

**Final Recommendations for International Partnership Building Resulting from the Group  
Conversation Session of PIFSC Scientists on April 26, 2013**

**Summary Report for FY 2013 Milestone**

- International partnerships take time and patience to establish and flourish, especially for new researchers on both sides of the relationship. Productive starting points include e-mail and other aspects of the internet. Seek out persons of interest when at symposia. Become familiar through background searches to learn all you can about the individuals and their organizations. Encourage them to do the same about you. Consider using your own financial and other resources, including vacation time, for travel, if not available through your agency. Patience is key to finding the right partners.
- Find good partners in the country (e.g. environmental NGOs), explain experimental design, and provide funds as needed. Explain reasons and methods (e.g. give the statistical analysis as part of the sharing). Approach potential collaborators with caution, especially if it's because you want to improve their methodology. You don't want to offend people, locals, scientists, or other cultures. You don't want to leave without capacity building; it's important to know a system has been established and is self-sustaining before leaving.
- Networking is of key importance to have great collaborations internationally as well as within NOAA. If not for collaborations within NOAA we would not have the chance to work as well and as widely as we do.
- Be patient in finding the right partners; do not rush into a potential relationship just because it's available.
- Keep in mind that although we have goals, our partners live and work in their own nations and they are trying to build careers and lives for themselves.
- Choose your partners among those that have the communication with their government in place; it is your responsibility to make sure you have everything in line with your own government.
- Know your restrictions/limitations ahead of time, they can slow down research and make you look incompetent in the eyes of collaborators and partners.
- Partners may have different priorities, so you have to be sensitive to that. Pick your own affiliation (RCUH, JIMAR, NOAA etc.) based on the sensitivities of your partners and their feelings toward your affiliation.

- Realize that not all partnerships will be long lived and could end suddenly due to promotions and reassignment of your partner. You never know who you will be dealing with in the future, and needing approval from in future partnerships.
- Emphasize to potential partners specifically what it is that you as an individual or your organization can offer them.
- Work with local government and/or groups that are supported by the local government.
- In all nations, conservation must be balanced with human uses ranging for example from consumptive to ecotourism.
- Realize you may need to step out of your comfort level to learn, appreciate, and integrate into a different culture.
- Work hard to disprove negative stereotypes others may have about the USA and NOAA.
- Realize it may be viewed as inappropriate to discuss a country's sea turtle species globally without the presence of the countries involved.
- Be safe, behave and get data. Know and follow the rules: rules of decorum, culture and law.
- Real success will be measured on a decades scale.

DEVELOPMENT OF A PLAN TO STRENGTHEN, EXPAND, AND ENHANCE THE PIFSC'S NETWORK OF SEA-TURTLE RELATED PARTNERSHIPS IN THE EAST ASIA-PACIFIC REGION.

A PSD MTRP FY2013 MILESTONE

By George Balazs

Premise: Paramount in the bridge-building process with the East Asia Pacific Region is the establishment of trust and the demonstration of patience. Joint research projects must involve equality in formulating plans and execution of the work with international partners. Data sharing and joint publications must be carefully coordinated and concurrently consented to at each step of the process, recognizing the significant cultural, language, and political barrier challenges. Nevertheless, the rewards of success from this process have been and will be considerable for all parties.

1. Realization and Recognition Elements of the Partnership Process worthy of Group Conversation within the Center:
  - a) The Center's objectives in international sea turtle collaboration must be founded upon the creative and adaptive strategic ideals of mutual giving, receiving and sharing of ideas, talent, time, resources, information and data commensurate with the meaning, intent and spirit of a professional partnership. The process and ethics are pivotal, rather than peripheral, to international partnership research.
  - b) The foundation of all international partnerships consists of individuals fostering a sustainable one-on-one relationship of sincere mutual interest, trust, respect, friendship, and understanding of differences in scientific approach, goals, priorities, language, government processes, and cultural values and practices. This can best be summarized through recognition that "people make partnerships in how they interact and treat one another".
  - c) Patience, trust and the investment of time are priorities for successful productive and enduring partnerships.

- d) As a creative ingredient, imagination is more important than knowledge in building and sustaining a partnership.
- e) Historical and contemporary policies and actions by the USA, far broader than sea turtles, place NOAA government scientists at a disadvantage in building partnerships in East Asia.
- f) Generosity and humility in proposing and negotiating journal authorships for publishing the results of partnership research are valuable traits for building a bridge to the future.
- g) Partnership trust in international research that becomes fractured, for whatever the reason, will be exceedingly difficult to repair and may take years if ever for trust to be restored. In divisionally structured organizations such as the Center, the loss of trust in one partnership component can adversely impact other partnerships.
- h) There are three components advantageous to the Center in strengthening, expanding and enhancing international sea turtle partnerships: 1) We are based in the globally attractive Hawaiian Islands with a multi-cultural population Asian-Pacific in ancestry distinctly separated from the USA mainland; 2) The Center harbors renowned scientists with demonstrated track records of successful international partnership; and 3) sea turtles have a charisma for some that contribute to partnership building on their behalf. This is coupled with the fact that Hawaii now has an abundance of sea turtles resulting from successful restoration efforts and research involving the Center.
- i) Two key questions that Center scientists should ask themselves before pursuing an international partnership are 1) what is the level and commitment of my professional and personal interest in the relationship and project? and 2) What priority and amount of time can I seriously devote, given my other research activities?
- j) Experience takes time.

## 2. Proposed Center Objectives for International Sea Turtle Research Collaboration

- a) Contribute to the status of knowledge hence conservation of internationally shared sea turtle stocks.
- b) Obtain information and data necessary for stock assessments.
- c) Identify sea turtle losses such as through fisheries , habitat degradation, and other factors in order to minimize those losses to sustainable levels.
- d) Others to be determined.

## 3. Action for Taking the Next Step

The next step will be to bring together Center scientists a) to interactively discuss the above elements in relation to proposed Center objectives; b) to give examples of what strategies for international partnership have shown success, or lack thereof; and c) to determine the greatest present challenges to achieving goals, and how they might be overcome.

With these aims in mind, a 2-3 hour group conversation session will be convened in late April or May 2013 with date and time mutually agreed upon by perspective Center participants. The workshop will be chaired by George Balazs. Irene Nurzia-Humburg will serve as rapporteur to capture key points of the discussions and conclusions to incorporate into a summary document. Invitations will be sent to the following individuals, as well as others within the Center, as interest in participation becomes known.

Abecassis M.

Kobayashi D.

Bigelow K.

Lee H.

Boggs C.

Polovina J.

Brainard R.

Swimmer Y.

Brunson S.

Van Houtan K.

Di Nardo G.

Wang J.

Howell E.

Wetherall J.

Jones T.

Two examples of journal publications resulting from international partnership research by the Center and East Asia scientists.

Polovina, Uchida, Balazs, Howell, Parker and Dutton. 2006. The Kuroshiro Extension Bifurcation Region: A pelagic hotspot for juvenile loggerhead sea turtles. *Deep-Sea Research II* 53 (2006) 326-339.

Kobayashi, Cheng, Parker, Polovina, Kamezaki and Balazs. 2011. Loggerhead turtle movement off the coast of Taiwan: Characterization of a hotspot in the East China Sea and investigation of mesoscale eddies. *ICES Journal of Science*, doi: 10.1093.

**Group Conversation – Objective: To strengthen, expand, and enhance the PIFSC’s network of sea turtle related partnerships in the East Asia-Pacific region.**

**AGENDA**

**April 26, 2013**

**9.00 – 11.00 am**

**Small conference room, PIFSC, Dole Street.**

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|---------------|--|
| 9.00 – 9.05am | Opening welcome remarks by George Balazs.  |
| 9.05 – 10.00  | Contributions by each participant ( $\leq 5$ min) and group questions and comments ( $\leq 5$ min).                      |
| 10.00 – 10.05 | Break.   |
| 10.05 – 10.45 | Reconvene and resume contributions by each participant ( $\leq 5$ min) and group questions and comments ( $\leq 5$ min). |
| 10.45 – 11.00 | Concluding group discussion and possible follow-up actions.  |

**PATIENCE**

**RESPECT**

**TRUST**

Date: Fri, 19 Apr 2013 17:00:40 -1000 (HST)

From: George H. Balazs <[gbalazs@honlab.nmfs.hawaii.edu](mailto:gbalazs@honlab.nmfs.hawaii.edu)>

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Subject: APRIL 26,  
FRIDAY 9-11am Agenda for Group Conversation Session on PIFSC International  
Sea Turtle Partnership Enhancement

Dear Colleagues: Please find attached the basic and brief road-map agenda for our Group Conversation Session on international sea turtle partnership enhancement. The session is just one week away- Friday April 26th from 9-11am in the Dole Street small conference room. Contributions by each participant will be entirely verbal, conversational, interactive, and relaxed. There will be no provision for power points. The session will close promptly at 11am. Irene Nurzia-Humburg will take notes. There will be no post-session 'homework' assignments.

The document that accompanies the attached agenda was previously sent out on March 20 and 27. The thoughts set forth are primarily those that I feel are germane, based on professional and personal experiences working over the years in Japan, Taiwan, China, New Caledonia, Samoa,



and Fiji. Some may be relevant to the group thoughts, and some may not be. They are offered in the spirit of contributing to a reservoir of ideas for moving forward in international research relationships- no matter where they are globally.

I view each of us as individual streams flowing seaward on our independent loosely interconnected pathways to achieve Center research goals, data, and publications. We all have our own styles, experiences, independence, knowledge, and ways of doing business. This diversity brings strength, creativity, and accomplishment. But somewhere downstream, before reaching the sea, how nice it would be if our skills and abilities, successes and failures, would flow first into a reservoir- coming together for a period of time- to learn from one another, synergize, and grow. This is how I view our forthcoming session. Aloha, George



**Participants of group conversation session April 26, 2013; From left to right: R. Brainard, D. Francke, S. Hakala, S. Brunson, G. Balazs, T. Jones, I. Nurzia-Humburg, J. Wang, K. Van Houtan and K. Bigelow.**