



CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES

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Quito, Ecuador, 4-9 November 2014
Agenda Item 23.2.2

SINGLE SPECIES ACTION PLAN FOR THE LOGGERHEAD TURTLE IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC OCEAN

Summary:

Following a technical meeting in Brisbane, Australia in March 2014, a Single Species Action Plan for the Loggerhead Turtle (*Caretta caretta*) in the South Pacific Ocean has been prepared in cooperation with Range States and experts, and with financial support from the Australian Government.

It was endorsed by the Scientific Council at its 18th session for adoption.

A revised version of the action plan was agreed by representatives of the Range States during COP11 and is attached as Annex 2.

The Conference of the Parties is invited to adopt the resolution and draft Action Plan contained in the Annex.

SINGLE SPECIES ACTION PLAN FOR THE LOGGERHEAD TURTLE IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC OCEAN

(Prepared by the UNEP/CMS Secretariat)

1. The Loggerhead Turtle (*Caretta caretta*) was listed on CMS Appendix II in 1979 and Appendix I in 1985. Populations in the Indian Ocean and off the Atlantic Coast of Africa are covered by CMS MOUs. However, there are no international instruments that address conservation issues across the Pacific Ocean.

2. In late 2013, the COP-appointed Councillor for Turtles, in conjunction with the Government of Australia, proposed that a Single Species Action Plan be developed under CMS for the South Pacific Ocean population of Loggerhead Turtles, as the issues facing the population are discrete and well suited to the development of targeted conservation actions.

3. Although the Loggerhead Turtle has a global distribution throughout tropical, sub-tropical and temperate waters, this draft Action Plan is concerned with the Loggerhead turtles that occur within the South Pacific Ocean. Nesting for Loggerhead turtles in the South Pacific Ocean almost entirely occurs on beaches of the east coast of Australia and in New Caledonia. Hatchlings from the eastern Australian beaches disperse south and pass New Zealand, leading to large numbers of small Turtles in the waters of Peru and Chile, and to a lesser extent off Ecuador. At around 16 years of age, large immature Loggerhead Turtles return to the Coral Sea - Tasman Sea region of the southwest Pacific.

4. Local reports indicated that there was an abundance of small immature *C. caretta* within the phase of their life when they dispersed into pelagic waters in the south-east Pacific off Peru. In response to these reports, a study funded by the CMS Small Grants Programme provided the first evidence that *C. caretta* originating from nesting beaches in the Australian region migrate through Peruvian waters in the south east Pacific Ocean.

5. The eastern Australian nesting population suffered from a significant decline from the 1970s to 2000, which was associated with by-catch mortality in Australian trawl fisheries. Following the introduction of mandatory turtle excluder devices in the fisheries, the decline ceased and some recovery was observed. However, there now appears to be a reduction in the return of large immature Loggerhead Turtles, which is associated with by-catch mortality in longline fisheries, and possibly the ingestion of plastic. If this continues, it is expected that additional declines will occur in an already depleted southwest Pacific population.

6. The Secretariat, in cooperation with, and with funding from, the Australian Government, convened a Meeting of Range States in Brisbane, Australia, 25-27 March 2014 to develop the draft plan. It was attended by representatives of Australia, Chile, Ecuador, Fiji, Peru and the United States of America, the COP-appointed Councillors for Turtles and for Bycatch, and experts from the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), New Caledonia, and the Peruvian NGO, ProDelphinus.

7. After the Meeting, a revised draft was sent in English and Spanish to all participants and the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles (IAC) Secretariat for further comments, which have been incorporated into the present draft, which was endorsed by the Scientific Council at its 18th Meeting in July 2014 and has been circulated, in three languages, to all Range States and interested stakeholders for comment.

8. A revised version of the Action Plan, which takes into account also comments received after the meeting of the Scientific Council, was agreed by representatives of the Range States during COP11, and is included in Annex 2 to this document.

Action requested:

The Conference of the Parties is invited to:

- Adopt the draft resolution annexed to this document, which refers to the draft Single Species Action Plan for the Conservation of the Loggerhead Turtle in the South Pacific Ocean.

DRAFT RESOLUTION

**SINGLE SPECIES ACTION PLAN FOR THE LOGGERHEAD TURTLE
(*Caretta caretta*) IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC OCEAN**

(Submitted by Australia)

Noting that the Loggerhead Turtle (*Caretta caretta*) was listed on CMS Appendix II in 1979 and Appendix I in 1985 and was designated for Concerted Actions for the period 2012-2014;

Aware that, while there is one management unit for *Caretta caretta* in the South Pacific Ocean, there are no international instruments that address conservation issues of this species across the entire Pacific Ocean;

Noting with appreciation the efforts of the COP Appointed Councillor for Marine Turtles in the development of this Action Plan; and

Further noting with appreciation the role of the Australian Government in funding a Meeting of Range States, convened by CMS in Brisbane, Australia, 25-27 March 2014 to develop a draft Single Species Action Plan;

*The Conference of the Parties to the
Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals*

1. *Adopts* the Single Species Action Plan for the Loggerhead turtle (*Caretta caretta*) in the South Pacific Ocean as submitted to COP11 in document UNEP/CMS/COP11/Doc.23.2.2;
2. *Urges* South Pacific Parties and other Parties with fishing fleets operating in the South Pacific Ocean, and *invites* South Pacific non-Party Range States to implement relevant provisions of the Action Plan;
3. *Encourages* other Parties to provide technical and/or financial support to activities outlined in the Action Plan;
4. *Invites* other relevant intergovernmental frameworks, such as the InterAmerican Turtle Convention, Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environmental Programme and Regional Fisheries Management Organisations operating in the South Pacific Ocean, to take into account the provisions of the Action Plan in the consideration of their activities and to support implementation of relevant Action Plan activities that fall within their mandate, as appropriate;
5. *Instructs* the Secretariat to bring the Action Plan to the attention of all Range States and relevant intergovernmental organisations and to monitor the implementation of the Action Plan; and
6. *Requests* the COP appointed Councillor for Marine Turtles to provide guidance for the implementation of the Action Plan and report on progress to COP12.