



**Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles**  
**Eighth Conference of the Parties**  
28-30 June, 2017 – Buenos Aires, Argentina

**CIT-COP8-2017-R2**

**Conservation of the Hawksbill Turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*)**

**RECOGNIZING** that the hawksbill turtle is an important component of many marine tropical ecosystems and is valued culturally, socio-economically, ecologically, and scientifically;

**CONSIDERING** that the hawksbill turtle has a broad distribution within the range of action of the Convention and maintains ecological connectivity with other regions;

**RECOGNIZING** that the hawksbill, as other sea turtles, has a complex life cycle that requires the protection of terrestrial, coastal and marine habitats, involving the jurisdictional waters of several countries;

**CONSIDERING** that although the species is classified globally as critically endangered by the World Conservation Union (IUCN), some populations in the Greater Caribbean and Western Atlantic are slowly recovering after several decades of implementing protective measures;

**CONSIDERING** that historically, captures of hawksbill turtles to use their scutes, meat and eggs for making products for human use, and the sale of those products in national and international markets have been one of the main causes for population decline;

**RECOGNIZING** the persistence of several other threats such as incidental and direct capture in fisheries and increasing disturbance of critical feeding and nesting habitats by coastal development, erosion, seismic surveys, pollution, diseases in prey species, coral bleaching, , climate change and eutrophication, among others;

**CONSIDERING** that it took many decades of intense research, conservation and management efforts to achieve a significant level of hawksbill nesting in the Yucatan Peninsula, and this effort needs to be sustained as a priority;

**RECOGNIZING** that although there is a greater knowledge about the trend in some hawksbill turtle populations in the region and that they have shown signs of resilience and adaptation to changing conditions, significant efforts will be required to mitigate the threats faced by the species;

**NOTING** that there is an important knowledge gap about the current status of the trade of hawksbill turtle products, particularly trade between countries;

**TAKING INTO ACCOUNT** the IAC Resolution on cooperation and synergy between the IAC and the Convention on the International Trade of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) (COP1/2002/R-3), and CITES Decision 17.222, which urges collaboration with the IAC regarding sea turtle trade;

**CONSIDERING** the need for improving compliance with relevant instruments particularly CITES, which lists hawksbills in Appendix I and prohibits international commercial trade in the species;

**THE EIGHTH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES OF THE INTER-AMERICAN CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION OF SEA TURTLES RESOLVES TO:**

**EXHORT** the Parties to promote IAC synergies with CITES, the Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPA), the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), the Western Hemisphere Migratory Species Initiative (WHMSI), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles and their Habitats of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia (IOSEA), other treaties, international organizations, relevant regional fisheries management organizations, and regional initiatives such as the Eastern Pacific Hawksbill Initiative (ICAPO) with the purpose of facilitating a regional dialogue about management and conservation of hawksbill turtles and their habitats;

**EXHORT** the Parties to improve compliance with relevant regulations protecting hawksbill turtle and especially, to strengthen the efforts to address illegal trade of this species products and by-products (e.g. scutes, eggs and meat) within and between countries, and to stop illegal trade;

**URGE** the Parties to strengthen protection of important hawksbill nesting and foraging habitats by declaration of protected areas and the regulation of anthropogenic activities adversely impacting these habitats;

**EXHORT** the Parties to support and strengthen the research and monitoring activities required to improve the scientific basis of conservation measures for the hawksbill turtle, particularly in genetics, migratory behavior, location and conservation status of foraging habitats and prey species, population dynamics in feeding sites, interactions with fisheries, social and economic impacts of conservation measures, and integrity of its nesting beaches;

**URGE** the Parties to evaluate and mitigate incidental capture of hawksbill turtles in their jurisdictional waters in accordance with FAO Guidelines to Reduce Sea Turtle Mortality in Fishing Operations and the IAC fisheries resolution (CIT-COP3-2006-R2);

**EXHORT** the Parties to apply the Precautionary Approach until possible impacts can be evaluated and mitigated on seismic surveys near priority marine habitats of the hawksbill turtle;

**ENCOURAGE** synergy between the Scientific Committee and hawksbill experts from the Pacific, the Caribbean and the Atlantic to develop recommendations for conservation based

on the best available scientific information to inform the Conference of the Parties on the status of the species and its habitats in the Convention Area;

**PROMOTE** the exchange of technical capacity, information and collaborative research on the hawksbill turtle and their habitats among Parties as well as non-Parties and other involved organizations in the Area of the Convention.

This resolution repeals and replaces the IAC Resolution on Conservation of hawksbill turtles (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) COP3/2006/R-1 in its entirety.