

SOUTH PACIFIC COMMISSION

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CABLE ADDRESS:
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TELEPHONE: 26.20.00
TELEX : 3139 NM SOPACOM
FAX: (687) 26.38.18



COMMISSION DU PACIFIQUE SUD

BOITE POSTALE 05
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NOUVELLE-CALÉDONIE

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PRO 59/4/2/1

In reply, please quote
PLEASE ADDRESS REPLY TO
THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

Nooumea, 19 October 1989

Dr. Karen BJORNDAL
Centre for Sea Turtle Research
Department of Zoology
UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA
GAINESVILLE, FL 32611, U.S.A.

Dear Dr. Bjorndal,

You will recall I wrote to you earlier this year seeking information on the activities of the IUCN/SSC Marine Turtle Group. You will be interested to learn that the conservation of marine turtles featured prominently at the Fourth South Pacific Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas which was successfully concluded in Port Vila, Vanuatu on 12 September.

At the conference a special working group of experts and managers associated with marine turtle management and conservation in the South Pacific was convened, with the assistance of the CITES Secretariat, to develop a draft Regional Marine Turtle Conservation and Management Programme for the South Pacific Region. The working draft of the programme was prepared by Ms. Sylvia Spring of the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service in conjunction with SPREP and the refined and finalised version was adopted by the conference. Copies of the programme and conference resolution on its adoption are attached. A phased workplan from the implementation of the programme is being drawn up at present.

We had hoped to have three regionally prominent turtle conservationists at the workshop (George Balaz, Mike McCoy and Colin Limpus) but in the end, of these, only Mike McCoy could make it. Other participants included representatives of James Cook University, Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service, CITES, Traffic (Oceania), Greenpeace and several Pacific Island countries including perhaps the most important from a marine turtle standpoint, Papua New Guinea.

.../...

The regional turtle conservation programme represents a positive step towards achieving regionally co-ordinated action on marine turtle conservation in the South Pacific. Much work will have to be done to see its ambitious targets realised and progress will not be dramatic. However, we are reasonably optimistic that the funding necessary to at least get the programme off the ground will be forthcoming in the near future. One of our biggest tasks will be to secure support for the programme from the many government marine resource and fisheries management departments and related agencies which abound in this region. This we hope to do by distributing the programme widely and featuring it at future regional fisheries technical meetings.

Apart from keeping you and your specialist group informed of this development, I would also appreciate it if you could inform me of any other regional programmes of this type which are being developed or implemented and contact addresses for their co-ordinators. The only one I know of is the MEDASSET programme being developed by Lily E. Venizelos in Greece with whom I am in contact.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Thomas,
Protected Areas Management Officer,
South Pacific Regional
Environment Programme (SPREP)

Atts.

cc: Ms. Sylvia Spring, ANWPS
Dr. George Balaz, US Nat'l Marine Fisheries
Mr. Colin Limpus, QNWPS
Executive Officer, Species Survival Commission, IUCN

PT/ewg