Copy

August 1979

SELF-ASSIGNED DUTIES OF THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN,

IUCN/SSC MARINE TURTLE GROUP

1. Serve as an information officer to the Group Chairman by forwarding copies of relevant publications, news articles and correspondence.

2. Carry out special assignments as may be recommended by the Group Chairman.

3. Make recommendations for conservation action to the Group Chairman.

4. Correspond and interact with all Group members in order to determine conservation and research problems.

George H. Balazs
UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII
Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology
Coconut Island • P. O. Box 1346 • Kaneohe, Hawaii 96744

QUEENSLAND
NATIONAL PARKS
AND WILDLIFE
SERVICE

Office Northern Regional Centre

Address National Parks and Wildlife
Service
Pallarenda, Townsville, 4810
Australia

Telephone

Date 6 April, 1982

Prof. A. Carr
Department of Zoology
223 Bartram Hall
University of Florida
GAINESVILLE 32611
United States of America

Dear Archie,

Here are some personal notes to keep you informed.

The eastern Australian green turtles again jumped dramatically this last season and my assistant could have walked from turtle to turtle on parts of Raine Island. I now have 8 years data on my green fluctuations - you have over 25 years for yours. George Balazs has about 8-10 years for his greens. Do we have enough yet to put them together and look for patterns? I'm interested if you are.

Our courtship studies went beyond our expectations and gave us the good data base to firm up ideas we were already developing. We sampled about 113 courting groups, capturing the entire group in many instances. Of 68 females captured while mounted we have recovered about 40 subsequently nesting - spread over about 100 km radius from the courtship area. Unfortunately I only monitored about half the available nesting islands in the area so we probably missed the rest on the unmonitored islands. However we now have a good story to tell about movements from courtship to nesting. The basic fact out of this was that our females didn't usually nest on the closest rookery.

In addition our recaptures of tagged males was impressive. We can now discuss the remigration interval for courting males - it's very different to that of the females both in frequency of occurrence and timing. Some of the males we have watched over 2 or more seasons appear to have mating home ranges that they returned to.

I look forward to the day when you and I can sit round a table and talk through the consequences of this data I'm gathering. Some of the things I say must be almost heretical at times and I probably need the steadying influence of someone of your experience.

Give my regards to Marjorie, Anne and Karen and look after yourself.

COL

Himeji City Aquarium | Tegarayama, Himeji City
670, Japan

April 14th 1982

Dr.Archie Carr
Chairman,
IUCN Marine Turtle
Specialist Group

Dear Dr. Carr :

Thank you very much for your letter on meeting of marine turtle specialist group. I was very glad to see them.

As you know, Fisical year in Japan it's usually begin from April to March of next year. So we have to make a estimate of next year budget plan until October or November. It is a little dificult to propose my travel plan after decided of new year budget.

If I can have a rough plan of new year meeting (where, when ....) until October. We can propose it in new year budget.

If we have a meeting in this fisical year. I will be attend to meeting by my own expense. If the meeting held in Southeast Asia. It's better for me,because it's less expensive than other place. But this is my own discretion. I will agree to proposal from chairman and member's decision.

With best regards and many thanks.

Sincerely

I.Uchida

Dr.I.Uchida
Director
Himeji City Aquarium
Nobusue,Tegarayama,
Himeji City670. Japan
姫路市立水族館
Tel 0792-89-0321

Telephone: 076-21246

Your Ref:
Our Ref: Prk.Tr.2601/4(5.)

MALAYSIA

STATE FISHERIES DEPARTMENT,
KUALA TRENGGANU,
MALAYSIA.

4th April 1982

Dr. Archie Carr,
Department of Zoology,
University of Florida,
Gainsville, 32611,
U.S.A.

Dear Dr. Carr,

I believe it is better to have the meeting in a place where the turtles are and at the nesting season. I did try to organize a meeting here for our group but failed to realise it because of some admistrative difficulties. If you do think of having a meeting here in June, July next year or year after, please make an official request to me.

2. For the meeting this year, I am able to obtain own finacing.

With best regards.

Yours faithfully,

(Siow Kuan Tow)
State Director of Fisheries,
Trengganu.

skt/wk

EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS 61920

Division of
Life Sciences

Botany Department	217-581-3624
Environmental Biology	217-581-3011
Zoology Department	217-581-3126

1 April, 1982

Dr. Archie Carr
Dept. of Zoology
University of Florida
Gainesville, Fl 32611

Dear Archie:

Thank you for your letter concerning possible meeting sites for the Marine Turtle Specialist Group. My own preferences would be Bali along with the World National Parks Congress or Kuala Lumpur along with the SSC Meetings in October. If all goes well I will be in India at that time and could get to either meetings.

I have only little news to report on the technology transfer of the exculder device to Malaysia. Siow is anxious to go ahead with the building of the device by Malaysian gear specialists so I have sent him the plans along with some recommendations by Mr Charles Taylor of NMFS for their particular nets. I have also written to Mona Bjonkland of UNEP and Jim Sternberg of CEE to see if either might be able to finance a two week trip for Taylor to supervise the initial building of excluder panels for the Malaysian trawlers. I am waiting to hear their reply.

In the meantime, I also continue to wait on results of a Indo-American Fellowship for next year. I am really getting impatient to get back in the field. If something doesn't come through soon I am going to have to start taking ice water showers. My latest is that I also applied for a temporary position (3 yrs) at the National University of Singapore. So far nothing on that either.

I hope Karen is not having too many problems with the final stages of the World Conference proceedings. She has sounded rather harried in her last letters.

Hope all is well in Gainesville and that I will next see you in some far off place.

Best wishes,

Edward O. Moll
Professor of Zoology

NATAL PARKS, GAME AND FISH PRESERVATION BOARD

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2 April 1982

Prof. Archie Carr,
Chairman,
IUCN Marine Turtle Specialist Group,
Department of Zoology,
223 Bartram Hall,
University of Florida,
Gainesville,
32611,
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

Dear Archie,

Thank you for your letter of 17 March that came to hand today. The problem as you outline it is a serious one and is compounded by the ad hoc nature of our past meetings. Speaking for myself a firm date, even 5 years ahead, would greatly simplify planning for such a meeting and I believe that I could seek funds for such trips given the time.

Wayne's suggestion of a savings account, by which I assume he means personal, is simply out of the question as far as I am concerned and I'm sure that this would apply to a number of us who are 'civil servants'. (Bureaucrats over your way !!)

Your suggestion re Bali has possibilities. My Director will be attending and my Board is keen that I should go as well so although there are a few minor problems (re South Africans attendance, etc) there is a distinct possibility that I could be there.

If it were possible to organise a meeting of the Group this would make my attendance all the more worthwhile and valuable. In closing the matter of meetings therefore:-

(i) I should be most interested to hear whether a turtle meeting could be held in Bali.
(ii) Meetings should be set at least two years ahead so that planning for funding can be entered into.

Our turtle season has just closed with a smaller population of leatherbacks and our second best year for loggerheads. Nothing really out of the ordinary.

All the very best and my regards to your good lady.

Yours sincerely,

George.

DR. G. R. HUGHES
for : DIRECTOR

GRH/klh

Biol. René Márquez M.
APDO. POSTAL 79-052
COL. DOCTORES
MEXICO 7, D. F.
06720

April 1st 1982.

Dear Dr. Carr:

Upon your bulletin dated on march 17, 1982 and the request there in. I must say that of course I prefer Australia or - Bali, but for economics aspects will be more easy to go to a - near place v. gr. Europa or Hawaii.

Maybe if I can get from outside the tiquet, will be more - easy for me to get money per diem. Any way the future here is- not clear for the money devaluation and the governmental change.

Maybe in Europa will be more easy to get finance, and you- know more about that than me.

I hope every body will be able to assist. Let me know any- advance in this way, thanks.

C O R D I A L L Y .

M. en C. RENE MARQUEZ MILLAN.

RIJKSMUSEUM VAN NATUURLIJKE HISTORIE

RAAMSTEEG 2, LEIDEN, NEDERLAND — TELEFOON 071-14 38 44

CORRESPONDENTIE-ADRES: POSTBUS 9517, 2300 RA LEIDEN

Professor A. F. Carr,
Department of Zoology,
223 Bartram Hall
University of Florida
Gainesville, 32611
U.S.A.

Leiden, April 2nd, 1982

Dear Archie,

Thank you for your letter of March 17th, 1982, with reference to a meeting of the Marine Turtle Specialist Group. I had heard already that IUCN favours a meeting in Bali, but I understand this choice is based mainly on reasons of policy to score a good mark with Indonesia, and not so much on chelonological reasons. Personally (given that the funds are available) I would have preferred: 1, Australia; 2, Malaysia; 3, Venezuela.

This raises the matter of funds, and Wayne King's suggestion that the members of the Group must procure the funds themselves. Indeed, whenever and wherever possible, the members should try and find the necessary funds, but if they do not succeed in this IUCN should arrange for funds, be it from their own budget, or by obtaining grants especially for the meeting. The country, where the meeting is held, can sometimes help by informing the ambassadors of the countries where the various members live, stressing the importance of the meeting and the necessity of Group Members being present, and asking the ambassadors to pass on this information, adding that it would be greatly appreciated if their Government would have Mr. . . . . to attend. This sometimes helps as I know from the past. An invitation to the Group Member stressing the importance of his attendance may help the Member when he does a try at obtaining funds.

I believe that if the Group is to function well, it is essential that all members should attend. Only in this way IUCN and Conservation can profit from the knowledge of the group members, and the discussions will help the members to obtain further vital knowledge beneficial to their work, and it will stimulate their work.

You write that there have been two meetings in U.S.A., that may be so, but since I joined the group (in 1961) we had two meetings at Mayaguez, the last one meeting at Miami/Grand Cayman, and, of course, the World Conference in 1979. There is no doubt that some of the members in other countries would be happy if the meeting would be held in their country, especially as they will have difficulty in attending meetings far away from home. Scientists in Australia, Malaysia, and Indonesia (and other countries, could be added) are somewhat isolated, and a meeting in their country would break through this isolation. Members attending meetings may like to see something of what their colleagues are doing, and a visit to a

far away country would be of great interest to them. This means that the Group certainly has members that would be glad to visit USA.

The only problem is, that if funds are not available to have all members attend, a meeting in USA will have a very strong USA attendance, and this may give the impression of matters being decided by USA, other countries having little say in matters. Those travelled much, and visited several out of the way places and thus part of the dominating USA is widespread, and it may hamper matters when conservation, treaties (even assistance) are considered.

Thus my conclusion is: a meeting at the other end of the world, and preferably 'down under' would be appreciated, if this cannot be done a meeting nearer to the West, e.g., in Cyprus (where tourist projects are developing), or even as Greece, or in Nice a U.S.A. will have success if you can get all members to attend.

George Ballas is right when he urged members to exchange publications, and the 'Council' of the group can do a lot of good by keeping the members informed. In this connection your letter is very welcome. In the past we had to learn about developments by hearsay or by friends who attended SSC meetings and brought documents home. Meeting once again may do much for cooperation.

As soon as I know, I shall try and inquire about funds. The trouble is that everyone is short of money and the Government is drastically cutting down on expenses. People who have retired (though they still come to work every day) do suffer from this.

With best wishes

Yours sincerely

Leo

L.D. Brouwerman

P.S. Excuse my handwriting, but I am writing this letter at Schiphol (Amsterdam Airport) waiting for my flight to Sicily, where my wife and I will spend a fortnight's holiday. I did write to Ballas once again three weeks ago, but no reply as yet. If or may when a Leiden or Cyprus USA member is still no reply, I shall ask the Honorary Consul General of the Netherlands to try and find out why our note has not yet been published

R

QUEENSLAND
NATIONAL PARKS
AND WILDLIFE
SERVICE

Office Northern Regional Centre

Address National Parks and Wildlife Service
PALLARENDA, Townsville, 4810
Australia

Telephone

Date 6 April 1982

Prof. A. Carr
Department of Zoology
223 Bartram Hall
University of Florida
GAINESVILLE 32611
United States of America

Dear Archie,

Re: SSC SEATURTLE GROUP MEETING

1. Re Australian Venue: Budgeting for the 1982-1983 financial year is in progress at present in my Department. It should be completed by late April. If you want to stand a reasonable chance of my Department assisting in funding a meeting we need to have your request for the Director's consideration by the end of April. After that the chances are greatly reduced. I've already given you my suggestions for an Australian meeting.

2. If it's not in Australia then obviously the closer the better I like it. Hawaii is okay. Bali is just as easy for me.

   If I have an official request to attend the meeting and am asked to present one or more papers then there is a high probability that my Department will fund me to Hawaii or Bali - I'm not sure about further afield. Europe, Canada, North Pole would exclude me. I want to be involved because I believe I have something to contribute and within Australasia our turtle stocks are important.

3. Timing: it looks like the October in Bali meeting will again fall within my field study time. May be I spend too much time in the field with turtles.

4. For your information: My Department has invited a representative of the Philippines Government turtle research/conservation effort to spend up to 5 months with me for training and experience. There is a good chance that the whole exercise will be funded by Australian Development Assistance Bureau and Queensland National Parks and Wildlife. If you know of one other area with an inexperienced person

.../2..

responsible for a country's turtle conservation I could accommodate them at the same time. They need to make the approach to me not visa versa.

Col

COL LIMPUS

MUSEUM OF COMPARATIVE ZOOLOGY
The Agassiz Museum

HARVARD UNIVERSITY · CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02138 · TEL. 617 495-2466

April 2 1982.

Dear Dr. Carr,

Your letter concerning a meeting arrived in time for me to include a reply with the enclosed letter. I would personally be very happy to attend a meeting in Australia and would be able to provide my own travel expenses (I am long overdue for a visit to my dear old mother). The period following the IUCN meeting in Bali in October would be fine - but the sooner I know the easier for me to plan my work schedule. I agree that some other members will have difficulty raising the $. Perhaps Robert Truland of Chelonia Institute could be approached for assistance for the needy. If we could schedule some substantative business - perhaps based on the World Turtle strategy - then IUCN-UNDP might spring for some travel. We should in any case request IUCN to send Brian Groombridge to our meeting so that we can complete his education.

Keep me informed. Regards Perran.

P.S. I hope the enclosure is a balanced and constructive approach to what I see as an important issue for resolution. P.

中国科学院动物研究所
INSTITUTE OF ZOOLOGY
ACADEMIA SINICA
7 Zhongguancun Lu, Haitien
Beijing, China

April 5, 1982

Dear Dr, Archie Carr:

I have received your letter of March 17, 1982. Because we know very little about the members of other countries, I have no suggestions about the location and the funds for the meeting. I am very grateful to you for your help and concern to the research and conservation of the Chinese sea turtles.

I wish the Marine Turtle Specialist Group every success in its efforts, under your vigorous leadership.

Sincerely your,

黄祝堅

Huang Chu-chien

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE · DEPARTMENT OF ZOOLOGY
DOWNING STREET · CAMBRIDGE CB2 3EJ
TELEPHONE 0223 358717 ext 540

March 26, 1982

Dear Archie,

It was good to hear from you. I think it would indeed be valuable to try and arrange a meeting on sea-turtles. Unfortunately I really do not have access to funds which could support anything at a distance, though hopefully this will change for the better in the near future ; I am applying for a number of jobs, and expect that something will turn up soon. Personally, I think that a regional meeting at the Bali Conference would be very useful. But again, in spite of my having contributed several things of direct interest to that Conference, such as a general marine environmental report on Indonesia, two recent papers for IUCN (one on marine 'genetic resources',and one specifically on 'traditional marine conservation' in Indonesia), the basic marine work on the Bali Barat Reserve which will be a show-piece (if all goes well) at the Conference (the Management Plan, and a descriptive paper to be published in Biological Conservation), it does not look as though I will be at the meeting. I may, however, ask about this if I manage to visit IUCN (Gland) in the early part of April. If you can make any recommendations in that direction , I would be most grateful. I would hope that being something of a Southeast-Asia marine conservation man, and having put together the review of Indonesian sea-turtles, together with Wjoman, something would be possible in terms of expenses.

I agree with your view that the U.S. would be difficult. What about a meeting right here in Cambridge ? There is, as you know,a great deal of species-conservation interest centred here ; I would think that it would constitute an excellent venue for an internationally-oriented meeting.

Thank you for consulting me ; I hope that my comments may be of some use. If you have any specific questions at a later date, do please get in touch. Is there any possibility of your being over here in the foreseeable future ? If so, and you have the time, it would be good to meet up.

Yours sincerely,

Nick

Dr N.V.C. Polunin

Sarvan Kumar
c/o Mr Brenda Bhartar
Madras Snake Park Trust
Raj Bhavan P.O.
MADRAS - 600022

To
Dr. Archie Carr
Department of Zoology
University of Florida
Gainesville, Florida 32601

Sub: Reappointment to IUCN Marine Turtle Specialist Group Membership

Dear Dr. Carr

Thank you for your Memorandum dated December 16, 1981 which I received only yesterday on my return from the field.

During 1981 the reports on field surveys I undertook in India were contracted to WWF-India and as such I was unable to send these reports to the IUCN as I wished. I am certain that these reports, however, will become available to IUCN if they were to contact WWF-India directly, the concerned individual being

Lt. Col. J.C. Sawhney (Retd)
Executive Secretary, WWF-India
c/o Godrej and Boyce,
Lalbaug, Parel,
Bombay - 400012, India.

The reports refer to sea turtle surveys I undertook in (a) Gujerat State, twice (b) The Andaman and

हवाई पत्र
Aerogramme

2.70 INDIA

Dr. Archie Carr
Department of Zoology
University of Florida
Gainesville, Florida 32601
U.S.A.

दूसरा मोड़ SECOND FOLD

भेजने वाले का नाम और पता:-
Sender's Name and Address:-

Satish Bhaskar
c/o Mrs. Brenda Bhaskar
Madras Snake Park Trust
Raj Bhavan P.O., Madras-600022
INDIA

इस फार्म के अन्दर कुछ न रखिये
No Enclosures Allowed

पहला मोड़ FIRST FOLD

Nicobar islands (c) Kerala State (d) Southern Nadu (e) Andhra Pradesh, all in India.

Despite my inability to send reports to IUCN in 1981, I look forward to serving another, hopefully much more active, three years as a member of the IUCN Marine turtle Group.

As for news unrelated to my surveys, Miss Ann Joseph, a volunteer working with WWF-India's Tamil Nadu Branch was given a license by the State's Forest Department to organize the collection of turtle eggs for a hatchery. Forty four clutches of L. olivacea were collected and [illegible] were later released. With best wishes,

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA
GAINESVILLE, 32611

DEPARTMENT OF ZOOLOGY
223 BARTRAM HALL
904-392-1107

May 21, 1982

Dr. Jaques Berney
Executive Secretary
CITES
c/o IUCN
Avenue du Mont-Blanc
CH-1196 Gland
Switzerland

Dear Dr. Berney:

In belated response to your note of 16 April I can only say that my personal view of the Surinam and the French petitions for down-listing *Chelonia* in their areas remains as expressed in my previous letters to you on this subject. Both proposals have been carefully planned, with due attention given to the diverse aspects of the undertakings. But the aim of both sets of aspirant turtle farmers is to develop international commerce. They want to be allowed to keep alive and extend demand and markets for turtle products, and they propose to do this before any mechanism for controlling the illegal exploitation and smuggling of wild populations has been perfected. The very existence of CITES recognizes this fundamental and troublesome relationship between farming an endangered animal and providing security for the natural species.

In the case of crocodilians, a classic precedent often cited as justification for regional delisting, the markets were already so extensive, so intrenched, and so vigorously defended by powerful entrepreneurs that all efforts to kill international traffic in crocodilian products died out. With the green turtle, however, no such avid, widespread demand has ever existed. But there is unlimited latent, potential demand; and the farmers will, quite naturally, cultivate this carefully. As markets grow, pressure on wild turtles grows with them, and the survival outlook of the species declines.

That is my chief objection to farming the green turtle - and thus, to down-listing it. And as CITES grants down-listing petitions, in response to recurrent parochial farming aspirations all around the range of the genus, other attendant abuses of the wild stocks are sure to multiply.

I am therefore, personally, opposed to delisting either the Surinam or the French island population. I should emphasize that this opinion is my own, and not necessarily the consensus of the Marine Turtle Group.

Sincerely yours,

Archie Carr

Archie Carr
Chairman, Marine Turtle Specialist Group,
IUCN

cc: G. Lucas, W. King, G. Balazs

SINCE NINETEEN HUNDRED "THE VOICE OF CONSERVATION"

Should it then be downlisted in Cites & ESA?

April 26, 1982

Dr. George Balazs
Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology
P. O. Box 1346
Coconut Island
Kaneohe, Hawaii 96744

Dear George:

Many thanks for your letter.

The question of the status of the leatherback turtle is one of those tricky ones. On strictly biological grounds, I don't think it meets the official IUCN criteria for "endangered" for the following reasons:

i) It has world-wide distribution.
ii) Its habitat is essentially intact - or at least it is not known to be disadvantaged or displaced by habitat alterations either at sea or on the nesting beaches.
iii) It seems to number over 100,000 mature female individuals, with presumably large but totally unknown numbers of males and juveniles as well, not a bad population for a giant reptile.
iv) Although the steadily increasing world population estimates reflect better knowledge rather than an increasing world population the fact remains that no decline has been documented.

There are of course some arguments in favor of "endangered" status. These include:

i) Many populations are subject to stress, either from poaching of animals on the nesting beach by locals or undesirably high levels of egg harvest.
ii) The world population is not as high as that of most other sea turtle species.
iii) Uniform protection for all sea turtles is probably easier to enforce than differential protection (though the other side of the coin is that credibility may be weakened and attention taken away from species like Kemp's ridley, that are endangered by any yardstick).
iv) Funds for leatherback research and conservation may be less abundant if the species is not considered threatened.

FLORIDA AUDUBON SOCIETY
~~921 Lake Sybelia Drive • P.O. Drawer 7~~ • Maitland, Florida 32751
1101 Audubon Way (305) 647-2615

v) Like many species, the leatherback may only be 'safe' as long as it is listed as "endangered".
vi) Complete protection for the minor nesting colonies, an obvious desideratum, may be harder to achieve if one can no longer point out to the governments of countries such as the Dominican Republic, Trinidad, Papua New Guinea, etc. that the species is endangered on a world-wide basis.

Regarding the question of who should hold the ultimate authority to make decisions regarding appropriate category (endangered, threatened, or whatever), obviously the technical input for this comes from the Specialist Group. However, if the group is not unanimous, some kind of refereeing at the administrative level is necessary. Also, I support some IUCN administrative role in establishing categaories even when the Specialist Group is in agreement just to make sure that the diferent groups are utilizing an approximately similar concept of what constitutes endangered, threatened, etc. Otherwise, there could be "conservative" groups using "threatened" even for very rare, disappearing species, and others using "endangered" routinely for any taxon for which they felt any concern.

Obviously, the real object of the exercise is to save species, not to adjudge categories just for their own sake. The question then should be - what category best serves the conservation of sea turtles generally? I doubt if the leatherback is likely to suffer particularly if it is downgraded, since there is negligible international trade in the species, and it is distinctive enough even at product or biochemical levels to be easy to distinguish from other sea turtles when in trade. Egg poachers (legal or otherwise) are likely to pay little attention to formal status as dictated by IUCN. The species needs local good management (especially in Mexico and Malaysia), which does require a conservative management scheme combined with close population monitoring so that prompt action can be taken if a progressive decline becomes apparent.

Personally I would prefer that the species be listed as "protected" and that we were not obliged to make difficult judgements that result in thrusting together hundreds or thousands of totally dissimilar species, that range from overly abundant world-wide species to probably extinct forms, under the single heading of "endangered".

I commend Groombridge for raising the question of the status of the leatherback. In compiling the Red Data Book account for this species, he was clearly confronted with the question, and he proceeded to seek advice on answering it.

Sincerely yours,

Peter

Peter C.H. Pritchard, Ph.D.
Vice President - Science and Research

CC: A. Carr [redacted]
Brian Groombridge
Perran Ross
N. Mrosovsky

P.S. Glad you liked the sea turtle poster. I support your choices for a site for a Turtle Group Meeting. Malaysia may be an even higher priority than Australia, since action is needed at both the Talang Islands and the Trengganu nesting grounds to reduce the egg harvest significantly, and a meeting locally may be a good way of focussing the necessary attention and pressure.

UNION INTERNATIONALE POUR LA CONSERVATION DE LA NATURE ET DE SES RESSOURCES
INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

COMMISSION DE LA SAUVEGARDE DES ESPÈCES - SPECIES SURVIVAL COMMISSION

Dr. Karen A. Bjorndal
Chairman
IUCN/SSC Marine Turtle Group
Caribbean Conservation Corporation
Dept of Zoology
University of Florida
Gainesville, Florida 32611
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Dear Karen,

At a recent meeting between staff members of IUCN, CITES and WWF International, it was decided that a new IUCN position statement was needed with respect to the ranching and commercial utilisation of sea turtles. The statement would be presented at the next meeting of the CITES Parties in Ottawa in July 1987, and would have an important influence on future decisions by CITES Parties on sea turtle management.

The last position statement on this subject was approved by the 55th session of the IUCN Council in May 1975. I attach a copy. I have no doubt that the Marine Turtle Specialist Group will want to work on a new version and this letter serves as a formal invitation to produce the first draft of such a document.

To avoid any misunderstanding, I am outlining in detail the procedure involved. We would like the Marine Turtle Specialist Group to produce the first draft of the document by the end of this year (31 December). This would then be reviewed by the Species Survival Commission and if changes or clarification are required, these would then be communicated back to the MTSG. Once the Commission has endorsed the document, it would be submitted to the IUCN Council, which meets in May 1987 for ratification.

There are a few points which you will need to consider.

1. All IUCN position statements must concord with the World Conservation Strategy (copy attached). The WCS encourages the sustainable utilisation of species (commercially or otherwise) as being one of the most effective ways of achieving long-lasting conservation. In other words, there is nothing per se wrong with utilisation of turtles, providing that it is at a sustainable level. For this exercice you should, therefore, avoid taking a stance of "no utilisation" in principle. Rather you should consider the scientific facts to assess what sorts and levels of utilisation are sustainable, and what are not. Presumably, this would vary from species to species and population to population. You should also consider the likely impact of ranching on utilisation. Will it make utilisation more or less sustainable? I suppose this might also vary with species and population. The use of ranching for species recovery is another issue. Would it have such a role with Kemp's Ridley? This is a very complex subject and I am sure that you do not need me to point out all the implications. I just give you these ideas to start the discussion.

2. The definition of ranching which you should use is the same as that employed in the 1975 position statement (see preamble No 5).

I realise that this will involve the MTSG, and you in particular as Chairman, in a great deal of work. However, I know that you will see it as an important task that needs to be done. How you decide to put the document together is of course your decision as Chairman of the MTSG. I wish you the very best in this endeavour, and please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions.

Yours sincerely,

Patricia Chable
Acting Executive Officer
Species Survival Commission

Encl.

cc. G. Lucas
S. Stuart

INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

PRINCIPLES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCERNING THE COMMERCIAL UTILISATION OF MARINE TURTLES **

Preamble

1. These Principles and Recommendations concerning the commercial utilization of marine turtles have been approved by the Executive Board of IUCN. They are based on proposals made by an *ad hoc* Task Force set up to review the exploitation of marine turtles and their products, as endorsed by the IUCN Survival Service Commission.

2. They have been prepared with special reference to the green turtles (*Chelonia*) but apply equally to the six other species of marine turtles. Because the majority of the distinct populations of marine turtles are extinct, threatened or rapidly declining, all species of marine turtles are considered to be in danger.

3. The reasons for the extinction and decline of populations of these species include particularly exploitation for meat, hides, eggs and other products (including souvenirs), massive killing of turtles in the trawl nets of fishing fleets as well as increasing habitat destruction and disturbance.

4. The situation has become even more critical with the expansion of international commercial trade in sea turtles and their products.

5. There is a distinction between turtle farming and turtle ranching: a turtle farm implies that the unit is completely independent of wild stocks; a turtle ranch is a unit dependent on wild populations for eggs or turtles with the animals kept in varying degrees of captivity.

Principles and Recommendations

6. As regards trawling, urgent action should be taken to encourage the use of nets designed to minimize undesirable catches of turtles, and research into this question should be given funding priority.

7. As regards souvenirs, the taking and preparing of turtles and turtle products for the main purpose of souvenirs should be strongly discouraged.

** Approved by
55th Session of Executive Board,
1,2,3 May 1975

8. As regards primary exploitation (meat, hides, eggs), where it can be demonstrated that local turtle populations can tolerate exploitation, this should be done only by peoples traditionally dependent on such populations with methods ensuring minimal waste and for local utilization (but then only if such peoples desire or need to continue this exploitation).

9. The diversion of wild sea turtle resources from traditional use by local people, or the expansion of that use, to satisfy or extend the demands of international commerce, is condemned.

10. The mass transfer of turtles or turtle eggs from one region to another in order to sustain turtle farming or turtle ranching projects is unacceptable because of the possible genetic consequences as well as the likelihood of depleting local stocks.

11. In recognition of the deteriorating energy and food resources of the world, it is advocated that wherever possible any turtle culture be maintained at the lowest applicable trophic level.*

12. Farming objectives which lead to the expansion of existing markets resulting possibly in an increased exploitation of wild turtles are unacceptable. However, it would be consistent with the foregoing principles to accept turtle farming whose products will replace wild turtle products in existing traditional markets. The acceptability of any farm should be demonstrated by suitably designed and independently evaluated tests and data. Moreover, those ranching endeavours satisfying the above conditions and which can be shown not to harm wild turtle populations are also acceptable.

13. Funds should be provided for the preparation of informative pamphlets to promote the application of the foregoing principles and immediate measures should be taken to ensure the early implementation of such action as is necessary to conserve the marine turtle resource in accordance with these principles.

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*All organisms are classified as producers, primary consumers (herbivores), secondary consumers (carnivores), or decomposers according to the place they occupy in the food chain of an ecosystem. This placement is termed "trophic level". Therefore, herbivorous species should subsist on a diet based on plant protein and carnivorous species, animal protein.

2-16-83

Wayne - Archie

You've heard me mention it in the past when you were in Hawaii, and more recently I've discussed it with Karen. However, it now seems more certain than ever. Within the next few months, probably by June 1, my employment will be formally transferred to NMFS, Honolulu Laboratory. As you know, in the past it's been strictly through a contract administered by the University of Hawaii. In other words, in the past I have not been working directly for NMFS. However, in the future I will be. I really have no choice in the matter, if I am to remain gainfully employed in sea turtle biology. On the other hand, I must admit that my association with NMFS here in Honolulu has thus far been

very stimulating and professionally rewarding. It may be otherwise elsewhere in the "system" but here in Honolulu it has been good.

For reasons on both "sides of the fence" (IUCN and NMFS), I plan to resign my "officer position" in the Turtle Group as of June 1. However, please understand that I will continue doing exactly what I have been doing for the Group. The only difference will be that I intend to "do it" as a regular Member, and not as a Deputy Chairman. A copy of the self-assigned duties that I wrote up for myself back in 1979 are attached to this letter.

I clearly have mixed feelings in having to write this to the two of you -- but it is the way it has to be.

Best regards,

George Balazs

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA
GAINESVILLE, 32611

DEPARTMENT OF ZOOLOGY
223 BARTRAM HALL
904-392-1107

28 July 1983

To: Members of the Marine Turtle Specialist Group

From: Karen Bjorndal

Regarding: Description of the status of sea turtle populations

During the meeting of the Marine Turtle Specialist Group held at Tortuguero, Costa Rica, on 24-25 July, Peter Pritchard suggested a new system for describing the status of sea turtle populations. The Group agreed that our present one-word description of the status of each species is not sufficient. A subcommittee was appointed (George Hughes, Colin Limpus, Peter Pritchard and myself) to review Peter's suggested system. The resulting, slightly modified method is attached.

Each species, where appropriate, will be divided into geographic populations, and each population will be coded according to its past trend, present status and current trend. For example, a population that is judged to be extremely depleted, decreasing and endangered would be coded as 3DE.

We are circulating this new plan for population status assessment to all Group members. We would like to hear from all of you whether or not this system is acceptable to you, or if you have any suggestions. The assignment of status categories to sea turtle populations is an important responsibility of the Specialist Group. Please let me hear from you by 30 September 1983.

When we have determined the method we will use, we will be writing to you again for your input on how the populations should be divided and what status we should assign to each. Thank you for your help.

POPULATION	PAST TREND & PRESENT STATUS	CURRENT TREND	RED DATA BOOK CATEGORY
Geographically defined	At Carrying Capacity/ No Evidence of Decline--1	Increasing Rapidly--A	Extinct --Ex
	Somewhat Depleted --2	Increasing --B	Endangered --E
	Extremely Depleted --3	Stable --C	Vulnerable --V
	Extremely Depleted, Critical --4	Decreasing --D	Rare --R
	Possibly Extinct/ Absent --5	Decreasing Rapidly--E	Indeterminate--I
		No Data Available --F	Out of Danger--O
			Insufficiently Known --K

/

13 August 83

Dear Karen / Turtle Group subcommittee -

Here is my response to your memo of 28 July. Yes, the proposed system is acceptable to me. Certainly this will be far better than the simple system now used. But will IUCN/SSC accept this for printing in the Red Book? If they are reluctant, then I suggest a "supplement" for the Red Book put out by the Turtle Group. This supplement could contain the lengthy list of "geographic populations", and our judgement of their status. The Red Book could simply mention that those interested in more detail or break-down could write for the mimeo supplement. This idea would also allow for more flexibility in changing the many listings, as new information, threats, etc. become known. A "limited"-print mimeo would be much easier to change, and less apt to come back and haunt us,

than a heavy bound Red Book printed every 5 (?) years or more at great expense.

Our next chore, dividing into "geographic populations", will really be the headache, in my view. If we don't use "breeding colony populations", as occurs for "endangered" listed sea turtles under the US ESA (and Sternberg 1981), then we will end up with what some elements call "stocks". This has distinct drawbacks, but personally I am not totally opposed to this word. It has widespread acceptance, unfortunately. To avoid its use totally will undoubtedly open us to criticism as "unrealistic conservationists/preservationists".

I guess for starters we need a clear definition of "geographic population". I hope the subcommittee will be able to do this.

Best regards,

George Balazs

George - Any additional comments? Please write him (w/copy to me) if so.
Karen

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON 98195

College of Forest Resources, AR-10

March 13, 1985

Dr. Karen Bjorndal
Caribbean Conservation Corp.
Dept. of Zoology

University of Florida
Gainesville, Florida 32611

Dear Colleague:

As a member of the Deer Specialist Group I am impressed by the possibilities for strengthening field investigations of free-living populations by the application of information obtained from captive individuals in zoos, etc. and from museum specimens. Such possibilities are not, of course, confined to deer. Currently, for example, we are gleaning basic data on the snow leopard in captivity to apply to a forthcoming field survey in India.

Now, I would like to ask your help in a survey of the various Specialist Groups, to discover, whether, within your Group, there is any systematic program of obtaining information from captives and/or museum specimens that can improve the efficiency of field investigations.

It may well be that with a general recognition of the utility of such a field-zoo-museum connection the actual functioning of such connections could be encouraged and facilitated. We could go much further in this direction, I believe, to the ultimate benefit of field studies and progress in the conservation of endangered species. Therefore, I look forward to your comments.

Sincerely yours,

Richard D. Taber

Richard D. Taber
Professor
Forest Zoology

RDT/em

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA
GAINESVILLE, 32611

DEPARTMENT OF ZOOLOGY
223 BARTRAM HALL
904-392-1107

19 March 1985

Dr. Richard D. Taber
College of Forest Resources, AR-10
University of Washington
Seattle, WA 98195

Dear Dr. Taber:

In regards to your letter of 13 March, there is no systematic program of obtaining information from captives and/or museum specimens that can improve the efficiency of field investigations of marine turtles being conducted in our specialist group. In general, museum collections of sea turtles are poor because few curators are willing to spare the necessary space, and transporting specimens of adults is difficult. Collections are usually limited to hatchlings and adult skulls. The animals in zoos and aquaria are of only limited usefulness. They are almost always maintained on a diet very different from their natural ones; age and place of origin are usually not known; and the numbers in any one area are usually small. I am aware of only two aquaria (in Miami and Honolulu) where a nesting beach is provided so that the captive turtles can reproduce. George Balazs, a very active member of our group, has worked with the turtles at the Honolulu aquarium. His address is: National Marine Fisheries Service, P.O. Box 3830, Honolulu, HI 96812.

There is a turtle farm on Cayman Islands where large numbers of green turtles are raised for their meat and shell. They also house a small population of Kemp's ridleys (by far the most endangered species of sea turtle) that may become a captive breeding population. Our group is strongly divided on whether turtle farming can make a positive contribution to sea turtle conservation. Although a fair amount of research has been conducted at the farm, none of our members is engaged in any projects there as far as I know.

Aside from George Balazs, I believe that I am the only member of the marine turtle group conducting research using captive animals. I have a research area on the northern coast of Great Inagua, Bahamas. A tidal bay about 7 square miles in area, which was naturally a favorite feeding area of green turtles in the region, was impounded about 20 years ago. It contains at least 200 green turtles and several hawksbills. I conducted my dissertation research there on the nutrition and grazing behavior of green turtles. I now have a long term growth study underway and a project to test various tag types. The turtles feed on seagrass beds in the bay, their natural diet, and a nesting beach is available. I visit the area once a year.

I'm sorry not to be of more help. If I can assist in any way, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Karen Bjorndal

Karen Bjorndal
Chairman, Marine Turtle Specialist Group

Results of the Meeting

of the Members of the Marine Turtle Specialist Group

Attending the 6th Annual Workshop on Sea Turtle Biology & Conservation

Waverly, Georgia 19 March 1986

Seven members of the Specialist Group were able to attend the meeting: George Balazs, Karen Bjorndal, Archie Carr, Rene Marquez, Jeanne Mortimer, Nicholas Mrosovsky and Larry Ogren. The meeting lasted approximately two and a half hours.

The following resolutions were discussed, and the members present agreed that they should be circulated to the Group for approval.

1. That the committee established to revise the Conservation Strategy for Sea Turtles be comprised of members drawn from the geographic and ideologic range represented in our Group.

2. That the best use of the $20,000 received from Japan would be to fund a series of small requests. Because these funds can be dispensed very rapidly, small (less than $1,000), emergency grants can be funded at the discretion of the Chairman to take advantage of the quick turn-around time. An example was provided by Rene Marquez who said that funds may be needed to provide fuel for vehicles to patrol a hawksbill beach in Mexico, if funds are not received from the Mexican government. If such a request is necessary, the funds would be needed very quickly to ensure the protection of the eggs and nesting females. All other requests will be circulated for approval among the Group.

3. That a good use of a portion of the funds would be to print Certificates of Appreciation from the Specialist Group that we could distribute to individuals throughout the world who have made significant contributions to the conservation of sea turtles, as recommended by Group members. The Certificates would be in English, French and Spanish. Rene Marquez proposed the idea; George Balazs agreed to investigate the cost of such an undertaking.

4. That a good use of a portion of the funds may be to provide motor parts for the patrol vehicles used on Suriname beaches. Apparently, protection of the beaches is hampered by the lack of a few engine parts for their patrol vehicles that are otherwise in good condition. Nicholas Mrosovsky proposed the idea; Karen Bjorndal agreed to pursue the matter with Krish Mohadin, our new member from Suriname.

5. That only a brief request for funds is necessary that includes all pertinent information, particularly the expected benefit for the conservation of sea turtles and the date by which the funds must be received.

6. That a brief statement of the specific accomplishments achieved <u>must</u> be submitted to the Chairman, for distribution among members, at the end of the project.

7. That a request for proposals be circulated again among Group members. This statement should be regarded as that request.

8. That our Group should urge the National Marine Fisheries Service of the U.S. Government to expedite the implementation of regulations requiring the use of Trawler Efficiency Devices (also known as Turtle Excluder Devices or TED) by U.S. shrimp trawlers by 1987. This requirement is deemed necessary because of the continued decline in numbers of Kemp's ridleys and because large numbers of ridleys, both adult and sub-adult, caught in trawls each year. The vote was unanimous with George Balazs, Rene Marquez and Larry Ogren abstaining. Jeanne Mortimer volunteered to draft the letter that will be circulated among Group members for approval.

9. That our Group should be aware of the serious threat that the continued presence of the wreck of the <u>A. Regina</u> on the reef off of Mona Island, Puerto Rico, poses to the important foraging and nesting habitat of hawksbills there.

10. That another meeting of the Marine Turtle Specialist Group should be held in conjunction with the Western Atlantic Turtle Symposium (WATS II) to be held in Puerto Rico in October 1987. It was agreed that a location in Asia would be preferable for our next meeting, but because of financial constraints, we should take advantage of such gatherings as WATS II when possible.

11. That every effort should be made to find funding for a Group meeting to be held in Asia. That Group members should be canvassed for possible locations and sources of funding. This statement should be regarded as such a request.

12. That the Chairman should request Gren Lucas to send formal letters to each member as he/she responds to the invitation to be a member of the Marine Turtle Specialist Group. The letter should state that the individual is a member of the Group for the given triennium.

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA
GAINESVILLE, 32611

DEPARTMENT OF ZOOLOGY
223 BARTRAM HALL
904-392-1107

Date: 8 May 1986

To: Members of the Marine Turtle Specialist Group

From: Karen Bjorndal

This morning I received the enclosed letter and CITES proposal from Simon Stuart. This is the first that I have heard of this proposal. Please note the very short time that we have to respond to this proposal. I must have our comments to Dr. Stuart by 28 May, so please send your comments to me as soon as you receive this document. I am concerned that a proposal of such importance and magnitude has not been referred to our Specialist Group in such a manner that we can offer constructive comments. The short time period makes input from many of our overseas members impossible. I am also concerned that there is apparently no opportunity for our Group to review the final report. The report is to be sent to CITES Secretariat, and, at least in the enclosed proposal, they only undertake to send a copy to the funding agency (which is not identified).

I hope to hear from you as soon as possible.

8 May 86

George-

First, many thanks for the Boulon reports (I didn't have them). I can't believe he combined captive + wild growth rates. I think Shoop makes an important point about giving % discrepancy in growth measurement. You may recall I had a slide on this topic in my Georgia talk. You have to remember George, no one else but you + me use good calipers. We have a lot of people reporting growth rates to 0.1 cm when they can only measure to 0.5 cm - not good! I'm surprised Nat wasted so much space on the meaningless Georgia Workshop data - what can you expect if no explicit directions are given - but I think the underlying idea is important. Another problem is w/ tag return data - Witham reports growth rates to 0.1 cm based on info in letters like "turtle was 6" long," which, in my experience means SCL can be from 3-9"! Let me know what you hear about titanium tags.

I received this letter this am. I am both disturbed + furious! This is the first I have heard of any such proposal. As you know, the CITES secretariat is really pushing farming/ranching. They were left w/egg on their face after the last meeting when all proposals were voted down. Proposals that

they had encouraged - see 3 of proposal. Note there is no opportunity for input ~~to report~~ on the report. It goes directly to CITES. Under this format, the fate of these species is in the hands of one consultant + CITES secretariat! Also Urgency, also p. 3, does not deal w/ urgency of turtle conservation, but the needs of countries wanting to trade in turtle products.

Their working through CMC may be good - but remember our fight w/ Groombridge when he wanted to downlist greens, etc on the Red Data Sheets.

They think 1 naive person can solve all questions of these 2 spps in 10 months! Please let me have your input. Time is so short, I'm afraid I won't be able to hear from many members.

I am also going to write to Groombridge asking what he knows. I'm also sending a copy to Mike Weber.

Is there any reason for me to hold on to the "artful" Certificate of Merit plans? Space is at a premium.

Best,

Fary

SINCE NINETEEN HUNDRED "THE VOICE OF CONSERVATION"

Dr. Karen Bjorndal
Dept. of Zoology
Univ. of Florida
Gainesville
Florida 32611

Nov 11 1986

Dear Karen:

Thanks for your letters. I believe you and I are in agreement as to the unrealistic paths that WATS seems to be treading. It may be a result of the steering committee including only one sea turtle person, and compounded by an excessive reliance on computerization of information that is often anecdotal rather than quantitative, an insistence on using local governmental personnel preferentially, however incompetent or uninterested, in doing the actual surveys, and an original intention, not of adding to turtle knowledge, but rather of just bringing governments togetherto talk about something -- it could just as well have been butterflies. Oh well. Keep them off that "quantitative" route as best you can, and we'll see what happens. Do not worry about my being peeved about not giving the leatherback species synopsis -- that was just a passing irritation. But I do quite seriously believe that the species synopses, both the written ones and those verbally presented, may be the most important part of the whole WATS effort. Even if they have exactly the same fisheries officers present at WATS II (which they won't), I am still not confident that they would remember what they were taught at WATS I, and a refresher course will do no harm at all. The written synopses may turn out to be valuable contributions to turtle science also.

Topic 2. I note the request from IUCN to revise the 1975 Turtle Group statement on turtle conservation, farming, and ranching. Something ominous is happening here. We all are now aware of the japanese government's investment in the study by Groombridge et al., which presumably Japan plans to use as an objective statement that some green turtle and hawksbill populations are abundant enough to allow international trade. This is quite dangerous, even though I have absolute confidence that Groombridge and his colleagues will do a superb job and "tell it like it is." This second step, IUCN/CITES/WWF asking (or demanding?) that our 1975 manifesto be revised in light of the WCS and its committment to sustainable utilization as a conservation tool, also raises lots of questions. For one, have other groups (e.g. the Rhinoceros Group) been asked to revise their conservation postures in order to reflect this committment to "sustainable utilization?" Or does IUCN feel that sea turtles, being more abundant than rhinos, are not really endangered? Although Pat Chable was fairly specific in her letter to you, she also seemed to be working on the assumption that our position paper was completely "Protective"

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in philosophy, urging no utilization. Yet my reading of this document, which is hardly ambiguous and indeed generally very well worded, specifically finds some types of utilization permissible (e.g. paragraphs 8 and 12), while several other paragraphs simply express caveats that still seem quite exemplary.

As you know, I tend to be a "middle of the road" man on several controversial turtle issues, aned am certainly not automatic in my responses or objections to ranching or farming of turtles, although I do see potential dangers and I would not invest my personal slim funds in either of these types of endeavours. But it seems that IUCN wants us to get into a posture of open support for turtle farming and ranching, as opposed to the qualified tolerance of it, under certain circumstances, that we so carefully defined in 1975. I find myself in the same position as George Balazs, carefully re-reading the 1975 document, open-mindedly looking for ways to improve it, and not finding any! I recommend that we find "no need for change" in our response to IUCN, but am certainly willing to listen to any arguments for a different conclusion.

Pat was of course correct when she noted that "The use of ranching for species recovery is a different issue." In the case of Kemp's ridley, I believe a captive facility -- ideally, a series of them, equipped with artificial nesting beaches -- is an essential part of the species recovery plan, and this is included as a Priority I item in the SE Region Sea Turtle Recovery Plan (although not a top priority with the Kemp's Ridley working group, a somewhat shadowy "Club" that has been engineering the annual govermental recovery actions for Kemp's Ridley, with limited reference to the Recovery Plan).

Topic 3. Tell me more about the Sea Turtle Research Center at the University of Florida. All I have heard about this is a letter from David Webb giving notice of an available post as Assistant Director. Is Archie the Director? Does he plan to remain so? Is this essentially a single faculty position as opposed to an actual center, with appropriate infrastructure? Are staff positions now filled? Please advise.

Give my best regards to Archie. I recently had an application from david Carr for funding for land surveys at Tortuguero in preparation for a possible purchase by Landon Clay, and I shall be discussing this with Truland next Wednesday in Washington.

Keep up the good work.

Peter

c.c. Geo Balazs

Peter C. H. Pritchard Ph.D.

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UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA
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DEPARTMENT OF ZOOLOGY
223 BARTRAM HALL
904/392-1107

27 July 1987

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.

WORLD CONFERENCE ON SEA TURTLE CONSERVATION

November 26-30, 1979 Washington, D.C.

19 August 1987

Dear George:

I am finally sitting down to write you a long, catch-up letter. Sorry to be so slow to respond to your many very helpful and very appreciated notes, letters and points of information.

I have enclosed a copy of a letter I received from George Hughes. It is the only response I received from the group after my request for comments on the balloon problem. This is something I wish I had time to deal with, but other subjects are higher priority. Do you think we should proceed with this? If so, how?

Your apparent cycling of numbers of nesting green turtles is fascinating. One of these days we'll figure out these patterns. Since these patterns, with variations, seem to occur in all populations, there must be some common basis. After the series of alternating very high and very low years that we had at Tortuguero in the late 1970's and early 80's, we had several years of consistent number, about half way between the previous high and low points. Then last year we had the biggest year we had ever had. This year looks as if it is going to be a very low year. So we may be re-entering a period of high and low peaks.

Thanks for the Palau stamp information--I'm ordering the sheet. Also, thanks very much for the turtle stamp from Tokelau. I loved the xerox you sent me of the entire series--especially the pigs happily rooting around in the ocean. I was going to ask you what you thought they were doing out there, but then I came across the enclosed picture in an issue of Sea Frontiers when I was cleaning out some of Dr. Carr's files.

Larry has not contacted me about the apparent substantial difference in hatchling green turtle hind flipper sizes. I have filed your sheets into the "To Do at Tortuguero Next Season" file. We should give serious consideration to trying to collect more taxonomic characters to test for differences between Tort and Hawaii. These two populations should be so different, that we should be able to identify any useful characters that could then be measured for other populations. I know that you once drew up a joint proposal with Dr. Carr and that you worked on flipper widths with Anne. Maybe we can come up with a plan requiring low time input on our parts to start looking at characters. I know ask the tagging team at Tort to weigh and measure 100 turtles at Tortuguero for between season comparisons. If we came up with a few characters to measure or count, I

Address All Correspondence to Vivian Silverstein, 1244 19th Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20036 202—659-9510

could add these to the data recorded by the tagging team. You could do the same with your workers on French Frigate. If you like, we can discuss this further at WATS. It would be a good idea to get some input from taxonomic types, like Peter Pritchard, on good characters to start with. Remember that in the past I told you I thought Hawaiian female greens had long tails--that can be one thing to check.

Speaking of joint projects, I want to assure you that our joint Hawaiian green turtle growth/nutrition work is my top priority research project. I am so excited about the prospect that I can hardly contain myself. Unfortunately, the reality of my present life is that even top priority research desires aren't top on the list. With getting the Sea Turtle Center off the ground, a lot of administrative duties are tying up all my time. This will change, however! Alan and I have discussed the project a lot. It is clear that the first step would be the analysis of your growth data on a feeding area by feeding area basis. Could you start working on gathering all your growth records? You told me before that organizing the data would take you some time. Then Alan and I could work on the analysis for a Balazs, Bolten and Bjorndal publication. We can discuss this also at WATS. We're going to be busy at WATS!

Thanks also for the reprint on algae resistance to digestion. I had not heard of his work before and will get the references he cites in the paper you sent me.

We will be discussing the Japan money situation at the WATS meetings. I doubt that we will be able to help your friends at Oroluk, but keep the suggestion in mind during our discussion. There have been so many flip-flops on the Japan money, that I really wish they had never given it to us. IUCN/SSC has the ability to turn even positive things like money into a hopeless snare.

I sent the "Bird Bander" note on the Costa Rican turtle incidental catch to a few Costa Rican turtle people to see what they can do.

I never received any letters from Stockbrands Co. regarding the poorer quality of tags you reported to them. Please keep me posted about news on titanium tags.

Alan is out in the Sargasso Sea right now. He'll be there for three weeks looking for little turtles and pollutants. He took some of the smallest monel tags that you had told us about for use on any post-hatchlings he catches.

Regarding our tag loss project at Union Creek. Biting by other creatures is a possibility for causing notches in the flesh, but the tearing out of a tag in this manner would, I think, leave a much more jagged notch than what we see. Most of the notches have been recorded in small turtles (around 3 kilos) with softer scales and hide. The 681 size tags--both monel and inconel--slowly migrate down to the trailing edge of the flipper and then finally break out when the remaining flesh holding them in is just a narrow strip. This process leaves a very characteristic scar. As the tag slowly moves, the flesh behind it heals up, leaving a narrow line scar. When the tag reaches the edge and breaks through the

final strip, that final break does not heal and leaves a shallow notch. We have recaptured turtles in the various stages of this "tag migration" and have seen each of the steps I have described to you.

I was also concerned about the differences between your tags and the NMFS inconel tags. In addition, the first NMFS tags I got were the same color as yours, a shiny silver; the next batch was gun-metal gray. These differences from batch to batch make our tag testing very difficult, because our results can vary significantly from batch to batch. But, since this variation is present in the tags purchased for turtles, it is part of the real situation we are trying to test. I am beginning to feel that this poor quality control in tag production is one of our biggest problems, and we cannot identify a tag type that is best, but rather that the better batches of any tag are better than the poor batches of any. Quality control has been a problem with all tag types and brands. You have reported problems with titanium. The monel varies among batches in its corrosion resistance. We had one batch of plastic Riese tags from Dalton that dropped off the turtles in a very short time because of a faulty joining between the flange and post on the male half of the tag. Unfortunately, sea turtle taggers do not form a large enough market to be able to demand the kind of quality control that we require.

This brings me to the subject in this letter of which I am most ashamed. My failure to send you my tagging records for yourtags in a timely fashion. After the number of dunning letters I have written to our tagging collaborators over the years requesting tagging records, I have absolutely no excuse. Please forgive me. The records are attached.

I hope you have been able to make some progress with the channels to be blasted on Oahu. I have not received a response to my letter to Nitta. I will let you know as soon as I do.

I have not received many letters in response to my WATS meeting announcement. I do know that Balazs, Bjorndal, Ehrenfeld, Fretey, Hirth, Limpus, Marcovaldi, Marquez, Meylan, Mohadin, Mortimer, Mrosovsky, Ogren, Pritchard, Schulz and Uchida will be there (many of these I have not heard from directly yet, but they are on the WATS program). Nuitja and Hughes will not be able to be there.

Mrosovsky wrote that he wanted the award certificates included on the agenda. Is there any chance of having at least a mock-up available for the meeting?

Hope all is going well with your work and that you are able to relax and enjoy it. Alan and I are working hard on that. We should compare progress notes. If you develop any particularly useful techniques, let us know.

Keep well,

Karen

GHB

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Southwest Fisheries Center Honolulu Laboratory
2570 Dole St. • Honolulu, Hawaii 96822-2396

August 8, 1988 F/SWC2

Dr. Colin J. Limpus
National Parks and Wildlife
Service, Pallarenda
Townsville, Queensland 4810
Australia

Dear Col,

Enclosed are copies of the photos taken in Japan that I promised to send you. Several of them turned out quite good, and certainly bring back pleasant memories of a successful symposium. The pace was so incredibly fast that only now have I been able to reflect on all that happened. On a personal note, it was good to see you again after a five year interval and hear of your research progress. I continue to be duly impressed by the scope and magnitude of what you are able to accomplish.

In the near future, I will be writing to Karen to make several important recommendations. Your active support and endorsement of these ideas are critical to their acceptance.

1. Start planning immediately to convene a meeting of the Marine Turtle Specialist Group in Australia, taking advantage of your generous offer to be the host. Late 1989 or early 1990 might be a reasonable target date. 90 91

2. Assign other "officer" positions within the Group in addition to our current Deputy Chairman position. For example, a Second Deputy Chairman would be very beneficial in helping Karen deal with the numerous issues confronting her on a monthly basis. I will be recommending <u>you</u> as the ideal person for this assignment. Of course, the position of Protocol Officer has already been filled.

3. The need to write a formal "thank you" letter to the Bekko representatives for their hospitality and (presumably) frank and open discussions. However, reiteration should be made of the dire need to reduce pressures on <u>Eretmochelys</u>. Yes, we said it there, but it needs to be stated again in writing. Funds for research can't be used to justify continuation of the current level of take while waiting a decade or more for the results of that research. The enclosed article on Japan's "unique" cultural viewpoint appeared in this past Sunday's newspaper. We all might have benefited from reading this information prior to the symposium.

When your time permits, I would be interested to learn how the rest of your Japan visit turned out.

Best regards.

Sincerely,

George H. Balazs
Zoologist

Enclosure

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA
GAINESVILLE, FL 32611

DEPARTMENT OF ZOOLOGY
223 BARTRAM HALL
904/392-1107

17 Oct 89

Dear George -

I said I'd write soon! I'm planning to greatly expand the MTSG. I have enclosed a list of current members & proposed members & correspondents. Please review the lists & make suggested changes. I am particularly interested in recommendations for foreign members. I have, however, gotten the okay from SSC to not worry about geographic "balance." If most sea turtle experts are in the U.S., so be it, is their attitude now.

If you have any questions, let me know. This is a working list, some names may be deleted, so please keep this confidential. Obviously, the listed geographic separation is very rough. I was just using it as a guide to where we are regionally. I have also sent the list of proposed Mexico, Central & South American members to Jack Woody for his help and the entire list to Anne Meylan.

Please send addresses as well as names of proposed members that you suggest.

Thanks for your help,
Karen

36 +106 new + 33 corresp. = 175 total

MARINE TURTLE SPECIALIST GROUP

CURRENT MEMBERS

Dr. Karen A. Bjorndal, Chairman

Mr. George Balazs
Mr. Satish Bhaskar
Dr. Leo D. Brongersma
Dr. Huang Chu-chien
Mr. Keith Corbett
Dr. David Ehrenfeld
Dr. Jacques Fretey
Ms. Chan Eng Heng
Dr. Harold F. Hirth
Dr. George R. Hughes
Sr. Mario Hurtado
Mrs. Aban Marker Kabraji
Dr. Colin J. Limpus
Dimitris Margaritoulis
Dr. Rene Marquez M.
Mr. Guy Guagni dei Marcovaldi
Joal Mayol
Mr. Mike A. McCoy
Dr. Anne Meylan
Dr. Jeff Miller
Mr. Krish Mohadin
Dr. Edward O. Moll
Dr. Jeanne Mortimer
Dr. Nicholas Mrosovsky
Mr. Njoman Sumertha Nuitja
Mr. Larry Ogren
Dr. John Parmenter
Dr. Peter Pritchard
Dr. J. Perran Ross
Dr. Joop P. Schulz
Dr. E. G. Silas
Mr. G. S. de Silva
Dr. Ismu Sutanto Suwelo
Mr. Siow Kuan Tow
Dr. Itaru Uchida

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PROPOSED ADDITIONAL MEMBERS

USA & CANADA

Dr. Tundi Agardy
Ms. Susan Basford
Mr. Michael Bean
Ms. Rebecca Bell
Mr. Frederick Berry
Dr. Alan Bolten
Mr. Robert Brandner
Patrick Burchfield
Dr. Richard Byles
Mr. Jeff Canin
Steve Cornelius
Dr. Debbie Crouse
Dr. Kenneth Dodd
Ms. Marydele Donnelly
Dr. Scott Eckert
Dr. Karen Eckert
Dr. Llewellyn M. Ehrhart
Dr. Thomas Eley
Ms. Sheryan Epperly
Dr. Nat Frazer
Ms. Deborah Fuller
Dr. John Hendrickson
Dr. Terry Henwood
Henry H. Hildebrand
Ms. Sally Hopkins-Murphy
Mr. Alan Huff
Dr. Elliott Jacobson
Mr. Bruce Jaildagian
Ms. Jan Johnson
Dr. F. Wayne King
Dr. Molly Lutcavage
Dr. Peter Lutz
Mr. Roderick Mast
Dr. Peter Meylan
Dr. Don Moll
Mr. Tom Murphy
Dr. John Musick
Mr. Charles Oravetz
Dr. David Owens
Mr. Earl Possardt
Dr. Anders Rhodin
Dr. James Richardson
Ms. Carol Ruckdeschel
Ms. Barbara Schroeder
Ms. Donna Shaver
Dr. Robert Shipp
Dr. Robert Shoop
Dr. James Spotila
Dr. Ed Standora
Mr. Michael Weber
Dr. W. David Webster
Dr. Thane Wibbels
Dr. Richard Wolke
Mr. Jack Woody
Dr. Jeanette Wyneken
Dr. George Zug

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MEXICO & CENTRAL AMERICA

Dr. Rafael A. Acuna M.
Javier Alvarado
Ms. Anny Chaves
Gustavo Cruz
Dr. Jack Frazier
Ms. Reyna Gil
Mr. Argelis Guevara R.
Ms. Maria Teresa Koberg
Dr. Douglas Robinson
Dr. Georgita Ruiz

SOUTH AMERICA

Dr. Federico Achaval
Ms. Maria Angela Marcovaldi
Ms. Glenda Medina
Henri A. Reichart

CARIBBEAN

Mr. Ralf Boulon
Dr. James Burnett-Herkes
Gilberto Cintron
Mr. Colin Higgs
Dr. Julia Horrocks
Ms. Rhema Kerr
Mr. Jose Ottenwalder
Dr. Fern Wood
Dr. James Wood

EUROPE

Prof. Roberto Argano
Dr. Jean Lescure
Jacques Maigret
Ms. Helen Martins

MEDITERRANEAN

Andreas Demetropoulos
Remzi Geldiay

AFRICA

Dr. Bernard Bonnet

MID-EAST

Dr. Razi Dmi'el
Igal Sella

ASIA

Dr. A. C. Alcala
Indraneil Das
Ms. Fehmida Firdous
Chandra Sekhar Kar
Charles Leh
Mr. Tom Milliken
Dr. P. Mohanty-Hejamdi
T. S. N. Murtry
Boonlert Phasuk
Dr. M. V. Subba Rao
R. J. Rao
S. M. A. Rashid
Hiroyuki Suganuma
Hideomi Tokunaga
Romulus Whitaker
Wang Xiao Yan

AUSTRALIA, NEW GUINEA, AND SOUTH PACIFIC ISLANDS

Dr. R.I.T. Prince
Ms. C. Sylvia Spring

(33)

CORRESPONDENTS

Ms. Carole Allen
Cleve Booker
Merry Camhi
Ray Carthy
Ms. Babbie Connett
Mr. Steve Connett
Lynn Corliss
Carlos Diaz
Dina Dickerson
Mr. John Fuller
Kathy Hall
Kazuo Horikoshi
Michael Horton
Mr. Milton Kaufmann
John Keinath
Cynthia Lagueux
Mr. Michael Lightbourn
Ms. Illa Loetscher
Mr. Chris Luginbuhl
Mr. Erik Martin
Ms. Deborah Mundell
Pam Plotkin
Ms. Jane Provancha
Mr. Paul Raymond
Ms. Norine Rouse
Erich Stabinau
Charles Tambiah
Mr. Robert Truland
Tony Tucker
Ms. Jeanne Wershoven
Mr. Bob Wershoven
Dr. Ross Wilcox
Blair Witherington

January 30, 1989

Ms. Anne Mayo
Special Assistant to the Chairman
IUCN Species Survival Commission
Royal Botanic Garden, Kew, Richmond
Surrey, England TW9 3AE

Dear Anne:

I am happy to report that the special project to make award certificates for the Marine Turtle Specialist Group has now been accomplished. Three of the certificates have been enclosed for you inspection and files. I was able to have 1000 of these produced with the US$200 designated for this project and previously advanced to me. The actual cost, covering layout, special foil printing, shipping, and embosser came to about $206., but I am pleased to absorb this small overbudget amount.

The exact method that will be used to distribute the certificates to our three dozen members worldwide will be determined by Karen Bjorndal. I will be seeing her in person at a meeting in Florida during early March. I have already agreed to handle,at no expense to SSC,the mailing of certificates to the membership.

Thank you for your help with this project which can potentially go a long way toward promoting the conservation of sea turtles by formal recognition of those working on the turtles' behalf.

Sincerely,

George H. Balazs

Mailing Address:

National Marine Fisheries Service
2570 Dole Street
Honolulu, Hawaii USA 96822-2396

cc Dr. Karen Bjorndal, Chairman, Marine Turtle Specialist Group

August 23, 1988 F/SWC2:GHB

Ms. Anne Mayo
Special Assistant to the Chairman
Species Survival Commission
Royal Botanic Garden
Kew, Richmond
Surrey, England TW9 3AE

Dear Anne,

I am writing to respectfully request an advance payment of $200 earmarked for custom-made "award certificates" that was formally approved by our Marine Turtle Specialist Group. Dr. Karen Bjorndal, our Group chairman, suggested that I write directly to you about this subject. I volunteered to undertake this project some time ago, but only now have reached a point where the printing is ready to be done. My personal finances do not allow me the luxury of making the advance payment required by the printer. All receipts will, of course, be submitted to you when the work is completed. I understand from Karen that this money is to come from the "Chairman's Special Account for Sea Turtles."

The check for $200 should be made out in my name only, without reference to the National Marine Fisheries Service. The award certificate project is for the Specialist Group alone, and is not in anyway tied to this agency.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

George H. Balazs
Zoologist

cc: Dr. Karen Bjorndal

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA
ARCHIE CARR CENTER FOR SEA TURTLE RESEARCH
223 BARTRAM HALL
GAINESVILLE, FL 32611

TELEPHONE 904 392-5194
FAX 904 392-9166

To: Members and Correspondents of the IUCN Marine Turtle Specialist Group (MTSG)

From: Karen Bjorndal, Chairman

Date: October 1990

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome all new members and correspondents of the Marine Turtle Specialist Group. The Group now has 170 members and correspondents from 43 countries. Many of you have asked what your new responsibilities will involve. The purpose of the Group is primarily an advisory one. If questions arise concerning sea turtles anywhere in the world, individuals at IUCN and SSC turn to us for advice on the best course of action.

However, our Group does not merely wait until questions arise. We are also involved in charting the course of conservation activities for sea turtles throughout the world through the development of a Marine Turtle Action Plan. I want to stress that any Action Plan we develop will not be a final, finished strategy. Rather, of necessity, the Action Plan will be a dynamic document that will be revised as we learn more about turtles as projects are accomplished. Not all problems can or will be addressed in our Action Plan. But if we wait until we can develop the perfect Action Plan, we will never develop one.

Through discussions with other IUCN/SSC Specialist Goups that have completed action plans, other members of the MTSG as well as IUCN/SSC officials, we have developed a format for the Marine Turtle Action Plan. We will follow a protocol that will allow for easy indexing and cross referencing by geographic region, species of turtle, type of project, and budget level. This will facilitate matching specific project proposals with appropriate funding sources. Keep in mind that the key to acceptance of the document by potential funding authorities will be the inclusion of projects with specific and realistic goals. We have included a page from the Action Plan for Tortoises and Freshwater Turtles as an example.

As I have said, the Action Plan will not address every sea turtle problem. However, we want to include the most pressing problems and to prioritize projects within the Plan. Although I believe that anything we learn about turtles, no matter how esoteric, can eventually help conserve turtles, some projects clearly have greater immediate application. We ask that you develop action projects with clear conservation goals, whether for education, surveys, trade monitoring, management, or research. We hope to have all regions of the world represented. Please submit as many good projects as you can develop. Describe projects that you are interested in conducting as well as those projects that you think should be done, although you would not be able to do them yourself. Please try to recommend a contact person for those projects that you would not conduct.

We plan to use the Sea Turtle Conservation Strategy adopted at the World Congress on Sea Turtle Conservation (Washington, D.C., 1979) as the philosophical foundation for the Action Plan. The Strategy is published at the end of the book *Biology and Conservation of Sea Turtles* (Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, D.C., 1982) and was widely distributed after the World Congress. Many of the projects listed in the Strategy have been completed, some actions no longer apply, and some projects still need to be undertaken. In the decade following the World Congress, other areas of conservation interest and concern have arisen. If any of you have comments on the content of the Strategy, please send them to me. Copies of the Strategy are enclosed for those MTSG members outside North America.

After the Action Plan is completed, we will have a strong, integrated document with which we can pursue funding for the projects. If you have ideas for potential funding sources, either for specific projects or for general support, please send the information to me. We are prepared to aggressively pursue funding. There is really no point in developing an Action Plan unless financial support is sought to ensure that the projects are accomplished.

Dr. Alan Bolten has agreed to serve as the compiler of the Action Plan. The personnel and facilities of the Archie Carr Center for Sea Turtle Research will be available to assist in the compilation. We look forward to hearing from you.

Please submit projects as soon as possible (deadline is 15 January 1991) so the Action Plan can be developed in a timely fashion. Unfortunately, unless additional funds are forthcoming, the Marine Turtle Action Plan will only be produced in English, as are the other IUCN Action Plans. We have limited capacity to translate projects submitted in other languages into English. We will appreciate your efforts to submit your project descriptions in English.

Please feel free to send any comments or questions you may have to either Alan or to me. If your address, telephone number, FAX number, or telex number should change, please let me know so that we can communicate most efficiently.

Dr. Karen A. Bjorndal, Director
Archie Carr Center for Sea Turtle Research
Bartram Hall
University of Florida
Gainesville, FL 32611
USA

Telephone: (904) 392 5194
FAX: (904) 392 9166

MARINE TURTLE ACTION PLAN PROJECT PROPOSAL FORM

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION IS 15 JANUARY 1991

PROJECT TITLE (Choose a clear, concise title):

REGION (Specify the country, countries or geographic region where the project will be conducted):

SPECIES (Circle as many as are appropriate):

Cc	Caretta caretta	Ca	Chelonia agassizi
Cm	Chelonia mydas	Dc	Dermochelys coriacea
Ei	Eretmochelys imbricata	Lk	Lepidochelys kempi
Lo	Lepidochelys olivacea	Nd	Natator depressus

BUDGET (Please provide an estimate of the total project budget in US dollars. Specific budget items are not required at this time):

JUSTIFICATION (The justification should be on separate pages and should be less than 500 words. This should be a statement outlining necessary background information, the need for the project, and the methods to be used. Give some indication of the time necessary to complete the project. Please be concise and precise):

PERSON SUBMITTING PROJECT PROPOSAL:

Name:
Address:

Telephone: FAX: Telex:

CONTACT PERSON (The person who should be contacted for further information if different from the person submitting the proposal. This may or may not be the person who would undertake the project):

Name:
Address:

Telephone: FAX: Telex:

If you have any questions, please contact us. Projects should be submitted to:

Dr. Alan B. Bolten
Archie Carr Center for Sea Turtle Research
Bartram Hall
University of Florida
Gainesville, FL 32611 USA

Telephone: (904) 392-5194 FAX: (904) 392-9166

Tortoises and Freshwater Turtles

An Action Plan for their Conservation

IUCN/SSC Tortoise and
Freshwater Turtle Specialist Group




DICE
at UKC

majority of recent visitors have failed to find this turtle, the habitat of which is only accessible during clear-water episodes (dry season).

Contact person: Robert Parmenter

Budget: U.S. $3,000

Population monitoring and breeding research for the Western swamp turtle, *Pseudemydura umbrina*

The Western swamp turtle is an unusual species confined to two nature reserves on the outskirts of Perth, Western Australia, where it inhabits ephemeral winter-wet swamps, and spends 6-8 months a year in aestivation. The total population is less than 100 animals and declining; one of the two populations might no longer exist, and there may be as few as one or two females remaining in the wild. The only valid hope lies in captive breeding, but this has proved extremely difficult to date; it is believed that the turtles need stressed conditions (e.g. long drought) in order to trigger breeding.

Continued monitoring is required to understand more fully the species' specialized and critical breeding cycle, and international expertise is needed to help increase the success rate of the current captive breeding programme at the Conservation and Land Management Centre in Perth.

Three main aims have to be achieved:

- Inducing the females to produce eggs
- Increasing the fertility rate of the eggs (which was less than 50% in 1980, the last season with reproduction in captivity)
- Improving the hatching rate, survival, and growth of juveniles.

Since the captive breeding and rearing programme will need to run for several years before animals can be released into the wild, it is essential that the remaining natural sites are fully protected and managed to maintain suitable habitat.

Contact person: Andrew Burbidge

Captive Breeding advisors: Gerald Kuchling and Walter Sachsse (through T&FWT Specialist Group Captive Breeding Sub-committee).

Budget: U.S. $10,000

6.2 Afrotropical Realm

Pilot programme for the conservation of the spurred tortoise (*Geochelone sulcata*) in sub-Saharan Africa

Geochelone sulcata is a widespread but thinly-scattered and little-known species occurring across the Sahel and sub-Saharan region from Senegal to Ethiopia. It is the largest mainland tortoise in Africa, and an important component of the fauna of this semi-desertic region, but its current status is uncertain and it may no longer inhabit several of its former localities.

A small-scale captive breeding programme has been established at the Nazinga Ranch, Burkina Faso, as part of a wider programme to evaluate the potential meat production per unit area that can be obtained on a sustainable basis. The ultimate aim of the project, through the cooperation of local people, government authorities, and specialists is to develop a unified approach to conservation and rural development in West Africa.

Work on *Geochelone sulcata* should be integrated into this programme and extended to other parts of the species range as the project develops. Initial status surveys should concentrate in West Africa in Senegal, Mali and Burkina Faso, and further east in Sudan. The potential for a pilot project for the reintroduction of tortoises in Sudan, utilizing stock from the very successful captive breeding colony at the Al-Ain Zoo, Abu Dhabi, should be investigated.

Contact persons: Clark Lungren (Burkina Faso), Jean-Pierre Pouvreau (Senegal), Mohd. Reza Khan (Abu Dhabi), and David Stubbs (U.K.)

Budget: U.S. $40,000 for initial establishment phases.

Status survey and pilot project for the conservation of the pancake tortoise (*Malacochersus tornieri*) in Kenya and Tanzania

This unusual tortoise of rocky hills and outcrops in arid thorn bush and savanna is scattered in isolated localities in southern Kenya (Kitui District) and northern Tanzania (Dodoma District). Few population data exist, but there was formerly heavy pet trade exploitation in Kenya, and there has recently been renewed heavy export from Tanzania. Many sites are vulnerable because of their proximity to dense human populations and trade centres.

Recent reports from Roger Wood in Kenya indicate that stable, undisturbed populations still remain. Detailed status surveys need to be conducted between May and August in main areas where populations are known and within existing wildlife reserves. This study is part of the priority programme of Operation Tortoise, the global review of tortoise status. Field staff will be supplemented by visiting specialists. Immediate goals are to locate as many existing populations as possible and determine their viability. Further, long-term conservation effort will be directed towards the purchase and management of small reserve areas; potential sites also have high botanical importance. Results of numerous captive breeding exercises need to be harnessed, and the Tanzanian authorities should be encouraged to implement CITES obligations for this species (i.e., to control and monitor trade levels through export licenses).

Contact persons: Don Moll, Tom Langton, and J. Hebrard

Budget: U.S. $30,000

Conservation programme for the Coahuilan box turtle (*Terrapene coahuila*)

This aquatic box turtle is restricted to the specialized marshy habitats of the intermontane desert basin of Cuatro Cienegas, Coahuila State, northern Mexico. The species is threatened by habitat modification, particularly irrigation schemes, and by virtue of its extremely limited range and habitat requirements. Captive breeding at the Gladys Parler Zoo (Brownsville, Texas) has been very successful.

Conservation priorities are to secure protected status for the turtle's remaining natural habitat and to devise a long-term management strategy to prevent inappropriate drainage schemes. This should be preceded by an up-to-date status review. Legislation already prohibits collecting.

Benefits for other species: there are three other freshwater turtle taxa occurring in the Cuatro Cienegas basin: *Trachemys scripta taylori*, *Apalone spinifera ater* , and *A. s. emoryi*. The basin also supports several endemic invertebrates and fish.

Contact person: To be determined. Meanwhile, inquiries should be directed via Specialist Group Co-chairman, Peter Pritchard.

Budget: Undetermined

Status survey of the spotted box turtle (*Terrapene nelsoni*) in western Mexico

There are very few extant records of this localized, terrestrial emydid turtle in northwestern Mexico, except for the single village area of Pedro Pablo, Nayarit. This is partly due to difficulty in locating animals, since they only appear after heavy rain. The overall distribution and the validity of the two described subspecies remain unclear. A full status survey is required.

Contact persons: Pat Minx and John Iverson

Budget: U.S. $25,000

Conservation of the Bolson tortoise (*Gopherus flavomarginatus*) in Mexico

This large terrestrial species, endemic to Mexico, is limited to the Bolson de Mapimi in the Chihuahuan Desert of the north-central plateau. Localized and discontinuous populations are primarily found in Tobosa (*Hilaria mutica*) grasslands on shallow slopes fringing basin flood plains. It is severely threatened by human exploitation for food, habitat degradation by livestock and agriculture, and illegal trade. Collapsing distribution, depressed fecundity, nest destruction, and low juvenile survivorship contribute to minimize the recruitment rate.

The species has received detailed ecological studies and some conservation input. Three important extensions to current work are necessary:

- Top priority: Purchase of the 10,000 ha Rancho Sombreritillo in Chihuahua. The ranch, which is currently for sale for around U.S.$ 100,000, includes the largest northern population of the Bolson tortoise, which is dense and actively reproducing. By year 2000 it could be the only viable population outside the Mapimi Reserve. Funding requirements must include provisions for fencing, maintenance, and wardening.

Contact persons: Gustavo Aguirre and David Morafka

Budget: U.S. $50,000 start up, U.S. $3,000 annually thereafter.

- Continuation of radiotelemetric tracking of hatchery tortoises when released into the wild.

Contact person: Gustavo Aguirre

Budget: U.S. $15,000 (over 5 years)

- Microbial and nutritional studies to improve captive hatchling viability and growth. To be coordinated with other similar projects by the T&FWT Specialist Group Captive Breeding Subcommittee (Walter Sachsse).

Contact persons: Gary Adest, Gustavo Aguirre, and David Morafka.

Budget: U.S. $7,500

Habitat protection for the gopher tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*)

Habitat loss and fragmentation caused by new developments are the major causes of the decline of this species in the southeastern U.S.A. A number of relocation studies are currently underway to establish whether doomed populations can be successfully translocated to new, safe sites. Initial results have not been encouraging, and this emphasizes the priority of securing key sites before they become threatened.

Funds are required for field work to identify the best privately-owned tortoise sites and to prepare nature reserve proposals. The results will be coordinated by The Nature Conservancy and the Gopher Tortoise Council, and specific funding appeals will be launched as sites are identified or become available.

Contact person: Dale R. Jackson

Budget: U.S. $20,000 (for hire and coordination of field personnel)

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA
ARCHIE CARR CENTER FOR SEA TURTLE RESEARCH
223 BARTRAM HALL
GAINESVILLE, FL 32611

TELEPHONE 904 392-5194
FAX 904 392-9166

29 October 1990

Dear George:

Many thanks for agreeing to do the "Species" articles. I used the title "Special Assistant to the Chairman" in the "Species" article I just sent to George Rabb. At the same time, I informed his staff that they should contact you regarding deadlines, etc. Notice that the new "Species" is being produced in Chicago. So far, I have been very impressed with George Rabb and his staff. I hope it continues.

I agree that you should wait to write a letter to Japan about Palau until after the meeting. Kazuo has told me that the Japanese (I believe the Ministry of the Environment) is again very concerned with the Palau situation--probably as a result of your report. Shortly after our Nagasaki meeting, Hiroyuki Suganuma (director of the Ogasawara Marine Turtle Research Center) will be going to Palau with an assistant, Fumihico Sato. Mr. Suganuma will only spend about a week, but Mr. Sato will remain a year, trying to improve the situation. Kazuo, who has also been to Palau several years ago, will be working for Suganuma when Kazuo finishes his degree here. Suganuma seems to be a good conservationist--we have worked together on a few projects. I am trying to get Uchida to include Suganuma as a participant at Nagasaki and Kazuo and Mr. Sato as observers, but I have heard nothing. Kazuo told me that Suganuma has been quite anxious to learn of IUCN opinion of Palau, so I gave him a copy of your opinions that were adopted as official IUCN doctrine and your video. Kazuo has sent both to Suganuma, and I know they are anxious to speak with you at the meetings. Kazuo says the plan now is for Mr. Sato to stress greater enforcement of turtle protection in Palau and to take eggs from only a very few nests to the rearing center and then work with the personnel to improve techniques. This is all very vague and second-hand through Kazuo. It would be great if we could all (you, me, Kazuo, Sato and Suganuma) get together and discuss the situation in Nagasaki. Mr. Suganuma speaks some English, Kazuo speaks quite well, and I do not know about Mr. Sato.

I went through my archives and -- GREAT SHOCK!!!! -- I was actually able to find something I knew was there. I have kept three copies of your photo here in case these do not reach safely. I don't recall ever seeing the negative, but I'll look though a few more files just in case. Hope these help.

My final note is the most important. George, would you please consider serving as Deputy Chairman of the MTSG, with the new triennium beginning this fall? Stanley de Silva officially retired from the post when he moved to Canada, but agreed to stay on until the end of the triennium (he never did anything anyway). With the enlargement of the Group, the development of the Action Plan, a better staff working with George Rabb and the imminent departure of Steve Edwards, I really hope that the MTSG can start accomplishing good for turtles. The enlargement of the Group allows certain strident voices to be diluted (no names mentioned!) and the major work of the Group to be placed in the hands of a small (4-8 people), hand-picked steering committee. This is how the large Freshwater Turtle and Tortoise Group is run, and apparently very successfully. Please give this your serious thought, as time allows, and we can discuss it in Japan.

Did you see Ehrenfeld's review of Groombridge/Luxmoore in the last Copeia?
Hope all is well; I look forward to seeing you in Japan. -- Karen

TRANSMITTAL SHEET

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Southwest Fisheries Center Honolulu Laboratory
2570 Dole St. • Honolulu, Hawaii 96822-2396
Commercial: (808) 943-1221
Telefax: (808) 942-2062

904-392-9166.

TELEFAX FOR: KAREN BJORNDAL DATE: 1-8-91

FROM: GEORGE BALAZS TELEPHONE EXT: 808-943-1240

NUMBER OF SHEETS TRANSMITTED (including this page) 2

ACTION PROJECT:

Survey range and magnitude of tumor disease in the Hawaiian green turtle population.

Fibropapilloma is a disabling and frequently fatal disease that has reached epidmeic proportions in several major aggreations of green turles resident to foraging pastures in the Hawaiian Islands. The incidence of this pathology has increased significantly during recent years, similar to what is being reported from Florida and certain sites throughout the Caribbean and elsewhere worldwide. In Kanohe Bay (Oahu) 55% of the 124 turtles captured and examined during 1989-90 were found to be afflicted. At Palaau (Molokai) the disease has increased 10% each year since it was first observed in late 1987. The severity of the tumors on afflicted turtles shows an increasing trend with the size (age) of the turtle, indicating that many diseased turtles may never recover. Strandings of dead turtles with tumors throughout Hawaii have increased during recent years, lending support to this hypothesis.

There are presently six sites in Hawaii in which the status of tumor diseased turtles is being periodically monitored. It is essential that this work continue, however numerous reports are also being received from the public (scuba divers, fishermen, etc.) of other locations in Hawaii where diseased turtles are now being seen. A comprehensive and more detailed understanding of the full range and magnitude of this tumor disease needs to be ascertained in order to evaluate its epidemiology, as well as longterm impacts to recovery of the population.

Dear Karen: The above "Action Project" + ATTACHED suggestion is in response to your memo of October 1990. NMFS may, and I stress "may", fund this work at a low level (expanded worked, that is). I will leave it to your judgement as to whether or not this work idea is appropriate for IUCN.

My only other idea is to make myself available as some sort of "trouble shooter" for matters in the Pacific islands that need attention, such as the case in Palau. Perhaps a contingency action project of this sort might be appropriate(?) ALOHA,

GEORGE

TO: KAREN BJORNDAL

ACTION PROJECT:

INVESTIGATION OF THE ROLE OF TOXIC CHEMICAL CONTAMINANTS IN THE ETIOLOGY OF EPIDEMIC-PROPORTION TUMORS IN THE HAWAIIAN GREEN TURTLE

Debilitating and grotesque tumors histologically known as fibropapillomas have reached epidemic proportions in the Hawaiian population of the green turtle, Chelonia mydas, a threatened species under the U.S. Endangered Species Act. At certain Hawaiian coastal sites, mainly areas adjacent to heavy urbanization and surface-water runoff, 50% or more of the turtles are known to be afflicted with this enigmatic disease.

Although tumors of this type were first recorded many years ago in green turtles, their incidence in Hawaii has increased dramatically in just the past 5-8 years. During this same time period, an almost identical phenomenon of these tumors has occurred in green turtles resident to certain coastal sites in Florida. The epidemiology suggests an infectous disease agent. From a comparative perspective, a viral agent seems probable, but intensive sampling both in Hawaii and Florida for electron microscopy has failed to detect a virus. The possibility of chemical pollutants directly causing these tumors, or affecting their expression through a virus, is a distinct but as yet uninvestigated possibility. An array of tissue from the turtles, as well as their major food sources and the seawater they reside in, need to be analyzed for chemical pollutant. This work would best be conducted in collaboration with researchers in Florida to ensure that similar samples are collected from that location for equivalent analyses.

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA
ARCHIE CARR CENTER FOR SEA TURTLE RESEARCH
223 BARTRAM HALL
GAINESVILLE, FL 32611

TELEPHONE 904 392-5194
FAX 904 392-9166

Minutes

To: Members of the Marine Turtle Specialist Group

From: Karen Bjorndal, Chairman

Date: 6 January 1992

There will be a regional meeting of the Marine Turtle Specialist Group held in conjunction with the 12th Annual Symposium on Sea Turtle Conservation and Biology in Jekyll Island, Georgia. The MTSG meeting will be on 29 February 1992, the Saturday following the Symposium. The meeting will be open to all individuals interested in attending, not to just MTSG members. For further information concerning the Symposium, please contact Dr. Jim Richardson, 1992 Sea Turtle Symposium Coordinator, Institute of Ecology, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia 30602 USA. Telephone: 404-542-6036 (office) or 404-548-9046 (home); FAX: 404-542-6040; Telex: 414190. As usual, there are no funds available through IUCN or SSC to cover travel expenses of group members.

Please send me any topics that you would like included on the meeting agenda. Topics that will be discussed include:

1. Research/data needs for Caribbean hawksbills to assess Cuba's management program.

2. Marine Turtle Action Plan Outline.

If you are unable to attend and have information that you would like to have presented at the meeting, please let me know. I look forward to seeing many of you in February.

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TELEPHONE 904 392-5194
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February 1992

To: Members of the Marine Turtle Specialist Group

From: Alan Bolten, Compiler of the Marine Turtle Action Plan

I have enclosed an annotated outline of the Marine Turtle Action Plan. Please review the outline and send me any comments that you have by **31 March 1992**. A version of this outline was circulated to about 50 members of the MTSG a few months ago; the enclosed version has been modified as a result of their comments. Be sure to search for your name in the Proposer/Contact column and check the entry. You may not immediately recognize your project because we have altered some titles for greater consistency among projects. Also, when similar projects were submitted, they were combined and both proposers/contacts were listed for the combined project. Projects submitted for the Hawksbill Research Plan compiled by Anne Meylan have been incorporated in this Action Plan but broadened, where appropriate, to include all species.

On the advice of Dr. Michael Klemens (implementor of the Tortoise and Freshwater Turtle Action Plan), budgets will not be included in the Action Plan. Dr. Klemens has found that having budgets included with the projects has made fund-raising more difficult, because the budget printed in the Plan is rarely the same as that eventually presented to funding organizations. Usually, the budget in the action plan is an under-estimate; the implementor then must justify large budget increases to the funding organization. Before any of these projects are submitted to funding agencies, the proposers/contacts will have to develop more detailed proposals including specific budgets.

As you will see in the outline, projects are listed under a primary category that best describes the project. Some projects are also assigned secondary categories, which are shown in the far right column as letter codes that refer to the outline project categories A-J. This system allows us to cross-reference one project under several categories. In the final document, full descriptions will be given for each project under its primary category. Following the full project descriptions, projects that are cross-referenced from other categories will be listed by title, proposer/contact and category where the full project description is given.

I would like to draw your attention to a few points:

1. There are only two proposals for designating protected areas in the Action Plan (section V.B.). Certainly there are additional areas that need protection; please submit your suggestions now.

2. If a project in the plan has already been completed or if it is no longer needed (e.g., because of changes in international trade), please let me know so that I can delete the project.

3. If you identify a topic that has not been covered by a project in the plan and that you feel is an important one, please develop an appropriate project (project form is enclosed). **Do not just comment that "this topic should be included." Please remember that I am the Action Plan *compiler* not the Action Plan *writer*.**

4. Projects can still be submitted for the Action Plan. A project form is enclosed.

5. Please help us with photographs for the Action Plan. See the enclosed "Request for Photographs."

Thank you very much for your assistance without which the action plan would not be possible.

REQUEST FOR PHOTOGRAPHS

We are now collecting photographs to be published in the Action Plan. If you have any high quality photographs that you would like to submit for consideration, please do so now. We need representative photographs of all species, and IUCN likes to use photographs with people doing things with turtles (for example, tagging, weighing, attaching telemetry instruments, tracking turtles, etc.). Also, we need photographs showing turtles negatively affected by human activities (for example, tangled in nets, eggs in a market).

Please attach information describing the photograph so that a figure legend can be written. In each legend, credit will be given to the photographer.

Please submit high quality, good contrast, black and white, glossy prints. 12 cm by 18 cm prints are preferred. If you cannot submit black and white prints, we can use good contrast color slides. We cannot use color prints. We will not be able to return any photographs or slides. Therefore, only submit extras or duplicates. Any photographs submitted will be used one time only for this publication.

Please mail photographs to:

Alan B. Bolten
Center for Sea Turtle Research
Bartram Hall
University of Florida
Gainesville, FL 32611 USA

MARINE TURTLE ACTION PLAN PROJECT PROPOSAL FORM

DEADLINE 31 MARCH 1992

PROJECT TITLE (Choose a clear, concise title):

REGION (Specify the country, countries or geographic region where the project will be conducted):

SPECIES (Circle as many as are appropriate):

Cc	Caretta caretta	Ca	Chelonia agassizi
Cm	Chelonia mydas	Dc	Dermochelys coriacea
Ei	Eretmochelys imbricata	Lk	Lepidochelys kempi
Lo	Lepidochelys olivacea	Nd	Natator depressus

BUDGET (Please provide an estimate of the total project budget in US dollars. Specific budget items are not required at this time):

JUSTIFICATION (The justification should be on separate pages and should be less than 500 words. This should be a statement outlining necessary background information, the need for the project, and the methods to be used. Give some indication of the time necessary to complete the project. Please be concise and precise):

PERSON SUBMITTING PROJECT PROPOSAL:

Name:
Address:

Telephone: FAX: Telex:

CONTACT PERSON (The person who should be contacted for further information if different from the person submitting the proposal. This may or may not be the person who would undertake the project):

Name:
Address:

Telephone: FAX: Telex:

If you have any questions, please contact us. Projects should be submitted to:

Alan B. Bolten
Archie Carr Center for Sea Turtle Research
Bartram Hall
University of Florida
Gainesville, FL 32611 USA

Telephone: (904) 392-5194 FAX: (904) 392-9166

NEWS FROM THE SPECIALIST GROUPS OF IUCN

Marine Turtle

A special project to present Certificates of Merit in recognition of contributions to the conservation of marine turtles has been set up by Group member George Balazs, who is leader of the Hawaiian Sea Turtle Recovery Team. A thousand certificates have been produced with gilt lettering, gilt badge and gilt figure of a turtle to enable members 'to give special thanks to people working in their region for the good of sea turtles'. The certificates were paid for out of funds received from the Japanese Bekko (turtle-shell) Association.

These funds have also supported continued studies by Nicholas Mrosovsky on sex determination mechanisms; a field status survey by Joop Schulz in Indonesia; and training of Indonesians in research management techniques by Colin Limpus, in collaboration with Western Australia. A site visit by George Balazs to evaluate the marine turtle farm in Palau is approved, and Anne Meylan has received funding, with IUCN/SSC support, to start a marine turtle education and management programme in Malaysia in collaboration with the Government.

Tortoise and Freshwater Turtle

In the December 1988 Newsletter, Peter Pritchard reports the first successful breeding of 'one of the most challenging freshwater turtles', the South American giant river turtle *Podocnemis expansa*. The Emperor Valley Zoo in Trinidad has 37 healthy hatchlings produced in April/May last year from a breeding stock of three females and one male, the survivors of a group obtained 63 years ago which never bred.

The increasingly precarious situation of the western swamp turtle *Pseudemydura umbrina* in Western Australia is described — a bush fire in one reserve in March 1988 burned all the turtle habitat, and a training aircraft crashed and burned in a second one — fortunately when the turtles were aestivating underground. Eggs were laid in a captive-breeding project, but unfortunately not hatched. To save the situation another captive-breeding project has been started with the last 17 captive specimens.

Dr Edward Moll's questionnaire on Malaysian tortoises is part of the Group's Operation Tortoise to determine the distribution and conservation status of the world's tortoises, and he gives detailed descriptions and illustrations of three species on which he would like information: the Asian brown *Manouria emys*, the impressed *M. impressa*, and the elongated *Indorestudo elongata*.

LOWER VERTEBRATES

Coral Reef Fish

The Group is in the process of formation and defining its goals, reports the Chairman, Dr Don McAllister.

Destruction of the coral-fish habitat is widespread and serious, as described in the article on page 33, but the actual status of most coral-fish species is largely uncertain — none appear on the rare and endangered species lists in the Red Data Book, chiefly because of the lack of studies — but many have declined due to habitat loss and overfishing. Quantified population estimates are lacking and species status reports have not been attempted.

The Group's provisional goals are to:

Produce a world list of coral fishes. The Chairman will produce a subset of his computerized list of fishes of the world, which contains about 24,000 species;

Produce a list of the marine aquarium fishes of the world, again as a subset of the computerized list, and attempt to classify the species as appropriate to aquarists of varying skills in order to help the industry regulate the sale of species unlikely to survive under ordinary aquarium conditions. Also prepare a report on the size, geography and nature of the marine aquarium industry, and evaluate the industry's effect on species diversity and survival;

Establish a Geographic Information System (GIS) grid for the world, to show the presence, absence or loss of species, habitat conditions, and selected environmental parameters. Species richness would be calculated as an aid to find important coral-fish areas;

Input coral-habitat status data, or annotate lack of it into the GIS grid. Missing data flags the need for study. Poor habitat condition plus species richness will flag areas urgently in need of attention;

List countries with coral reefs, adding names of government and NGO organizations responsible for or knowledgeable about coral reefs, send a questionnaire on status of coral reefs and coral fishes to these organizations, and, summarize and analyze the data;

Obtain distribution data for a selected sample of coral-reef fishes. Input presence or absence of fishes into a microcomputer for GIS analysis. Compile maps of species densities, find species-rich areas and which are in degraded reef areas, and draw attention to these as 'critical' areas. Establish world conservation priorities;

Analyze questionnaires. Prepare potential action plans. Prepare, circulate and publish draft report.

Persons with concerns about coral fishes, information, reports or publications are asked to send them to the Chairman.

Species Newsletter of the SSC No 12 May 1989
(Species Survival Commission)

SUGGESTED PROTOCOL

WHAT: The specific problems of the species concerned need to be considered, and appropriate aims for a captive breeding programme made explicit.

WHEN: The vulnerability of small populations has been consistently underestimated. This has erroneously shifted the timing of establishment of captive populations to the last moment, when the crisis is enormous and when extinction is probable. Therefore, timely recognition of such situations is critical, and is dependent on information on wild population status, particularly that provided by the IUCN/Conservation Monitoring Centre. Management to *best* reduce the risk of extinction requires the establishment of supporting captive populations much earlier, preferably when the wild population is still in the thousands. Vertebrate taxa with a current census below one thousand individuals in the wild require close and swift co-operation between field conservationists and captive breeding specialists, to make their efforts complementary and minimize the likelihood of the extinction of these taxa.

HOW: Captive populations need to be founded and managed according to sound scientific principles for the primary purpose of securing the survival of species through stable, self-sustaining captive populations. Stable captive populations preserve the options of reintroduction and/or supplementation of wild populations.

A framework of international cooperation and coordination between captive breeding institutions holding species at risk must be based upon agreement to manage such species cooperatively for demographic security and genetic diversity. The IUCN/SSC Captive Breeding Specialist Group is an appropriate advisory body concerning captive breeding science and resources.

Captive programmes involving species at risk should be conducted primarily for the benefit of the species and without commercial transactions. Acquisition of animals for such programmes should not encourage commercial ventures or trade. Whenever possible, captive programmes should be carried out in parallel with field studies and conservation efforts aimed at the species in its natural environment.

Marine Turtle Ranching: Guidelines for Evaluating Proposals

A workshop of 18 experts convened by Dr Stephen Edwards, SSC Executive Officer, at the request of the CITES Secretariat, to advise it and the Parties on criteria for marine turtle ranching proposals, managed to reach a consensus. The Chairman, Karen Bjorndal, and four other scientific members of the SSC Marine Turtle Group, took part, as well as experts with management and enforcement backgrounds. The workshop report covering biological and physical facilities, and laws and enforcement, is currently under review by participants, but the following general points were agreed:

1.the problem with marine turtles is what is *not* known rather than what is; therefore ranching schemes should only be accepted if a research programme is included in the proposal;

2.only schemes with a documented benefit to marine turtle conservation should be accepted;

3.all legislative and enforcement controls should be in place before any trading is started.

To meet the requirements, while a ranching facility could be approved, it should not be allowed to start trading in products until the CITES Secretariat, with scientific advice and following an on-site inspection, has determined that all conditions have been met.

Success in this workshop was possible because of the high level of professional commitment of the participants and their dedication to resolve sometimes difficult conflicts. John Goldsmith, a long-time UK participant in CITES, served as a valued consultant to the workshop and Mrs Linette Humphrey, SSC Administrative Officer, took care of the technical details, ensuring participants could accomplish their objectives. Funding was provided by the Bekko Association of Japan, the US National Marine Fisheries Service, Department of Environment of France, and WWF-US. Copies of the report will be available later this year, following its submission to CITES.

A Heritage Site for Plants

A recent addition to the World Heritage Sites, inscribed under the Unesco World Heritage Convention, is the Garajonay National Park in the centre of the island of Gomera, in the Canaries. This, says the *Threatened Plants Newsletter*, is the first Heritage Site recognised for its plant life. The ancient laurel forests represent the subtropical Tertiary forest long gone from southern Europe, and they are among the few surviving unharmed. Thirty-four of the 450 plant species in the park are endemic to the island, and eight to the park itself. The total number of World Heritage Sites is now 69.

4/88 No. 10

and shrubs of the Hawaiian flora. Plants are individually fenced with wire to protect them against feral pigs and are thriving. Clearing exotic vegetation has revealed more dramatically and released from overwhelming competition those native trees persisting on the sites, principally the native species of *Canthium* and *Sapindus*. Perhaps more surprising and important is the spontaneous appearance within cleared areas of seedlings of native plants, such as *Canavalia*, *Pipturus*, and *Sapindus*. In one clearing, we found what may be a young volunteer seedling of *Lipochaeta micrantha*, a very rare endemic of the sunflower family, and young *Mezoneuron kavaiense* have been found growing naturally in the same cliff area that harbours *Neowawraea*. These may be the only wild individuals of *Mezoneuron* remaining on Kauai.

Keith now attaches the greatest importance to installing electrified perimeter fencing around the lower preserve to control feral pigs. I estimate that within 3 to 5 years, the preserve could be a showplace of native flora and an important educational resource. I think it has already provided a safe haven for some of the most endangered species in the United States and has shown what can be done by one dedicated private individual to advance the cause of conservation.

Captive Breeding — the IUCN Policy Statement

This Policy Statement, prepared by the SSC Captive Breeding Specialist Group, was approved by IUCN Council in September 1987.

SUMMARY: Habitat protection alone is not sufficient if the expressed goal of the World Conservation Strategy, the maintenance of biotic diversity, is to be achieved. Establishment of self-sustaining captive populations and other supportive intervention will be needed to avoid the loss of many species, especially those at high risk in greatly reduced, highly fragmented and disturbed habitats. Captive breeding programmes need to be established before species are reduced to critically low numbers, and thereafter need to be co-ordinated internationally according to sound biological principles, with a view to the maintaining or re-establishment of viable populations in the wild.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

IUCN data indicate that about 3 per cent of terrestrial Earth is gazetted for protection. Some of this and much of the other 97 per cent is becoming untenable for many species, and remaining populations are being greatly reduced and fragmented.

From modern population biology one can predict that many species will be lost under these conditions. On average more than one mammal, bird, or reptile species has been lost in each year this century. Since extinctions of most taxa outside these groups are not recorded, the loss rate for all species is much higher.

Certain groups of species are at particularly high risk, especially forms with restricted distribution, those of large body size, those of high economic value, those at the top of food chains, and those which occur only in climax habitats. Species in these categories are likely to be lost first, but a wide range of other forms are also at risk. Conservation over the long term will require management to reduce risk, including *ex situ* populations which could support and interact demographically and genetically with wild populations.

FEASIBILITY

Over 3000 vertebrate species are being bred in zoos and other captive animal facilities. When a serious attempt is made, most species breed in captivity, and viable populations can be maintained over the long term. A wealth of experience is available in these institutions, including husbandry, veterinary medicine, reproductive biology, behaviour, and genetics. They offer space for supporting populations of many threatened taxa, using resources not competitive with those for *in situ* conservation. Such captive stocks have in the past provided critical support for some wild populations (e.g. American bison *Bison bison*), and been the sole escape from extinction for others since re-introduced to the wild (e.g. Arabian oryx *Oryx leucoryx*).

RECOMMENDATION

IUCN urges that those national and international organizations and individual institutions concerned with maintaining wild animals in captivity commit themselves to a policy of developing demographically self-sustaining captive populations of endangered species where necessary.

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from page 20

Two more hornbill species have recently featured on stamps: the silvery-cheeked *Bycanistes brevis* on the two kwacha stamp of a new Malawi series, and Monteiro's Hornbill *Tockus monteiri* on the fifty-cent stamp of a short series of Southwest Africa, Namibia.

Andrew Johns has completed work in Sabah on the effects of logging, partly published in the Bulletin of the Oriental Bird Club (1988, 8: 11-15), and a report on the long-term effects is complete. Fortunately, hornbills seem little affected by selective logging, at least in the medium term, suggesting they are among the more resilient members of the forest fauna.

Parrots

The Group met in Curitiba, Brazil, in October and reviewed a draft action plan, reports Chairman Dr Donald Bruning. This places endangered and threatened parrots in four categories, each with different action needs, and also addresses key-site conservation, field studies, trade, education, data, policy, and finally implementation. The major thrust of the last is the need to 'establish a Parrot Action Plan Officer to promote, co-ordinate and seek funds for this Action Plan'.

The Group continues its efforts to develop captive breeding of the Spix macaw. Three holders of birds outside Brazil have agreed to co-operate, but unfortunately there is still no co-operation within Brazil. The whereabouts of other birds is still being investigated.

The pet trade, both legal and illegal, continues to cause great concern. The 1984 law prohibiting commercial sale of wild-caught birds in the state of New York serves as a model used by other states, but the pet industry lobby has so far prevented other states from adopting such legislation by misrepresenting the intent or result of such a law.

The Group's third meeting is planned for New Zealand in 1990 in conjunction with the IOC and ICBP meetings. The major objective will be to develop an action plan for parrots of the Asian Pacific area.

Seabirds

The Group plans a workshop on island management for ICBP's 1991 meeting in New Zealand, says the Chairman, Dr David Duffy. This will give an overview of threats to seabirds and islands, followed by detailed case studies of specific islands with different problems. The meeting will discuss potential management plans and solutions for the problems of each site.

The results should serve as a source book for island managers, and will produce a series of conservation plans for 10-15 important seabird islands.

The Group continues to produce a Spanish-language bulletin for seabird biologists in Latin America, now in its fourth year. Plans are to change its format to something more professional and to reproduce English-language extracts from the Bulletin of the Pacific Seabird Group. A supplement to the 1984 technical bulletin on seabird status and conservation is nearly finished.

A small working group is designing a template for a series of regional, local-language posters to reduce egging in tropical seabird colonies.

The Group is discussing ways to reduce overlap with regional seabird groups and to concentrate on global projects where it can have a coordinating function.

REPTILES

Crocodile

Brief news items from all parts of the (crocodile) world are a feature of Newsletter No. 7, January-December 1988, edited by Peter Brazaitas and Myrna Watanabe. Newsletter No. 8 (January-March 1989) however, records that for lack of time both editors have retired, though Peter Brazaitas, who is now New York Zoological Society's general curator of the Central Park Zoo, remains as Contributing Editor; the Group Chairman, Professor Wayne King, has taken on the editorship, with John Polisar as Managing Editor. This issue has an account of the Group's Steering Committee meeting in Papua New Guinea in October 1988 — see the Chairman's letter on page 36, and also prints a full list of the 78 Group members and 28 correspondents drawn from all six continents. The Steering Committee will meet again in October this year, in Lausanne, Switzerland, and in April next year in Gainesville, Florida, along with the working meeting.

The Group has obtained funding for the preparation of its action plan.

The Proceedings of the 8th Working Meeting in Quito, Ecuador, in October 1986 have been published by IUCN — with 17 substantial papers. Obtainable from 219c Huntingdon Road, Cambridge, CB3 0DL, UK.

UNION INTERNATIONALE POUR LA CONSERVATION DE LA NATURE ET DE SES RESSOURCES
INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Newsletter of the Species Survival Commission No. 12

Edited by Maisie Fitter

CHAIRMAN: Gren Lucas

Contents

WWF

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The Cover

The *Species* cover was designed by our Chairman Emeritus, Sir Peter Scott. The fourteen species displayed here, from the top, left to right are: Mauritius kestrel *Falco punctatus*; rafflesia *Rafflesia arnoldii*; shoebill (whale-headed stork) *Balaeniceps rex*; Queen Alexandra's birdwing butterfly *Ornithoptera alexandrae*; Oahu tree snails *Achatinella* spp; land iguana *Conolophus subcristatus*; coelacanth *Latimeria chalumnae*; Galapagos giant tortoise *Geochelone elephantopus*; cactus *Ariocarpus agavoides*; Pine Barrens tree frog *Hyla andersoni*; blue whale *Balaenoptera musculus*; traveller's tree *Ravenala madagascariensis*; nene (Hawaiian) goose *Branta sandvicensis*; Arabian oryx *Oryx leucoryx*. The two newcomers this time are the Galapagos tortoise and the Arabian oryx.

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SPECIES

Newsletter of the SSC No. 12

May 1989