

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



Sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties
Bangkok (Thailand), 3-14 March 2013

Interpretation and implementation of the Convention

Species trade and conservation

HAWKSBILL TURTLE

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.

Background

2. At its 15th meeting (CoP15, Doha, 2010), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decision 15.84 in relation to the hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), as follows:

Directed to the Secretariat

The Secretariat shall collaborate with the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles (IAC), the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean region (Cartagena Convention) and its Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW Protocol), and range States in the wider Caribbean and the Western Atlantic region to:

- a) *finalize the report of the regional workshop, allowing for feedback from participants and their national turtle management agencies, as well as range States of the region; and*
- b) *explore opportunities for cooperation, including development of joint proposals to donors, considering the final report of the regional workshop on hawksbill turtles.*

Implementation of Decision 15.84

3. The regional workshop referred to in paragraph a) of Decision 15.84 was held in Puerto Morelos, Quintana Roo, Mexico, from 23 to 25 September 2009. The executive summary report of the workshop was compiled in English and Spanish in November 2009, and made available at CoP15 in document CoP15 Doc. 50¹. Workshop participants were sent the executive summary for comment in March 2010, and the Workshop Steering Committee² incorporated the comments received to produce a draft final report. This draft was sent to participants for review and comment in May 2010. The final report was produced in English and Spanish and sent electronically to all workshop participants in April 2011. The report was then translated into French.
4. The final report of the Regional Workshop is available online at:

http://www.iacseaturtle.org/eng-docs/publicaciones/Hawksbill_Report_Final_ENG.pdf

¹ See <http://www.cites.org/eng/cop/15/doc/E15-50.pdf>.

² *The Steering Committee comprises representatives of: the Secretaría de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (SEMARNAT) and Consejo Nacional de Áreas Protegidas (CONANP) of Mexico, the US Fish and Wildlife Service of the United States of America, the Ministry of Production of Peru (Dirección de Pesca Artesanal del Ministerio de la Producción (PRODUCE), the Department of Environment & Nature of the Netherlands' Antilles (MINA), CITES, IAC and SPAW.*

5. The report of the regional workshop identified the following five overarching themes, for which the workshop participants established various objectives and strategies for undertaking targeted actions:
 - a) Directed offtake: targeted fisheries, opportunistic fisheries;
 - b) Gillnet bycatch and entanglement in lost gear;
 - c) Habitat deterioration: infrastructure, artificial lights and vegetation removal;
 - d) Habitat deterioration: pollution and non-natural predation; and
 - e) Threats related to inadequate regional policies and climate change.
6. Four of these thematic issues were considered to be priority areas of concern to be addressed as soon as possible, once funding had been secured (see Annex 6 of the workshop report). The four areas are:
 - a) Reduction of by-catch of hawksbill turtles throughout the Wider Caribbean and Western Atlantic (WC/WA) region;
 - b) Reduction of direct offtake of hawksbill turtles and of the trade in their products in the WC/WA region;
 - c) Identification of distinct nesting hawksbill turtle population units in the WC/WA region; and
 - d) Harmonization of laws, regulations and policies for the conservation of hawksbill turtles in the Wider Caribbean region.
7. With regard to paragraph b) of Decision 15.84 concerning cooperation and development of joint proposals, several initiatives have been taken to promote and address the recommendations, strategies, key issues and projects indicated in paragraphs 5 and 6 above.
 - a) The IAC Secretariat presented the workshop report and its recommendations to IAC focal points (composed of government agencies from the 15 member countries³): and to its Scientific and Consultative Committees at the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to IAC (CoP5), held in Bonaire in June 2011. The IAC Secretariat informed the CITES Secretariat of the IAC Consultative Committee's recommendation, subsequently approved at IAC CoP5, to explore possibilities for developing Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with regional and international organizations, such as the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and its Committee on Fisheries (COFI), as well as with CITES. This recommendation was included in the Consultative Committee's Work Plan (2011-2012)⁴ (see pp. 58-59) and approved at IAC CoP5.
 - b) The Marine Turtle Conservation Fund of the US Fish and Wildlife Service provided funding in May 2010 for a project submitted by the IAC Secretariat regarding capacity building and outreach to Caribbean nations to raise awareness of the threats to hawksbill turtles and to encourage new countries to become IAC members. Strong working relationships were established during the workshop, and the IAC Secretariat has followed up with formal visits to Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago in order to encourage their accession to the Convention. During the drafting of the present document (October 2012), the CITES Secretariat was informed by the IAC Secretariat that good progress had been made in these negotiations with two of those countries.
 - c) During the eighth meeting of the IAC Scientific Committee (Costa Rica, 28-30 September 2011), members discussed follow-up activities to the 2009 workshop recommendations. The re-appearance in 2011 of the hawksbill turtle in the estuaries and mangrove habitats of Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua was noted. Committee members identified the collation of further information on this eastern Pacific population and the assessment of such information in the context of the 2009 regional workshop recommendations as a requirement in order to foster a more coherent regional

³ Member countries of the IAC: Argentina, Belize, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, the Netherlands, Panama, Peru, the United States and Uruguay. See <http://www.iacseaturtle.org/paises-eng.htm>

⁴ See http://www.iacseaturtle.org/eng-docs/resolucionesCOP5CIT/COP5_REPORT_Final_31_oct.pdf.

approach to marine turtle conservation. Further details are contained in the *Report of the Eighth Meeting of the IAC Scientific Committee*⁵.

- d) During the IAC CoP5 Consultative Committee of Experts (Shepherdstown, June 2012), members agreed that, while it was important to study the eastern Pacific Hawksbill turtle population and address possible concerns, there was also a need to update the information from the Wider Caribbean and Western Atlantic regional workshop (2009) on the current status of the hawksbill turtle throughout its range to assess changes, progress and threats. Further details are contained in the *Report of the Fifth Meeting of the IAC Consultative Committee of Experts*⁶.
- e) In this regard, the CITES Secretariat provided some financial assistance to the IAC Secretariat to undertake an update of the information on the status of the hawksbill turtle presented at the 2009 workshop. It is anticipated that this financial assistance and cooperation, and the resultant outputs, will assist in the development of future proposals to donors, in accordance with Decision 15.84, paragraph b). The update is expected to be completed by 2014 and will include nesting and foraging data as well as a trade review. This update should allow for comparison of how the conservation status of the species has changed, and facilitate a review of measures put in place by CITES and IAC Parties to aid the recovery of this species. Priority conservation actions for this species will be encouraged by the IAC and CITES Secretariats, as appropriate, amongst IAC Parties and non Parties.

Conclusion and recommendations

8. The Secretariat is of the opinion that Decision 15.84 has been implemented and that it can therefore be deleted. However, a number of recommendations arising from the 2009 regional workshop still remain to be implemented.
9. The Secretariat encourages the range States of the hawksbill turtle, IAC and SPAW to continue their collaborative efforts and maintain momentum in implementing the 2009 regional workshop recommendations. It also strongly encourages donor Parties, aid agencies, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, and other experts to assist range States in implementing these recommendations, taking into account the findings of the ongoing status update
10. The Secretariat draws attention to the IAC Consultative Committee's recommendation of promoting alliances and synergies with other international organizations related to IAC objectives, as detailed in its Work Plan (see paragraph 7. a) above). In order to encourage synergies to address common areas of concern, for example illegal trade, the Parties are asked to adopt the draft decision contained in the Annex to this document.

⁵ See http://www.iacseaturtle.org/eng-docs/comite-cientifico/Informe_CC8-CIT_dec_12_ENG_Final.pdf.

⁶ See http://www.iacseaturtle.org/eng-docs/comite-consultivo/5reunion/CIT-CCE5-2012-Doc_8_REPORT_ENG_FINAL.pdf

DRAFT DECISION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

Hawksbill turtle

Directed to the Secretariat

16.XX

The CITES Secretariat shall collaborate with the Secretariat of the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles. It shall encourage implementation of outstanding recommendations arising from the 2009 regional workshop on the hawksbill turtle in the wider Caribbean and western Atlantic region, taking into account the findings of the status update, as necessary, which shall be completed by 2014. The Secretariat will report on the implementation of the present Decision at the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.