



Indian Ocean - South-East Asian Marine Turtle Memorandum of Understanding



Fact Sheet

(Last updated: 14 January 2012)

Objective	The Memorandum puts in place a framework through which States of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia region, as well as other concerned States, can work together to conserve and replenish depleted marine turtle populations for which they share responsibility. Major threats to marine turtles include unsustainable exploitation, destruction of nesting and feeding habitats, and incidental mortality in fishing operations. The Conservation and Management Plan -- containing 24 programmes and 105 specific activities -- focuses on reducing threats, conserving critical habitat, exchanging scientific data, increasing public awareness and participation, promoting regional cooperation, and seeking resources for implementation.
Background	The Memorandum of Understanding and associated Conservation and Management Plan were developed over a series of intergovernmental negotiation sessions held in Perth, Australia (October 1999), Kuantan, Malaysia (July 2000), and Manila, Philippines (June 2001).
Legal Framework	Non-binding agreement concluded under the auspices of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals.
Geographic Coverage	Waters and coastal States of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia and adjacent seas, extending eastwards to the Torres Strait. For implementation purposes, the area is divided into four sub-regions: South-East Asia + neighbours, Northern Indian Ocean, Northwestern Indian Ocean, and Western Indian Ocean.
Species Coverage	Loggerhead <i>Caretta caretta</i> , Olive Ridley <i>Lepidochelys olivacea</i> , Green <i>Chelonia mydas</i> , Hawksbill <i>Eretmochelys imbricata</i> , Leatherback <i>Dermochelys coriacea</i> , Flatback <i>Natator depressus</i>
States of the Agreement Area (44)	Australia, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, France, India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Myanmar, Oman, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, Seychelles, Singapore, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Thailand, Timor Leste, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, United Kingdom, Viet Nam, Yemen. The United States of America is also participating in the Memorandum of Understanding.
Signatory States (33) (Date of signature in parentheses)	Australia (23.06.01), Bahrain (10.12.06), Bangladesh (23.10.03), Cambodia (12.12.02), Comoros (23.06.01), Eritrea (24.11.05), France (05.12.08), India (20.02.07), Indonesia (31.03.05), Islamic Republic of Iran (23.06.01), Jordan (18.03.04), Kenya (09.05.02), Madagascar (22.01.03), Malaysia (19.09.11), Maldives (26.04.10), Mauritius (12.07.02), Mozambique (05.12.08), Myanmar (23.06.01), Oman (16.03.04), Pakistan (12.07.04), Papua New Guinea (10.09.10), Philippines (23.06.01), Saudi Arabia (03.08.05), Seychelles (22.01.03), South Africa (22.02.05), Sri Lanka (23.06.01), Thailand (12.05.04), United Arab Emirates (18.01.07), United Kingdom (27.03.02), United Republic of Tanzania (23.06.01), United States of America (23.06.01), Viet Nam (24.07.01), Yemen (20.08.08).
Effective Date	1 September 2001. (The MoU becomes effective for new members on the first day of the third month following the date on which they sign.)
Meetings	The Signatory States held their first formal meeting in Bangkok from 22-24 January 2003. A report is available from the Secretariat. The Second Meeting of Signatory States was held from 16-19 March 2004. The meeting reviewed, in detail, the progress made towards implementation of the Conservation and Management Plan; endorsed a proposal for the establishment of a network of significant sites; agreed to begin planning for

a Year of the Turtle campaign in 2006; revised the geographic scope of the MoU to include China, Japan and the Republic of Korea; and undertook to examine the feasibility of extending the coverage of the MoU to include countries in the Pacific. A report is available on the IOSEA website, under "IOSEA meetings".

The Third Meeting of the Signatory States was held in Bangkok from 29-31 March 2005, and was well attended by about 65 participants. There was representation from all but one of the 21 Signatory States, as well as three non-Signatories and observers from nearly 20 non-governmental and intergovernmental organisations. A full report is available from the IOSEA website (see "IOSEA meetings").

Among the highlights:

- Review of the most comprehensive analysis ever undertaken of the measures put in place by IOSEA Signatories to conserve marine turtles and their habitats of the region.
- Agreement to proceed with a region-wide Year of the Turtle campaign in 2006 under the IOSEA banner.
- Further consideration of a plan to establish a network of sites of importance for marine turtles.
- Endorsement of the Secretariat's proposal to intensify linkages with regional fisheries management bodies, and for IOSEA Signatories to report on their implementation of newly adopted FAO guidelines on reducing turtle mortality in fishing operations.
- Detailed discussion of other cooperative international actions required to tackle the problem of turtle by-catch in fisheries, and passage of a resolution urging the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission to take concrete steps in this area.
- Agreement to investigate the impacts of the Indian Ocean tsunami on marine turtle populations, with particular attention to be given to leatherback turtles; and passage of a resolution calling for sustainable fisheries and coastal development practices in the tsunami's aftermath, particularly as they relate to marine turtles.
- Reconstitution of an expanded Advisory Committee under the new chairmanship of Dr. George Hughes, from South Africa. For the first time, observers chosen from each of the four IOSEA sub-regions will be able contribute to the deliberations.
- Agreement to consider further options for extending the IOSEA MoU to include interested countries of the Pacific or to develop a similar instrument for that region.

The Fourth Meeting of the Signatory States was held in Oman from 11-14 March 2006. Hosted by the Ministry of Regional Municipalities, Environment and Water Resources, the conference was the best-attended of any IOSEA meeting to date, with nearly 70 participants from 30 countries. Twenty-two Signatory States and five non-Signatories were officially represented, along with various IGO and NGO partners from across the IOSEA region.

Among the highlights:

- Adoption of a resolution aimed at promoting and strengthening marine turtle conservation in the Northwest Indian Ocean sub-region.
- Agreement on provisional terms of reference for the establishment of an IOSEA-Western Indian Ocean Marine Turtle Task Force (WIO-MTTF), to be organized in collaboration with the Nairobi Convention.
- Indonesia reported on an important initiative to conserve leatherback turtles through a tri-partite agreement between that vast archipelago, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands, in partnership with WWF.
- Comprehensive review of implementation progress prepared on the basis of the national reports submitted by Signatory States. The Secretariat generated an overall performance matrix by objectively analysing all of the activities reported to have been undertaken to implement the IOSEA Conservation and Management Plan. The detailed review is contained in Document 8.3, circulated prior to the meeting. An executive summary distills the main findings; and a one-page addendum summarises a number of key issues that were identified.
- Tabling of an advanced draft of an "Assessment of the conservation status of the Leatherback turtle in the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia, including consideration of the impacts of the December 2004 tsunami on turtles and turtle habitats". The report suggested that the long-term impacts of the tsunami for turtles could be expected to be marginal, whereas in the immediate-term coastal communities and associated conservation programmes had been profoundly affected. The report also revealed gaps in information and basic collaborative work that needed to be addressed, in part through additional research, monitoring, and enforcement of legislation.
- The meeting considered a number of important administrative and policy issues, notably the uncertain financial prospects for continuing operations

	<p>into 2007 despite the generous voluntary contributions of a small number of Signatory States.</p> <p>-- The Advisory Committee was reconstituted with a membership of six experts under the new chairmanship of Dr. Jack Frazier. The Committee's terms of reference were amended slightly to clarify the nomination procedure for members, and to welcome official observers from each of the sub-regions, decided by the member States, as follows: Philippines (for South-East Asia+); Sri Lanka (for Northern Indian Ocean); Islamic Republic of Iran (for Northwestern Indian Ocean); and Comoros (for Western Indian Ocean).</p> <p>The Fifth Meeting of the Signatory States was held in Bali, Indonesia from 20-23 August 2008. Hosted by the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries (MMAF) and WWF - Indonesia. Twenty-six Signatory States -- the entire IOSEA membership, except for one country -- were officially represented at the meeting, the highest number to date. Advisory Committee members, invited experts, and observers from non-Signatory States as well as intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations rounded out the attendance. The gathering of 100 delegates was the largest IOSEA conference held so far, and it marked the second time the meeting was organised in one of the four IOSEA sub-regions, outside of the secretariat's Bangkok headquarters.</p>
Finance	Voluntary contributions from the Governments of Australia, France, South Africa, United Kingdom, United States; as well as UNEP/DEC, UNEP/ROAP and CMS Trust Fund.
Advisory Committee	Currently eight members with expertise from various disciplines, appointed by the Signatory States. The most recent (fifth) meeting of the Advisory Committee was held in Bali, Indonesia, in August 2008.
Secretariat (Operational since April 2003)	<p>Co-ordinator / Senior CMS Advisor: Mr. Douglas Hykle</p> <p>IOSEA Marine Turtle MoU Secretariat c/o UNEP Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific United Nations Building, Rajdamnern Nok Avenue Bangkok 10200, Thailand</p> <p>Tel: +(662) 288 1471; Fax: +(662) 280 3829 or +(662) 288 3041 E-mail: iosea@un.org</p>
Languages	The official texts exist in three language versions (Arabic, English and French); the working language of the MoU is English

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