation of the IAC Special Fund.
7. Discussions on the Cooperation and Synergy between the Inter American Convention and the CITES Convention.
8. Various Matters.
9. Suspension of the first part of the First Conference of the Parties.



**Inter-American Convention for the Protection
and Conservation of Sea Turtles
First Conference of the Parties: Second Part**

19-22 August, 2003

San José, Costa Rica

CIT-COP 1/2 Agenda-REVISED-18th August. (eng)

PROVISIONAL AGENDA COP 1 – SECOND PART

1. Opening of the Meeting by Mr. Allan Flores Moya, Vice Minister of the Ministry of Environment and Energy, Costa Rica
2. Approval of the Agenda (Document CIT-COP _ Agenda-REVISED 18th August)
3. Report of the Secretariat *Pro Tempore* August 2002-August 2003 (Documents CIT-012 and CIT-013)
4. Rules of Procedure (Resolution COP1 CIT-004): Rule 11, Observers (Document COP 1 CIT-004/ [Rule 11-REVISED-18th August])
5. Terms of Reference for the Consultative Committee of Experts (Document CIT-009) and constitution of the Consultative Committee of Experts (Document CIT-015-REVISED)
6. Terms of Reference for the Scientific Committee (Document CIT-008) and constitution of the Scientific Committee (Document CIT-016-REVISED)
7. Guidelines for International Cooperation (Document CIT-010)
8. Proposed Work Plan of 2004 for the Secretariat *Pro Tempore* (Document CIT-011)
9. Proposed Resolution for the conservation of leatherback turtles in the Eastern Pacific (Document CIT-006)
10. Report by Costa Rica on the 24th Annual Symposium on Sea Turtle Biology and Conservation (INF-009)
11. Report by Venezuela on the organization of the Second Conference of Parties
12. Election of President, Vice-president, and Rapporteur for COP 2
13. Other issues
14. Closure of the First Conference of Parties

ANEXOS

Resolutions





RESOLUTION COP1-CIT-001

Establishment of the Pro Tempore Secretariat

1. The First Conference of the Parties agrees to establish a Pro Tempore Secretariat.
2. The Conference of the Parties is pleased to accept the proposal made by Costa Rica to act, direct and operate a Pro Tempore Secretariat for a period of two (2) years and to undertake the functions and duties described in Article VI of the Convention, as well as any other function and duty assigned by the Conference of the Parties, taking into account the interim nature of the arrangement and the availability of resources.
3. The Pro Tempore Secretariat shall carry out mainly the following duties and responsibilities assigned by the Parties:
 - (a) Supporting, organizing and participating in the meetings of the Conference of the Parties and subsidiary bodies, working in conjunction with the host country of the meeting, as appropriate;
 - (b) Coordinating and facilitating communications among and between Parties and observers;
 - (c) Making available to the Parties in the working languages all reports, recommendations and decisions adopted, and any other documents necessary for the work of the Parties;
 - (d) Administration of the Inter-American Convention Special Fund (IACSF), according to the guidelines agreed by the Parties; and,
 - (e) Other such duties and responsibilities as approved by the Parties.

Costa Rica, August 2002



Delegation from Perú: Alberto Hart, José Carlos Marquez and Miguel Guzmán



RESOLUTION COP1CIT-002

Guidelines for the Operation of the Inter-American Convention special Fund

Establishment of the Fund

1. In accordance with Article XIII of the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles, the First Conference of the Parties agrees to establish a Special Fund (IAC-SP), to be financed through direct contributions.

All Parties, international organizations and non-governmental organizations interested in the work and the success of this Convention, are urged to contribute to the Fund and to seek funding from other sources.

2. The Fund shall be administered by the *Pro Tempore* Secretariat and used only for the following objectives described by the Convention:

- a) Meeting the expenses that could be required to establish the *Pro Tempore* Secretariat, pursuant to Article VI of the Inter-American Convention;
- b) Supporting those Parties which are developing countries in the compliance of their obligations under the Convention, including access to technology as deemed appropriate;
- c) Supporting the meetings of the Conference of the Parties and Subsidiary Bodies;
- d) Meeting expenses associated with translating, printing and distributing reports, adopted recommendations and

decisions, and any other documents necessary for the work of the Parties;

- e) Funding the travel and associated costs of the Secretariat and, where appropriate, the delegates, to attend meetings of the Parties and Subsidiary Bodies;
- f) Honoraria and contractual consultancy fees as well as other services; and,
- g) Meeting any other such costs as approved by the Parties.

3. The provisional Secretary should establish the Special Fund for the Inter-American Convention (SFIC) in a separate bank account with a bank which is approved by both parties. Such a bank should have a branch office in the USA, and the Special Fund should remain in United States Dollars. The fiscal year of the Fund for accounting purposes and such will be the same as the Calendar year.

4. The direct contributions of the donors received by the *Pro Tempore* Secretariat shall be deposited in the IACSF. The *Pro Tempore* Secretariat will deliver the corresponding receipts to the donors and will present a summary report of the contributions to the Conference of the Parties, including the country or donor organization, the amount received and the date in which the money was deposited in the account.



The Approved Budget

5. The *Pro Tempore* Secretariat, in consultation with the Parties, shall draft a provisional annual budget for use by the IACSF. The interim Secretariat shall transmit the provisional budget to the Parties as soon as possible but no later than ninety (90) days prior to the Conference of the Parties where the funds forthcoming from the IACSP, will be disbursed. The Parties shall approve in written form the provisional budget no later than sixty (60) days before the meeting.

6. In those cases where the IACSF is used to support the costs of the Conference of the Parties, the host country shall be responsible to submit, in advance, by means of the *Pro Tempore* Secretariat, the estimated budget of associated costs inherent to being the host country for the meeting. The estimated budget shall be approved by the Parties before disbursement of funds from the IACSF, for this purpose. The *Pro Tempore* Secretariat shall not disburse any funds from the IACSP with reference to local costs of the Conference unless these costs are specifically included in the approved budget.

Disbursements

7. Expenditures may be shifted between the items in the approved budget, provided that no single category of costs is increased by more than 25% without the express approval of the Parties and provided that the total actual expenditures for all categories does not exceed the funds available in the IACSF.

8. The *Pro Tempore* Secretariat will be responsible for expenditures from the IACSF in accordance with these guidelines and subject to requests by the Conference of the Parties. All expenditures

should be documented, such as receipts, contracts, agreements, etc. Payments of travel costs should remain within the guidelines of the approved budget.

Financial Management

9. The *Pro Tempore* Secretariat is responsible for the proper administration of the IACSF in accordance with these guidelines and good financial management practices.

10. The *Pro Tempore* Secretariat will provide a current financial statement on the IACSF to each Conference of the Parties, including a summary of all the expenditures paid from the IACSF and the current balance of the account.

11. The IACSF will be subject to the annual auditing procedures of the *Pro Tempore* Secretariat. A copy of any audit will be made available to the Parties.

12. All interest earned on the IACSF shall be returned to the fund.

Terms and Review

13. The IACSF shall continue to operate as determined by the Parties.

14. The purpose of the Special Fund and its administrative guidelines may be reviewed from time to time to ensure it continues to meet the needs of the Parties and may be amended if agreed to by the Parties.

Costa Rica, August 8, 2002



RESOLUTION COP1CIT-003

Cooperation and Synergy between the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles and the Convention on the International Trade of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)

ACKNOWLEDGING, that all the species of sea turtles are listed under Appendix I of the CITES Convention;

ACKNOWLEDGING, also, that all the Signatories and the Parties of the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea turtles are also Parties to the CITES Convention;

TAKING NOTE, that as is normal in the CITES Convention, its Preamble recognizes that cooperation is essential for the protection of certain species of wild fauna and flora;

TAKING NOTE, also, that Article IV of the Inter American Convention establishes, “Compliance with the established obligations in the CITES Convention pursuant to sea turtles, their eggs, parts and products”;

RECALLING, that Chapter 38 of Agenda 21 and the Welcome Decision 19/9c of the Government Council of UNEP which recognizes “The importance of participation of the Program in the promotion and support in the coordination and cooperation with and among environmental agreements and their Secretariats”;

TAKING NOTE, that the Government of Ecuador presented a proposal of resolution to the COP12 of the CITES Convention to be convened in

Santiago de Chile, from 3 to 15 November, 2002, entitled “Cooperation and Synergy with the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Marine Turtles”.

THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION

EXHORTS, the Parties of the Inter-American Convention and the *Pro Tempore* Secretariat to coordinate their activities with respect to sea turtles and their habitats with the Contracting Parties and the Secretariat of the CITES Convention, including the participation in future meetings of the CITES Convention relative to sea turtles;

EXHORTS, the Parties pertaining to the two Conventions to promote the synergy as appropriate with their national circumstances, and to take measures to achieve coordination among appropriate national authorities with the governments of the Parties in each Convention so that unnecessary duplication of activities is reduced;

ENTREATS, the Parties of the CITES Convention to in the future consider the decisions adopted by the Conference of the Parties of the Inter-American Convention particularly in the event of sea turtle movements occurring within the appendixes of the CITES Convention.



DECIDES, that the *Pro Tempore* Secretariat of the Inter-American Convention transmit to the Secretariat of the CITES Convention these and other relevant Resolutions and Decisions adopted by the Conference of the Parties of the Inter-American Convention; and,

INVITES, the Secretariat of the CITES Convention to participate as observer in the meetings of the Conference of the Parties of the Inter American-Convention as well as in its Subsidiary Organs.



Delegation from the Netherland Antilles: Paul Hoetjes and Gerard Van Buurt



Partial view of the Meeting Room. In the background, Miguel A Medina from Honduras; David Hogan and Holly Koehler from the USA; Anabella Barrios from Guatemala; and Eduardo Moreira and Guillermo Morán from Ecuador.



RESOLUTION COP1CIT-004

Rules of Procedure for Meetings of the Parties of the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles

RULE 1 APPLICATION

These rules shall apply to any meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles held pursuant to Article V.

RULE 2 DEFINITIONS

In addition to the definitions under Article I of the Convention, for the purposes of the foregoing Rules of Procedure, the following definitions shall apply:

- a) *Convention*: The Inter American Convention on the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles;
- b) *Rules of Procedure*: The Rules of Procedure for the Meetings of the Conference of the Parties of the Convention;
- c) *Conference of the Parties*: The meetings of the Parties established pursuant to Article V of the Convention;
- d) *Meeting*: Any ordinary or extraordinary meeting of the Conference of the Parties held

pursuant to Article V of the Convention;

- e) *Chair*: The person elected to preside the Conference of the Parties pursuant to the Rules of Procedure;
- f) *Subsidiary Bodies*: Any committee or working group established by the Convention or the Conference of the Parties, including the Consultative Committee and the Scientific Committee, whenever they are established;
- g) *Secretariat*: The entity responsible for carrying out the functions described in Article VI of the Convention, pursuant to the Rules of Procedure;
- h) *Focal Point*: Any government entity designated by a Party to act as liaison with the Secretariat and Subsidiary Bodies created under the Convention;

RULE 3 MEETINGS

The Meetings of the Conference of the Parties shall be held under the terms and conditions established in Article V of the Convention and meetings shall be subject to a



quorum of at least two thirds of the Parties to the Convention.

RULE 4 REPRESENTATION

- 4.1 Each Party shall notify the Secretariat, through the official channels it deems appropriate, of the conformation of its delegation to the meeting of the Conference of the Parties.
- 4.2 Each Party shall designate a Focal Point with the main responsibility of acting as liaison with the Secretariat in the period between meetings.

RULE 5 DECISION MAKING

- 5.1 Decisions shall be adopted by consensus of the Parties pursuant to Article V (5) of the Convention. For adopting a decision, quorum shall consist of no less than two thirds of the Parties to the Convention.
- 5.2 Consensus shall exist when there is general agreement among the Parties, unless a delegation expressly states its opposition.
- 5.3 For decision-making on financial and budgetary matters, the Parties shall consider any recommendations by the Secretariat for resource optimization, distribution of financial burdens and possible funding sources.
- 5.4 For decision making on matters pertaining to the Subsidiary Bodies, Parties should consider their recommendations. In case the Conference of the Parties decides not to accept said recommendations, said matters could be sent back to the appropriate Subsidiary Body for further analysis and submission of new recommendations.

5.5 In case a decision needs to be made between sessions, particularly in cases of emergency that cannot wait until an ordinary or extraordinary meeting is convened, a decision may be adopted by correspondence or electronic means, no longer than thirty (30) days after the determination that said decision be made by those means. In that case, the following shall apply:

- a) The Chair, through the Secretariat, shall explain the issue or problem and recommend alternatives for solutions to the Parties.
- b) The Parties shall promptly acknowledge receipt of any request for a decision through these means.
- c) Should acknowledgement of receipt not be received within a week of the transmittal date, the Secretariat shall re-transmit the request and shall use all additional means available to ensure it has been received.
- d) Should the Secretariat receive no answer from a Party that acknowledges receipt within the required period, this Party shall be recorded as having abstained, but this will not prevent adoption of the decision.
- e) The Secretariat shall communicate to the Parties any decisions made by these means as soon as possible but no later than fifteen (15) days.

RULE 6 AGENDA

- 6.1 The provisional agenda for the meeting of the Conference of the Parties shall be prepared by the Secretariat following the instructions of the Chair, as well as any requests by the Parties, and shall be forwarded, together with any necessary supporting documentation, to all Parties and observers, no less than ninety (90)



days prior to the date of the meeting.

- 6.2 After distribution of the provisional agenda, any comment or suggestion made by the Parties received no less than sixty (60) days prior to the date of the meeting, shall be taken into consideration unless it relates to urgent matters, in which case it is allowed to be presented up to thirty (30) days prior to the opening of the meeting.
- 6.3 The provisional agenda for each ordinary meeting shall include, as appropriate:
- a) Items provided for by the Convention, including that set forth in Article V(3);
 - b) Any items to be included from previous meetings, as decided by the Parties;
 - c) Any item proposed by a Party prior to approval of the provisional agenda;
 - d) Any other items the Conference of the Parties deems necessary for consideration.
- 6.4 At the start of each meeting, the Chair shall submit the provisional agenda to the Conference of the Parties for approval.

RULE 7 DEBATES

- 7.1 The meetings of the Conference of the Parties and of the subsidiary bodies shall be open, unless the Parties or the relevant body decides otherwise.
- 7.2 No representative may take the floor in meetings of the Conference of the Parties without prior authorization from the Chair, who shall yield the floor in the same order as requests are made.
- 7.3 During the discussion of an issue, any Party may present a motion of order and the Chair shall immediately act on it, pursuant to the

provisions of these Rules of Procedure. Any Party making a motion of order may not at the same time speak to the substance of the issue under discussion.

- 7.4 During a debate, the Chair may develop a list of speakers and with the agreement of the Conference of Parties, declare the list to be closed. However, the Chair may grant the right of response to any Party if an intervention made after the list was closed makes it necessary.
- 7.5 During the debate of any issue, any Party may propose suspending, adjourning, or postponing the debate. Said motions shall immediately be submitted to the Parties for a decision, including a decision on the resumption of the debate.
- 7.6 The observers may have the opportunity to participate in the debates. The Chair will make all efforts so debates are not exclusive to the observers..
- 7.7 Any Party may request an executive session or Heads of Delegation meeting due to issues of confidentiality.

RULE 8 CHAIR, VICE-CHAIR AND RAPPORTEUR

- 8.1 The Conference of the Parties shall elect the Chair, the Vice-Chair and the Rapporteur at the end of the ordinary meeting, to act in that capacity until the end of the next ordinary meeting. The Chair, Vice Chair and Rapporteur may be re-elected.
- 8.2 The Chair, the Vice-Chair and the Rapporteur shall assume their positions immediately after being elected.
- 8.3 The functions of the Chair of the Conference of the Parties shall be:



- a) To open and adjourn each meeting;
- b) To preside the meetings;
- c) To direct the meetings pursuant to the approved agenda;
- d) To guide the discussions, to submit issues for decision by the Parties and to announce any decisions;
- e) To yield the floor;
- f) To determine, upon consultation with the Secretariat, the draft provisional agenda and the provisional agenda for each Conference of the Parties;
- g) To sign the report of each meeting prior to its distribution to the Parties and other interested persons, as appropriate;
- h) To give follow-up to decisions and resolutions from the Conference of the Parties, in collaboration with the Secretariat.

8.4 When the Chair is temporarily unable to participate, the Vice-Chair shall take on the functions of the Chair.

8.5 Should the position of Chair be left permanently vacant, the Vice-Chair shall take on the duties of the Chair until the Parties elect a new Chair.

8.6 The Chair or the Vice-Chair, while presiding the Conference of the Parties shall not participate in decision-making, unless expressly on behalf of his/her delegation.

8.7 The Rapporteur shall assist the Secretariat in drafting the meeting reports, the minutes of the meetings and any other functions assigned to him under these Rules of Procedure and others assigned by the Conference of the Parties.

RULE 9 LANGUAGE

9.1 The official languages of the Convention shall be Spanish, French, Spanish and Portuguese. The working languages of the Conference of the Parties shall be Spanish and English.

9.2 Any interventions in one of the working languages shall be interpreted to the other. In case a different language is used, the Party or observer involved shall see that it is interpreted into the working languages.

9.3 All official publications and communications shall be prepared in the official languages, as appropriate.

RULE 10 DOCUMENTS, FILES AND REPORTS

10.1 Documents prepared for discussion at the Meetings, shall be written in one of the working languages and translated into the other, to be distributed prior to the relevant meeting. If necessary, and unless a Party is not opposed, the Chair may allow discussions on documents that were not translated into the working languages, or that were distributed on the same day of the session where they are to be discussed.

10.2 The minutes of each meeting of the Conference of the Parties shall be prepared by the Rapporteur, with support of the Secretariat and distributed to the Parties for their review no later than 15 days after the end of the meeting. The Parties shall have 30 days to make comments. In case there are substantive comments or observations, the Secretariat shall forward these to the other Parties. After exhausting the exchange of communications, the minutes shall be deemed to be approved.



- 10.3 The minutes, memoirs, summary reports, proposals, as well as any other document emanating from the Conference and adopted by it, shall be transmitted by the Secretariat to the Parties and made available to the participants as soon as possible after each meeting.
- 10.4 Resolutions, recommendations and decisions adopted by the Conference of the Parties shall be forwarded by the Secretariat to the Parties and made available to the participants as soon as possible after each meeting, and in no case no later than thirty (30) days after the conclusion of the relevant meeting.
- 10.5 The Conference of the Parties shall adopt an annual report, or bi-annual, as appropriate, of its activities, which shall include:
- a) A report on the activities carried out by the Conference during the inter-session period;
 - b) A report of ordinary and extra-ordinary meetings;
 - c) An executive summary of the reports set forth in Article XI of the Convention; and,
 - d) An executive summary of the reports on activities carried out by the Subsidiary Bodies during the corresponding period.

RULE 11 OBSERVERS

- 11.1 Interested States and international organizations may participate in the Conference of the Parties as observers, in accordance with Article V (6). The Secretariat will extend the corresponding invitations.

- 11.2 Organizations or individuals of the private sector, scientific institutions and non-governmental organizations with recognized expertise in matters pertaining to Convention may solicit their accreditation to participate as observers in the Conference of the Parties, in accordance with Article V (6).
- 11.3 Once the place and date of the next Conference of Parties are defined, the Secretariat, in consultation with the host country, will determine the deadline for the reception of requests for accreditation consistent with Rule 11.6.
- 11.4 For their accreditation, the applicants of the private sector, scientific institutions, and non-governmental organizations, must include in their respective requests the following information:
- a) Experience related with the matters of the Convention,
 - b) Legal status in accordance with the legislation of the country of origin, when appropriate.
- 11.5 Once the participation of an observer is accredited, they must notify the Secretariat of their intention to participate when a Conference of Parties is convened.
- 11.6 The Secretariat will distribute among the Parties a list of the observers requesting participation, at least 90 days before the next Conference of the Parties, including the order of presentation of the requests and also information about the logistic capacity of the organizers.
- 11.7 For extra-ordinary meetings of the Conference of the Parties, in accordance with Rule 12.4, only observers accredited for the previous Conference may participate.



- 11.8 Observers may participate in meetings of the Convention and its Subsidiary Bodies, consistent with Rules 7.1 and 7.7.
- 11.9 The Parties, through the Secretariat, may require observers to pay reasonable fees to cover the costs related with their participation.
- 11.10 Observers must comply with all the rules, procedures, and norms applicable to the other participants in the meeting.
- 11.11 The documentation distributed to the Parties will be available for observers, except that which the Parties consider to be of reserved use.
- 11.12 Observers may distribute documents through the Secretariat, make declarations, or be involved in other activities, as appropriate and with previous authorization of the President. All that information distributed by an observer without heeding the above may be retracted by instructions from the President.
- 11.13 If an observer is undermining the objectives of the Convention or is not complying with Rule 11.10 or other applicable Rules of Procedure, their accreditation will be withdrawn at the request of a Party when the Party submits such a request, with a written justification, to the Secretariat. The withdrawal of accreditation will be effective immediately.
- 11.14 The Secretariat, in accordance with Resolution COP1-001 (3) (b), will maintain a register of observers who participate in the Conferences of the Parties.

RULE 12 DATE AND PLACE OF MEETINGS

- 12.1 Ordinary meetings of the Conference of the Parties shall be convened pursuant to Article V of the Convention.
- 12.2 Meetings of the Conference of the Parties shall be held in the country chosen by the Conference of the Parties at its previous meeting, based on the official invitation of the Party. The host Party shall determine the exact dates and duration of each ordinary meeting, after consultation with the Secretariat and the other Parties.
- 12.3 Extraordinary meetings of the Conference of the Parties shall be convened only after a Party so requests it from the Secretariat, pursuant to Article V (2) of the Convention. To the extent possible, an extraordinary meeting may be convened if in a period equal or smaller than 120 days another meeting of the Conference of the Parties has been scheduled.
- 12.4 The majority of the Parties should support the request for an extraordinary meeting provided that the Parties approved convening said meeting no later than thirty (30) days after the date of the request. Such meetings shall be convened no later than ninety (90) days after the date the request receives the support of the majority.

RULE 13 AMENDMENTS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE RULES

- 13.1 A Party may propose amendments to these Rules of Procedure by submitting to the Chair of the Conference of the Parties, through the Secretariat, the text of the proposed amendment, no later than ninety (90) days prior to the next Meeting of the Parties. The



Chair shall forward any proposed amendment to all Parties, through the Secretariat, no later than fifteen (15) days after receipt. Any proposed amendment shall be included in the provisional agenda of the next ordinary meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

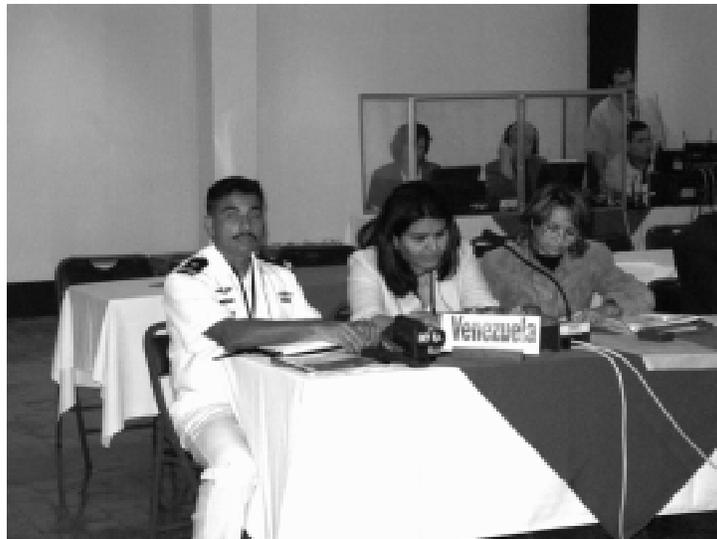
13.2 Any amendment to the Rules of Procedure shall enter into force immediately upon adoption by the Parties.

13.3 Should any doubts arise regarding the scope and meaning of the Rules of Procedure, it shall be up to the Conference of the Parties to make a decision to this effect.

RULE 14 SUBSIDIARY BODIES

14.1 These Rules of Procedure shall apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to the meetings of the Subsidiary Bodies established pursuant to Articles VII and VIII of the Convention, as well as to those of any other Subsidiary Body approved by the Conference of the Parties and in accordance with the Terms of Reference established for them by the Conference of the Parties.

14.2 In case a Subsidiary Body requires additional specific rules for better operation, these shall be approved by the Conference of the Parties.



Delegation from Venezuela: Kelvin Garcia, Aleidi Sangroni and Edis Solórzano



RESOLUTION COP1CIT-005

Terms of Reference for the Consultative Committee of Experts of the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles

The mandate of the Consultative Committee of Experts is established in Article VII (2) of the Convention.

OBJECTIVE

Advice and guide the Conference of the Parties to comply with the mandate of the Convention in order to promote the protection, conservation and recovery of sea turtle populations and of the habitats on which they depend, based on the best available scientific evidence, taking into account the environmental, socioeconomic and cultural characteristics of the Parties.

FUNCTIONS OF THE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS

The Consultative Committee of Experts, pursuant with Article VII (2) of the Convention, will take into consideration the opinions and recommendations of the Scientific Committee and the expert groups created to advise it, in accord with Article VII (4), and, taking into account the opinions of its multi-sectorial members, must comply with the following:

1. To prepare and update its Work Plan, pursuant to the guidelines of the Convention, and the accords and resolutions of the Conferences of the Parties (COP's).
2. To present to the COP, through the Secretariat, opinions and recommendations that promote the objective of the Convention, on the following issues, *inter alia*:

- a. On amendments, creation of additional annexes and complementary protocols to the Convention;
 - b. On the actions of one or more Parties that in any way affect the objectives of the Convention;
 - c. On agenda items for the COP;
 - d. On measures to promote synergy and cooperation with international organizations, conventions and other international organisms pertinent to the objectives of the Convention, as well as on follow-up considerations, taking into account the Guidelines for International Cooperation adopted by the Parties; and,
 - e. On measures to promote mechanisms of cooperation with the private sector, the scientific community, and non-governmental organizations (NGO's), as well as follow-up considerations, taking into account the Guidelines for International Cooperation adopted by the Parties.
3. To analyze the economic and social impacts of the different proposals and measures adopted to reduce incidental or directed capture and mortality of sea turtles, in order to recommend corresponding actions to the Parties.
 4. To periodically evaluate, in collaboration with the Scientific Committee, the format of the Annual Report for the Parties, in accord with Annex IV of the Convention.



5. To support the Secretariat in the creation and maintenance of an up-to-date directory of sectorial experts, which will be available to the Parties and for whomever else so requests it. (Note: Article VI (1) (d) of the Convention.)
6. To collaborate with the Secretariat in the elaboration and dissemination of information and educational materials, referred to in Article VI (1) (d).
7. To support the Parties with specialized information relevant to the Convention.

STRUCTURE OF THE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS

Procedure for Official Representatives

1. Pursuant to Article VII (1) (a) of the Convention, each Party may appoint one representative to the Consultative Committee, who may be accompanied at each meeting by advisors.
2. Each Party will notify the Secretariat, through diplomatic channels or via the designated focal point, the name of its official representative to the Consultative Committee. The Secretariat will circulate the list of official representatives to all the Parties.
3. The term for official representatives to the Consultative Committee shall be 2 years. In the case that the official representative of a Party will not complete his or her term, the Party will immediately provide the Secretariat with the name of the new official representative who will complete the term. The Secretariat will then forward the name of the new official representative to all the Parties.

Procedure for Sectorial Representatives

4. Pursuant to Article VII (1) (b) of the Convention, the Parties shall also appoint, by consensus, three representatives, with recognized expertise in matters pertaining to this Convention, from each of the following groups, for a total of nine representatives:
 - a. The scientific community;
 - b. The private sector; and,
 - c. Non-governmental organizations.
5. The Secretariat, in coordination with the Parties, will issue a public call for nominations at least 120 days prior to the COP to receive nominations from the Parties, individuals or entities. The nominations shall include the following information, which will be provided in the working languages of the Conference of the Parties:
 - a. The sectorial group being nominated and the justification for this choice;
 - b. The name of the candidate, entity, institution or organization;
 - c. The affiliation; and,
 - d. The *Curriculum vitae*, profile or other documentation of qualifications or recognized expertise.
6. The nominations for the sectorial representatives shall be transmitted by the Secretariat no later than 90 days prior to the Conference of the Parties in which new members will be appointed.
7. For the designation of the sectorial representatives, the Parties will take into account the importance of the Consultative Committee including experts with knowledge and experience in matters pertaining to the Convention, as well as in the geographic areas of the hemisphere where the sea turtles occur.



8. The sectorial representatives shall be appointed to the Consultative Committee for a period of two years. The appointment of any sectorial representative may be renewed with the consensus of the Parties.

Interim Procedure

In order to facilitate the constitution and first meeting of the Consultative Committee in advance of the Second Conference of the Parties, an interim procedure for the nomination and appointment of the sectorial representatives between COP1 and COP2 will be in place.

9. The Interim Procedure will be as follows:
 - a. The nominations shall be received by the Secretariat no later than 60 days following the closing of the First Conference of the Parties;
 - b. The nominations shall include the information outlined in paragraph 5 above;
 - c. The Secretariat within 15 days after the deadline for the reception of the sectorial nominations will use the means and procedure described in Rule 5.5, in reference to the adoption of decisions;
 - d. The Parties shall communicate to the Secretariat their preferences for the 9 sectorial positions within 30 days;
 - e. The Secretariat shall then circulate the list of the 9 potential appointees receiving the most expressions of support within 15 days for the approval of the Parties. The Parties shall communicate within the following 15 days their decision on the final list of potential appointees. In the event that two or more potential appointees receive the same number of expressions of support, the Secretariat shall re-circulate those specific nominees for the Parties to again make their preference known in accordance with paragraph 10 (d); and,

- f. In the event that the Parties do not reach consensus on the final list of potential appointees using this procedure, the decision will be deferred until the Second Conference of the Parties.

10. The Procedure for the Official Representatives, referred to in paragraphs 1 to 3, will be maintained while the Interim Procedure is applied.
11. Following COP2, the Procedure for the Sectorial Representatives, referred to in paragraphs 4 to 8 of this section, will be in effect.

MEETINGS OF THE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS

1. The meetings of the Consultative Committee will be conducted in accordance with the Rules of Procedure for Meetings of the Parties to the Convention, except when an additional specific rule for better operation of the Committee has been approved by the Conference of the Parties, pursuant to Rules 14.1 and 14.2.
2. The meetings of the Consultative Committee will take place preferably after the meetings of the Scientific Committee, and in accordance with Article VII (3) of the Convention, at least once a year, taking into account funding available for this purpose in the Inter-American Convention Special Fund.
3. The Conference of the Parties may request that the Consultative Committee convene an extraordinary meeting.
4. The Consultative Committee, to perform its duties, may establish sub-committees or work groups, as appropriate.
5. The Chairman and/or Rapporteur of the



Scientific Committee will be invited to participate in the meetings of the Consultative Committee.

6. Observers may participate in the meetings of the Consultative Committee, in accordance with Rule 11 of the Rules of Procedure for Meetings of the Parties to the Convention.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMATION

Members of the Consultative Committee of Experts shall maintain as reserved all information that they may have obtained or had access to during their tenure, which is categorized by the Parties as confidential. Likewise, they must abstain from using that information for objectives different or contrary to that established in the Convention.



Partial view of Meeting Room.
Delegates from Perú: José Carlos Márquez and Miguel Guzmán.
Mexico: Ricardo Belmontes, Ignacio Méndez, Israel Núñez, Honduras: Renè Guevara and Miguel A. Medina and the USA: David Hogan

Coordinators Table: Marco Solano Secretary, Allan Flores President COP11AC and Luis Torres Pporteurur COP11AC





ANNEXES

CIT Documents





CIT-004 Revised

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

General Guidelines for the Program of Work

The objective of this document is the adoption of guidelines intended to direct the work of the Convention, and in no way should be understood as mandates or agreements to be followed.

COP 1, August 2002:

- (a) Adopt Rules of Procedure for meetings of the Conference of the Parties and Subsidiary Bodies;
 - i Resolution COP1CIT-004, Rules of Procedure for the Meetings of the Conference of the Parties of the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of SeaTurtles.
- (b) Consider the establishment of a *Pro Tempore* Secretariat.
 - ii Resolution COP1CIT-001, Establishment of the *Pro Tempore* Secretariat.
 - iii Resolution COP1CIT-002, Guidelines for the Operation of the Inter- American Convention Special Fund.
- (c) Establishing the Subsidiary Bodies:
 - (iv) Adopt the terms of reference.

- (v) Prioritize the work assigned to each Body.
- (vi) Nominate/Propose representatives.
- (vii) Determine the frequency and duration of meetings.
- (viii) Determine locations for the first meeting of each Body.
- (xi) Draft agendas for the first meeting of each Body.
- (xii) Determine the procedure to inform the Parties.
- (d) Develop plans to generate financial support to support the associated costs of the implementation of the Convention, and,
- (e) Discuss the procedure and the priorities to be followed as per the coordination and strategic alliances with other organizations/ institutions.

Provisional 2002-03:

- (a) First meeting of the Scientific Committee (Format Proposal for National Reports);
- (b) First meeting of the Consultative Committee; and,



- (c) The Parties develop National Reports on the nature, status and structure of the national programs for the protection of sea turtles.

COP2, Summer 2003

- (a) The Parties present the National Reports;
- (b) The Parties inform on the status of the commercial fisheries;
- (c) Examine the development of formal relationships between the Convention and other agreements and global situations, regional and sub regional conservation as well as other organizations and international pertinent institutions;
- (d) Discuss the needs in the short, medium and long term of the regional as well as national implementation;
- (e) Consider the initial reports and recommendations of the Scientific and Consultative Committees;

- (f) Discuss the initial needs of conservation and management for sea turtle populations, based on reports and recommendations of the subsidiary bodies, as indicated; and,

- (g) Promote the development of formal programs of work of the subsidiary bodies.

Provisional 2003-2004: Second meetings of the Scientific and Consultative Committees

COP3 2004:

- (a) Revision of the development of national plans;
- (b) Development of recommendations for the strengthening of regional, sub regional and national plans;
- (c) Examine the compliance of the Parties and non-Parties to the current regulations; and,
- (d) Define the functioning of the Subsidiary Organs and their programs of work, as indicated, through the recommendations of the COP to these Organs.



Costa Rican delegates: Clara Padilla, Guido Chávez and Ligia Castro.



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

First Conference of the Parties: Second Part

19-22 August, 2003

San José, Costa Rica

CIT-006 (eng)

Proposed Resolution for the Conservation of Leatherback Sea Turtles (*Dermochelys coriacea*) in the Eastern Pacific

WHEREAS leatherback sea turtles have existed in the Earth's oceans for more than one hundred million years;

WHEREAS leatherback sea turtles are an important component of marine ecosystems;

WHEREAS leatherback sea turtles are valued for cultural, socioeconomic, and scientific reasons;

CONSIDERING that eastern Pacific leatherback populations have dropped approximately 90% from 1980 to 2002, because of which the IUCN considers this species as critically endangered;

CONSIDERING that the principal threats to eastern Pacific leatherback turtles have been identified as long-line and gillnet fishing, unsustainable exploitation of eggs and the destruction or alteration of nesting habitat;

CONSIDERING that the implementation of measures to protect leatherback sea turtles at sea may also benefit a broad spectrum of marine species of economic value to the fishery and tourism sectors;

THE FIRST CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES OF THE INTER-AMERICAN CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION OF SEA TURTLES (IAC) RESOLVES TO:

NOTE that the status of leatherback turtles in the eastern Pacific is critical and that the highest priority of the Parties must be to seek immediate solutions to reverse this situation;

EXHORT the Parties to seek support and financial resources from national and international sources to implement all conservation measures necessary for the survival of this species and the protection of its habitats;

URGE that Parties with leatherback turtle nesting beaches in the eastern Pacific protect them immediately, including pertinent associated habitats, and stop the poaching and illegal commerce of eggs from this species;

EXHORT the Parties to collect information on incidental by-catch of leatherback turtles by commercial fisheries using pelagic long-lines and gillnets in the eastern Pacific so as to evaluate and reduce the impact of these fisheries on the species.



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

First Conference of Parties: Second Part

19-22 August, 2003, San José, Costa Rica

CIT-008(eng)

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TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE OF THE INTER-AMERICAN CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION OF SEA TURTLES

The mandate given to the Scientific Committee is established in Article VIII (2) of the Convention text.

OBJECTIVE

To provide technical and scientific advice to the Conference of the Parties to comply with the mandate of the Convention in order to promote the protection, conservation and recovery of sea turtle populations and of the habitats on which they depend, based on the best available scientific evidence, taking into account the environmental, socioeconomic and cultural characteristics of the Parties.

FUNCTIONS OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

The Scientific Committee will have, in addition to the duties established in Article VIII (2) of the Convention, the following functions:

1. Prepare and update its Work Plan, pursuant to the guidelines of the Convention, and the

accords and resolutions of the Conferences of the Parties (COP's), establishing the priority of the issues to be addressed. The Work Plan shall be presented to the Contracting Parties for its approval.

2. Elaborate, in collaboration with the Consultative Committee of Experts, the format of the Annual Report for the Parties, prior to the next Conference. This format shall include, in addition to the information required in Annex IV of the Convention, basic indicators for evaluating the status of sea turtles populations and their habitats, especially under those circumstances subject to the exceptions indicated in the Article IV (3) (b).
3. Periodically evaluate, in collaboration with the Consultative Committee of Experts, the format of the Annual Report for the Parties, and, if considered necessary, recommend modifications.
4. Support the Secretariat in the creation and maintenance of an up-to-date directory of scientists, which will be available to the Parties and for whomever else requests. In this task



it will, among other things, issue a public call for nominations, and should incorporate specialists who have a wide range of knowledge and experience in matters pertaining to the Convention, as well as in the geographic area that it covers.

5. Analyze the Annual Reports of the Parties, as well as the scientific investigations (including sociological and economic research), projects and initiatives conducted by Parties or other relevant organizations or entities.
6. Develop technical guidelines for the preparation of bilateral, multilateral and regional management plans.
7. Develop and improve methodologies for the evaluation of environmental, socioeconomic and cultural impacts resulting from the measures adopted within the frame of the Convention.
8. Support actions directed towards development, use, training and transfer of socially and ecologically sustainable technologies, taking into account the guidelines for international cooperation agreed by the Parties.
9. Present annually to the Parties, through the Secretariat, a report on its work, which reflects the different points of view and opinions of its members. This report shall include observations and recommendations on measures additional to those described in the Convention, to promote its objective.

STRUCTURE OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

Procedure for representatives designated unilaterally by the Parties

1. Each Party may designate one representative

to the Scientific Committee, who may be accompanied at each meeting by up to three advisors. The Party will notify the Secretariat, through diplomatic channels or via its designated focal point, the name of this representative. The Secretariat will circulate the list of these representatives to all the Parties.

2. The representatives who comprise the Scientific Committee should have an academic degree and/or proven experience in any of the relevant thematic areas.
3. The term for representatives designated by the Parties shall be 2 years, at the end of which the Party may renew the designation. In case the designated representative of a Party cannot complete this term, the Party shall immediately provide the Secretariat with the name of the representative who will complete it. The Secretariat shall inform all the Parties the name of the new representative.
4. Procedure for representatives designated by consensus
5. In addition to the unilateral designations made by the Parties, the Parties shall also appoint by consensus representatives with recognized scientific expertise in matters pertaining to the Convention. The representatives to the Scientific Committee designated unilaterally by the Parties shall recommend these additional designations in order to take into account the needs of the Committee and its Work Plan; these recommendations will be based on the Directory (referred to in paragraph 4 of Functions of the Committee) or other appropriate sources.
6. The Secretariat, in coordination with the Parties, will issue a public call for nominations at least 120 days before the COP to receive nominations from the Parties, individuals or entities. The nominations shall include the



following information, which will be provided in the working languages of the Conference of the Parties:

- a. Name of candidate;
 - b. Affiliation; and
 - c. *Curriculum vitae*, profile or other documentation that shows his/her qualifications and/or recognized expertise.
7. Nominations for the representatives to be designated by consensus shall be transmitted to the Parties, by the Secretariat, no later than 90 days before the Conference of the Parties in which new designations will be made.
8. The Parties, when making their decision on designations, shall take the following factors, *inter alia*, into account:
- a. Scientific, academic and/or practical expertise that reflects and complements the variety of disciplines and other matters pertaining to the Convention;
 - b. Relevance of the candidate's scientific discipline to the duties of the Scientific Committee, specifically with its Work Plan;
 - c. Capacity of the candidate to complement the expertise and knowledge base among the existent Committee members.
9. The period of the representatives designated by consensus to the Scientific Committee shall be two years, and may be renewed with the accord of the Parties.

(Procedural point: It is envisioned that the first meeting of the Scientific Committee would take place prior to the second COP, although it will include only the representatives designated unilaterally. As a result of this meeting, the proposed Work Plan and the recommendations for the representatives to be designated by consensus will be provided to the Parties. During COP2 the Parties shall revise these inputs before designating representatives by consensus to the Scientific Committee.)

MEETINGS OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

1. The meetings of the Scientific Committee will be conducted in accordance with the Rules of Procedure for Meetings of the Parties to the Convention (Resolution COP1CIT-004), except when an additional specific rule for better operation of the Committee has been approved by the Conference of the Parties, pursuant to Rules 14.1 and 14.2.
2. The meetings of the Scientific Committee will take place, preferably prior to the meetings of the Consultative Committee, at least once a year, taking into account, *inter alia*, financial resources available for this purpose in the Inter-American Convention Special Fund.
3. In general, members of the Scientific Committee shall conduct their work through electronic communication, tele/videoconferences, virtual fora and networks. The Secretariat shall facilitate these forms of communication, depending of the resources available for these purposes.
4. The Conference of Parties may request that the Scientific Committee convene an extraordinary meeting.
5. The Scientific Committee, to perform its tasks, may establish sub-committees or working groups, as appropriate.
6. The Chairman and/or Rapporteur of the Consultative Committee of Experts shall be invited to participate in the meetings of the Scientific Committee, as well as in the Conferences of the Parties.
7. The Scientific Committee may invite to its meetings any scientific institution or individual experts on matters pertaining to the objective of the Convention.



8. Observers may participate in the meetings of the Scientific Committee, in accordance with Rule 11 of Rules of Procedure for Meetings of the Parties to the Convention (Resolution COP1CIT-004).

CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMATION

Members of the Scientific Committee of Experts shall maintain as reserved all information that they may have obtained or had access to during their tenure, which is categorized by the Parties as confidential. Likewise, they must abstain from using that information for objectives different or contrary to those established in the Convention.



Delegations from Brazil, Belize, and Netherland Antilles, second part COPIAC



Delegates from the USA: David Hogan and Holly Koehler, from Guatemala Anabella Barrios



**Inter-American Convention for the Protection and
Conservation of Sea Turtles**
First Conference of the Parties: Second Part

19-22 August, 2003

San José, Costa Rica

CIT-010 (eng)

GUIDELINES FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

1. The Inter-American Convention establishes in Article XII “International Cooperation”, the promotion of bilateral and multilateral actions of cooperation to foster the protection, the conservation and the recovery of marine turtles and their habitat.
2. Several local, bilateral and multinational organizations are working towards the protection of marine and coastal as well as continental natural resources which are important for the conservation of the habitat of marine turtles.
3. The geographic scope of the Convention is vast but the limitations in human and financial resources available increase with the passage of time. This prompts the various actors in the conservation world to seek for strategic alliances and synergies to achieve objectives.
4. The Conference of the Parties indicates to the *Pro Tempore* Secretariat the following:
 - a. Address all requests from international organizations which express interest in establishing mechanisms related to marine turtles:
 - b. Establish contact with scientific and conservation entities in the region, specializing in the fields of research, protection and conservation of marine turtles, with the view to seek support for the achievement of the objectives of this Convention;
 - c. On the basis of the mandate of the Convention, analyze the scope of the objectives and possible commitments deriving from such actions and inform the Contracting Parties, proposing mechanisms and processes to be followed:
 - d. If consensus is reached among the Contracting Parties to establish cooperation, negotiate with the interested organism(s) the terms of reference required to consolidate such an action.
 - e. Periodically inform the Parties about the results of such processes.



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

First Conference of the Parties: Second Part

19-22 August, 2000 San José, Costa Rica

CIT-011 (eng)

WORK PLAN FOR THE YEAR 2004

Introduction:

The approval of the Work Plan for the Year 2003 from the *Pro Tempore Secretariat*, was achieved at the beginning of the year. The Parties forwarded their approval in written form; however, because of time constraints, the Work Plan could not be analyzed during the meeting of the Parties at COP1 (first part). Consequently, the present document is being presented during the meeting of COP1 (second part), with the view of starting the year 2004 with a Work Plan which has been discussed and approved by the Conference of the Parties in August 2003.

All the resolutions approved during COP1, as well as the text of the Inter-American Convention itself, give us a mandate regarding the actions we must follow, in general terms, and, particularly, at the level of the *Pro Tempore Secretariat*. Somehow, it is necessary to organize our work pursuant to a time frame, with the view to develop activities which may lead to achieve the objectives of the Inter-American Convention. Document CIT-004 (revised), and presented by the United States of America, including general guidelines in this respect, was analyzed during the first part of the COP.

With the Work Plan for the year 2003 as a basis, those tasks exhibiting continuity throughout the year 2004 are analyzed, as well as new ones to

be performed during 2004, pursuant to the resolutions emanating from the second part of COP1.

During the First Conference of the Parties (COP1), of the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles (CIT), convened August 6th to 8th, 2003, in San José, Costa Rica, it was agreed to establish an interim or *Pro Tempore Secretariat* (Resolution COP1CIT-001). The resolution establishing the *Pro Tempore Secretariat* and the consultation document of the Work Program 2004 (CIT-2004Revised), to be analyzed during COP1 (second part), as well as Article VI of the IAT, represent a clear mandate about the role and the responsibilities of the *Pro Tempore Secretariat*.

Pursuant to Resolution COP1CIT-001, Establishment of a *Pro Tempore Secretariat*, the Secretariat shall comply with the obligations and responsibilities mandated by the Parties, as follows:

- a) Support, organize and participate in the meetings of the Conference of the Parties and the Subsidiary Bodies, working jointly with the host country of the Conference as is pertinent;
- b) Coordinate and facilitate communication among the Parties and the Parties and the Observers.



- c) Make available to the Parties in the work languages of the Inter-American Convention, all reports, recommendations and decisions, and any other necessary documents for the work of the Parties;
- d) Administrate the Special Fund of the Inter-American Convention (SFIAC), pursuant to the guidelines approved by the Parties (COP1CIT-002); and,
- e) Any other obligations and responsibilities approved by the Parties.

With the view that those specific activities for which the *Pro Tempore* Secretariat is responsible during the year 2004 may be identified and organized, the present proposal and the accompanying budget were developed to be forwarded to each one of the Focal Points of each Contracting Party. The specific actions the *Pro Tempore* Secretariat must perform are annotated and organized pursuant to five categories encompassing the duties and obligations approved by the Parties during COP1. Certain offers regarding financial resources are in place for the operation of this plan, to which the Budget 2004 is attached, to consolidate those actions included in this document. Likewise, a *superavit* of the Budget for 2003 is anticipated, which monies must be re-budgeted in the future.

1. Support, organize and participate in the meetings of the Conference of the Parties and the Subsidiary Bodies, working together with the host country of the meeting, as pertinent.

1.1 Perform the logistics for the second and third Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP2 and COP3).

All meetings of the Parties require organization and previous planning. Therefore, it

is necessary to perform a series of actions to satisfy the needs and services required, air travel for the Parties, preparation of documents in the work languages, simultaneous translation, etc.

1.2 Coordination with the Party States for the drafting of the agendas for COP2 and COP3.

These meetings will require work agendas; therefore, we must comply with the guidelines established in **Resolution COP1CIT-004, Rules of Procedures for the Meetings of the Conference of the Parties of the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles.**

1.3 Support and follow-up on the establishment and the functioning of the Subsidiary Committees.

During COP1CIT, the terms of reference for the establishment and functioning of the Scientific and Consultative Committees were approved, as well as the support for their operation and consolidation.

In regard to the Consultative Committee, the necessary coordination with the Contracting Parties will be conducted, and with those entities and organisms who may be represented therein, as established by Resolution COP1CIT-005, Terms of Reference of the Consultative Committee, approved during the second part of CP1CIT.. Because this Committee will be integrated by 20 members, 9 of which representing different sectors of civil society including the scope of action of the Inter American Convention, its establishment and future functioning will be requiring an extraordinary effort on the part of the Secretariat during 2004.



1.4 Drafting of a proposal on the format and contents of the national reports to be discussed at COP2.

As agreed during the first part of COP1, the issue of the national reports will be discussed at COP2. Therefore, the Secretariat must facilitate this process drafting a proposal for discussion and analysis during COP2.

2. Coordinating and facilitating communication between the Parties and the Parties and the Observers.

2.1 Coordinating with the Focal Points the nomination rosters and the registry of candidates applying to integrate the Subsidiary Committees.

Members integrating the subsidiary committees, at least in the case of the Consultative Committee, must be nominated or ratified by the Conference of the Parties. The administration of this information and the establishment of the committees must be facilitated for the Parties by the Secretariat, as indicated in **Resolution COP1CIT-001, Establishment of a Pro Tempore Secretariat.**

2.2 Pursue the pro-active efforts for communication and information with non-Party States, with the objective to achieve the affiliation of new members to the Inter-American Convention.

More information is still necessary on sea turtles and the scope of the Inter-American Convention. This information vacuum represents a barrier for interested countries to become Contracting Parties and members of the Convention. The pro-active efforts in this respect must continue on the part of the Secretariat and establish more of a formal communication with

these diplomatic organs to familiarize them with the scope and objectives of the Inter-American Convention, our work and the goals achieved. This knowledge could become the incentive for joining the Inter-American Convention.

3. Make available to the Parties the reports, recommendations, agreements and any other documents necessary for the work of the Parties, in the work languages of the Inter- American Convention.

3.1 Draft in the languages of the Inter-American Convention, and distribute to the Parties and other participants the reports of COP2 and COP3.

All COP's documents shall be available in English and Spanish in digital format and forwarded to the Party Delegates and the participants by electronic mail. At the start of each COP, all Agreements and Resolutions of the previous COP shall be delivered in paper copies to the participants, to facilitate discussions during the meetings.

3.2 Up-dating of the Web Site of the Inter-American Convention

It is vital for the Web Site of the Inter-American Convention to be up-dated with the view to ensure its functionality for the official users as well as for those individuals interested in such themes. For COP2 and COP3, it is anticipated to have available at the Web Site the discussion documents in the work languages at least one month prior to the meetings, for expeditious consultation.



3.3 Proposal drafting for funding information and environmental education programs on sea turtles in the geographic scope of the Inter-American Convention.

The Inter-American Convention, in general terms, is well recognized among conservationists; however, in other sectors also included within the scope of the Inter-American Convention, such as fisheries, tourism and business, to name just a few, it is still unknown. Therefore, it is necessary to produce a series of publications where the objectives of the Inter-American Convention as well as the status of the populations of sea turtles in the American Continent and, if possible, globally, are registered. This is vital because marine environments where sea turtles spend most of their lives are linked globally. As indicated in the Text itself of the Inter American Convention, it is necessary to stimulate the participation of governmental and non-governmental institutions (NGOs), as well as the general public in each one of the States (Art IV-g).

To achieve the above, external funding is necessary and made possible by means of the presentation of funding proposals to pertinent entities.

4. Administrate the Special Fund of the Inter-American Convention (FECI), pursuant to the guidelines approved by the Parties (COP1CIT-002).

4.1 Identify financial and technical resources to conduct research and implement the measures adopted by the Inter-American Convention.

During COP1 (first part), this subject was amply discussed and included in **Resolution**

COP1-002, Guidelines for the Operation of the Special Fund of the Inter-American Convention (2-b). Actions required to achieve this objective must be officially developed.

4.2 Proposal drafting for fundraising to effectively implement the Inter-American Convention.

During the first part of COP1, this subject was amply discussed and included in **Resolution COP1-002, Guidelines for the Operation of the Special Fund of the Inter-American Convention (2-b).** Therefore, actions required to achieve this priority must be developed as soon as possible.

This type of process requires for each country to create technical bases, that the different actions giving form to the Inter-American Convention may be implemented. This includes the training of leaders and facilitators in each one of the Party States, which is fundamental, that they may act as catalysts for the different actions which will facilitate the achievements of the Inter-American Convention. To start, a course scheduled for 2004 on the technical and scientific management of nesting beaches is being programmed. In principle, this course will take place in Tortuguero at the Biological Station of Caribbean Conservation Corporation, and shall be conducted by the scientific resident of that station, Sebastian Tröeng, among other experts. The course, at Tortuguero National Park, will have a one-week duration where two components will be developed, one technical and one practical. We consider these actions instrumental in facilitating the format standardization of the national reports.



4.3 Development of a Special Fund for the Party States.

We shall also be working in fundraising for the establishment of Supporting Funds for the Party States, for activities related with the protection and conservation of sea turtles. These Supporting Funds include subventions which objectives are environmental education and information projects, training and beach protection as well as that of other key ecosystems such as coral reefs, and the implementation and use of TED's in shrimp fleets and others where incidental capture of sea turtles is very high. Projects shall also be included to develop methods for reducing incidental capture in other fisheries. These funds shall be administered by the Inter- American Convention Special Fund and their operation guidelines shall be on the agenda for analysis and approval at COP2.

5. Other tasks and responsibilities approved by the Parties.

Various special activities not included in the routine of the *Pro Tempore* Secretariat must be fulfilled, especially those referring to the representation of the Inter-American Convention and the development of joint projects with other entities. Among these are the following:

5.1 Global Symposium of Sea Turtles.

This event will be take place during the third week of February 2004 in Costa Rica; however, its planning started since April 2003. As informed to the Parties, the Secretariat is supporting this symposium since its inception. This event represents an excellent opportunity to disseminate the objectives of the Inter-American Convention and the work it has been developing.

5.2 Representation of the Inter American Convention.

The Inter-American Convention by means of the *Pro Tempore* Secretariat is invited to attend meetings organized by different organisms. There are instances when either the *Pro Tempore* Secretary or some other member of the IAC must participate in these meetings. Some times talks about the Inter-American Convention are requested. These instances cannot be programmed as they are organized outside the scope of the Inter-American Convention.



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

First Conference of the Parties: Second Part

19-22 August, 2000

San José, Costa Rica

CIT-012 (eng)

REPORT OF THE INTERIM SECRETARIAT AUGUST 2002 TO AUGUST 2003

INTRODUCTION

The Inter American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Marine Turtles came into force in May 2001. Currently ten countries are Contracting Parties, as follows: Belize; Brazil; Costa Rica; Ecuador; Honduras; Mexico; Netherlands Antilles; Peru; United States of America and Venezuela. Two more, Nicaragua and Uruguay, have presented their instruments for adhesion before the government of Venezuela, the official depository of the Convention.

The Ministry of the Environment and Energy of Costa Rica agreed to coordinate the First Conference of the Parties, which was convened at the Irazú Hotel in San Jose, Costa Rica, in August 6th, 7th and 8th, 2002. This meeting was sponsored by both, the governments of Costa Rica and the United States of America.

Included in the achievements of this Conference of the Parties, are the following: the approval of the **Rules of Procedure**; the **Resolution to Promote Synergy and Cooperation with the CITES Convention**; and, the **Resolution to Establish a *Pro Tempore* Secretariat**, with a 2-year duration (installed at the National Parks Foundation), plus the establishment of a **Special Fund for the Inter American Foundation (SFIAC)**, administered by the National Parks Foundation.

Because it was not possible to cover the totality of the approved agenda for COP1CIT, an agreement was reached to suspend the meeting with the view to pursue the agenda at a later date. The dates for this second part of COP1CIT, are August 19-22, 2003, at Hotel Irazú.

As previously indicated, by means of **Resolution COP1CIT-001 “Establishment of the *Pro Tempore* Secretariat”**, the responsibilities and duties pertaining to this temporary organism are detailed as follows:

- a) Supporting, organizing and participating in the meetings of the Conference of the Parties and the Subsidiary Organs, working together with the country hosting the meeting, as pertinent;
- b) Coordinating and facilitating communication among the Parties, and between the Parties and the Observers;
- c) Making available to the Parties in the work languages the reports, the recommendations and the agreements as well as any other documents necessary for the work of the Parties;
- d) Administering the **Inter American Convention Special Fund (IACSP)**,



pursuant to those guidelines approved by the Parties; and,

- e) Any other responsibilities and duties agreed by the Parties.

Nomination of the *Pro Tempore* Secretary

By means of **Document DVM-601-2002** dated August 13, 2002, Mr. Manuel Antonio Bolaños, then Vice Minister of the Environment and Energy, nominates Marco A. Solano M., as *Pro Tempore* Secretary for the Inter American Convention, a position Mr. Solano fulfils as an additional responsibility to his coordinating the National Wetlands Program of Costa Rica. These additional responsibilities are performed until May 2003, at which time Mr. Solano, as *Pro Tempore* Secretary, dedicates full time to the coordination of the logistics for the second part of COP1CIT.

Therefore, with the view to comply with the mandate established in **Resolution COP1CIT-001**, it is agreed by both, Mr. Solano and the COP1CIT Chair, to establish a 5-month contract, from June to October 2003, with the objective of conducting all matters related with the celebration of the second part of COP1CIT. In this way, the full time commitment of Mr. Solano to perform the work required by the *Pro Tempore* Secretariat is guaranteed, and in this way comply with the COP mandate.

During the second part of COP1CIT, the manner in which the *Pro Tempore* Secretariat will function and operate after the month of November, including the year 2004, should be decided.

COP1CIT Report

The aftermath of any and all Conferences of the Contracting Parties generates hard work related to meeting reports and to the resolutions and agreements, especially in our case, as this meeting represents the first COP. It is worthwhile to mention that no rules of procedure were in place be-

fore this meeting, a challenging situation as regards the flow of information and documents, which improved, however, as the meeting proceeded. At the conclusion of this first part, 4 Resolutions were approved, three of them pertaining to the administration and one other to the CITES Convention.

As indicated in **Rule 10 of Resolution COP1CIT-004**, together, the Rapporteur, Mr. Luis Torres, and the *Pro Tempore* Secretariat drafted a document including the COP agreements. This document was transmitted to the Contracting Parties for their approval.

We received timely commentaries from the Parties, included in the original document. A new format for the report was also recommended, which was adopted by the Secretariat. After fulfilling these steps and when consensus was achieved regarding the contents and the format of the report, it was distributed electronically to all the participants of COP1CIT, and to all those persons and organisms requesting it.

As approved by COP1CIT, all documents generated during these meetings were translated into the two working languages, English and Spanish. Therefore, all documents pertaining to this process were transmitted to the Parties in those languages.

Establishment of the Inter American Convention Special Fund

Complying with the mandate of **Resolutions COP1CIT-001 and 002**, a letter of understanding was undersigned with the National Parks Foundation for the administration of the IACSF, following those guidelines established in the aforementioned documents. In this way, the **Special Fund of the IAC** is established, with a generous contribution of \$50,000 from the government of the United States for the operation of the Convention during 2003, by means of the *Pro Tempore* Secretariat.



Nomination of the Focal Points

As agreed during the first part of COP1CIT, in one-month's time the Party States would be nominating their respective Focal Points. In the majority of cases those persons nominated at the start remained the same. Changes have been produced in the personas of the Focal Points of four countries. The current list of Focal Points is included as an annex.

Work Plan 2003 and Budget 2003

During the first part of COP1CIT, possible actions at the Convention's level to be conducted by the *Pro Tempore* Secretariat, were discussed. A document presented by the United States was also analyzed. However, unavailability of discussion time, as per the agenda, precluded a deeper analysis of a possible work plan. Therefore, the establishment of "**General Work Guidelines**" **Document CIT-004 Revised**, was approved, with the following provision: "The objective of the document is to make available a series of guidelines conducting the work of the Convention but in no way should these be considered mandatory or as agreements to be followed."

Incorporating the document's general guidelines as a basis, together with the resolutions and agreements, a proposal was drafted for a Work Program for 2003. It would be very difficult to work in an orderly and focused fashion without a work plan and its accompanying budget. In this way, by means of **Document DM-1732-2002** of 10 December 2002, Mr. Manuel Antonio Bolaños informs the Focal Points of this initiative and requests the criteria of the Parties.

The United States recommended a more detailed presentation format, which was accepted, as well as the commentaries on the text transmitted by Mexico and the Netherlands Antilles. The Parties agreed with the actions set forth in the Work Plan presented to them. In this way, by means of

Document DMV-048-2003 of 21 January, 2003, the **Work Plan 2003** is transmitted to the Parties.

Latin American Meeting of Sea Turtle Experts 2003

During March 2003 the **XXIV Annual Symposium on Sea Turtle Biology and Conservation**, was convened in Malaysia. For more than 10 years, a meeting of Latin American sea turtle experts has been convened prior to this symposium. This year the theme of the Latin American meeting was the Inter American Convention of Marine Turtles. Because the Secretariat was unable to participate, we requested Ms. Clara Padilla, member of the Costa Rican Delegation and someone who is very close to the Inter American Convention, to represent us in this meeting and inform the experts on the scope and implications of this international organism.

Work Plan Year 2003

Along these lines we shall conduct a brief analysis of the achievements for each one of the activities described in the Work Plan.

1. Supporting, organizing and participating in the meetings of the Conference of the Parties and the subsidiary organs, working with the host country as pertinent.

The drafting of documents pertaining to the Scientific and Consultative Committees and those issues regarding international cooperation, has been accomplished. A provisional agenda for this meeting has also been drafted.

All matters pertaining to the organization and the necessary logistics for the second part of COP1, have been performed, as well as the coordination with the Focal Points in the designation of Delegates from each Party State. Reservation of adequate room space for the meetings, lodging, food, simultaneous translation



and photocopying services, air transportation and the transmittal of documents to the participants, *inter alia*, have also been accomplished.

2. Coordinating and facilitating communications among the Parties and between the Parties and the Observers.

Significant efforts have been accomplished to inform and improve communication between the Parties and the observers, by digitally transmitting several documents produced at COP1CIT during 2002. Likewise, work has been done to further communication with non-Party States, that these may join the IAC. We have forwarded several notes in this respect and held meetings with officials from Guatemala, El Salvador, Canada, Argentina France and Surinam.

We have also contacted all diplomatic embassies in Costa Rica, informing them of COP1CIT 2002 results, and the advancements for the second part of COP1CIT. We have also invited these to participate as Observer States. We have been informed by Guatemala that adhesion formalities are well advanced. Belize ratified the Convention on 3 February 2003. At present we represent 10 Contracting Parties, with ratification pending from Nicaragua and Uruguay.

3. Making available in the work languages to the Parties all reports, recommendations, agreements and any other pertinent documents necessary for their work

The meeting report of the Contracting Parties was digitally transmitted to the observers and all interested persons. During the second part of COP1CIT, a paper copy with the Minutes, the Resolutions and the Agreements of the first part of COP1CIT will be distributed, with the general view to facilitate discussions.

Likewise, the *Pro Tempore* Secretariat, in coordination with the World Wildlife Fund (WWF)

and the Caribbean Conservation Corporation, has prepared an information booklet featuring themes relating to the general situation of marine turtles, the agreements of the first part of COP1 and the focus of the second part. Likewise, the complete text of the Convention is included. This booklet has been edited in the two working languages of the Convention. It is anticipated that it will serve as an introductory instrument for those persons still uneducated about the Inter American Convention.

The updating of the Convention's Web Site in Internet included in MINAE's server, was attained. At present, current information is included as well as basic information disseminated regarding the second part of COP1.

4. Administrating the Inter American Convention Special Fund (IACSP), pursuant to the Guidelines agreed by the Parties (COP1CIT-002)

In observance with the guidelines approved by the Parties by means of **Resolution COP1CIT-2002**, one USDollar account was established which is being administered by the National Parks Foundation. During the month of December, \$50,000 (fifty thousand dollars) were accredited in the IACSF, contributed by the government of the United States to support the Inter American Convention operation, by means of the *Pro Tempore* Secretariat.

The administration of such funds is accomplished by following the guidelines of the **Work Plan for 2003** and its accessory budget. Included among the most significant expenses are the following: **Item 1-Supporting Personnel**. Contracting the *Pro Tempore* Secretary for 5 months to organize the second part of COP1; contracting the Bilingual Secretary for 2003 for 10 hours per week. **Item 2-Equipment**. Two computers and accessories were purchased as well as basic office equipment. Likewise, **Item 3-Other Expenses**, refers to the acquisition of basic office equipment. Attached is the detailed report of the



various disbursements to date. This coming January we shall be submitting an Expense Report for 2003.

As you were duly informed, during the month of July of 2003, \$150,000 (one hundred and fifty dollars), entered the IACSF, as a contribution from the government of the United States of America. In principle, \$56,805 of this sum is for the celebration of the second part of COP1 in August 2003. The remaining \$93,195, corresponds to the activities for the year 2004 being proposed to the Parties. This work plan must be approved by the Parties during the second part of COP1. In August of this year we shall be receiving \$5,000 from the Embassy of the Netherlands, to fund the work required to produce the Final Report of COPICIT, in both work languages.

5. Other duties and responsibilities approved by the Parties

5.1 Work Plan 2004 Proposal

Document CIT-011-Rev.1 was drafted for discussion by the Parties during the second part of COPICIT. This document includes those actions to be developed during 2004 and their associated budget.

5.2 Proposal for a cooperation agreement with OLDEPESCA.

By means of **Document DVM-192-2003** of 14 March 2003, on the part of Mr. Manuel Antonio

Bolaños, as Chair of COPICIT, the Parties were informed about **Resolution No.182-CM-03**, of the Latin American Organization for the Development of Fisheries (OLDEPESCA), indicating the interest of this organization in undesigning “A cooperation agreement”, with the Inter American Convention. Work has been accomplished in this respect and a draft document of this agreement is available, to be presented at a later date for the analysis of the Parties.

The Parties have indicated that this subject should be discussed at a later date, probably during COP2CIT.

5.3 Cooperating with the organization of the XXIV Annual Symposium on the Biology and Conservation of Sea Turtles

As informed by means of Document DVM-160-2003 of 7 March 2003, undersigned by Mr. Manuel Antonio Bolaños, Chair of COPICIT, we have been supporting several activities related to this event. However, because of our current obligations, our cooperation has not amounted to much. It is probable, however, that during 2004 our support will be more significant.



Focal Points/Puntos Focales por País

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

First Conference of the Parties: Second Part

19-22 August, 2003

San José, Costa Rica

CIT-013 (eng)

THE WORK PROGRAM FOR 2003

Introduction:

It was agreed at the First Conference of the Parties (COP1) to the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles (IAC), held 6-8 August 2002 in San Jose, Costa Rica to establish an interim or Pro Tempore Secretariat (Resolution COP1CIT-001). The resolution establishing the Pro Tempore Secretariat, the advisory Program of Work document (Resolution COP1CIT-004), also adopted at COP1, and Article VI of the IAC provide a clear mandate for the role and responsibilities of the Pro-Tempore Secretariat.

In accordance with Resolution CIT-001, Establishment of a Pro Tempore Secretariat, the Pro-Tempore Secretariat shall carry out mainly the following duties and responsibilities assigned by the Parties:

- a. To support, organize and participate in the meetings of the Conference of the Parties and subsidiary bodies, working in conjunction with the host country of the meeting, as appropriate.
- b. Coordinating and facilitating communications among and between Parties and observers;

- c. Making available to the Parties in the working languages all reports, recommendations and decisions adopted, and any other documents necessary for the work of the Parties;
- d. Administration of the Inter-American Convention Special Fund (IACSF) according to the guidelines agreed by the Parties (Resolution COP1CIT-002); and
- e. Other such duties and responsibilities as approved by the Parties.

In order to identify and organize the specific activities the Pro Tempore Secretariat will be responsible for in 2003, the present proposal and the budget, which have been submitted to each one of the Focal Points of each Contracting Parties, were developed. Specific tasks to be carried out by the Pro-Tempore Secretariat are annotated and organized in accordance with the five categories of duties and responsibilities agreed to by the Parties at COP1. At this time, it appears that sufficient financial resources exist in the budget to achieve the actions included in this document.



1. Supporting, organizing and participating in the meetings of the Conference of the Parties and subsidiary bodies, working in conjunction with the host country of the meeting, as appropriate;

1.1 Preparing the logistics for COP1 (second part).

All meetings of the Parties require an organizing body and logistic preparation. Therefore, it will be necessary to conduct a series of actions geared towards the fulfillment of such needs and services as required to support a meeting of the Parties. These include booking a suitable meeting venue, securing sufficient hotel accommodation, providing information on air transportation for the Parties, contracting translation services, distributing documents in advance, etc.

1.2 Coordinating with the Contracting Parties to develop a draft agenda for COP1 (second part).

These meetings will require a work agenda. Although Resolution COP1-CIT004, Rules of Procedure for the Meetings of the Conference of the Parties of the Inter American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Marine Turtles, could not be finalized at COP1 (first part), Rule 6 (Agenda) was agreed to by the Parties. Unless a Party objects, the Pro-Tempore Secretariat will develop a provisional agenda for COP1 (second part) in accordance with Rule 6 of Resolution COP1CIT-004.

1.3 Coordinating and supporting the organization of COP2, with the Focal Point from Venezuela.

Comply with the mandate established in Resolution COP1CIT-001, Establishment of the Pro-tempore Secretariat.

1.4 Coordinating with the Contracting Parties on the provisional agenda for COP2.

The Pro-Tempore Secretariat will develop a provisional agenda for COP2 in accordance with Rule 6 of Resolution COP1CIT-002.

2. Coordinating and facilitating communications among and between Parties and observers;

2.1 Coordinating with the Focal Points the draft lists of nominated candidates for the subsidiary bodies.

There was not sufficient time during COP1 (first part) to consider nominations or appoint representatives to the scientific and consultative committees (Article VII and VIII). Appointments to such subsidiary bodies must be made by the Conference of the Parties. The Pro-Tempore Secretariat will distribute this information to the Parties when it becomes available.

2.2 Communicating with and submitting information to non-Party States, with the objective to achieve a broader affiliation of new Parties to the Inter-American Convention.

Several countries are interested in becoming Contracting Parties to the Convention. We have been informed of the above by foreign embassies established in Costa Rica. In order to encourage broad support for the Convention and increased membership, the Pro-Tempore Secretariat will maintain formal communications with these diplomatic entities, to inform them about the measures adopted by the Parties, the work of the subsidiary bodies and the goals of the Convention. All communications between the Pro-Tempore Secretariat and any diplomatic entities will be promptly distributed to all Parties and observers.



3. Making available to the Parties in the working languages all reports, recommendations and decisions adopted, and any other documents necessary for the work of the Parties

3.1 Editing and distribution of the documents from COP1 (first part).

All the documents created during COP1 (first part), are on digital format, in English as well as in Spanish. It is necessary to copy them on paper, for submission to the participants of COP1.

3.2 Designing and creating the Web Site of the Inter American Convention.

Ninety percent of the texts are ready to be included on the internet web site that has been developed as part of the web site of the Ministry of the Environment and Energy, Government of Costa Rica.

3.3 Preparing the final reports for COP1 (second part) and distributing these to the Parties and to other participants.

4. Administration of the Inter-American Convention Special Fund (IACSF) according to the guidelines agreed by the Parties (COP1CIT-003).

4.1 Search funding and technical resources to carry out research and to implement the measures adopted within the framework of the Inter-American Convention.

During COP1 (first part), this issue was discussed and is included in Resolution COP1CIT-002, Guidelines for the Operating of the Special Fund of the Inter American Convention (2-b). Efforts to achieve the above should begin in earnest.

5. Other such duties and responsibilities as approved by the Parties.

There are a number of other tasks that should be completed in 2003 either at COP1 (second part) in order to establish an effective institutional and administrative framework for implementing the Convention. These include the development of terms of reference for the scientific and consultative committees; nomination and appointment of representatives to the committees; the format and content of the national reports; procedures for coordinating and cooperating with other international institutions and organizations with relevance to the goals and objectives of the Convention; and mechanisms to promote public awareness and education and outreach.

Scientific and Consultative Committees

At COP1 (first part), a number of delegations expressed an interest in the timely establishment of the subsidiary bodies (Scientific and Consultative Committee). In order to accomplish this task, it will be necessary to develop detailed terms of reference for those committees as well as a procedure for nominating and appointing representatives. It may be helpful for a discussion document on these issues to be developed, which can be circulated by the Pro-Tempore Secretariat, in advance of COP1 (second part). Documents circulated at COP1 (first part) that were generated at the Pre-COP non-governmental forum could contribute to such a document. Parties are invited to advise the Pro-Tempore Secretariat on how to proceed with regard to how or whether such a discussion document or documents should be developed.

The Format and Content of the National Reports

During the first part of COP1, it was agreed that the issue of the format and content of the national reports would be analyzed during COP2. Again, as with the terms of reference for the



subsidiary bodies, it may be helpful for a discussion document on these issues to be developed, which can be circulated by the Pro-Tempore Secretariat, in advance of COP2. Parties are invited to advise the Pro-Tempore Secretariat on how to proceed with regard to how or whether such a discussion document or documents should be developed.

A Procedure for Coordinating and Cooperating with Other Institutions and Organizations

A procedure or mandate for how the Pro-Tempore Secretariat cooperates and interacts with other institutions and organizations that have relevance to the objectives of the Convention, in order to coordinate joint actions for the conservation and the protection of the marine turtles, should be developed by the COP.

Education and Outreach Programs

Although a general awareness does exist about the Inter-American Convention, it is necessary to make available a series of publications where the objectives of the Inter- American Convention are highlighted as well as the status of marine turtles worldwide. As indicated in the text of the Inter American Convention, it is necessary to achieve the participation of governmental institutions, NGOs, as well as the general public of each State (Article IV-g). To achieve this, external funding, will be necessary.



Luis Torres, Pporteur; Jack Frazier and Melania Yáñez, Secretary's Support Group





ANNEXES

INF Documents





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

First Conference of the Parties: First Part

6-8 August, 2002

San José, Costa Rica

Inf-001

GLOBAL STATUS OF MARINE TURTLES

An overview by Peter C. H. Pritchard

BACKGROUND

Marine Turtles are perhaps the most famous and celebrated of endangered species, and among many conservationists it has become almost obligatory to precede any mention of the name of any of the various marine turtle species with the words “endangered,” “critically endangered,” or “threatened,” almost as if the adjective were part of the name. Yet the sea turtles are hardly typical examples of taxa in danger of extinction. Some endangered species are disappearing relicts with ghostly remnants of once-wide continental ranges, but most such life forms are relatively obscure, poorly-known, localized, and unavailable for human consumption mainly because they are too rare to provide useful biomass, thus provoking much public sector comment along the lines of “what good is it anyway?” The classical endangered species also typically has a restricted distribution, perhaps limited to a single remote island or archipelago, or to a single nation or even province or state within that nation.

Marine turtles of one species or another, by contrast, occur in the waters or on the beaches of most tropical or subtropical nations that have a seacoast, and may occur as waifs or accidentals in

waters that are decidedly temperate or even sub-arctic. Indeed, most individual marine turtle species occur in all three of the great oceans and associated seas, and thus have the widest ranges of all reptiles. Moreover, far from being so obscure as to provoke puzzlement among the general public as to their utility, the value of marine turtles is manifest to all. It was the green turtle, *Chelonia mydas*, that Archie Carr called “the world’s most valuable reptile,” and in terms of real utility to the human species as opposed to unit value in specialized live reptile markets, he was right. Sea turtles are good to eat, their eggs are even more widely appreciated, and the ecotourism value of nesting sea turtles is considerable – and growing. There has been lucrative trade in non-edible turtle products too, including the shell scutes of hawksbills, the leather of ridley flippers, the oil of leatherbacks, and the souvenir carapaces and stuffed juveniles of several species.

There is also growing appreciation of the ecological roles played by marine turtles, ranging from maintenance of healthy sea grass beds to control of jellyfish proliferation. And the prey functions of these highly prolific reptiles, which may on occasion produce close to a thousand eggs in a season, should also not be ignored. It has been



said that the primary ecological function of a marine turtle is to bring the productivity of the marine ecosystem ashore, depositing it on land in the form of a high biomass of eggs rich in fats and protein. Only one in a thousand of these eggs may ultimately produce a reproducing adult turtle, and the remainder, as eggs or hatchlings, are available to provide nutrition for an extraordinary gamut of marine and littoral predators, not to mention humans as well.

Public recognition of the value of marine turtles is thus not the primary battle today; the importance of conserving these charismatic, popular animals is rarely denied. The difficulty and disputation lie rather in whether sea turtles should be managed for maximal productivity for human benefit or protected as fundamentally vulnerable, slow-maturing, k-selected species. The answers to such policy questions are inextricably tied up with social and economic considerations, as well as discussions as to whether management of exploited populations may sometimes be more effective, or at least socially acceptable, than management of protected ones. The emerging model has often been one in which, in the developed, wealthier nations that have sea turtle populations, complete protection, with significant enforcement effort, has become the norm. In the poorer nations with considerable numbers of subsistence-level peoples, turtle policy has ranged from attempts to emulate the developed-world model in the face of funding shortfalls and human demand for turtle products, to models recognizing either that local marine turtle populations are not obviously depleted, or that subsistence-level people either cannot or should not be restrained. This may result in a scenario ranging from some degree of legalized take of marine turtles or their eggs, to one in which a government may theoretically

legislate or agree to complete protection, but in practice turn a blind eye to localized or subsistence usage.

Complicating such policy-making is the curiously bimodal sociology of marine turtle exploitation. Turtle eggs or meat may be the special-occasion fare (or even routine victuals) of people well below the poverty line, however defined, who happen to live close to the resource. At the other end of the scale, turtle leather in Italy, hawksbill shell in Japan, or green turtle soup in England were, at least until recently, the domain of the rich and privileged. Only the middle class was left out of the game. The wealthy have actually acceded to loss of turtle privileges relatively gracefully, possibly because they were not all that important to them anyway; and the maturation and relatively high profile of the CITES convention in recent years has eliminated marine turtle products from most international markets. The principal voice of protest to such a ban has been that of a partnership between Cuba and Japan, offering the possibility of a controlled trade in hawksbill shell products derived from the thriving hawksbill populations of Cuba and earmarking them for the lucrative *bekko* markets of Japan. At recent CITES Conferences of the parties, this proposal, requiring the downlisting of Cuban hawksbills from Appendix I to Appendix II, has gained a simple majority of votes but not the obligatory two-thirds. It has also spawned far-reaching discussions between pro- and anti-exploitation voices in the conservation world as to whether seemingly well-managed, abundant, or protected turtle populations might progressively be opened up to international trade, or whether protection in perpetuity should be maintained in the face of increasing economic demand. The emerging key question is: do you reduce the actual human take of sea turtles the most



by exercising complete protection but realizing that poaching will occur, or by negotiating an annual quota with the exploitation interests in the expectation that poaching will then cease? The correct answer is unquestionably not the same in all places or at all times.

A further complication is that, while the international trade in marine turtle products is all but dead, not only is local subsistence take far more intractable, but the problems of incidental catch also remain. Many years of Turtle Excluder development, largely initiated by the United States, have yielded a variety of devices to reduce or eliminate the drowning of turtles in shrimp trawls and other fishing gear. They include contraptions with such colorful names as “Cameron Parish Jellyball Shooter,” “Morrison Soft Ted,” and “Georgia Jumper,” and they have been introduced to many coastal nations of the hemisphere by a combination of cooperative technology transfers and potential or actual trade sanctions. A given model does not necessarily work at all times for all species or all sizes of turtles, and it is necessary that they be deployed conscientiously, by fishers who are trying to make them work rather than to prove that they don’t. But there are many who consider that regional harmonization and enforcement of TED regulations may be the most important single outcome of the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles.

It needs to be recognized, too, that it is not only well-capitalized or industrial operators who have significant incidental impact upon marine turtles. In French Guiana, artisanal near-shore net fishing operations by Carib people in the Marowijne area result in disturbingly high mortality of adult female leatherback turtles in the

largest documented nesting colony of this species even though the direct take of turtles and their eggs is essentially controlled; and the same is happening in Guyana, where much smaller leatherback populations are also still subject to a variable level of direct take as well as incidental catch by subsistence Arawak people.

But, sociology aside, it is the biology of marine turtles that is fixed and non-negotiable, and it behooves those who advocate or tolerate any level of exploitation of marine turtles to generate demographic insight to justify such take. The obligation is presumably least if justification is sought for a very small take from very large populations. Another approach, used for example in Suriname some years ago, is to identify the purely natural losses encountered by an ostensibly thriving turtle population – in the Suriname case, loss of eggs of green turtles (*Chelonia mydas*), occurring through beach erosion uninfluenced by human activities – and to learn to identify “doomed eggs” and divert them for human consumption, presumably without impact upon the numbers of hatchlings successfully reaching the ocean.

Models have been developed for various sea turtle populations, and are constantly being refined, although few if any have reached the stage of actual predictive capability. There are persistent difficulties with calibration of all models because population responses to manipulations (either negative or positive) may be delayed for many years; cases rarely occur in which the results of many simultaneous manipulations, planned and unplanned, can be teased apart and analyzed, and there is also difficulty associated with the selection of an appropriate population index. It is obviously impossible to count all individuals in a population, or even to make estimates of total population



numbers, in view of the vast, ephemeral boost that a population may receive as the season's hatchlings hit the water. Catch-per-unit-effort surveys have been attempted from time to time, but few capture techniques target both sexes and all life stages equally, and the complex migratory patterns and differential seasonal presence or availability of various life-stages, especially of the breeding adults, confound comparisons, as do the early-life one-time travels of post-hatchlings. Most demographers, therefore, use a population index based upon numbers of nesting females.

Such an index has been criticized because it is thought to represent an index of population status, or at least reproductive success, a generation (i.e. perhaps several decades) earlier rather than offering contemporary insight into population vigor, and recruitment failure could have occurred for many years before it would be reflected in reduced numbers of nesting females. Such criticisms may be valid, but a more optimistic evaluation would suggest that, if recruitment failure was substantial or complete, it would be obvious on the beaches at the egg or hatchling stage and could be evaluated at the same time as the nesting females or nests were being quantified. Ideally, a count of nesting females provides insight not only into success of reproductive effort a generation ago, but also offers some prognostication of population status a generation hence, when the surviving hatchlings produced by today's nesters reach maturity and come home.

But even then, determining population status and population trends from counts of nesting females is tricky. Confounding factors include the following:

- 1) It is probable that certain marine turtle populations are not "naturally" stable. In the

Guianas, for example, a mixed population of green turtles, hawksbills, olive ridleys and a few leatherbacks in the early 1960's had been replaced by a population almost entirely of leatherbacks forty years later. In Suriname a thriving *arribada* of olive ridleys in the 1960s had been displaced, by a combination of beach erosion and replacement and resurgent leatherback nesting, into eastern French Guiana and Brazil forty years later; and some, perhaps all, *arribadas* of olive ridleys – the most numerous sea turtles in the world today – may have natural cycles of waxing, peaking, waning and collapsing, with an amplitude of at least several decades, perhaps more.

- 2) Ridleys may frequently nest in successive years, but other species of marine turtles very rarely do so, even though they may nest up to nine or ten times in a single season. Various complex factors, internal and external, combine to concentrate nesting effort of such species into certain years, so that even an unharvested, presumably stable population may show sharp annual alternations of "good" and "bad" nesting seasons. Many years of data will thus be needed for a trend to become clear, and standard statistical procedures to determine validity of trends are obfuscated by the data for "good" and "bad" years being fundamentally different in nature, a "good" year at least providing a minimum estimate as to how many adult female turtles are in the population, whereas a "bad" year may not provide a useful estimate of anything. The result is that lines drawn to join the data points of many successive nesting seasons show a zig-zag quality that almost certainly does not correspond to real population changes; and straight-line regression plots that give equal



value to all points, high and low, may indicate an overall trend that is not supported by a regression line based only on the points representing maxima (i.e., years in which the nest count was higher than in both the year before and the year after).

- 3) Over the long term, data may vary in quality. Different sections of beach may be surveyed, or the “index value” or relative importance of the section of beach selected for sampling (e.g. the northern 5-miles of the 22-mile green turtle nesting beach at Tortuguero, Costa Rica) may change over the years. In dynamic situations, especially when manpower is limited, there is a tendency to deploy one’s field crew to the area judged to have the most turtles during the current season, even though this represents a moving target and complicates year-to-year comparisons. Most long-term monitoring projects introduce “improvements” over the years, with advances ranging from better staff training to use of beach motorcycles to facilitate wider coverage, and these actions will increase the accuracy of nest counts or encounters with nesting turtles, or improve ability to distinguish between actual nests and false crawls. Over very long time spans, the oldest data are likely to be highly anecdotal, and may possibly be exaggerated; or an opposing phenomenon is that of the “diminishing baseline,” whereby over a short time span of a few seasons, memory or knowledge of primordial population levels may be non-existent, and a trend may be considered positive or a population healthy if a given annual nesting cohort is the strongest in, say, the last five years, even though it may be only a fraction of that of a century before.

- 4) Theoretical and pragmatic approaches may, at least superficially, conflict. This may not be because the science is wrong, but rather because it has not addressed the real-world decisions that are faced by the user community. Thus, population models of the loggerhead turtle, based upon a great deal of information on population demographics made available through incidental capture and beach stranding statistics, have indicated that, for the loggerhead at least and perhaps for sea turtles in general, the most important members of the population are female turtles on the brink of maturation. They have the hazards of youth behind them and the reproductive years all lie just ahead, while a given single egg is considered insignificant to the population because, statistically, it is almost certain to fail to yield a turtle that survives to maturity. Such models, rightly or wrongly, have been interpreted as downplaying the importance of the eggs themselves for population maintenance, and may have been used as justification for certain ill-considered egg harvest programs. But the pragmatists point to certain strong populations, reasonably protected on their nesting grounds and with good recruitment, that have survived and even expanded in the face of considerable directed take (in the case of the Tortuguero green turtles) or incidental capture (in the case of Florida loggerheads), whereas populations where adults have been protected but egg collection been very heavy have collapsed (see examples below). And the pragmatists observe that the question before a given fisherman is not whether to take a large turtle, a small turtle, or a single egg, but rather whether he should catch, say, one



200 kg turtle, ten 20 kg turtles, or take 200 kg of turtle eggs – a question to which the answer is not obvious.

COLLAPSED AND RECOVERED POPULATIONS

Over recent centuries, some turtle populations have collapsed and others are in the process of so doing. Collectively, the examples demonstrate unequivocally that an abused turtle population may decline dramatically, even though the collapse may be postponed years or decades if the stress takes the form of egg harvest rather than capture of turtles themselves. However, recent evidence also points to the potential of turtle populations for recovery in response to effective protection, to tolerate surprising levels of abuse at times, and sometimes even to initiate a new nesting colony from scratch.

A few examples of collapsed populations include (there are many others):

I) Several Caribbean, Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico populations of the green turtle, including those of Bermuda, Grand Cayman and Little Cayman, and the Dry Tortugas, west of Key West. The accounts of contemporary chroniclers are particularly abundant and vivid for the extraordinarily abundant green turtles of the Cayman Islands in the 17th century, which for 200 years played a key role in the victualing of expeditions of exploration, colonization, and warfare in the Caribbean region. One or two thousand nesting greens, it was reported by Pieter Adriaensz Ita to the Dutch chronicler Johannes de Laet in 1630, could be taken every night from a single beach on northwestern Little Cayman alone. Today, only desultory nesting by green turtles occurs anywhere in the Cayman

Islands. The Bermuda population is now almost entirely composed of juvenile turtles. Nesting by both loggerheads and green turtles does occur today in the Dry Tortugas, the *Chelonia* colony being the largest in Monroe County (Florida); but it is not a large population in absolute terms.

- 2) The leatherback turtles of Kuala Terengganu, Malaysia. When first reported to the outside world in the 1950's, this was by far the most important known leatherback nesting colony in the world. However, a long-standing policy of auctioning the rights to the eggs to local egg merchants, with only a small number being bought back by the State government for hatching, doomed the nesting colony and threw the extensive local turtle-oriented touristic development into confusion. Today very few nestings occur in Terengganu.
- 3) Similarly, the once vast green turtle nesting colonies of the Talang Islands, not far from Kuching, Sarawak, and the subject of the pioneering studies of Tom Harrison and John Hendrickson for many years, have passed into oblivion. Again, a local policy of protecting the turtles but taking almost all of the eggs yielded its inevitable results.
- 4) The only known nesting colony of Kemp's ridley, *Lepidochelys kempi*, was discovered by Andres Herrera in 1947, although not publicly announced until 1963. A daytime emergence of an estimated 40,000 nesting turtles on a section of beach near Rancho Nuevo, near Aldama, Tamaulipas, Mexico was filmed by Herrera, and the film subsequently examined by Henry Hildebrand and Archie Carr. By 1965, when beach patrols were established to protect the turtles, the total population had



been reduced to the low thousands, and it continued to decline for years following protection. Somewhat fragmentary evidence indicates that egg exploitation had been massive during the “*arribada* years,” and this factor combined with high levels of incidental trawler capture in both the northern and southern Gulf of Mexico – and to some extent in the southeastern United States – almost exterminated the entire species.

- 5) The most dramatic and alarming contemporary decline of a marine turtle population is that of the leatherback in the eastern Pacific. The species was never particularly widespread or populous in the Indian Ocean region, and the Atlantic populations remain very strong, but enormous nesting colonies documented in the early 1970s in Michoacan, Guerrero, and Oaxaca, Mexico, and on Playa Grande and some other beaches in Pacific Costa Rica have been reduced by over 95% throughout the region, despite the presence of beach and egg protection in these areas throughout the 90s. The decline is thought to stem from a variety of factors, including many years of egg collection in the recent past, beach-slaughter of nesting females at least on the Mexican beaches, and widespread incidental mortality in long-line and swordfish fisheries in pelagic waters of the eastern and southeastern Pacific.

CURRENT STATUS OF EXTANT SPECIES

Many authorities recognize just seven species of marine turtle, the leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*), the green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*), the loggerhead (*Caretta caretta*), the olive

ridley (*Lepidochelys olivacea*), Kemp’s ridley (*Lepidochelys kempii*), the hawksbill (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), and the Australian flatback (*Natator depressus*). However, a growing body of evidence, based not only upon morphological divergence but also upon demonstrable sympatry between the two forms without inter-gradation, suggest that the genus *Chelonia* should be considered to include two species, *Chelonia mydas* in the western Pacific and the Indian and Atlantic Oceans, and *Chelonia agassizii* in the eastern Pacific, both on continental shores from the Gulf of California to Peru and also in the offshore archipelagoes (Galapagos, Revillagigedos, etc.). This would raise the total to eight species.

- 1) Marine turtles of the Atlantic Ocean. In the Atlantic system, there are significant populations of all species of marine turtle except for the two localized forms *Chelonia agassizii* and *Natator depressa*. Overall status is as follows:
 - a) Leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*). In the western Atlantic, populations appear to be strong and increasing throughout most of the nesting sites from the Lesser Antilles including Trinidad through the Guianas to French Guiana. In the United States Atlantic and Caribbean and Gulf coasts of Mexico there is little nesting. In West Africa a very substantial nesting colony has recently been discovered in Gabon; trend data are unavailable and the past history of this colony is unknown.
 - b) Olive ridley (*Lepidochelys olivacea*). Western and eastern Atlantic populations



of this species appear to be morphologically distinct from each other and from those of the East Pacific, although not currently recognized nomenclaturally. The nesting populations of Guyana and Surinam, significant to substantial in the 1960s, are now reduced to relict status; however a nesting colony has become established in eastern French Guiana (Montjoly and other beaches) in recent years. Furthermore, nesting beaches for *L. olivacea* have been discovered in tropical Brazil in recent years, and in some cases (e.g. in Sergipe) nesting numbers have shown significant upward increases in recent years. Trends in western Africa are unknown.

- c) Kemp's ridley (*Lepidochelys kempi*). With a single nesting flotilla estimated at 40,000 turtles in Tamaulipas, Mexico, in 1947, the species was progressively reduced in the next four decades to just a few hundred breeding females. However, for about fifteen years the nesting colony has progressively increased, as a result of beach protection, head-starting, and TED utilization.
- d) Loggerhead (*Caretta caretta*). This is primarily a temperate-zone species, with nesting in various parts of the Mediterranean (Zakynthos and other Greek Islands; parts of the Turkish Coast; Libya), and with the main threat on the European side being beachfront tourist development. The largest colonies nest in the United States (mainly Florida, but northwards to Virginia), with some also in Yucatan (Mexico). The Florida-nesting

populations appear to be strong and increasing, as a result of years of legal protection, beach patrols and hatcheries, TED utilization, etc. North of Florida, the situation is less secure, in that the turtle populations are less dense and shrimping more intensive. The Gulf of Mexico colonies are small compared to those of the Atlantic coast.

- e) In the Atlantic, the hawksbill (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) has a wide range and nesting sites encompass both continental coastlines and islands, large and small. Overall, there has been a generalized depletion, and the scattered nature of the nesting make beach patrols difficult and sometimes unproductive. However, in US Caribbean waters (Puerto Rico, Mona etc.), legal protection appears to be yielding results and sighting of hawksbills are increasing, and in the Yucatan Peninsula (Mexico) and in Cuba hawksbill populations are considered to be large and stable or increasing.
- f) The green turtle, *Chelonia mydas*, has maintained a large and stable nesting colony at Tortuguero, Costa Rica, throughout the years since monitoring started in the 1950s, in the face of heavy subsistence exploitation in many of the nations where the turtles feed (Nicaragua, Panama, Honduras, Venezuela, etc.). The formation of the Tortuguero National Park has probably been a key factor in the ability of the colony to withstand such exploitation, although the legal take of adult females in waters near Puerto Limon in recent years has been an



ambiguous factor, possibly bringing about some control by establishing a legal quota, but more likely adding legal take to illegal, resulting in a high but unquantifiable overall take. Recent action by the Costa Rican Constitutional Court has eliminated the legal quota, and theoretically offered the species complete protection in Costa Rica.

Other Atlantic green turtle nesting colonies include those of several remote islands without civilian populations and under largely military jurisdiction (Isla Aves, Venezuela; Ascension Island; Atol das Rocas and Trindade Islands, Brazil), and the turtle populations there are probably stable now, although that of Isla Aves diminished massively since the 1940s, as the island itself became smaller. During the last two decades green turtle colonies have become established both at Rancho Nuevo, Tamaulipas, Mexico (best known as the Kemp's ridley nesting beach) and at South Melbourne Beach, Florida (primarily a loggerhead beach). On the other hand, the Guyana nesting colony has virtually disappeared during the last three decades, although the colony in neighboring Surinam (where beach slaughter of turtles is rare) remains strong.

In the eastern Atlantic, the largest nesting colonies appear to be those of the Bijagos Archipelago (Guinea-Bissau). There are recent indications that the nesting turtles there are undergoing massive exploitation.

In the Mediterranean, most nesting is by loggerhead turtles; the best green turtle nesting ground is probably that of Akyatan, Turkey.

2) Marine turtles of the Indian Ocean. a) The

loggerhead turtle is poorly known and rather locally distributed in the Indian Ocean, with a reportedly huge nesting colony on the small island of Masirah, off the coast of Oman, a modest but progressively increasing colony on the Mocambique/Natal border area (known as Tongaland), South Africa; and reasonably strong and stable colonies in temperate parts of Western Australia. There are few other areas in the entire Indian Ocean where the loggerhead is anything more than an occasional straggler.

b) The olive ridley is also bizarrely localized in the Indian Ocean. Virtually the entire nesting population is concentrated at two or three sites of extraordinarily aggregated nesting in the Gahirmatha area of the coast of Orissa, India. Otherwise, there is dispersed nesting on much of the eastern coast of peninsular India and some in Sri Lanka, but without significant concentrations. The Orissa colony is stressed by very high mortality in shrimp trawls operating in the area during the turtle nesting season.

c) The leatherback is also very restricted in the Indian Ocean, possibly because so many shorelines are guarded by coral reefs, which can seriously damage the delicate integument of this pelagic species. Small but increasing numbers of individuals nest in Tongaland with the loggerheads. In former times (1930s) the coast of Sri Lanka was important for leatherback nesting, but now this is very slight. Today the largest nesting colonies are probably those of Irian Jaya (Vogelkop Peninsula), but these too are



decreasing. In the South China Sea, between the Indian and Pacific Oceans, the once crucial leatherback colony at Kuala Terengganu has now collapsed.

- d) In the Indian Ocean, very important nesting colonies of the green turtle, *Chelonia mydas*, occur at a number of points around the Arabian Peninsula, especially in Oman, and with outlying concentrations as far east as Karachi and south as far as the Somali coast. Other major colonies occur in Western Australia. Europa Island, in the Mocambique Channel, and Aldabra Atoll, north of Madagascar, are also very important nesting sites, and both areas lack civilian populations. Nonetheless, these colonies are not immune to exploitation on the feeding grounds, e.g. in Madagascan waters.
 - e) Hawksbills are widespread in the Indian Ocean, although no really major nesting colonies have been reported. Reasonable numbers nest on certain islands off the Arabian Peninsula and in the Seychelles, but in most places nesting is scattered.
 - f) Some flatback turtles (*Natator depressus*) nest in northern Western Australia and are probably reasonably safe, but even though this species is rarely consumed by humans, it is subject to incidental capture in prawn trawls.
- 3) Marine turtles of the Pacific Ocean. a) In recent decades the most important nesting colonies of the leatherback turtle anywhere were those of the eastern Pacific, especially

in Michoacan, Guerrero and Oaxaca, Mexico, and Playa Grande, Playa Langosta and other beaches in Pacific Costa Rica. These colonies have recently undergone serious collapse and are in danger of complete extirpation. This may be a legacy of the years of heavy egg collection (everywhere) and slaughter of nesting females in Mexico, but the current stresses appear to be incidental capture by pelagic fisheries. In the western Pacific, nesting occurs principally in Melanesia (Papua New Guinea including New Britain and New Ireland; Solomons, etc). In most places, the nesting turtles are likely to be slaughtered by indigenous peoples. There is virtually no nesting in Australia, New Caledonia, or the countless small islands of Micronesia and Polynesia, and very little in western South America.

- b) The olive ridley is almost unknown in the Pacific islands and scarce in the western Pacific. However, it achieves extraordinary nesting concentrations in Pacific Mexico (currently Playa La Escobilla, Oaxaca; formerly other beaches such as Piedra de Tlacoyunque (San Luis la Loma), Guerrero, and Playon de Mismaloya, Jalisco), and in Costa Rica (Playa Nancite and Playa Ostional, Guanacaste). These turtles apparently move southward after nesting, and large numbers have been reported in Ecuadorian waters. Currently, the Nancite arribada, although located in a national park, is diminishing and losing integrity, whereas the Ostional colony, although subject to a controlled egg harvest of significant proportions, appears to be increasing, and may be drawing



turtles that formerly nested at Nancite. These population shifts and fluctuations are probably natural and may reflect the fact that, in very large arribadas, the percentage of eggs actually producing viable hatchlings is very small. Eventually such arribadas will collapse for this reason, and others will form where there is less crowding and where more eggs may hatch.

- c) The black turtle (*Chelonia agassizii*) is confined to the Pacific Ocean and has its major nesting colonies in the Galapagos Islands and in Michoacan, Mexico. Nesting also occurs on the offshore islands of Mexico (Clarion, Revillagigedos, etc). Others nest in mainland Central America (especially Costa Rica). Occasionally specimens occur in the western Pacific (Japanese waters, and Manus Island, Bismarck Sea) and throughout the range there is some degree of sympatry with the green turtle, *Chelonia mydas*. The principal feeding area for the Michoacan colony is the Gulf of California, but traditional hunting by the Seri people combined with widespread contemporary illegal hunting have brought this colony to highly endangered status. The Galapagos population, whose nesting is scattered over dozens or hundreds of beaches on most of the major islands, is more secure but is still subject to some hunting, including in Central American waters.
- d) In the Pacific basin, the green turtle occurs and nests on countless small islands. However, the largest nesting

colonies are in Queensland, Australia (especially Raine and Pandora Islands; also islands in the Capricorn group including Heron Island). These colonies are protected in Australia, but are subject to major mortality in directed fisheries in Indonesian waters, especially around Bali. Very dense nesting occurs on the small d'Entrecasteaux Reef islands of New Caledonia (Iles Surprise, Leleixour, Fabre and Huon). In New Guinea the most abundant nesting is probably on Long Island, off northern Papua New Guinea. Nesting also occurs in the Hawaiian Islands, especially French Frigate Shoal. Nesting has virtually stopped in the Talang Islands, off Sarawak, but there is now a binational sanctuary for turtles (mostly greens, some hawksbills) in a small group of islands shared by Malaysia and the Philippines.

- e) The loggerhead is unknown throughout vast areas of the Pacific, and nesting is almost unrecorded in the entire western Pacific. However, significant numbers of juvenile loggerheads reach the waters of Baja California in certain years; these turtles derive from nesting colonies in Japan. The most abundant nesting in the Pacific occurs in certain beaches of southern Queensland, including both mainland beaches such as Mon Repos and islands such as Wreck Island. They enjoy good legal protection, but are subject to significant incidental capture.
- f) Hawksbills are rare, and nesting very rare, in the east Pacific. This appears to be natural rather than a result of



anthropogenic depletion; the coastal waters are generally cool and very deep, often without significant continental shelf or coral formation. However, hawksbills occur as a minority component of the turtle faunas of a great many tropical Pacific Islands, and in Australia they actually form real nesting colonies in a few places, especially on the island of Milman near Cape York. Some authorities believe that such concentrations may once have been much larger and more widespread, and that the contemporary pattern of nesting scattered over vast areas but with few dense colonies represents the result of centuries of over-exploitation. Even in the seemingly safe areas, such as Australia, the nesting populations may be subject to heavy exploitation in other countries (Solomons, Indonesia), and there are suggestions that even the major Milman Island colony is diminishing. Nevertheless, with a nesting population of 6,000 to 10,000 female hawksbills, there seems little question that the Australian populations are currently the largest in the world. Indonesia may have about 2,000.

- g) The flatback turtle has a number of nesting colonies in tropical Australia, usually on mainland beaches or the shores of large, nearshore islands. Few large aggregations exist; Crab Island, west of the tip of Cape York, may be the most important nesting ground, and is also characterized by some degree of year-round nesting, and as much diurnal

activity as nocturnal. The populations are thought to be stable.

CONCLUSIONS

- I) Five species of marine turtle are widespread in the tropical oceans, and all have at least some areas of abundance as well as extensive areas of depletion.
- II) Three species of marine turtle (the black turtle, *Chelonia agassizii*; Kemp's ridley, *Lepidochelys kempii*; and the flatback turtle, *Natator depressus*) are localized, occurring in just one to perhaps half a dozen nations. The first two are severely depleted, although the second (*L. kempii*) is progressively recovering as a result of intense bi-national conservation effort and investment. The last of the three, the flatback, is probably not significantly depleted but is essentially restricted to the tropical shorelines and waters of a single nation, Australia.
- III) Robust sea turtle colonies (i.e. those that are naturally large, possibly because of a highly productive nutritional base) can withstand significant loss of individual turtles, but it is important that the reproductive phases and nesting beaches be adequately protected and hatchling productivity ensured. Small colonies may easily be pushed into extinction by unsustainable human take.
- IV) Whether they are currently strong, or seriously depleted, sea turtle populations do require good management that will restrict unsustainable activities such as



slaughter of nesting females, and such management will often include complete protection of all life-stages.

V) “*Arribadas*” of ridley turtles represent a special case, where scientifically-based management that includes some exploitation, especially of eggs, for human benefit may not only be a sociological imperative but may also be compatible with the long-term maintenance of the nesting aggregations. *Arribadas* appear to have an optimum size to maximize hatchling productivity, and when they become overwhelmingly large, hatchling productivity may fall.

VI) Incidental catch of marine turtles by fisheries of various kinds, including shrimp trawling and near-shore gill netting, remains a serious problem in many areas, and regionally unified methodologies to control or eliminate it are a high priority.

VII) Conservation does work. With implementation of the US Endangered Species Act, CITES, and a host of local, regional, and national conservation efforts, many marine turtle populations are now recovering.



Work team meeting in Tres Rios, made up of delegates from Mexico, Venezuela, Costa Rica, Peru, and the USA



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

First Conference of the Parties: First Part

6-8 August, 2002 San José, Costa Rica

Inf-007

Report of Non Government Organizations (NGOs), to the Parties of the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles.

**August 7, 2002. Hotel Best Western-Irazú
San José, Costa Rica**

The participants of the NGO's meeting would like to express our profound appreciation to the First Conference of the Parties of the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles, for the opportunity given to the NGO's to participate as observers at your first meeting. Additionally, we congratulate and applaud the efforts of the Parties for the important achievements obtained at this meeting, that constitute the starting point for consolidating and promoting a global strategy for sea turtle protection.

Believing that the present decline of sea turtle populations constitutes a true emergency, the undersigned individuals and representatives of non-governmental organizations wish to convey our sense of urgency that this convention be as bold as possible in taking concrete steps to stop the slide to extinction. Imbued in this spirit, we respectfully offer the following recommendations:

Amendments

- The primary purpose of the Convention is the protection of sea turtles. Thus, we believe that Article XV in some circumstances may be contrary to that goal and its elimination should be seriously considered. Decisions of this Convention should be determined solely on what will benefit sea turtles, regardless of the

effect of these decisions on international trade.

- While we applaud the desire to find consensus, we recommend the Convention be amended so that a consensus is NOT necessary to make decisions, just a simple majority or a 2/3 majority, in order to avoid inaction on critical issues.

Use of Sea Turtle Products

- Secure the efficient enforcement of laws that ban the sale of sea turtle products, except in special circumstances as recognized under the framework of the IAC.

International Trade of Sea Turtle Products

- Support the CITES continuous opposition to all international trade of sea turtle products.

Fisheries

- Request OLDEPESCA and OSPESCA, as regional fishery entities, to secure the full application of the Code of Responsible Fisheries of FAO of 1995, mainly the establishment of the Precautionary Principle for each and all fisheries, and to work towards the elimination of sea turtle by-catch.
- Urge nations that have not signed and ratified the United Nations International Convention of the Sea (UNCLOS) to do so immediately.



Long-line Fisheries in Pelagic Waters

- * Support the international campaign to declare a moratorium on pelagic long-line fisheries in the Eastern Pacific, until methods or fishery practices are developed that guarantee the physical integrity of the sea turtles.
- * Begin effective monitoring of the impacts of long-lining by means of an observer program on board a statistically significant number of long-line fishery vessels within the geographic range of this Convention.
- * Eliminate illegal fishing activities through effective enforcement and strong penalties against violators, including but not limited to confiscation of pirate vessels.

Shrimp Trawls

- * Initiate fisher-to-fisher training and exchange programs throughout the region using fishers with extensive experience in the proper use of TEDs.
- * Establish an IAC Commission, independent of the Parties, to carry out NON ANNOUNCED inspections to verify the use of TEDs in the countries of the region.
Ensure a reporting method that provides (Scientific Committee, Consultative Committee) and the public.
- * Establish an observer training program on board shrimp trawl vessels to implement within one year an observer program on a minimum of 33% of effort to determine the impact of shrimp fishing on sea turtle capture and to guarantee the appropriate use of TEDs in each nation.

Gillnet and Purse-Seine Fisheries

- * Implement research in each nation where these fisheries operate to identify levels of impact of both fisheries on sea turtles.

Beach Protection

- * Strictly forbid the traffic and use of leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*), sea turtle eggs in the Pacific region.
- * Identify the ten most important nesting sites for each species that nests within the geographical range of this Convention and ensure effective protection at each of these sites.
- * Create and enforce legislation that mandates the elaboration of Environmental Impact Assessments (impact of developments, light control, sewage discharge, etc) in these critical nesting habitats.

Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)

- * Strictly enforce regulations regarding exploitation of resources in existing MPAs
- * Clearly establish the legal and administrative competences for the enforcement of fishery legislation in MPAs.
- * Conduct research to identify critical marine habitats for each species and designate MPAs in such areas, as appropriate.

Pollution

- * Eliminate dumping or run-off of organic wastes, nuclear materials, poisons, etc in marine habitats.
- * Control at-sea dumping by vessels.
- * Control the discharge of intense level of sound.
- * No allowance of military training activities in critical marine habitats.
- * No allowance of petroleum exploration nor exploitation in critical marine habitats.



**Convención Interamericana para la Protección y Conservación
de las Tortugas Marinas**

Primera Conferencia de las Partes: Segunda Parte

19-22 de agosto 2003, San José, Costa Rica

INF-010 (Eng y esp)

**INFORME DEL MINISTERIO DE RELACIONES EXTERIORES
DE VENEZUELA SOBRE LAS FECHAS DE FIRMA
Y RATIFICACION DE LOS PAISES PARTE**

19 de mayo de 2003

Country/ País	Fecha de Firma/ Date of Signing	Date of Ratification/ Fecha Ratificación
BELIZE	Dec. 21, 1998	Feb. 3, 2003
BRAZIL	Mar.21, 1997	Nov.22, 1999
COSTA RICA	Jan.31, 1997	Apri.17, 2000
ECUADOR	Dec.31, 1998	Oct.6, 2000
GUATEMALA		
HONDURAS	Dec.29, 1998	Feb.1, 2001
MEXICO	Dec. 29, 1998	Sep.11, 2000
NICARAGUA	Mar.4, 1997	
NETHERLANDS	Dec.24, 1998	Nov.29, 2000
PERU	Apr.8, 1997	Nov.18, 1999
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA	Dec.13, 1996	Feb.21, 2001
URUGUAY	Dec.31, 1998	
VENEZUELA	Dec.16, 1996	Aug.20, 1998



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

First Conference of the Parties: Second Part

19-22 August, 2003

San José, Costa Rica

INF-011 (eng)

**SUMMARY OF THE RESOLUTION OF THE TWENTY-THIRD
ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM ON THE BIOLOGY AND CONSERVATION OF
SEA TURTLES OF THE INTERNATIONAL SEA TURTLE SOCIETY**

“During the plenary session on March 21st, the membership passed three Resolutions promoting the conservation of sea turtles and their habitats. Resolution 2003-2 is as follows: ‘Resolution to support the Costa Rican CIT-006 Resolution for the conservation of the leatherback

sea turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*), in the Eastern Pacific’, to the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles (IAC). This resolution was passed unanimously.”



**Inter-American Convention for the Protection and
Conservation of Sea Turtles
First Conference of the Parties: Second Part**

19-22 August, 2000 San José, Costa Rica

INF-013 (eng)

**DECLARATION OF THE NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS
BEFORE THE DELEGATES OF THE IAC, ON THE CONSERVATION
OF SEA TURTLES**

August 19 – 22, 2003

Thank You, Mr. Chairman:

On the part of the hundreds of thousands of persons affiliated to NGOs and who are signing this declaration, as follows:

ANAI Association (Costa Rica)
PRETOMA Sea Turtle Restoration Program (Costa Rica)
CCC Caribbean Conservation Corporation (US and Costa Rica)
CIMAD Research Centre for Environmental Management and Development (Colombia)
CRI Chelonian Research Institute (US)
Defenders of Wildlife (US, Mexico and Canada)
Leatherback Trust (Costa Rica)
Humane Society of the United States HSUS (US)
Turtle Island Restoration Network TIRN (US and Costa Rica)
Wildlife Conservation Society (Costa Rica)

We wish to express our appreciation to the various governments and their delegates for their hard and effective work in the sphere of diplomatic negotiations towards the implementation of the Convention.

At the same time we are grateful for the opportunity bestowed on us to join this initiative and wish to take this opportunity to offer our expertise and capabilities in the field of sea turtle conservation.

Now when this phase of the Convention (COP1) is coming to an end, we want to take this

opportunity to emphasize those issues we consider the most relevant and of the utmost priority for the sea turtles, and which require the immediate attention of the Convention.

Foremost, the most critical and pressing issue is the sudden and drastic reduction of the leatherback turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*), in the eastern Pacific. We wish to express our appreciation to the Delegates, especially those of Costa Rica, for acknowledging the critical situation of this species pursuant to Resolution CIT-006, presented by this country during the first meeting of COP1.



Other issues we consider are important follow:

- The incidental capture in long-lines and gillnets of high seas fisheries in the eastern Pacific ocean;
- The incidental capture in shrimp trawlers.
- The need to efficiently protect the sea turtle nesting beaches from degradation as a consequence of tourist and urban development;
- The need to create protected marine areas to provide protection to the marine areas of

nesting beaches, to the foraging areas and to the migratory routes of sea turtles;

- Finally, the need to stop the illegal commerce of turtle products within the local and international scope.

We hope that very soon we will be able to see the Convention working towards the solution of the problems facing sea turtles in the American continent. Again, us NGOs offer our assistance in reaching this goal.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

