

Background of the Marine Turtle Specialist Group

The Marine Turtle Specialist Group was founded in 1966 in response to a growing recognition of the endangered status of marine turtles. Sir Peter Scott asked Archie Carr to chair the group and appoint group members. Archie Carr remained the chairman until 1984, when he stepped down, and Grenville Lucas—then Chairman of SSC—appointed Karen Bjorndal as chairman. Tom Harrisson, Nicholas Mrosovsky, George Balazs and Karen Bjorndal served as either co-chairman or deputy chairman with Archie Carr. Karen Bjorndal has worked with two deputy chairmen: G. Stanley de Silva and George Balazs.

The MTSG was a small group, ranging from 15 to 30 members, until 1990, when the membership was expanded to over 150 members. Today, membership is nearly 200 with individuals from 47 countries.

During Archie Carr's chairmanship, the MTSG operated with a minimum of structure. Peter Pritchard served as Coordinator of Marine Turtle Conservation Programs from 1969 to 1973. In response to the larger size of the group, an Executive Committee composed of the chairman, deputy chairman and seven members was appointed in 1993. In 1994, Marydele Donnelly became Program Officer under support provided by an anonymous donor to the MTSG through the efforts of the Center for Marine Conservation (Washington, DC).

Mission

The IUCN/SSC Marine Turtle Specialist Group exists to develop, support, and implement programs which promote the restoration and survival of healthy marine turtle populations that fulfill their ecological roles.

We accomplish this by :

1. Ensuring that the conservation of marine turtles is guided by the biological constraints of the animals and the best scientific information available.
2. Conserving and managing natural resources and habitats that are fundamental for marine turtles.
3. Emphasizing management for long-term survival of the species.
4. Recognizing that marine turtles are a shared international resource.
5. Involving local communities in conservation management.
6. Seeking assistance and support from people and organizations interested in conserving marine turtles.
7. Integrating local, regional, national, and international efforts through advisement and advocacy.
8. Helping to build capacity of concerned authorities to conserve marine turtles.
9. Adopting and advocating innovative methods.

The IUCN Species Survival Commission

A Global Strategy for the Conservation of **Marine Turtles**

Prepared by IUCN/SSC Marine Turtle Specialist Group

MTSG Officers

Karen Bjorndal: Chairman

George Balazs: Deputy Chairman

Marydele Donnelly: Program Officer

MTSG Executive Committee

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SPECIES SURVIVAL COMMISSION



Center for Marine Conservation



Sultanate of Oman

IUCN

The World Conservation Union