



**CONVENTION ON  
MIGRATORY  
SPECIES**

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13<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES  
Gandhinagar, India, 17 - 22 February 2020  
Agenda Item 26.2

**MARINE TURTLES**

*(Prepared by the Scientific Council and the Secretariat)*

Summary:

This document reports on progress in implementing Decision 12.17 *Marine Turtles* and recommends revisions to the Decision. It has been revised by the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council at its 4<sup>th</sup> session in November 2019.

## MARINE TURTLES

### Background

1. At its 12<sup>th</sup> meeting (COP12, Manila, 2017), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decisions 12.17 *Marine Turtles*, which called on the Scientific Council to undertake a number of actions:

#### **12.17 Directed to the Scientific Council**

*The Scientific Council should:*

- a) *Review relevant scientific information on conservation and threats to marine turtles, such as climate change and sky glow, to develop new recommendations for the conservation of all species of marine turtles included in Appendix I or II of the Convention, for presentation at the 13<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties;*
  - b) *Develop a draft Single Species Action Plan for the conservation of the Hawksbill Turtle to be presented at the 13<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties, to address the trade, use and other threats to their conservation in South-East Asia, and the adjacent western Pacific. This Single Species Action Plan should be developed in collaboration with the Indian Ocean South-East Asia Marine Turtle Memorandum of Understanding and with relevant non-governmental organizations, taking into account the outcome of CITES Decision 17.222, which mandates an assessment on marine turtle trade, that assessment scheduled for completion in time for discussion at the 70<sup>th</sup> meeting of the CITES Standing Committee in October 2018.*
2. This document reports on implementation of this Decision and recommends that the Decision be retained and updated in order to complete the work commissioned.

### Activities to Implement Decision

3. Since COP12, limited progress has been made on implementation of the Decision due to a lack of capacity and resources on the part of the Scientific Council to carry out this work, and due to the timing of some of the key specific inputs required.
4. First, while the Scientific Council has not been able to make progress with respect to implementation of Decision 12.17.a), the Australian Government submitted Doc.26.4.9.1, which presents the *National Light Pollution Guidelines for Wildlife, including Marine Turtles, Seabirds and Migratory Shorebirds* for adoption. Parties might wish to take this into account in their consideration of the recommended actions.
5. Second, Decision 12.17.b) calling for the development of a Single Species Action Plan for the Hawksbill Turtle, called for this work to be done in collaboration with the Signatories 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 Marine Turtle MOU) and consider a report on marine turtle trade to be developed by CITES.
6. The Advisory Committee of the IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU is currently working on an assessment of the conservation status of Hawksbill Turtles. This is expected to be finalized for the 8<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Signatories (MOS8) of the IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU (21-25 October 2019, Da Nang, Viet Nam). This document will be important as a basis for the development of the Single Species Action Plan.

7. The CITES assessment on marine turtle trade referred to in the Decision was published in June 2019, significantly later than had been originally envisioned. The *Report on Status, Scope and Trends of the Legal and Illegal International Trade in Marine Turtles, its Conservation Impacts, Management Options and Mitigation Priorities* has been made available as UNEP/CMS/COP13/Inf.7. It includes annexed country reports on Madagascar (Inf.7/Annex I), Mozambique (Inf.7 /Annex II), Colombia, Panama and Nicaragua (Inf.7/Annex III) and Indonesia, Malaysia and Viet Nam (Inf.7/Annex IV). This work was supported through CMS by the Government of Australia.

#### Discussion and Analysis

8. As noted above, climate change, sky glow and other threats to marine turtles continue to cause concern. Since this matter remains of high importance, it is recommended that part a) of the Decision be renewed, and funds be made available to support its implementation.
9. Further, it is recommended that this part of the Decision be amended to request the Scientific Council to collaborate with the Advisory Committee of the IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU and the Consultative Committee of Experts and the Scientific Committee of the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles, in order to draw on the best available expertise.
10. Many of the Range States likely to be involved in the Single Species Action Plan for Hawksbill Turtles will be present at MOS8 of the IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU in October 2019. The CITES assessment on trade in marine turtles and the assessment by the IOSEA Advisory Committee of the conservation status of Hawksbill Turtles will be discussed. This meeting therefore presents an opportunity to build consensus concerning the development of a Single Species Action Plan for Hawksbill Turtles and agree a common way forward.
11. It is recommended that Decision 12.17.b) be retained and updated in order to complete the work envisioned.

#### Recommended Actions

12. The Conference of the Parties is recommended to
  - a) adopt the draft Decision contained in the Annex to this document which amends Decision 12.17.

PROPOSED DECISION

**MARINE TURTLES**

***Directed to Parties***

13.AA Parties are invited to provide funding to the Secretariat to support the implementation of this Decision.

***Directed to the Scientific Council***

13.BB (12.17) The Scientific Council should ~~shall~~, subject to the availability of resources:

- a) review, as far as feasible in collaboration with the IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU and the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles, relevant scientific information on conservation and threats to marine turtles, such as climate change and sky glow;
- b) based on this review, develop new recommendations for the conservation of all species of marine turtles included in Appendix I or II of the Convention, for presentation at the 134<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties;
- c) develop, in collaboration with the IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU, CITES and relevant non-governmental organizations and supported by the Secretariat, a draft Single Species Action Plan for the conservation of the Hawksbill Turtle to be presented at the 134<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties, to address the trade and, use and other threats to their conservation in South-East Asia, and the adjacent western Pacific. ~~This Single Species Action Plan should be developed in collaboration with the Indian Ocean South-East Asia Marine Turtle Memorandum of Understanding and with relevant non-governmental organizations, and taking into account the outcome of CITES Decision 17.222, which mandates an assessment on marine turtle trade, that assessment scheduled for completion in time for discussion at the 70th meeting of the CITES Standing Committee in October 2018 2019 CITES Report on Status, Scope and Trends of the Legal and Illegal International Trade in Marine Turtles, its Conservation Impacts, Management Options and Mitigation Priorities, as well as the Hawksbill Assessment under preparation by the Advisory Committee of the IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU.~~