

Marine Turtle Newsletter

Update: A Global Strategy for Marine Turtles

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In 1995 the IUCN/SSC Marine Turtle Specialist Group published "A Global Strategy for the Conservation of Marine Turtles" for wide distribution around the world. Since its initial production in English, the MTSG and its members have translated the Strategy into Spanish, French, Arabic, Chinese, Portuguese and Farsi. By encouraging conservationists to translate the 24 page Strategy into many languages, the MTSG has extended the influence of the Strategy into numerous areas that are important for marine turtles.

The Strategy includes recommendations to develop and support programs that promote the survival of healthy marine turtle populations and the habitats on which they depend. The cornerstone of the Strategy is the need for conservation to be guided by the constraints of marine turtle biology. It recognizes marine turtles are a shared international resource to be managed for sustainability by involving local communities and integrating local, regional, and national efforts.

The Strategy includes nine primary strategies. "Research and Monitoring" and "Integrated Management for Sustainable Marine Turtle Populations" focus on biology and reducing mortality, while "Regional and International Cooperation" involves the drafting and implementation of agreements. "Evaluation of the Status of Marine Turtles" provides accurate designation of marine turtles by appropriate criteria under international conventions. "Public Awareness, Information and Education", "Community Participation in Conservation", and "Building Capacity for Conservation, Research, and Management" address human aspects of conservation. "Operation of the MTSG" and "Funding" seek to improve our organization and ability to undertake effective programs.

The participation of local communities and the need to incorporate sea turtle conservation in socioeconomic development are recurring themes within the Strategy. The Strategy addresses efforts that need to be undertaken by sea turtle conservationists and governments around the world to ensure the future health of marine turtle populations. To date, marine turtle conservationists from around the world have submitted research items for the as yet unpublished Marine Turtle Action Plan, but actions and implementation mechanisms have not been prioritized. The Strategy complements the Action Plan (which will be eventually be produced as an electronic document and enable us to promote critical conservation efforts and facilitate fund-raising.

Since its publication, the Strategy has directed numerous efforts to conserve marine turtles, such as production of the manual "Research and Management Techniques for the Conservation of Sea Turtles." The effect of the Strategy is expected to last for years to come. Copies are available for US\$ 8.00 from the MTSG Washington D.C. office (address below). Please make checks payable to "MTSG/CMC" and indicate which language edition you would like.

MTSG. 1995. A Global Strategy for the Conservation of Marine Turtles. Prepared by the IUCN/SSC Marine Turtle Specialist Group. 24 pp.

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