

CONNECTING CULTURES TO SAVE A TRANSPACIFIC AMBASSADOR, THE LOGGERHEAD TURTLE

S. Hoyt Peckham¹, Raquel Briseño², Kama Dean³, Naoki Kamezaki⁴, Irene Kinan⁵, Mizuno Kojiro⁴, Johath Laudino-Santillán⁶, Yoshimasa Matsuzawa⁴, Leland Oldenburg⁷, Ignacio Romero-Aguilar⁸, Georgita Ruiz⁶, Israel Richie-Sánchez⁹, Miguel Valenzuela¹⁰, and Wallace J. Nichols¹¹

¹ University of California at Santa Cruz and ProPeninsula

² Instituto de Ciencias del Mar y Limnología, UNAM

³ ProPeninsula and Grupo Tortuguero

⁴ Sea Turtle Association of Japan

⁵ Western Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Council

⁶ Grupo Tortuguero

⁷ Hawaii Longline Association

⁸ Sociedad Cooperativa de Producción Pesquera Puerto Chale

⁹ Sociedad Cooperativa de Ecoturismo Tortuguero

¹⁰ Sociedad Cooperativa de Producción Pesquera Punta Abreojos

¹¹ The Ocean Conservancy and California Academy of Science

Endangered loggerhead turtles nest in Japan and mature in the waters of Hawaii and Mexico and thus require international, collaborative conservation measures. Reversing the decline of loggerhead turtles is a priority clearly articulated in US, Japanese and Mexican environmental policy, as well as by local, national and international NGOs and intergovernmental agencies. Unfortunately, efforts to protect loggerheads have been hampered by poor pan-Pacific coordination among agencies, organizations, scientists, and fishers. Because fisheries bycatch is the greatest known threat to loggerheads, it is clear that conservation action must be coordinated in all three countries. Fisheries conservation initiatives in Mexico and Hawaii and nesting beach protection in Japan have resulted in reduced turtle mortality, but loggerhead turtle bycatch remains problematic in some fisheries. Preliminary social research indicates that fishers can be motivated to take conservation action by their appreciation for turtles' transpacific migrations and consequential vulnerability. We have assembled a pan-Pacific team from the U.S., Japan, and Mexico to share their knowledge towards understanding the cultural, social, and economic conditions that threaten loggerhead turtles in each country and for developing joint solutions to this shared problem. Through international exchange and capacity building, we are empowering fisher leaders and policy makers from Mexico, the US, and Japan to convey the transpacific migration and vulnerability of loggerhead turtles to other fishers and their families in bycatch hotspot communities. A delegation of Mexican, Japanese and US fishers, conservationists and scientists traveled to Japan, Mexico, and the US (this Symposium) to: 1) gain a pan-Pacific conservation perspective by experiencing trans-Pacific traveling loggerhead turtles in Japan; 2) share local bycatch concerns and develop solutions with international counterparts at the annual meeting of the Sea Turtle Association of Japan and at the annual meeting of the Grupo Tortuguero; 3) inspire and empower fishers to reduce bycatch by sharing the exchanges through community enrichment programs and a short documentary film; and 4) to share new knowledge of loggerheads to develop a tri-national conservation strategy to recover the North Pacific population.



NOAA Technical Memorandum NMFS-SEFSC-569

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

22-28 February 2007
Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, USA

Compiled by:

ALan F. Rees
Mike Frick
Aiki Panagopoulou
Kris Williams

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Carlos M. Gutierrez, Secretary

NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION
Conrad C. Lautenbacker, Jr., Administrator

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
James W. Balsiger, Acting Assistant Administrator for Fisheries

Technical Memoranda are used for documentation and timely communication of preliminary results, interim reports, or special-purpose information, and have not received complete formal review, editorial control or detailed editing.