

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA
GAINESVILLE, 32611

DEPARTMENT OF ZOOLOGY
223 BARRAM HALL
904-392-1107

April 20, 1981

Dr. Michel Martin
Secretary General
SEPANRIT
Centre d'Etudes de Geographie Tropicale
Domaine Universitaire de Bordeaux
33405 Talence, France

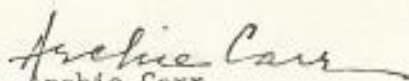
Dear Dr. Martin:

Mr. William Duke of IUCN has sent me a copy of your letter to him with the enclosed assessment of sea turtle problems in French overseas territories. This is an extraordinarily constructive document, and I hope it will receive the attention that it deserves, particularly in the Caribbean.

In only one regard do I have reservations regarding the views that you express. This is in respect to turtle farming, and your suggestion that if farms are self-supporting as regards new stock, and if they cause no direct environmental disruption, they should logically be endorsed by conservationists. To me, the most serious and inescapable adverse effect of turtle farming is the extension of markets, and the resulting stimulus to poaching wild populations and smuggling products derived from them. Until laws and enforcement are effective everywhere, farms and international commerce can only increase the pressure on wild species, and weaken the efforts of IUCN, CITES and other organized efforts to protect them.

But the purpose of this letter is not to air a difference of opinion about turtle culture. It is rather to express admiration and gratitude for your thoughtful and forceful analyses of the status of marine turtles in strategic parts of their range. If the Marine Turtle Specialist Group can be of any assistance in implementing the changes for which you reveal a need I hope you will let me know.

Sincerely yours,


Archie Carr
Chairman, Marine Turtle Specialist
Group, IUCN
Technical Director, Caribbean
Conservation Corporation