



**Inter-American Convention for the Protection and
Conservation of Sea Turtles**
9th Conference of the Parties (COP9)
June 12 – 14, 2019, Santo Domingo, the Dominican Republic

CIT-COP9-2019-Inf.3

IAC CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS REPORT

The following document summarizes the implementation of the Consultative Committee of Experts (CCE) activities according to their work plan adopted at the CCE11 - 2018 and CCE12-2019 meetings. The Consultative Committee Chair Mr. Paul Hoetjes presents this report to inform IAC COP9.

The last page of the report is a summary of the achievements by the CCE in the last two years in support to the IAC Parties and the objectives of the Convention.



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Activities executed according to the work plan and agreements adopted at CCE11 and CCE12 meetings in 2018 and 2019, respectively.

Agreements from the 11th Meeting of the IAC Consultative Committee of Experts

a. Changes to the IAC Annual Report format in the Resolution section:

- i. In the Resolution on the impact of Fisheries table, a column for “species” was added to indicate the sea turtle species that interacts with each fishing gear. This has been implemented since 2018 IAC Annual Report.
- ii. New resolution compliance table to address the Resolution on Conservation of the Loggerhead Turtle was included, per recommendation of the COP and the Scientific Committee. This has been implemented since 2018.

b. Strategy to increase engagement and collaboration with Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMO) was executed as follows:

- i. Ms. Rebecca Regnery CCE Sectorial delegate represents the CCE on the implementation of the strategy to work with RFMOs together with the Scientific Committee. She is in charge of communicating the Scientific Committee and IAC Secretariat PT of RFMO meetings and agenda items that are of interest to the work of IAC.
- ii. The work will be as follows: 1) The Consultative Committee delegate will be in charge of implementing the first part of the strategy such as identifying the meetings where the participation of the IAC is relevant, 2) the information will be communicated to her counterpart in the Scientific Committee, whom in consultation with the Chair will implement the steps of the strategy related to technical matters.

c. Proposal for a pilot study to record environmental parameters on nesting beaches under the Resolution on Climate Change and Sea Turtles.

- i. The CCE approved the Scientific Committee proposal to invite IAC Parties to participate in a pilot study ([CIT-CC14-2017-Doc.06](#) – Annex VII) to gather environmental information on nesting beaches.
- ii. The Secretariat *Pro Tempore* sent along with 2019 IAC Annual Report Request, the invitation to participate in the study to IAC Focal Points. The Secretariat PT will inform the Scientific Committee, which countries agreed to participate, and the beaches they have selected to record environmental parameters. All technical inquiries from the Parties regarding the pilot study will be addressed by the Scientific Committee Chair and the climate change working group.

d. Amendment to the Resolution on Guidelines for Financing the Operation of IAC was executed as follows:

- i. The Consultative Committee recommended a revised Resolution on Guidelines for Financing the Operation of the IAC (CIT-COPE1-2007-R2) to address the management of in-kind contributions to the Convention. The CCE formed a working group to draft a Resolution to the IAC COP9. The working group formed by Argentina, the United States, and the Caribbean Netherlands prepared a proposal that was approved at the CCE12 – 2019 meeting and it is now included in the COP9 agenda for consideration.

e. Ramsar Draft Resolution on Sea Turtles, and IAC-Ramsar Memorandum of Understanding Renewal

- i. Ramsar Sea Turtle Resolution: Consultative Committee members called the attention of the IAC to a Resolution regarding sea turtles that was presented at Ramsar Pan-American meeting in 2018 in Costa Rica, the CCE delegate from Costa Rica spoke on behalf of IAC at the meeting to transmit the recommendations from IAC Parties to the draft resolution. Additionally, the IAC Secretariat *Pro Tempore* conveyed the IAC recommendations/ edits to the resolution text to Ramsar Secretariat through the Ramsar Regional Advisor for the Americas, requesting that they are shared with the Chair of Ramsar Standing Committee. The IAC Secretariat *Pro Tempore* sent the recommendations to Ramsar Standing Committee Delegates from Honduras and United States requesting that these are shared with their local Ramsar representatives. The delegation from Argentina at Ramsar COP13 (2018) presented and lobby for the recommendations to the Resolution XIII.24, which were adopted including text regarding the renewal of the IAC -Ramsar Memorandum of Understanding. The sea turtle Resolution was adopted taking into consideration IAC Recommendations.
- j. IAC-Ramsar MdE: The Consultative Committee Delegates from Argentina and Costa Rica together with the IAC Secretariat PT, followed up with Ramsar

Secretariat on the efforts to renew the MoU. An update of this effort will be discussed later on the COP agenda.

**Recommendations and agreements from the 12th Meeting of the IAC Consultative
Committee of Experts**

- i. Prepared draft Resolution on the Amendment of the Guidelines for Financing the Operation of the IAC CIT-CCE12-2019-Doc.2 to be presented at COP9.
- ii. Prepared a draft Resolution for the Conservation of the Northwest Atlantic Leatherbacks (*Dermochelys coriacea*) to be presented to COP9.
- iii. Prepared draft Resolution on the Access to, Use, and Request of Data Compiled by the IAC to be presented to COP9.
- iv. Recommendation to IAC Scientific Committee to prepare a one-page information document on Green Turtles (*Chelonia mydas*) index beaches status in the Southeastern Pacific for COP9. Ecuador will submit information on monitoring effort in Galapagos and Costa Rica, Chile, and Ecuador will submit their data to prepare a technical document at the Scientific Committee meeting.
- v. Recommended COP9 to adopt WCMC proposal for an online report, requesting support from the Parties to fund the project. The CCE delegates were encouraged to propose to their focal point if they would be interested in funding partially the contract for WCMC.
- vi. Recommendation to include in COP9 Agenda the presentation of a model of the LaudOPO network on East Pacific Leatherback, and recommendations of CITES final report on sea turtle trade.
- vii. Recommendation of participation of the IAC in the 2019 meeting of the Cartagena Convention and SPAW protocol in Honduras, as a strategy to approach the countries within the range of the Northwest Atlantic Leatherback to support IAC in implementation of the recommendations of the resolution that will be discussed at IAC COP9. The Caribbean Netherland delegation offered to facilitate a formal meeting with the countries involved. The result of the recommendation is that the CCE Chair as a member of the Netherlands delegation to SPAW COP proposed a resolution to work with IAC on actions for the conservation of the Northwest Atlantic Leatherback. The decision was just adopted at SPAW COP10, stating in numeral 7 in the SPAW report:

“Secretariat work closely with the Inter-American Sea Turtle Convention (IAC) and call on key countries (Trinidad and Tobago, French Guiana, Guyana, Suriname, and Canada) to cooperate with the SPAW Protocol and IAC to identify and address the threats to the North-West Atlantic leatherback population”

viii. Recommendation to IAC Parties during RFMOs meetings to express their support, specifically at IATTC meeting, from countries that have been successful in implementing effective measures to reduce bycatch by presenting their cases.

Achievements from the Consultative Committee Work Plan 2017-2019

1. Three Resolution proposal drafted to be presented to the IAC 9th Conference of Parties, namely
 - a. Amendment to IAC Financial Guidelines
 - b. Conservation of the Northwest Atlantic Leatherback
 - c. IAC Data Access and Use.
2. Support the IAC Strategy to increase collaboration with Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMO) mostly with IATTC by appointing Ms. Rebecca Regnery to follow up on the RFMO meeting's agenda, and Dr. Bryan Wallace to help prepare recommendations for conservation measures for sea turtles in the IATTC convention area and coordinate with the IAC leatherback task force to represent the IAC at IATTC technical meetings such as Bycatch Working Group to present IAC recommendations. (Support USA, and Sectorial members CCE)
3. Support the process of IAC-Ramsar MoU renewal, it is currently in review by the Ramsar Secretariat. (Support from Argentina and Costa Rica)
4. Support adoption of a Resolution at SPAW Protocol and Cartagena Convention COP for collaboration with IAC on NWA Leatherbacks. This action led to increased awareness on the status of Leatherback Turtles (*Dermochelys coriacea*) in the Northwest Atlantic. (Support Caribbean Netherlands).
5. Support adoption of a Resolution XIII.24 at Ramsar COP13 (2018) titled: "The enhanced conservation of coastal marine turtle habitats and the designation of key areas as Ramsar Sites" (Support from Argentina and Costa Rica).
6. IAC Annual report format revision with the Scientific Committee, and adoption of a table to follow up on the compliance with the loggerhead turtle Resolution.