

CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES
OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA



Thirty-first meeting of the Animals Committee
Online, 31 May, 1, 4, 21 and 22 June 2021

Species specific matters

ADDENDUM TO MARINE TURTLES (CHELONIIDAE SPP.
AND DERMOCHELYIDAE SPP.)

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.

Progress since August 2020

2. As noted in paragraph 5 of document AC31 Doc. 24, the Secretariat published Notification to the Parties No. 2020/035 on 22 April 2020 pursuant to Decision 18.210, paragraph f). This part of the decision indicates that the responses to the Notification should be considered by the Standing Committee at its 73rd meeting. As explained in paragraph 10 of document AC31 Doc 24, the Secretariat proposed to convey any information of a scientific nature contained in the responses to the Animals Committee, as per Decision 18.210, paragraph g).
3. Responses were received from the following eight Parties: Australia, Canada, China, Jamaica, Japan, Monaco, Thailand, and the United States of America. These responses are contained in Annex 2 to this addendum in the language and format in which they were received and information of scientific nature in the responses are summarised in paragraphs 4 to 6 below.

Summary of responses to Notification to the Parties No. 2020/035

4. In the responses, all Parties reported that the species of marine turtles found in their waters are protected with China, Jamaica, Monaco, and Thailand also noting marine reserves or protected areas. Five Parties provided information on a recovery or conservation action plan for marine turtles (Australia, Canada, China, Jamaica, and the United States of America) and noted ongoing monitoring programmes for marine turtles, which included sampling, tagging or tracking studies and/or monitoring of nesting sites.
5. Several Parties provided information on studies on marine turtles (Australia, Canada, China, Jamaica, Thailand, and the United States of America). These included population assessments, satellite tagging and sampling to better understand turtle behaviour, ecology and migratory information, and genetic and isotope analysis to improve basic knowledge of sea turtles. Australia and Canada provided information on marine turtle population assessments, with Australia providing results of a study that showed a decline in nesting hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) population at Milman Island in the northern Great Barrier Reef and Canada noting a decline in populations of leatherback sea turtles (*Dermochelys coriacea*) and an unclear abundance trend for loggerhead sea turtles (*Caretta caretta*) in Canadian waters.
6. A number of Parties explicitly noted participation in international cooperation for research, training, and/or monitoring activities (Australia, Canada, China, and the United States of America). The United States of America also provided information on a collaborative global sample collection effort for DNA and isotope analysis to improve turtle basic knowledge and reported that samples from around the world are accessioned at the Marine Mammal and Sea Turtle Research Collection.

Proposed next steps

7. A preliminary review of the marine turtle study and draft recommendations were prepared by Mr. Hugh Robertson (representative for Oceania, one of the co-leads for the Animals Committee on marine turtles) and presented in Annex 2 to document AC31 Doc. 24. While much of the information in Annex 2 remains valid, some updates are required due to changes in meeting schedules and the responses to Notification to the Parties No. 2020/035. To facilitate the work of the Committee, the Secretariat has updated the text accordingly and presented a revised draft in Annex 1 of this Addendum for consideration by the Animals Committee.

Revised recommendations

8. The Animals Committee is invited to:
 - a) take note the information presented in document AC31 Doc. 24 and its addendum;
 - b) consider the updated review of the marine turtle study and draft recommendations presented in Annex 1 to this addendum; and
 - c) submit recommendations, as appropriate, for consideration by the Standing Committee.

Proposed amendments to document AC21 Doc. 24, Annex 2

Proposed new language is in underline font and deleted language is in ~~strikeout~~ font.

Marine turtles (Cheloniidae and Dermochelyidae)

1. This document has been prepared by Mr Hugh Robertson (Representative for Oceania), as one of the co-leads for the Animals Committee on *marine turtles*, in response to a request from the Chair of the Animals Committee for a preliminary review of the study referred to in Decision 18.216 and the preparation of draft recommendations for consideration at the 31st meeting of the Animals Committee.

Background to Decision 18.216

2. The Secretariat explained in CoP18 Doc 70 that financial support for undertaking a study of the status, scope and trends of the legal and illegal international trade in marine turtles, its conservation impacts, management options and mitigation priorities called for in Decision 17.222, paragraph a), had been secured from Australia (through the CMS Secretariat), the European Union [through the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States Secretariat (ACP)], and the United States of America.
3. The study on the legal and illegal international trade in marine turtles was done by the Marine Research Foundation (MRF), the Wildlife Trade Monitoring Network (TRAFFIC) and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). It had been done in close collaboration with *inter alia* the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles (IAC), and the Secretariat of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), in particular its Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles and their Habitats of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia (IOSEA Marine Turtles MoU).
5. The study, entitled Status, scope and trends of the legal and illegal international trade in marine turtles, its conservation impacts, management options and mitigation priorities, was presented in information document CoP18 Inf. 18. The report focuses on in situ assessments in eight countries from three geographical sub-regions (the East African, Inter-American, and Southeast Asian/Coral Triangle). The eight countries (Madagascar, Mozambique, Colombia, Nicaragua, Panama, Indonesia, Malaysia and Viet Nam) were selected because they had emerged as potentially significant locations involved in illegal trade in marine turtles, following a review of recent literature and consultations with experts [including the International Union for Conservation of Nature Species Survival Commission Marine Turtle Specialist Group (IUCN/SSC MTSG)].
6. At SC69, the Standing Committee established an intersessional working group (United States of America (Chair), Australia, China, Indonesia, and Japan; and the Food and Agricultural Organization, Humane Society International, International Union for Conservation of Nature, TRAFFIC, and the World Wide Fund for Nature) on marine turtles to *review the information and recommendations contained in the study and formulate its own recommendations for consideration by the Standing Committee at its 70th meeting for its reporting to the Conference of the Parties, at its 18th meeting.*
7. At SC70, the Secretariat explained in document SC70 Doc. 50 that the study had been delayed and the working group was not able to submit a document with its own recommendations for consideration by the Standing Committee at SC70, as per its mandate. The Standing Committee agreed to propose to the Conference of the Parties, at its 18th meeting (CoP18), the extension of Decisions 17.222 and 17.223.
8. Given the scientific and technical nature of parts of the study, and based on discussions at SC70, the Secretariat was of the view that Decision 17.223 could be amended to include the Animals Committee in the review process, as agreed in Decision 18.216.
9. Noting that CoP18 adopted Decision 18.216, and also adopted a set of decisions (especially 18.211-18.213), based on a cursory rather than detailed review of the study, the Animals Committee can focus on identifying

actionable findings and developing recommendations from the study that are not yet reflected in the decisions adopted at CoP18, and which may help Parties and the Standing Committee to fulfil their tasks under these marine turtle decisions.

Implementation of Decision 18:216

10. In accordance with paragraph a) of Decision 18.210, on 22 April 2020, the Secretariat issued Notification 2020/035 which included a copy of the full report on the legal and illegal international trade in marine turtles (as originally presented in English only in information document CoP18 Inf. 18) along with translations of key sections from the study (executive summary, discussion and overarching conclusions, and recommendations). The notification also requested Parties to submit information on the status of implementation of Decisions 18.211 to 18.214, including any planned implementation activities.
11. Paragraph f) of Decision 18:210 directs the Secretariat to “issue a Notification requesting that Parties provide information on implementation of Decisions 18.210 to 18.214 **for consideration by the Standing Committee at its 73rd meeting**”, yet Decision 18:216 directs the Animals Committee to review, at its 31st meeting, the study contained in information document CoP18 Inf. 18 **and any additional information received by the Secretariat in response to the Notification issued under Decision 18.210, paragraph f)**;
12. Because responses to Notification 2020/035 are not due until 30 June 2020, and depending on the number and detail of the responses, it may not be practical for the Animals Committee to consider the responses to the notification in any detail at AC31, except through a report presented by the Secretariat at the meeting.
13. All seven species of marine turtle – hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), loggerhead turtle (*Caretta caretta*), green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*), leatherback turtle (*Dermochela coriacea*), Kemp's ridley turtle (*Lepidochelys kempii*), olive ridley turtle (*Lepidochelys olivacea*) and the flatbacked turtle (*Natator depressus*) are included in Appendix I of CITES. As such, the international trade for commercial purposes is strictly prohibited for these species.
14. From in-country investigations and interviews, and from seizure data, the marine turtle study found evidence of illegal harvest and trade of marine turtles in all eight countries from the three widely separated geographical regions. However, these particular countries had been selected on the basis of recent evidence that they were significantly implicated in illegal trade markets, and so it is not clear how widespread the exploitation of marine turtles is globally.
15. Some additional information was provided on the illegal take and trade of marine turtles in two other regions, the Mediterranean and West Africa, which painted a similar picture to that from the selected countries.
16. In all cases, national laws and regulations offered full or partial protection of live animals and their eggs. Partial protection was due to some regions or specific sites having a legal marine turtle fishery for adults or eggs.
17. The main marine turtle species exploited were hawksbill turtles (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) mainly for their carapaces, and green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) mainly for their meat. Eggs of a wider range of species were harvested, and other products such as penises and taxidermied animals were noted in some countries.
18. Marine turtles are taken in both targeted and non-targeted fisheries, with bycatch from semi-industrial and industrial fisheries being reduced by the use of turtle excluder devices. Most of the take of marine turtles is from artisanal fisheries and most animals are consumed locally or traded within countries. Domestic use and trade within these eight countries was much greater than international trade, which was mainly limited to trade to neighbouring countries or within a subregion. In the Southeast Asian/ Coral Triangle subregion, there were indications of more organised illegal international trade, such as increased use of online marketing, and seizures of large numbers of marine turtles on foreign fishing vessels.
19. The number of confiscated or seized specimens, mainly for “personal use”, recorded globally in the CITES trade database from 2000 to 2017 showed a decline in the number of illegal transactions between 2008 and 2013 followed by a plateau, but the report was not able to determine whether this decline was genuine or reflected poor enforcement and uneven reporting efforts by CITES Parties.

20. Decisions 18:211 – 18:215 on marine turtles that were adopted at CoP18 are comprehensive and cover a wide range of scientific, reporting, legal and enforcement measures stemming directly from “CITES-focused recommendations” and “overarching recommendations” contained in the study report on marine turtles.
21. Particular paragraphs of these decisions which have a strong scientific component are:
- 18:211 g) *collect samples of marine turtles for DNA analysis, including from seized specimens, to determine species involved and populations of origin and provide these to forensic and other research institutions capable of reliably determining the origin or age of the samples in support of, for example, research, investigations and prosecutions;*
 - 18:213 a) *research into the socioeconomics associated with the legal and illegal harvest and use of specimens of marine turtles, including eggs, including assessments of the sustainability of alternative livelihood options for communities depending on marine turtles and the motivations for their use;*
 - 18:213 b) *research that establishes a baseline for the status and distribution of marine turtles in the different countries/regions; and*
 - 18:213 c) *research into the scale and impact that national (and its international) artisanal, semi-industrial and industrial fisheries, including illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing, have on marine turtle populations and their linkage to illegal trade.*
22. Particular recommendations of a biological or socio-economic science nature in the study report that are relevant to international trade and which were not captured in the marine turtle decisions agreed at CoP18 were:
- 5. *Where harvest quotas for marine turtle specimens are necessary, develop robust and standardized frameworks for determining national harvest quotas. These should be science based, integrate a determination of suitable offtake levels, account for existing quotas in other States sharing the marine turtle(s) stocks, and account for national enforcement capacity.*
 - 8. *Work with States and their fisher communities to ensure that there is effective documentation at the national level of marine turtle fisheries bycatch and mortality that can inform posterior conservation and management measures.*
 - 13. *Develop science-based operational protocols for marine turtle captivity and hatchery establishments to follow as a way to ensure that their operations provide conservation value to marine turtle populations.*
 - 24. *Undertake future comparative research in the locations and communities covered in the present assessment to understand how trade has evolved.*
 - 27. *Develop holistic regional marine turtle survival probability models to assess sustainability of current harvest levels. These should take into account threats from multiple countries (number of turtles of different age classes taken from populations), limitations of source rookeries (number of turtles recruited per year), natural survival probabilities, and marine turtle biology. Where possible, these models should build on existing models, such as those developed by the IUCN Marine Turtle Specialist Group.*
 - 28. *Undertake biological and socio-economic research that can support the development of (additional) (spatial) protection measures for marine turtle foraging, nesting and migratory areas.*

Assessment and recommendations

23. Although Decision 18:216 b) does not specify when the Animals Committee needs to submit recommendations for consideration by the Standing Committee, Decision 18:217 a) requires the Standing Committee to review the recommendations from the Animals Committee at its 73rd meeting, which falls ~~between~~ before AC31 and AC32.

24. We, the co-leads, recommend that the Animals Committee should ~~in the interim~~ report to the ~~73rd~~ 74th meeting of the Standing Committee that the study, commissioned with financial support from Australia, the European Union and the United States of America, was very valuable in identifying key issues where CITES and others can help with the conservation of marine turtles. The report provided a useful analysis of the legal and illegal take and trade in marine turtles in eight countries, from three geographical regions, that were selected because of recent information implicating them in illegal exploitation and trade of marine turtles. It is, however, not clear how many other countries have similar issues, or face some completely different issues.
25. The responses of Parties to Notification No. 2020/035 may provide useful information on their implementation of Decisions 18.211 to 18.214, and thus shed light on issues they face that are relevant to consideration by the Animals Committee.
- ~~26. Because Party response to Notification 2020/035 are not likely to be available before AC31, we recommend that it may be necessary to establish an intersessional working group to consider the responses received and report back on their analysis and findings at AC32 with the view to make recommendations to the Standing Committee at their 74th meeting, in time for the Standing Committee to submit its recommendations to the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.~~
27. Decisions 18:211 to 18:214 are very comprehensive, and cover all of the “CITES-focussed recommendations” and most of the “overarching recommendations” from the study report. There are only a few of the “overarching recommendations” of a biological or socio-economic science nature in the study report that are relevant to international trade that were not clearly captured in the marine turtle decisions agreed at CoP18 (see paragraph 22).
28. A weakness of the study report, however, was the limited analysis of global trends in illegal international trade because it was suspected that the existing data are a reflection of reporting effort by certain Parties rather than the real picture. Further analysis would be especially valuable when standardized reporting by Parties of confiscated and seized specimens becomes more widespread and routine through annual illegal trade reports.
29. We, the co-leads, recommend that if an ~~intersessional~~ in-session working group is established at AC31, then their mandate should be to report back to AC32 with recommendations, as appropriate, to the 74th meeting of the Standing Committee. This report should address the outstanding items noted in paragraph 22 and any additional ones raised at AC31, together with issues raised by Parties in response to Notification to the Parties No. 2020/035 that are relevant to the Animals Committee.

Responses to Notification to the Parties No. 2020/035

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From: Rhedyn Ollerenshaw <Rhedyn.Ollerenshaw@awe.gov.au>
Sent: Wednesday, 17 June, 2020 3:56 AM
To: UNOG-UNEP-CITES Info <cites.info-cites@un.org>; Karen Gaynor <karen.gaynor@cites.org>
Cc: Cooper, Susan <Susan.Cooper@awe.gov.au>; Narelle Montgomery <Narelle.Montgomery@environment.gov.au>; Karen Arthur <Karen.Arthur@environment.gov.au>
Subject: Response to Notification 2020/035 - Australia - Marine turtles [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Dear Karen

Hello from Australia! I hope you are keeping well. I'm sorry that we won't be meeting in person in July.

Please find below Australia's response to Notification 2020/035 concerning implementation of Decisions 18.210 to 18.217 on Marine turtles.

- Six of the world's seven species of marine turtle occur in Australian waters. These species are the: loggerhead (*Caretta caretta*), olive ridley (*Lepidochelys olivacea*), leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*), green (*Chelonia mydas*), flatback (*Natator depressus*) and hawksbill (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) turtles. All six are listed under the Australian *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) as threatened, migratory and marine. This listing affords them protection as a matter of national environmental significance. If an activity has the potential to have a significant impact on a matter of national environmental significance, the activity must be referred for assessment under the EPBC Act.
- The *Native Title Act 1993* identifies activities such as hunting and fishing as potential native title rights and interests and permits Native Title holders to hunt turtles for the purposes of satisfying their personal, domestic or non-commercial communal needs. The *Torres Strait Fisheries Act 1984* allows for the traditional take of marine turtles by traditional inhabitants of Torres Strait within the area of the Torres Strait Protected Zone and the surrounding outside, but near, areas as described in the Torres Strait Treaty.
- Management of marine turtles in Australia is coordinated through the national *Recovery Plan for Marine Turtles in Australia* (2017). The Recovery Plan recognises the threat of illegal take of marine turtles as a high priority threat, particularly in regards to international take of Hawksbill turtles. The Recovery Plan identifies priority actions to address illegal take and reduce the illegal trade in marine turtle products, including working on a regional scale to reduce illegal, unreported and unregulated take and trade of turtles and increase education and communication of marine turtle conservation.
- The Australian Government has actively engaged through regional agreements to protect marine turtles from illegal take and trade.
 - Australia is an active member of the Illegal Trade Working Group to the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles and their Habitats of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia (IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU).
 - The Australian Government provided \$20 000 through the *Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals* (CMS) to CITES to facilitate the development of the study the "*Status, scope and trends of the legal and illegal international trade in marine turtles, its conservation impacts, management options and mitigation priorities*".
 - At the 8th Meeting of the Signatories to the IOSEA Marine Turtle MoU held in October 2019, Australia reiterated its commitment to the protection of turtles and the Native Title rights of Indigenous people to hunt on their land and sea country.

- Dr Colin Limpus (Queensland Government) is undertaking an assessment of Hawksbill turtles in IOSEA region.
- The Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (ACIC) completed an investigation in 2016 into the practice of illegal killing, poaching and transportation of turtle and dugong meat. The key findings of this investigation include:
 - Poaching and the illegal sale of meat throughout Queensland and the Torres Strait Indigenous communities is almost certainly minimal and usually opportunistic, but the full extent is unknown.
 - There is no substantive evidence to suggest that an organised commercial trade in turtle and dugong meat exists in Queensland, including the Torres Strait, and it is unlikely that a commercial market and organised trade in turtle and dugong meat exists in Queensland.
 - Indigenous community members are generally supportive of the development of enforceable measures to stop poaching activities within their sea country.
 - Turtle and dugong poaching in the Torres Strait is almost certainly minimal primarily because the legislative framework permits hunting by all traditional inhabitants, including those from PNG coastal villages, subject to certain restrictions.
- Australian Commonwealth, state and territory governments facilitate monitoring of marine turtle population demographics for all species of marine turtle found in Australia. Many of these programs regularly publish outcomes in the peer reviewed scientific literature. Of particular relevance to CITES Decisions 18.210 to 18.217, Bell et al (2020) identified a decline in the nesting hawksbill turtles population at Milman Island in the northern Great Barrier Reef over 28 years. The cause of this decline was not determined, but it was hypothesised that a combination of reduced hatching success combined with exploitation of mature animals at unprotected foraging grounds may have led to the observed reduction in nesting turtles.
- Bell, I. P., J. J. Meager, T. Eguchi, K. Dobbs, J. D. Miller and C. A. Madden Hof (2020). "Twenty-eight years of decline: Nesting population demographics and trajectory of the north-east Queensland endangered hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*)." Biological Conservation 241: e108376.

Warm regards

Rhedyn

Rhedyn Ollerenshaw
A/g Assistant Director | Policy
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CITES Management Authority of Australia

Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment
E: Rhedyn.ollerenshaw@awe.gov.au

From: no_reply@cites.org <no_reply@cites.org>

Sent: Thursday, 23 April 2020 2:05 PM

To: Wildlife Communications <dehcommunications@environment.gov.au>

Subject: New Notification to the Parties to CITES

Importance: High

The following Notification to the Parties was posted on the CITES website on 22 April 2020:

Notification to the Parties No. 2020/035:

[Implementation of Decisions 18.210 to 18.217 on *Marine turtles \(Cheloniidae spp. and Dermochelyidae spp.\)*](#)

[Annex 2: Status, scope and trends of the legal and illegal international trade in marine turtles, its conservation impacts, management options and mitigation priorities](#)

The Notification can be viewed on the page below:

<http://cites.org/eng/notif/index.php>

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Canada Response to Marine Turtles CITES Notification 2020-035

Population and Conservation Status

Canadian waters provide seasonal habitat for several species of marine turtles. Loggerhead (*Caretta caretta*) and Leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*) sea turtles are frequently encountered in Canadian Atlantic waters. Leatherbacks are occasionally encountered in Canadian Pacific waters. There are three other species that have been documented in Canadian waters but are extremely rare and seldom encountered: Green (*Chelonia mydas*) Atlantic and Pacific waters, Kemp's Ridley (*Lepidochelys kempii*) Atlantic waters and Olive Ridley (*Lepidochelys olivacea*) Pacific waters. All sea turtles are protected in Canadian waters as targeted harvest is prohibited.

Leatherback

There are two foraging populations of Leatherbacks in Canadian waters, one corresponds to the Northwest Atlantic Distinct Population Segment, and the other to the Western Pacific population. Both populations are listed under the federal Canadian *Species at Risk Act* as Endangered.

In the Northwest Atlantic, most leatherback turtles nest in the southern United States, Caribbean, and South and Central America, from February through to July. They migrate north to forage in Canadian waters during summer and fall. Atlantic Canada has one of the highest densities of foraging Leatherback sea turtles in the North Atlantic during the summer, in large part due to a predictable abundance of jellyfish. When in Canada, Leatherbacks can be found in coastal, shelf and offshore waters. The Northwest Atlantic population is decreasing; consistent with the global decline of the species. Over 1,000 Leatherback Sea Turtles are thought to visit Atlantic Canada each year to feed.

Leatherbacks in Pacific Canadian waters migrate long distances from Indo-Pacific nesting beaches, to forage on jellyfish. Leatherbacks are only occasionally observed in Canadian Pacific waters, with 145 sightings reported since the 1930's. A low population size, occurrence at the northern extent of the species' range and challenges in surveying foraging turtles, contribute to a poor understanding of leatherback turtle in Canadian Pacific waters. The Pacific Leatherback population has exhibited declines of up to 95% in the last 50 years.

Loggerhead

Juvenile Loggerhead sea turtles migrate to Atlantic Canadian waters to feed in spring through to the fall. The foraging population corresponds to the Northwest Atlantic Distinct Population Segment. Loggerhead turtles found in Canada principally originate from nesting populations in the southeastern United States, including Georgia and Florida. In Canada, Loggerhead habitat is defined temporally and geographically, in part, by sea surface temperature, and includes thermally dynamic waters along the shelf break and further offshore, where the warm waters of the Gulf Stream mix with the cooler waters of the Labrador Current. While in Canadian waters, Loggerhead sea turtles are mostly found offshore. The trend in abundance for this subpopulation is not clear. However, globally the species is in decline. Loggerhead sea turtle is listed under the Canadian *Species at Risk Act* as Endangered.

Management

All sea turtles are protected from harvesting in Canadian waters. Under the Canadian *Species at Risk Act*, Recovery Strategies outline the objectives and goals for protecting and recovering species at risk. Action Plans are based on the Recovery Strategy and summarize measures necessary to meet Recovery Strategy goals and objectives, and include the identification of critical habitat and details of measures necessary to promote the recovery of the species. The Recovery Strategy for Leatherback Turtle in Atlantic Canada was published in 2007 and the Action Plan for Leatherback in Atlantic Canada was published in 2020. A Report on the Progress of Recovery Strategy Implementation was published in 2013. A Recovery Strategy for Leatherbacks in the Canadian Pacific Ocean was published in 2006 and the Action Plan for Leatherback in Pacific Canada was published in 2019. A Report on the Progress of Recovery Strategy Implementation for the Pacific Population was published in 2013. A Recovery Strategy and Action Plan for the Loggerhead Sea Turtle in Canada is in the process of being developed.

Canada works closely with local and international partners to study Leatherbacks and Loggerheads and mitigate known threats. Collaborative research includes, deploying satellite tags on turtles in Canada and on southern nesting beaches; work which has been instrumental to improving understanding of migratory and foraging behaviours of both species. Sampling and tagging research also helps define species' distributions and habitat use within Atlantic Canada.

Work is ongoing to better understand interactions between sea turtles and fishing gear in Canada. Creative solutions to minimize the risk of such encounters are being explored with the fishing industry. Licence conditions for the pelagic longline fleet in Atlantic Canada were recently updated to ensure current best practices in sea turtle handling and bycatch prevention are being adopted, such that recovery of marine turtles in Atlantic Canadian waters is not compromised. Fisheries and Oceans Canada has worked with the fishing industry to develop and implement the Atlantic Canadian Loggerhead Turtle Conservation Action Plan. The plan seeks to monitor and mitigate incidental capture and post-release mortality of sea turtles by Canadian commercial fishing fleets. The Canadian government has also worked with the fishing industry to develop and implement the species at risk logbook program, requiring fishers to record both Leatherback and Loggerhead interactions.

Sea Turtle sightings are reported in Atlantic Canada to the Canadian Sea Turtle Network, and to the BC Cetacean Sighting Network in the Pacific. Along the west coast of the United States and Canada, a multi-jurisdictional collaborative project is in place to fortify the capacity for sea turtle stranding response by developing basic response protocols, obtaining necessary supplies, and training network members to streamline response efforts and data collection.

Products in Trade

The trade of marine turtle products into and out of Canada is small. The imports of products over the last ten years have mostly been preconvention items such as carvings, jewelry and carapaces, or biological samples for scientific purposes. The majority of exports over the last ten years have also largely been preconvention items such as carvings, jewelry and carapaces, or biological samples for scientific purposes. In Canada, pre-convention sea turtle products still require CITES import, export permits and re-export certificates. In addition, the Canadian legislation prohibits the possession of sea turtle products for the purpose of trade or offering for trade (some exemptions may apply).

Response to Notification No.2020/035 Regarding Marine turtles

(*Cheloniidae* spp. and *Dermochelyidae* spp.)

In recent years, China has continuously attached great importance to the conservation and management of marine turtles, implementing the relevant provisions of CITES Resolutions and Decisions, carrying out series of measures to strengthen the protection and conservation.

1. Legislation and action plans

All species of marine turtles distributed in China have been included in the List of Wildlife under the State Key Protection, which means that any hunting and killing of marine turtles are prohibited. Further, they will be transferred from state second-class protection to state first-class protection. Based on Wildlife Conservation Law and Fisheries Law, a series of supporting regulations and plans such as the “*Implementation Regulations for the Protection of Aquatic Wild Animals*”, “*Outline of Action for Conservation of Aquatic Living Resources in China*” and “*China Biodiversity Conservation Strategy and Action Plan (2011-2030)*”, have been promulgated, with marine turtle protection as the key content. The “*Marine turtles Conservation Action Plan (2019-2033)*” has been issued, which clarifies the basic principles, action objectives and route map of marine turtle conservation work, and provides strong guidance for the scientific conservation and effective management of turtle conservation.

2. Scientific research and the protection of marine turtle species and their habitats

Using satellite tracking and other methods to investigate marine turtle's wild resources and main habitats in China, preliminary studies on turtle's activity and distribution have provided basic support for turtle conservation. At the same time, a nature reserve and two conservation stations have been established along the coast to specially and effectively protect marine turtle and their habitats. For many years, marine turtle release activities have been carried out along the coast, which have promoted the restoration of the wild marine turtle population. For example, in 2019, such marine turtle release activities were held in Shandong, Guangdong provinces.

3. International exchange and cooperation

Several international meetings/workshops, such as the academic exchange meeting on sea turtle conservation, international seminar on marine turtle conservation, were held in China, to strengthen academic and information exchange, and to summarize and learn successful experience of other countries and organizations in marine turtle conservation.

4. Multisectoral coordination mechanism

The "Marine Rare and Endangered Wildlife Rescue Network" and "China Sea Turtle Conservation Union" have been established to carry out various forms of protection such as sea turtles rescue activity, in which fishery administrations, conservation agencies, scientific research institutes, aquariums, non-governmental organizations jointly

participated

5. Publicity awareness

Some noted public figures have been invited as ambassador for the Image of Aquatic Wildlife Conservation. The Marine Wildlife Conservation Award has been established. In the major social functions such as the annual celebration of the World Turtle Day, Aquatic Wildlife Science Promotion Month, World Wildlife Day, a series of targeted publicity activities have been carried out to raise awareness of the protection of turtles and other aquatic wildlife from all walks of life.

6. Joint law enforcement

The law enforcement and supervision of aquatic wildlife is the key work of the annual special enforcement actions named "China Fishery Sword". In such actions, various departments, including the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, General Administration of Customs, State Administration for Market Regulation, Marine Guard, and China CITES Management Authority, are working together to ensure effectiveness of joint law enforcement actions on aquatic wildlife. For example, in 2018, more than 50,000 law enforcement personnel were deployed in such joint departmental operations, with remarkable results achieved. All the illegal trade information of marine turtles were collected in a standardized manner and submitted in the annual illegal trade report to CITES Secretariat.

Report to the CITES Secretariat on Marine Turtles

This document has been prepared by the National Environment and Planning Agency (NEPA), Jamaica, concerning the implementation of Decisions 18.210 and 18.217 on marine turtles (*Cheloniidae spp.* and *Dermochelyidae spp.*) Notification to Parties No. 2020/035

MANAGEMENT AND ACTION PLANS FOR CONSERVATION

The Sea Turtle Recovery Action Plan for Jamaica was prepared in 2011 and provides the framework and direction for programmes to save Jamaica's sea turtle populations from extinction. The document describes a five-year national Sea Turtle Conservation Programme to achieve, inter alia: national consultations on the implementation of the Plan; an inventory of active sea turtle nesting beaches; a national network of long-term monitoring at Index sites (nesting, foraging); genetic fingerprinting of domestic populations (nesting, foraging); professional training in sea turtle research and monitoring techniques; an assessment and report of sea turtle products in Jamaica (including measures in place to eliminate the sale of worked shell products); an inventory of threats to sea turtle survival (nesting, foraging) in Jamaica; an assessment and report on sea turtle bycatch in Jamaica; development of best practices and handbooks on "Turtle-friendly Beach Development and Management" and "Recommended Regulations and Guidelines for Sea Turtle Conservation in Protected Areas"; inclusion within the national system plan for protected areas habitats important to sea turtle nesting and foraging; workshops on the development of area specific sea turtle management plans; and certain benchmarks related to public education and awareness.

CURRENT LEGISLATION

1. The Wild Life Protection Act, 1945

The Wild Life Protection Act makes it an offence to have a sea turtle or any part of the animal in one's possession. Anyone found guilty of this offence is liable to a fine of up to J\$100,000 or 12 months imprisonment.

Every person who- takes or attempts to take; or (b) sells or has in his possession for the purpose of sale, any turtle eggs shall be guilty of an offence against this Act. The following species are found on the THIRD SCHEDULE of the act.

Green Turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) L.N. Hawksbill Turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), Loggerhead Turtle (*Caretta caretta*), Atlantic Ridley (*Lepidochelys olivacea*), Kemp's Ridley (*Lepidochelys kempii*), Atlantic Leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*)

2. Endangered Species (Protection, Conservation and Regulation of Trade) Act, 2000

The Endangered Species Act provides for the conservation, protection and regulation of trade in endangered species. The Act was prepared to allow the Government

of Jamaica to fulfil its obligations under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

Marine turtles (*Cheloniidae spp.* and *Dermochelyidae spp.*) are listed under the First Schedule of the Endangered Species Act. Anyone found guilty of an offence under this act is liable to a fine of up to J\$1,000,000.00 or up to 2 years imprisonment.

ANNUAL SEA TURTLE MONITORING

1. The National Environment and Planning Agency (NEPA) conducts annual sea turtle nesting monitoring and reconfirmation of historical nesting beaches at select beaches islandwide. These surveys are typically conducted during the months of June to November which are considered the peak nesting season for the island's main nester, the Hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*). NEPA also actively seeks to collect information on nesting activity from non-governmental organizations, private individuals and hotels. This monitoring report provides information on the index beach in the Palisadoes-Port Royal Protected Area, the reconfirmation of historical nesting beaches, and nesting information from select beaches around the island which are monitored and reported on by non-governmental organizations, private individuals and hotels.
2. Public private partnership with various organizations, hotels and individuals monitor sea turtle nesting activity on their beaches. Currently, NEPA has Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with two community-based non-governmental organizations (NGOs) located on the south coast of Jamaica. In addition, there are other NGO's and individuals who conduct monitoring of nesting beaches and share the data with NEPA. Not all entities monitored consistently throughout the monitoring period for each year and so there may be gaps in data for some monitoring sites.

TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Training for community members at NGO's with which NEPA has MOUs was done through public-private partnership with the assistance of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) in 2017. NEPA provided further training in monitoring protocols and reporting and supplies the NGOs

with tags that are applied to the flippers of the nesting females they encounter. In addition, one NEPA staff member received training in Bermuda in 2017 in an international open water course on biology and conservation of sea turtles.

ILLEGAL DOMESTIC HARVEST

Anecdotal evidence of sea turtle poaching is often received. In addition both the discarded carcasses of typically Green and Hawksbill turtles and abandoned live turtles are rescued and released

KNOWN CRAFT ITEMS

Hawksbill shell jewellery is often sold in resort towns such as Negril. The use of turtle shells is not very extensive but is believed to be used opportunistically as a by-product of turtles poached for meat. Craft with vendors claimed they would find the shell scutes on the beach washed up and do not butcher turtles for the purpose of jewellery. Raids and seizures have been carried out in the past.

RECENT SUCCESSFUL PROSECUTIONS

1. In 2016, one person was captured on video butchering a Hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) in Alligator Pond, Manchester and was sentenced to serve one month in prison or pay a fine of \$50,000 and was also ordered to carry out 50 hours of community service. The incident took place in 2015, the video was widely circulated on social media.
2. In 2018, two persons were each fined \$50,000 for breaches under the Wildlife Protection Act (WLPA) The men, who were filmed killing a Green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) at 9 Miles in Bull Bay, St Andrew, They, had pled guilty to hunting a protected animal (WLPA section 6) and possessing the whole or any part of a protected animal (WLPA section 6A).

Information from Japan in response to CITES Notification 2020/035 regarding the request for information on the status of implementation of Decisions on marine turtles (Cheloniidae spp. and Dermochelyidae spp.)

In response to CITES Notification 2020/035 regarding the request for information on implementation of Decisions 18.211 to 18.214 on marine turtles, Japan hereby submits the following:

1. Japan prohibits direct harvest of marine turtles except for special occasions (e.g. scientific research permitted by central/local government) in accordance with relevant legislations.

2. In addition, Japan has been addressing incidental harvest of marine turtles through relevant Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs). In accordance with regulations adopted by RFMOs and domestic legislations for the implementation, Japan has been taking measures for: (1) mitigating the incidental capture of marine turtles; and (2) ensuring the safe handling of captured ones to secure their survival.

Commented [A1]: ヒメウミガメ、オサガメについては、水産資源保護法施行規則第1条に基づき採捕禁止。

アオウミガメ、アカウミガメ、タイマイについては、漁業法第67条に基づき、各県の行政委員会たる海区漁業調整委員会の指示に基づき原則採捕禁止。

Commented [A2]: マグロ RFMO の決議及び勧告（例えば、WCPFC の CMM2018-04）。

Commented [A3]: 指定漁業の許可及び取締り等に関する省令第56条の2等で担保。

NOTIFICATION 2020/035
Mise en œuvre des décisions 18.210 à 18.215,
Tortues marines (Cheloniidae spp. et Dermochelyidae spp.)

Conformément à cette notification, voici les éléments concernant la gestion de tortues marines à Monaco.

1. PROTECTION

Le Code de la mer prévoit des mesures générales de protection de la faune et de la flore marines visant à leur conservation et leur développement naturels et, à ces fins, visant à les préserver de tous troubles. Ces mesures s'appliquent à l'ensemble des rivages, des eaux intérieures et des eaux territoriales (art. L.230-1).

Des mesures particulières sont prévues pour les espèces inscrites à l'annexe II du Protocole de Barcelone du 10 juin 1995 relatif aux aires spécialement protégées et à la diversité biologique (art. O. 230-1) dans laquelle sont inscrites les espèces de tortues marines suivantes :

- Tortue Caouanne (*Caretta caretta*, Linnaeus, 1758)
- Tortue Verte (*Chelonia mydas*, Linnaeus, 1758)
- Tortue Luth (*Dermochelys coriacea*, Vandelli, 1761)
- Tortue imbriquée (*Eretmochelys imbricata*, Linnaeus, 1766)
- Tortue de Kemp (*Lepidochelys kempii*, Garman, 1880)

Conformément à ces mesures, sont interdites pour ces espèces ainsi que de leurs œufs, parties ou produits :

- la perturbation intentionnelle,
- la capture,
- l'importation,
- la détention,
- la mise à mort,
- le commerce,
- le transport et
- l'exposition à des fins commerciales.

Ces mesures sont complétées par des dispositions relatives à la pêche qui confirment l'interdiction de vendre, de transporter, de colporter ou de faire quelque usage que ce soit du produit des pêches prohibées (art. L.244-5) ainsi que l'interdiction de prélever toutes les espèces protégées telles qu'elles figurent dans les accords internationaux auxquels Monaco est Partie (art. O.244-23).

En cas de capture accidentelle d'un spécimen d'une espèce répertoriée au titre des espèces animales inscrites à l'annexe II du Protocole de Barcelone du 10 juin 1995 relatif aux aires spécialement protégées et à la diversité biologique, le spécimen doit (art. O.230-1) :

- être immédiatement relâché dans des conditions propres à assurer sa survie ;
- à défaut, être déclaré et remis à la Direction de l'Environnement dans les plus brefs délais.

Par ailleurs, il existe dans les eaux territoriales monégasques deux aires marines protégées : la zone protégée du Larvotto et la zone protégée du Tombant des Spélugues.

2. DEROGATIONS

Le Code de la mer prévoit également des dispositions dérogatoires (art. O.230-1).

Cela concerne en tout premier lieu les fonctionnaires et agents de la Direction des Affaires Maritimes, de la Direction de l'Environnement, de la Sûreté Publique et du Corps des Sapeurs-pompiers agissant dans l'exercice de leurs missions.

Les dérogations concernent ensuite les activités de recherche scientifique comportant la capture, la pêche ou le prélèvement d'espèces protégées au titre de leur inscription à l'annexe II du Protocole de Barcelone du 10 juin 1995 relatif aux aires spécialement protégées et à la diversité biologique. Ces recherches doivent être autorisées par le Ministre d'État, conformément à l'article L. 241-1 du Code de la mer.

Sont enfin également prévues des dérogations aux interdictions, à condition qu'elles ne nuisent pas au maintien, dans un état de conservation favorable, des populations des espèces concernées dans leur aire de répartition naturelle, accordées par le Ministre d'État, après avis de la Direction des Affaires Maritimes et de la Direction de l'Environnement, pour les cas suivants :

- a) dans l'intérêt de la protection de la faune et de la flore sauvages et de la conservation des habitats naturels ;
- b) dans l'intérêt de la santé et de la sécurité publiques ou pour d'autres raisons impératives d'intérêt public majeur, y compris de nature sociale ou économique, et pour des motifs qui comporteraient des conséquences bénéfiques primordiales pour l'environnement ;
- c) à des fins de recherche scientifique et d'éducation, de repeuplement et de réintroduction de ces espèces et pour des opérations de reproduction nécessaires à ces fins, y compris la propagation artificielle des plantes ;
- d) pour permettre, dans des conditions strictement contrôlées, d'une manière sélective et dans une mesure limitée, la prise ou la détention d'un nombre limité et spécifié de certains spécimens ;
- e) à des établissements, pour la détention ou l'élevage hors du milieu naturel de spécimens d'espèces à des fins de conservation et de reproduction.

3. SANCTIONS

Le non-respect de ces dispositions est sanctionné conformément à l'article L.230-3 du Code de la mer selon les modalités suivantes : emprisonnement de six jours à un mois et amende prévue au chiffre 1 de l'article 26 du Code pénal, ou de l'une de ces deux peines seulement.

En cas de récidive, l'emprisonnement est de un mois à six mois et l'amende est celle prévue au chiffre 2 de l'article 26 du Code pénal.

Les infractions ou tentatives d'infractions commises dans une aire marine protégée destinée à favoriser le repeuplement, la conservation et le développement de la faune et de la flore marines, sont punies d'un emprisonnement de trois mois à un an et de l'amende prévue au chiffre 3 de l'article 26 du Code pénal. Les infractions ou tentatives d'infractions, commises entre le coucher et le lever du soleil sont punies d'un emprisonnement de six mois à trois ans et de l'amende prévue au chiffre 4 de ce même article 26.

Les navires, embarcations ou matériels ayant servi à commettre l'une des infractions prévues au présent article peuvent être saisis. À cette saisie peut être substituée la consignation d'une somme d'argent d'un montant égal au double du taux maximal de l'amende encourue.

En cas de condamnation le tribunal peut prononcer soit la confiscation des navires, embarcations ou matériels et ordonner leur vente ou leur destruction, soit la confiscation de la somme consignée.

Au titre des dispositions relatives à la pêche, les sanctions sont fixées par l'article L.244-7 qui prévoit :

Sans préjudice de l'application des dispositions de l'article L. 230-3, les infractions aux autres dispositions du présent chapitre ainsi qu'à celles des ordonnances souveraines et des arrêtés ministériels pris pour son application, sont punies de l'amende prévue au chiffre 4 de l'article 29 du Code pénal.

En cas de récidive, dans le délai d'une année, l'emprisonnement est de six jours à un mois et l'amende est celle du chiffre 1 de l'article 26 du Code pénal.

Pour information :

Article 26 du Code pénal :

Le montant de la peine d'amende est fixé pour chaque délit suivant les catégories ci-après :

- chiffre 1 : de 1 000 à 2 250 euros ;
- chiffre 2 : de 2 250 à 9 000 euros ;

- chiffre 3 : de 9 000 à 18 000 euros ;
- chiffre 4 : de 18 000 à 90 000 euros.

Article 29 du Code pénal :

Le montant de la peine d'amende est fixé pour chaque classe de contraventions suivant les catégories ci-après :

- chiffre 1 : de 15 à 75 euros ;
- chiffre 2 : de 75 à 200 euros ;
- chiffre 3 : de 200 à 600 euros ;
- chiffre 4 : de 600 à 1 000 euros.

4. APPLICATIONS DES DECISIONS 18.211 A 18.215

Monaco, en tant qu'aire de répartition, met tout en œuvre pour protéger les tortues marines.

La législation a été présentée dans les paragraphes précédents.

Aucun trafic illégal d'espèce de tortue marine n'a été recensé sur le territoire monégasque. Il n'existe pas de marché local et les tortues marines ne viennent pas sur les plages monégasques.

Les spécimens de tortues marines recensés à Monaco le sont soit en tant que préconvention (antiquités ou collection du Musée) soit en tant qu'animal repêché dans les eaux territoriales, blessé ou mort.

Dans ce cadre, au titre du Code de la Mer le Musée Océanographique de Monaco est autorisé à :

- Détenir et élever des espèces de tortues marines protégées au titre de l'article 0.230-1 du Code de la Mer (Autorisation du 21 Septembre 2018)
- Réintroduire, dans les espaces maritimes monégasques, les tortues marines recueillies au fins de réhabilitation (Autorisation du 12 mars 2018).

Le Musée Océanographique de Monaco est enregistré comme Institution Scientifique auprès de la CITES sous le numéro MC 002.

Il accueille le Centre monégasque de soins des espèces marines (CMSEM) et est en contact avec le Réseau Tortues Marines de Méditerranée Française (RTMMF).



Thailand



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07 JUL 2020

REPLY . . . FILE

No. 0510.6/2611

Department of Fisheries
Kaset Klang, Chatuchak
Bangkok, Thailand 10900

29 June B.E. 2563 (2020)

Dear CITES Secretariat,

**Subject: Implementation of Decisions 18.210 to 18.217 on Marine turtles
(*Cheloniidae* spp. and *Dermochelyidae* spp.)**

Reference is made to the Notification to the parties No. 2020/035 dated 22 April, 2020 at its 18th meeting (CoP18, Geneva, 2019), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decisions 18.210 to 18.217 on Marine turtles (*Cheloniidae* spp. and *Dermochelyidae* spp.). The Secretariat request parties to submit information on the status of implementation of Decisions 18.211 to 18.214, including any planned implementation activities and should be submitted by email no later than 30 June 2020.

In this regard, the Department of Fisheries (DoF), Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, would like to submit relevant information and legislation already exists and implementation related to these decisions as follows:

1. Currently, marine turtles in Thailand are defined as protected and conserved wildlife in accordance with the Wildlife Preservation and Protection Act B.E. 2562 (2019). Activities with regards to hunting, trading, occupying, and breeding of those species are prohibited. The prohibition also includes possession of their carcasses or any parts and derivatives.

2. In addition to that of Wildlife Preservation and Protection Act B.E. 2562 (2019) that covers protection of marine turtles and endangered species, Thailand has also issued Marine National Parks, Protected Wildlife Areas, and other Conservation Areas to Promote Administration and Management of Marine and Coastal Resources B.E. 2558 (2015) for protecting and conserving habitats and feeding grounds of those endangered aquatic species and implemented on improve monitoring, detection and law enforcement activities related to marine turtles and endangered species in coastal areas and at transaction points (e.g. in the marketplace, online, maritime areas, and at air- and seaports).

3. The provisions of the Royal Ordinance Act B.E. 2560 (2017) aim to reorganize fisheries in Thailand and in waters at large with a view to preventing IUU fishing in order to preserve aquatic animal resources as a sustainable source of food for humanity and preserve the environment in an appropriate state along the line of approaches, criteria and standards recognized internationally, as well as to protect endangered aquatic species. Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives issued the Notification on Prohibition of Capture and Retaining Catches of Endangered Aquatic Species Onboard Fishing Vessels. Prohibition of capture and retaining catch of endangered aquatic species and all species of marine turtles (Family) *Cheloniidae* and *Dermochelyidae*, including their eggs onboard fishing vessels. This Notification shall not apply in case of life saving for that of aquatic species.

4. In Thailand...

4. In Thailand, a study on marine turtles found that there are five species of marine turtles were found in Thailand, including Green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*), Hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), Olive ridley turtle (*Lepidochelys olivacea*), Leatherback turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*) and Loggerhead turtle (*Caretta caretta*), but there are only four species of spawning marine turtles were found which are Leatherback turtle and Olive ridley turtle spawned only on seashore on the mainland of the west coast of Thailand. Green turtle and Hawksbill turtle are often spawned on beaches of various islands, included the Gulf of Thailand and Andaman Sea. There are about 10 important sea turtle spawning places in Thailand, with the largest one at the Khram Island and Similan Island.

5. The Department of Marine and Coastal Resources organized the 1st Workshop on Primary Rescue for Endangered Marine Species (2019), for local communities and related government agencies. This workshop aim to educate and lecture on endangered marine species classification, status of endangered marine species in Thailand, threats, laws and regulations that the people should know, basic techniques for rescue endangered marine species and practice on catching animals to enable participants to rescue stranded endangered marine species prior the government officers arrive to the stranded beach.

Should you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely,



(Mr. Banha Sukkaew)
Deputy Director-General
For Director-General

ITES Secretary-General
Palais des Nations,
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CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland
Fax (+4122) 797 34 17

U.S. Response to CITES Notification 2020/035 on *Marine Turtles* *Marine turtles* (*Cheloniidae spp. and Dermochelyidae spp.*); Status of implementation of Decisions 18.211 to 18.214, including any planned implementation activities

18.211 Directed to Parties

Parties are urged to:

a) review the findings of the study presented in information document CoP18 Inf. 18 and use these to inform targeted conservation and management efforts;

The study results have been shared with the Coordinator within the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) for the Marine Turtle Conservation Fund (MTCF). The U.S. Congress passed the Marine Turtle Conservation Act in 2004 in response to the decline of many marine turtle populations worldwide and the serious threats to their long-term survival. The primary purpose of the Act is to provide financial support for projects that conserve nesting populations and habitat and address other threats to the survival of marine turtles in foreign countries. The study findings could prove useful in informing or even shaping MTCF requests for funding as related to capacity building for addressing illegal trade of marine turtles. Please refer to the response to Decision 18.213 for more information about particularly relevant grant awards issued for the period 2019-2020, which address the trafficking of marine turtle parts or products.

c) develop and/or update management and action plans for the conservation of marine turtles inclusive of the recommendations in information document CoP18 Inf. 18;

The U.S. Endangered Species Act (ESA) requires the development and implementation of recovery plans for threatened and endangered species native to the United States, unless such a plan would not promote conservation of the species. A recovery plan serves as a road map for species recovery—the plan outlines the path and tasks required to restore and secure self-sustaining wild populations. Recovery plans are developed with federal, state, tribal, local governmental, nongovernmental, and other interested parties. If successfully implemented, recovery plans result in a listed species being reclassified from endangered to threatened status, or result in the delisting and removal of the species from ESA protections.

Recovery plans must incorporate, at a minimum:

- A description of site-specific management actions necessary to achieve species recovery;
- Objective, measurable criteria which, when met, would result in a determination that the species be delisted; and
- Estimates of the time and costs required to achieve the plan's goal.

The FWS and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) have developed the following Recovery Plans:

Green turtle:

- <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/document/recovery-plan-us-population-atlantic-green-turtle-chelonia-mydas>
- <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/document/recovery-plan-us-pacific-populations-green-turtle-chelonia-mydas>
- <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/document/recovery-plan-us-pacific-populations-east-pacific-green-turtle-chelonia-mydas>

Hawksbill:

- <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/document/recovery-plan-us-pacific-populations-hawksbill-turtle-eretmochelys-imbricata>
- <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/document/recovery-plan-hawksbill-turtles-us-caribbean-sea-atlantic-ocean-and-gulf>

Kemp's ridley:

- https://www.fws.gov/kempsridley/Finals/kempsridley_revision2.pdf

Leatherback:

- <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/document/recovery-plan-us-pacific-populations-leatherback-turtle-dermochelys-coriacea>
- <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/document/recovery-plan-leatherback-turtles-us-caribbean-atlantic-and-gulf-mexico>

Loggerhead:

- <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/document/recovery-plan-us-pacific-populations-loggerhead-turtle-caretta-caretta>
- <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/document/recovery-plan-northwest-atlantic-population-loggerhead-sea-turtle-caretta>

Olive ridley:

- <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/document/recovery-plan-us-pacific-populations-olive-ridley-turtle-lepidochelys-olivacea>

f) improve monitoring, detection and law enforcement activities related to marine turtles in coastal areas and at transaction points (e.g. in the marketplace, online, maritime areas, and at air- and seaports);

The United States already has effective and robust federal, state and local mechanisms in place.

18.211 continued...

g) collect samples of marine turtles for DNA analysis, including from seized specimens, to determine species involved and populations of origin and provide these to forensic and other research institutions capable of reliably determining the origin or age of the samples in support of, for example, research, investigations and prosecutions;

NMFS houses a national sea turtle genetics laboratory at the Southwest Fisheries Science Center (SWC) in La Jolla, California. NMFS partners with researchers around the world to collect and archive samples and conduct analyses to inform conservation management. This research includes determining population structure and defining Units to Conserve (UTC); conducting stock identification of sea turtle fisheries bycatch and strandings; and enhancing population assessments by improving knowledge of sea turtle life history, ecology and behavior, population vital rates, and demography.

In situations where genetic samples cannot be exported to the United States, NMFS works collaboratively with international partners to build in-country capacity and provide training to ensure standardization of sample collection, archiving, and laboratory analysis.

In addition to genetic analysis, imported sea turtle tissue samples are used for stable isotope analysis to determine foraging ecology, trophic status, and migratory movements, as well as skeletochronology of imported humerus bones to study growth and age in sea turtles. Efforts for these two lines of research occur in the Stable Isotope Ecology Lab and Sea Turtle Demography Lab at the SWC. Between 1 April 2019 – 1 April 2020, a total of 4,527 samples were imported to the SWC and accessioned into the Marine Mammal and Sea Turtle Research Collection from countries around the world.

i) ascertain key trade routes, methods, volumes, and trade ‘hot-spots’ using available technologies, and enforce national and international regulations or other mechanisms that apply to marine turtles take and trade;

Since 2018, the FWS Office of Law Enforcement (FWS/OLE) has seized over two hundred shipments imported into the United States containing sea turtle parts or products (Cheloniidae and Dermochelyidae). The majority of the seizures (86%) involved shells, shell products and carapaces, jewelry and meat originating from the Federated States of Micronesia, Mexico, and Palau. The remaining 14% of the seizures reported for the time period were sea turtle eggs, leather products, bodies (bones or skull mounts) and medicinals from other countries.

The United States continues to practice best methods to share information with relevant authorities. FWS/OLE has noticed a trend of commercial shipments of sea turtle parts from Caribbean and South American countries destined to Asia transiting the United States. The FWS/OLE interdicted an in-transit shipment of 1,423 sea turtle scutes covered in blue chalk that was declared as “plastic recycle” destined to Asia. Two species identified in this shipment were the Hawksbill sea turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) and the Green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*). The United States continues to closely monitor in-transit shipments for illegal wildlife products.

j) improve accountability for the practices undertaken by all vessels and improve the monitoring and control related to CITES-listed marine turtles at landing sites;

Incidental take of marine turtles is prohibited by the ESA, including take incidental to fishing activity. Fishing activities by U.S. vessels that may incidentally take marine turtles are strictly regulated to restrict certain types of gear, require safe handling procedures for marine turtles that are bycaught, and gear modifications to reduce levels of incidental take. These fishery restrictions are enforced at sea by NMFS and the U.S. Coast Guard, and at fishery landing sites by the NOAA Office of Law Enforcement (NOAA OLE).

Additionally, NOAA OLE works with industry and stakeholders to provide outreach and education to sea turtle measures and regulations.

NOAA OLE participates in joint enforcement inspections and investigations targeting the illegal trade of protected marine products alongside FWS, U.S. Coast Guard, Customs and Border Protection, Homeland Security Investigations, the Food and Drug Administration, and state enforcement partners.

NOAA OLE and FWS continue to provide counter-wildlife trafficking law enforcement expertise during numerous bi- and multi-lateral international engagements.

NOAA OLE supports efforts to improve the capacity of foreign partners to combat the illegal trade in protected marine products by participating in enforcement and prosecution training workshops in multiple countries. These trainings focus on law enforcement best practices such as evidence collection/control, investigation tools, case preparation, and information sharing, as well as regional fisheries management organization conservation and management measures that address prohibited/protected marine species and mitigating the unintentional take of protected species.

NOAA OLE actively participated in INTERPOL's Project SCALE, which supports member countries in identifying, deterring, and disrupting trafficking of protected marine products. These efforts have resulted in coherent international law enforcement collaboration and effective investigative responses worldwide. NOAA OLE also served on the Executive Board of INTERPOL's Fisheries Crime Working Group.

NOAA OLE supported several technical assistance activities that promote successful global implementation of the 2009 FAO Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing (Agreement) and enhance enforcement capacities in source countries. Conducting more thorough fisheries inspections in accordance with the Agreement supports improved detection of IUU fishing and crimes associated with IUU fishing such as the illegal harvest of protected marine species.

k) support fisheries management authorities in implementing turtle mitigation and safe handling practices;

The United States has implemented various requirements to reduce sea turtle bycatch and to reduce injuries when turtles are bycaught. Bycatch reduction measures and safe handling requirements have been implemented in U.S. pelagic longline fisheries in the Atlantic and Pacific and in certain bottom longline fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico. Bycatch reduction

measures are also mandatory in certain federally managed gillnet fisheries including the mid-Atlantic and the California drift gillnet fishery. The United States requires Turtle Excluder Devices (TEDs) in shrimp otter trawls, summer flounder trawls in certain areas, and skimmer trawls (40 feet and greater, beginning in 2021). Certain pound net fisheries and scallop dredge fisheries are also regulated to reduce sea turtle interactions and the severity of injuries if bycaught. The United States also works to transfer turtle “safe” handling practices to increase post-release survivorship and mitigation technologies to international pelagic and coastal fisheries through engagement in the Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (e.g., the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), and the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) and through collaborative fishery mitigation and research projects.

l) coordinate efforts at the regional level, involving Parties and bodies with relevant mandates, to identify and address trade, use and other threats, such as fisheries’ interactions with marine turtles (particularly bycatch), with a view to supporting multilateral environmental agreements; and

The United States works through the Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (e.g., ICCAT, IATTC, WCPFC) to implement measures to reduce bycatch of sea turtles and to foster safe handling practices. For example, the United States proposed, and the WCPFC adopted, a revised sea turtle conservation measure that took effect on January 2020 and will result in expanded mitigation requirements for all shallow-set longline fisheries in the area covered by the Convention for the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean [\(WCPFC-CMM-2018-04\)](#) – a change that will increase requirements to cover approximately 20% of WCPFC longline effort compared to approximately 1% previously. The IATTC also recently strengthened their sea turtle conservation measures to include handling measures, and gear mitigation and reporting requirements for shallow-set fisheries, which will come into force in January 2021 ([IATTC-Resolution C-19-04](#)).

18.212 Directed to Parties that are marine turtle range States

Parties that are marine turtle range States are urged to:

a) develop, and where such legislation already exists, conduct a thorough review of legislation that protects marine turtles, taking account of its effectiveness in enforcement and management including direct and incidental harvest, and standardization or alignment with other national and sub-national legislation, neighbouring states, as well as international regulations and commitments;

The six species of sea turtles in the United States are protected under the [Endangered Species Act of 1973](#). NMFS and the FWS administer the Endangered Species Act with respect to marine turtles. NMFS leads conservation and recovery of sea turtles when they are at sea, while FWS has the lead when they are on nesting beaches. The ESA protects sea turtles by prohibiting direct and incidental take of these species, interstate and international trade, and requiring the development and implementation of recovery plans to assist in the recovery of these species.

Sea turtles are under threat from a variety of hazards. Major threats in the United States include damage and changes to nesting and foraging habitats, accidental capture during fishing, entanglement in [marine debris](#), and being hit by boats and ships. To reduce harm to sea turtles, NMFS restricts commercial fishers from using certain kinds of fishing gear (gill nets, long-lines, pound nets, and trawls) that are known to catch large numbers of sea turtles as [bycatch](#).

Sea turtles can be accidentally caught in shrimp nets and drown. To prevent this, NMFS, along with environmental and fishing organizations, developed [turtle excluder devices \(TED\)](#). A TED is a grid of bars with an opening at the top or bottom of a shrimp net, similar to a trap door. Small animals, like shrimp, pass through the grid bars and are caught in the net. When sea turtles and other large animals are accidentally captured in the net, they are deflected by the grid bars and can escape through an opening called a TED flap and swim away. TEDs can [dramatically reduce](#) sea turtle death and are [required](#) to use while shrimp fishing in some areas.

NMFS works globally to reduce bycatch in fishing operations and address illegal fishing practices to reduce the incidental catch and mortality of fish and other animals including sea turtles. This international work builds on U.S. domestic efforts and includes participation in international agreements, training and education of foreign fisheries, development of international standards and best practices for fishing operations, and enforcement of international laws.

The United States is a Contracting Party to the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles (IAC), developed to enhance the conservation of sea turtles and harmonize standards for their protection throughout the Western Hemisphere. Specifically, the IAC requires Parties to promote the protection and conservation of sea turtle populations and their habitats; to reduce the bycatch, injury and mortality of sea turtles associated with commercial fisheries; to prohibit the intentional take of, and domestic and international trade in, sea turtles, their eggs, parts and products; and to foster international cooperation in the research and management of sea turtles.

The United States (represented by the U.S. State Department, NMFS, and FWS) is an active member of the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles and their Habitats of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia (IOSEA).

Because of NMFS' jurisdiction in the marine environment, a significant portion of its work is focused on mitigating sea turtle bycatch in commercial and recreational fisheries. NMFS has developed collaborative projects with countries around the world to test TEDs, modified gillnets, circle hooks in longlines and buoy gear.

More information about these efforts can be found in the biennial report to Congress on the international provisions of the Magnuson-Stevens Reauthorization Act, which can be accessed here: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/foreign/international-affairs/identification-iuu-fishing-activities>

In addition to working bilaterally with other countries, NMFS has worked through Regional Fisheries Management Organizations to adopt sea turtle resolutions that require implementation of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization guidelines, increased observer coverage, increased data reporting, and changes in fishing gear and practices.

b) where domestic harvest of specimens of marine turtles, including eggs, is legal, ensure any domestic harvest quotas are established based on robust science-based methods and the principles of sustainability, including accounting for existing quota or no-take quotas in other States' that share marine turtle stock(s), taking into account national enforcement capacity;

Harvest of marine turtles is prohibited in the United States by the ESA.

18.213 Directed to Parties, governmental, intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations and other entities

Parties, governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and other entities are invited to provide financial or technical assistance for, inter alia:

a) training and capacity building of relevant authorities at the national and regional level, including on the implementation and enforcement of national and international regulations that apply to marine turtles, and on identification, monitoring, reporting and wildlife enforcement capability;

NMFS fishing gear experts train federal and state enforcement agency staff to ensure they are fully capable of enforcing federal ESA requirements, including those to reduce bycatch of sea turtles. NMFS staff conduct workshops on sea turtle safe handling techniques for federally-managed commercial fishery operators. NMFS conducts significant outreach programs to inform fishermen of current requirements and to assist them to ensure compliance.

NMFS also helps to build international capacity by providing training on safe handling and transferring gear mitigation technologies in longline and coastal set-net fisheries. However, key factors in sea turtle decline in international areas include both continued fishery bycatch and persistent poaching of sea turtles and their eggs. Of particular concern is the relationship that may exist between fishery bycatch and wildlife trafficking, given that the bycatch of sea turtles in coastal fisheries may help fuel the black market trade. Activities in Southeast Asia are particularly concerning, as many U.S. managed turtle populations use this region for foraging, migrating, and nesting, and it is likely that turtles from U.S. managed populations are represented in the illegal wildlife trade there. Characterizing the extent of the human activities that negatively impact these sea turtles, understanding the dynamics that drive these practices, and developing mitigation strategies with international partners are needed and have been initiated with both Indonesia and the Philippines.

Through the MTCF (described in 18.211 (a)), a FWS grant was awarded in FY19 to support “*Proactive Enforcement Against the Emerging Marine Turtle Trade in Cambodia.*” It was awarded in partnership with the NGO Wildlife Alliance, with the purpose to counter trafficking of marine turtles in Cambodia by generating actionable intelligence on trafficking routes, networks, and wildlife markets across Cambodia while building the capacity and skills of the

nation's wildlife police unit (Wildlife Rapid Rescue Team) and the Cambodian Fisheries Administration to proactively act on marine turtle trade.

Another MTCF grant, "*Tackling the Illegal Trade of Marine Turtles in Vietnam*," was awarded in partnership with Education for Nature-Vietnam (ENV). The purpose of the project is to reduce marine turtle trafficking in and through Vietnam by deterring the resurgence of operations by known offenders, identifying and eliminating new trafficking operations, and implementing policy and coordination among partners to further protect turtles.

The FWS/OLE has also conducted training to relevant authorities and in range countries when requested.

b) build community and political awareness on the conservation status of marine turtles and on the importance of promoting the conservation of the species through compliance with CITES at the national level;

The FWS and NMFS regularly collaborate with other federal agencies, state and local governments, and NGOs on conservation actions identified in our sea turtle Recovery Plans. The FWS and NMFS outreach efforts include raising awareness of the threats sea turtles face and sharing the science on sea turtle biology and status. NMFS reports to Congress every two years on the status of efforts to develop and implement recovery plans, and on the status of all sea turtle species for which recovery plans have been developed. A copy of this report can be found here: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/document/recovering-threatened-and-endangered-species-report-congress-fy-2017-2018>

In addition, the MTCF awarded a grant to "*Protecting Sea Turtles in China*" in partnership with WildAid, Inc. China is the country with the single largest demand for sea turtle meat, ornamental products, and for Traditional Chinese Medicine. The purpose of the project is to reduce demand for sea turtle products in China by implementing mass media campaigns designed to influence consumer behavior.

Another MTCF grant is titled "*Reducing Demand for Hawksbill Turtle Shell Products and Supporting Law Enforcement at Trading Points of Turtle Shell Raw Material in Indonesia*" and was awarded in partnership with the Turtle Foundation, USA. Global hawksbill populations have declined by 90% in the last century. The purpose of the project is to counter wildlife trafficking in Indonesia by utilizing consumer outreach campaigns to reduce the demand for sea turtle products and by supporting law enforcement efforts at previously identified manufacturing centers and trading points.

c) research into the socioeconomics associated with the legal and illegal harvest and use of specimens of marine turtles, including eggs, including assessments of the sustainability of alternative livelihood options for communities depending on marine turtles and the motivations for their use;

Harvest of marine turtles in the United States and by any person under U.S. jurisdiction is prohibited by the Endangered Species Act.

d) research that establishes a baseline for the status and distribution of marine turtles in the different countries/regions; and

The United States conducts a significant research into the status, distribution, and threats to marine turtles. NMFS and the FWS have developed [plans](#) to guide research and management to improve the health and long-term survival of each sea turtle species. Research on marine turtles in the United States is authorized by scientific research permits issued under the authority of Section 10 of the ESA. Each research permit application is evaluated to ensure the research would contribute to the recovery of sea turtles species and populations before a permit is issued.

The FWS and NMFS conduct and fund research to determine and monitor sea turtle status and trends as well as foundational research on sea turtle biology and ecology. This includes funding for projects both domestically and internationally, in recognition of the fact that sea turtles are highly migratory and are typically considered shared international resources. Therefore, programmatic efforts in international locations help to fill information gaps, but also collect data to monitor nesting and foraging populations, characterize levels of bycatch in coastal fisheries, and understand levels of direct killing of adults, juveniles, and eggs), and build community or institutional capacity for conservation and management.

FWS and NMFS integrate these findings along with other relevant research findings to fulfill ESA mandates (e.g., Section 7 Biological Consultations to ensure Federal actions do not jeopardize the existence of listed species), and conduct Status Reviews/Five Year Reviews for all sea turtle species listed under the ESA. In the Status Reviews/Five Year Review, the NMFS and FWS review each species' status and distribution as well as the current threats.

e) research into the scale and impact that national (and its international) artisanal, semi-industrial and industrial fisheries, including illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing, have on marine turtle populations and their linkage to illegal trade.

NMFS has a National Observer Program comprising six regional observer programs. Information on the observer programs can be found at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/topic/fishery-observers#observer-programs>. Through an Annual Determination, pursuant to its authority under the ESA, NMFS identifies U.S. fisheries operating in the Atlantic Ocean, Gulf of Mexico, and Pacific Ocean that will be required to take observers upon NMFS' request. The purpose of observing identified fisheries is to learn more about sea turtle interactions in a given fishery, evaluate measures to prevent or reduce sea turtle takes, and implement the prohibition against sea turtle takes.

Through the information provided by the observer programs, NMFS implements regulations to reduce sea turtle bycatch and mortality in fisheries. Further, the United States evaluates all Federal actions that may affect sea turtles through the Section 7 process of the ESA, as well as the environmental review process required by the National Environmental Policy Act.

Additionally, NMFS and FWS provide assistance to understand and assess impacts to turtles in international coastal artisanal and commercial fisheries through cooperative research projects, and actively work to test gear modifications in international fisheries as well as transfer gear modification technologies that have proven effective in reducing sea turtle bycatch under experimental and in-situ fishery conditions.

18.214 Directed to the Secretariat, Parties and other organizations

Parties, the Secretariat and relevant multilateral agreements such as the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), its Indian Ocean and South-East Asia Marine Turtle Memorandum of Understanding (IOSEA), the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles (IAC), and the Ramsar Convention and the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) are encouraged to communicate and collaborate with each other on the management and sustainable use of marine turtles to ensure the compatibility of activities, optimize resources, promote research, and enhance synergies concerning the conservation of marine turtles.

The United States (represented by the U.S. State Department, NMFS and FWS) is an active member of the IOSEA and IAC. The United States regularly communicates and collaborates on the conservation and management of sea turtles to increase compatibility of activities, optimize resources, promote research, develop measures to reduce and eliminate threats, and enhance synergies concerning the conservation of sea turtles. These efforts also include conducting status assessments, analyzing population trends, and identifying conservation priorities through the IOSEA and IAC regions.