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To: Members of the Marine Turtle Specialist Group in the Pacific Region

From: Karen Bjorndal, Chairman

Dr. Itaru Uchida and I met during the recent CITES meetings in Ottawa. Dr. Uchida proposed that we hold a regional meeting of the Specialist Group in Japan in August 1988. The mayor of the city of Hiwasa has offered to provide a meeting place and some funding. Hiwasa is famous for its long-term involvement with and protection of its loggerhead nesting population. The timing of the meeting was chosen to coincide with the annual sea turtle festival for which the city is well-known. The mayor would like us to be present for the festival and to devote one evening to a town meeting with brief presentations and a question-and-answer session. The people of the area are very interested in sea turtles and anxious to be more informed.

Our tentative plan is for the group to meet for three days in Hiwasa and then travel to Himeji, the site of Dr. Uchida's aquarium, for two days. Dr. Uchida will open the session with a review of sea turtle biology and conservation as they relate to Japan. Each participant will be expected to present a short, informal review of activities in his/her region. Proposed agenda topics are:

1. Shared sea turtle resources of the region--with particular emphasis on Indonesia and the tortoiseshell trade.
2. Incidental catch of sea turtles with a history and update on TEDs.
3. Problems of poaching and its control in the conservation of sea turtles.
4. Traditional handcrafts using sea turtle products in the Pacific.

Unfortunately, because of the difficulty in obtaining funds for travel, we have to limit the number of people invited. Our proposed list of participants is: George Balazs, Karen Bjorndal, G.S. de Silva, Huang Chu-chien, Colin Limpus, Rene Marquez, Michael McCoy, Njoman Nuitja, Ismu Suwelo, Siow Kuan Tow, and Itaru Uchida. We will try to obtain funds to support travel and expenses of all participants. In addition to the funds offered by the Town Council of Hiwasa, the Japanese Tortoiseshell Association is willing to help fund the meeting.

Will you please let me know as soon as possible whether you will be able to attend the meetings. If you will be able to attend, please send me an estimate of the cost of your airline ticket to Japan and tell me if you will require funding or whether your agency could pay all or part of your expenses. Finally, Dr. Uchida and I realize that some members may feel uncomfortable accepting support from the Japanese Tortoiseshell Association; please let me know if you would prefer that your expenses not be paid by that Association.

If you have any suggestions for the format or agenda of the meeting, please let me know. Also, I would appreciate receiving any ideas you may have for other sources of funds for the meeting.