

MEETING REPORTS

Workshop on the Management and Sustainable Use of Marine Turtles

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A "Workshop on the Management and Sustainable Use of Marine Turtles" was held in Cuba from 13-21 September 1999. Conducted under the auspices of the Caribbean Turtle Management and Research Group (CTMRG), the workshop attracted participants from 13 countries (Cuba, Dominica, St. Lucia, St. Kitts, St. Vincent & Grenadines, Grenada, Nevis, Dominican Republic, Trinidad & Tobago, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Colombia and Mexico). Teaching was carried out by Cuban, Mexican and Australian specialists.

On the first day, in Havana, lectures on Cuba's environmental policy, fishing regulations and an overview of CITES were presented. The following day, the group travelled to Cocodrilo, on the southern coast of the Isle of Pines (Isle of Youth), where presentations and practical exercises were held on: harvest methods, general biology, movement, satellite telemetry, tagging, reproduction, maturation, nesting, ranching, monitoring, DNA analysis, data management and management programmes. On returning to Havana, the stocks of hawksbill shell accumulated from Cuba's management

program were visited at Cojimar, and the final steps in the processing of the shell were presented. The workshop was officially closed, with members of a European Union Scientific delegation handing out certificates to participants.

Important results were achieved at the workshop. Holding the workshop at one of the two traditional harvest sites in Cuba allowed participants to see first hand the importance of marine turtles to a small remote community, which has harvested marine turtles for over 114 years. Each participant presented a short report on their country's activities with marine turtles, and was able to learn from Cuba's experience with its management programme. The importance of national management as a first step towards regional management was noted. It is important that management programmes for marine turtles be implemented within the region, which include research and conservation objectives. The workshop fostered regional co-operation in conservation, research and management between participating countries.

Workshop on Marine Turtles in Taiwan

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The International Workshop on the Migration, Foraging Habitats and Nesting Ecology of Marine Turtles in Taiwan was held in Taipei, Taiwan, Republic of China (ROC) from April 12th-14th 1999. This workshop was sponsored by the Council of Agriculture and the Environmental Protection Agency of ROC. Participants were invited from Japan, Malaysia, Philippines, Mainland China and Hong Kong, United Arab Emirates and Taiwan. George Balazs (NOAA, Hawaii) served as the workshop Scientific Advisor.

The workshop recognised that sea turtle populations in Asia are declining dramatically. In addition the satellite telemetry studies conducted since 1994 have shown that green turtles that nest at Wan-An Island,

Penghu Archipelago of Taiwan distribute widely on the continental shelves east of Mainland China. These results stress the importance of regional and international cooperation on sea turtle conservation efforts. The main purpose of this workshop was to promote and foster the information exchange on sea turtle research and conservation with nations that share the critical habitat of the green turtles that nest in Taiwan.

The workshop was divided into two parts: public presentations by participants and discussions regarding further research and conservation efforts needed. The end point marine environment of each turtle tracked was also discussed in detail. Very little information was known of these areas and, except for a few sites, most

are not protected. The workshop stressed the need to protect these areas and the importance of incorporating the fishery sector in sea turtle research and conservation.

Significant conclusions of the workshop were the need for:

- 1) More genetic studies.
- 2) More conservation and public awareness campaigns on both the nesting and foraging sites.
- 3) Tagging studies of hatchlings, turtles taken as bycatch and the use of PIT tags.
- 4) More information on the regional distribution of seagrass and coral reefs.
- 5) An understanding of the threats along the migratory routes.

6) Site visits, information exchanges and interviews with the local people and authorities at the end point of each migration route.

7) Collaborative research with oceanographers and fishery experts.

8) International cooperation with the nations in the region.

9) Training of the next generation of sea turtle biologists and development of a graduate programme to study the marine environment.

10) Setting up a Taiwan sea turtle web site.

This workshop should serve as a stepping stone to regional conservation on sea turtle research and conservation efforts. Copies of the workshop report are available from the address given above.

Workshop on Marine Turtles and Protected Areas Database in Libyan Arab Jamahirya

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A workshop on marine turtles and the protected areas database in Libya was held in Elbayda city, close to the Kouf National Park from the 26th - 27th November 1999. The workshop was sponsored by the Technical Center for Environment Protection (TCEP), the Marine Biology Research Center (MBRC), the secretary of the popular committee of Elbayda and with collaboration of the Regional Activity Center for Specially Protected Areas (RAC/SPA-MAP-UNEP).

The workshop was attended by Mr. L. Chabason, Coordinator of the Mediterranean Action Plan; Mr. A. Hintati, Director General of RAC/SPA; Mr. Dimitris Margaritoulis Regional Vice-Chairman of the IUCN Marine Turtle Specialist Group; Mr. A. Boargob, Director General of Environmental Studies Dept. of the TCEP and marine turtle experts Mr. M.N. Bradai and Mr. A. Hamza who participated in the survey of the Libyan coast (phase III) in 1998. In addition Mrs. A. Makhlouf; RAC/SPA consultant for the preparation of the Libyan protected areas database, and Dr. Ali Batau, Dean of the Faculty of Science, Elbayda attended.

On the first day of the meeting an excursion was made to the natural, archeological and historical sites in the area of the Green Mountain. Participants then visited the Kouf National Park (an important nesting site for loggerhead turtles in Libya). On the second day

the workshop was officially opened by the head of the secretary of the popular committee of Elbayda and the MAP Coordinator. Mr. Hintati then gave a talk about the coastal survey for marine turtles nesting in Libya (1995-1998), and the results of the three phases of the survey were presented by Mr. A. Hamza and Mr. Bradai. Mr. Margaritoulis then talked about the MTSG-IUCN and the role of non-governmental organizations in increasing public awareness. In addition, a brief presentation was then made by Mrs. A. Makhlouf on the preparation of the Libyan protected areas database.

After discussions the workshop concluded that the following recommendations be made. The need for:

1. Continuing the survey of marine turtles in Libya, identifying the most important nesting sites and establishment of protected areas for this endangered animal.
2. Realizing the use of the Libyan protected areas database.
3. Assessing the impact of fisheries on marine turtle populations of the Libyan coast.
4. Increasing public awareness campaigns on the protection of marine turtles.
5. Collaborating with regional and international organizations in this field.