

A. PROPOSAL

Inclusion of Caretta caretta in Appendix I

B. PROPONENT

Federal Republic of Germany

C. SUPPORTING DATA

1. Taxonomy

1.1 Reptilia

1.2 Testudines

1.3 Cheloniidae

1.4 Caretta caretta (Linnaeus, 1758)

1.5 Common names: Loggerhead turtle (English)

Unechte Karettschildkröte (German)

2. Biological data

2.1 Distribution: Occurs in subtropical and tropical zones of the earth (Indian Ocean, Pacific, Atlantic, Mediterranean); during the breeding season, large groups of sexually mature females appear on suitable beaches, which are situated far from each other. The inventory of those breeding places which are still occupied is not complete (for details of distribution see Groombridge 1982: 137-192).

2.2 Population: There are only fragmentary data on the population of this species. Its occurrence is mainly concentrated on Arabia (up to 30,000 females were estimated to occur on the beaches of Oman), but also on the northern Caribbean (beaches of Florida with 5 to 15,000 females) as well as on the coasts of Australia. A more detailed survey of the quantitative data is found in Groombridge (1982: 139-143). The population of this species is also declining, however, to a smaller extent than in the case of the three other species of sea turtles which are to be included in Appendix I.

2.3 Habitat: Breeding beaches - similar to those of the other sea turtles; they are mainly situated in subtropical and temperate zones. The species is more frequently found in coastal waters than in the open sea. The Loggerhead is a carnivorous species, feeding mainly on benthic invertebrates, especially molluscs and crustaceans, also sponges.

2.4 Migrations: Knowledge of movements away from nesting areas is scant, but Loggerheads are known to move very considerable distances fairly, suggesting purposeful non-random travel. Although long-distance movements are known, these often appear to take place along coastlines, not over open sea. Tagging programmes have demonstrated several apparently regular dispersal routes. Turtles from the Tongaland (South Africa) population move northward after nesting, to Mozambique and Tanzania (with a few tag returns from Madagascar and South Africa); Loggerheads from the north-east Queensland rookeries have been recorded along the Queensland coast to the eastern Gulf of Carpentaria and Papua New Guinea; those nesting in southeast USA move either northward along the eastern seaboard (north to New Jersey), or southward to the Gulf of Mexico, Cuba, Dominican Republic and mostly to the Bahamas. Wandering individuals have been recorded in temperate and arctic waters, to 70° N at Murmansk, USSR, and to 35° S at Rio de la Plata, Argentina.

3. Threat data

3.1 Direct threat to the population: The species is hardly used for commercial purposes; only in some areas the local population catches it for food purposes or digs up its eggs. Incidental catches in trawl nets (e.g. on the southern coasts of the USA: ca. 4,000 animals per year) are not negligible.

3.2 Habitat destruction: The most important threat to the Loggerhead is the loss of the nesting habitat to coastal development; this has been particularly significant in the United States and the Mediterranean.

3.3 Indirect threat: Strong increase of tourism on beaches which are inhabited or frequented by turtles. In the Caribbean it is feared that the chemical pollution of waters caused by the development of the oil industry will in future lead to toxic impacts.

3.4 Threat connected especially with migrations: Artificial lights appear to cause disorientation of nesting females and hatchlings. Hatchlings and adults may head inland and be killed on roads or die of desiccation. Lights or other disturbances may be connected with a high proportion of false crawls.

4. Protection status and needs

4.1 National protection status: Similar as in the case of Chelonia mydas. Also cf. Groombridge 1982: 144

4.2 International protection status: The loggerhead turtle is listed in Appendix I of the Washington Convention.

4.3 Additional protection needs: Similar to those of Chelonia mydas. Also cf. Groombridge 1982: 145

5. Range states

Algeria, Angola, Australia, Bahamas, Belize, Brazil, Burma, Cape Verde Is., Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Cuba, Cyprus, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, France (Corsica, Reunion, New Caledonia), Gabon, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Israel, Italy (including Sardinia & Sicily), Jamaica, Japan, Libya, Madagascar, Mauritania, Mexico, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Netherland Leeward Is., New Zealand, Nicaragua, Oman, Papua New Guinea, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Portugal (including Azores and Madeira), Puerto Rico, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Solomon Is., Somalia, South Africa (Natal), Spain (Canary Is.), Sri Lanka, Suriname, Tanzania (including Zanzibar), Thailand, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, U.K. (Antigua), USA, Uruguay, Venezuela and international waters.

6. Comments from range states

None

7. Additional remarks

The loggerhead turtle is listed as being "vulnerable" in the IUCN Red Data Book of the 1982.

8. References

Anon. (1982): Oman protects marine wildlife. - Oryx 16 (3): 271

Honegger, R. (1978): Threatened Amphibians and Reptiles in Europe. - Nature and Environment Series, No. 15. Council of Europe, Strasbourg

Ruckdeschel, C. and G.R. Zug (1982): Mortality of sea turtles *Caretta caretta* in coastal waters of Georgia. - Biol. Conserv. 22: 5-9

Stoneburger, D.L. and L.M. Ehrhart (1981): Observations on *Caretta c. caretta*: a record interesting migration in the Atlantic. Herp. Rev. 12 (2): 66

Also cf. the publications listed under *Chelonia mydas*.