

International Agreement of KIT-NIPS and CBDD

NIPS - the Netherlands International Partnership for Sustainability - coordinates in the Netherlands the implementation of agreements on sustainable development. The principles of the agreements are: reciprocity, equality and participation, in order to promote the exploration of new horizons. NIPS' ambition is to contribute towards the development of new standards in North-South relations. NIPS wants to stimulate global sustainable development with the recognition of mutual dependency and responsibility, the necessity for equal sharing, for the benefit of future generations and the ability to learn from each other and each others organizations. The counterpart of NIPS in Benin is the CBDD, the Centre Beninois pour le Developpement Durable.

History

In 2000, representatives from Nature Tropicale (Benin) and Biotopic (The Netherlands) visited five different sea turtle conservation projects in Costa Rica. Mr. Randal Arauz of STRP Pretoma introduced them to several projects looking at management, ecotourism, working with the population and volunteers and the use of turtle excluder devices in fisheries. The next step was the organization of a technical workshop in Benin by Nature Tropicale, Biotopic and the IUCN. One of the results was the establishment of a regional sea turtle network in West Africa, Wastcon, and an evaluation of the status of sea turtle protection in Benin. The evaluation highlighted the importance of stakeholder participation in conservation issues along the coastal zone in Benin.

Participation in Conservation

In February 2003 several meetings were organized by Nature Tropicale, Coope Sol i Dar, Biotopic and IUCN in Benin, where information and discussion sessions with the different stakeholders took place. Comparisons were made with the situations in Suriname where ecotourisms play an important role in the conservation efforts and the local economy. Costa Rican practices on participatory methodologies were presented and explained. Together with the stakeholders, a first inventory of their problems was made. With the members of Nature Tropicale a session was organized on the methodology for the analysis, identification and how to prioritize the actions. Possible alternative socio-economical development can be discussed with the actors, for instance in ecotourism and aquaculture.

Conclusions

1. The participatory methodologies used in Costa Rican field projects appeared to be useful in the African context and in the work that Nature Tropicale does in Benin.
2. The practical application of these methodologies can be adapted to the African context using local animation, drawings and histories from the African Culture.
3. Nature Tropicale and Biotopic could benefit strongly from a training course on facilitation of meetings and participation tools.
4. The challenge in Benin is to look for alternative and sustainable socio-economical such as ecotourism and aquaculture.
5. North-South relations as well as South-South relations between NGOs or between villages can be used as a stimulus for new conservation developments.
6. It is urgent to develop ways to incorporate the different institutions, sectors and communities into the conservation and scientific work developed by Nature Tropicale in Benin.

SOUTH PACIFIC REGIONAL MARINE TURTLE CONSERVATION PROGRAMME: A VISION FOR EFFECTIVE CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF OUR TURTLE RESOURCES

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The Regional Marine Turtle Programme was first developed by SPREP and the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service (ANPWS) in 1989 and adopted by the Fourth South Pacific Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas. Since then the RMTCP has been adopted by all the countries of the region as the focus for turtle conservation work in the South Pacific.

The programme includes population census, tagging and monitoring, other research, the creation of a regional information database, public education (posters, school education etc); staff training; legislation and regulation review; and other conservation work (protection of nesting areas etc.).

The RMTCP currently carry out three major activities:

- Networking with member countries,

- Support for in-country projects / programmes,
- Production and distribution of turtle conservation resource material

In networking, RMTCP maintains communication between and among member countries ensuring exchange of information. A regional database on marine turtles is housed in SPREP and information disseminated regionally according to country requests. RMTCP provides support to in-country programmes and projects aimed at turtle conservation and sustainable utilization. Project proposals from member are submitted to RMTCP for funding. Projects submitted to date have been designed to carry out turtle tagging programmes and carrying out awareness campaigns. Project proponents have mainly asked RMTCP to produce and distribute turtle conservation resource material to member countries and other interested parties to promote turtle conservation. Resource material includes turtle video re-run, turtle tags and applicator kits, posters and t-shirts. These materials are distributed according to country requests and as resources allow.

INVOLVING COMMUNITIES IN SEA TURTLE RESEARCH: EDUCATION MAKES A DIFFERENCE

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Illegal egg harvests from sea turtle nesting beaches continues to be a major threat to the long-term survival of sea turtle populations (Spotila et al, 1996). Many research programs desire local residents' participation in conservation efforts, but involving the public extends beyond the expertise and time of many scientists (Brewer et al, 2002). For three years, Ecology Project International has successfully integrated local residents in conservation research at a high-density nesting beach for leatherback sea turtles (*Dermochelys coriacea*) on the Caribbean coast of Costa Rica. In 2002, 17 student groups totaling 272 participants served as research assistants during 51 nights of the peak leatherback nesting season. Local high school students collected biometric data, augmented the frequency and duration of patrols, contributed to habitat restoration of the nesting beach, and provided energy and inspiration to resident researchers. In February, 2003, Ecology Project International applied this model of community involvement at a green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) monitoring program in Galapagos National Park, Ecuador. In the first partnership of its kind on the islands, local Galapageño high school students patrolled critical nesting beaches alongside biologists from the Charles Darwin Research Station.

References

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- Spotila, J. R., A. E. Dunham, A. J. Leslie, A. C. Steyermark, P. T. Plotkin, and F. V. Paladino. 1996. Worldwide population decline of *Dermochelys coriacea*: are leatherback turtles going extinct? *Chelonian Conservation and Biology* 2: 209-222.
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PROTECTING SEA TURTLE NESTS FROM RACCOON DEPREDATION AT SEBASTIAN INLET STATE PARK

Terry O'Toole

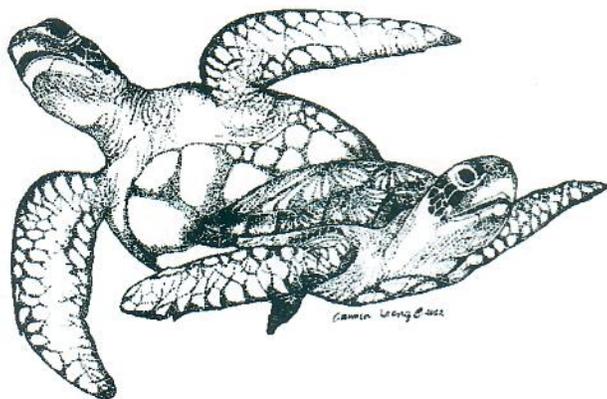
D.E.P. Florida Park Service, 9700 South A1A, Melbourne Beach, Florida US 32951

Raccoons are the main predators of sea turtle nests at Sebastian Inlet State Park, the largest section of public owned land in the Archie Carr National Wildlife Refuge, located on the central East Coast of Florida (USA). The Archie Carr National Wildlife Refuge has the second largest nesting aggregation of Loggerhead sea turtles in the world. A raccoon reduction program has been implemented, in which we used three methods to decrease the raccoon population. One, we reduced access to human food sources, such as dumpsters and garbage cans; two, we used public education activities such as public interpretive programs and signage; and three we used a live trapping and euthanasia program. By reducing the raccoon population there has been a positive effect on reducing raccoon predation on sea turtle nests.



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**PROCEEDINGS
OF THE TWENTY-THIRD ANNUAL
SYMPOSIUM ON SEA TURTLE BIOLOGY
AND CONSERVATION**



**“Living with
Turtles”**

17 to 21 March 2003, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Compiled by: Nicolas J. Pilcher

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Marine Fisheries Service
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