



---

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING  
ON THE CONSERVATION AND  
MANAGEMENT OF MARINE TURTLES  
AND THEIR HABITATS OF THE INDIAN  
OCEAN AND SOUTH-EAST ASIA**

CMS/IOSEA/MOS8/Inf.7.1.r

28 August 2019

Original: English

---

8<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE SIGNATORY STATES

Da Nang, Viet Nam, 21-25 October 2019

Agenda Item 9.1

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA – NATIONAL REPORT 2019**

*(Prepared by the United States of America)*

# IOSEA MARINE TURTLES MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING - NATIONAL REPORTING 2019

## IOSEA Marine Turtles MoU - National Reports

The purpose of completing the national report is to provide information on your country's implementation of the IOSEA Marine Turtle MoU including, as far as possible, contributions of cooperating non-governmental partners. Implementation will be assessed in terms of the six objectives of the Conservation and Management Plan (CMP). The online questionnaire is divided into these six main objectives, and asks specific questions in relation to the activities that need to be carried out to fulfil those objectives.

Please answer all questions as fully and as accurately as possible. It may seem time-consuming, but once you have completed the first report, the next time will be much easier because you can simply revise your existing report online. Comprehensive responses to the questions posed in Section 1.4 should satisfy many of the reporting requirements of the 2004 FAO Guidelines to Reduce Sea Turtle Mortality in Fishing Operations, thereby avoiding duplication of effort.

Description text is provided below some of the questions to explain what information needs to be provided. Text boxes can be expanded to accommodate longer answers or to explain and provide additional information, beyond what is requested. Details of future plans are especially encouraged. Wherever possible, please try to indicate the source of information used to answer a particular question, if a published reference is available. Remember that you are sharing information with other countries about your progress, so that it may be of benefit to them. At the same time, you may find it useful to look at other countries' reports to get ideas for marine turtle conservation that might be adapted to your context.

When working on the online questionnaire, save your information by clicking on the "Save all" button inside each section. An auto-save feature also saves any changed responses every 30 seconds, and whenever you move between sections. Feel free to attach additional material (published reports, maps etc) to this questionnaire.

Throughout the questionnaire, alongside each question you will find one or more 3-letter abbreviations within square brackets. These are used to indicate the purpose for which the information provided will be used in the subsequent analysis of all of the national reports, as shown in the following table.

To some extent, the order in which these different types of information are listed below is a reflection of their importance - ranging from critical indicators of performance to factual details that are merely informative.

### **Abbreviation**

#### **Type**

#### **Treatment / Purpose**

IND

Indicator

The information provided serves, in and of itself, as a key indicator of successful implementation or of pre-requisites for same (eg. of core actions undertaken, resource availability, capacity etc.)

PRI

Priorities

The collective data will be synthesized to give an indication of what has been done already (helping to avoid duplication of effort); what is generally not being done (gaps that need to be addressed); and what interventions or specific assistance may be required.

TSH

Trouble-shooting

Particular implementation problems and issues (possibly of special interest to a small group of countries) are identified/highlighted with a view to stimulating remedial action in the short-term.

BPR

Best practice

Well-documented examples of best practices / success stories will be compiled and presented as approaches that other Signatory States might consider pursuing (ie adopting or adapting to suit their own circumstances).

SAP

Self-Appraisal

Self-assessment of effectiveness and completeness of actions undertaken - intended to stimulate reflection within a given Signatory State on what more could or should be done in relation to a particular activity.

INF

Information

The information will be collected and compiled, with little or no modification, mainly for purpose of sharing of information that could be of interest or value to other readers and/or other analyses.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

Signatory State:

Which agency or institution has been primarily responsible for the preparation of this report?

> NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service

List any other agencies, institutions, or NGOs that have provided input:

> U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

U.S. Department of State

Department of Agriculture, Division of Aquatic and Wildlife Resources, Guam

Memorandum in effect in Signatory State since (dd/mm/yyyy):

> 01/09/2001

This report was last modified (dd/mm/yyyy):

> 07/07/2019

Designated Focal Point (and full contact details):

> Mr. Earl Possardt

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Division of International Conservation

5275 Leesburg Pike, MS:IA

Falls Church, VA 22041

USA

Phone: 703-358-2277

Email: Earl\_Possardt@fws.gov

# OBJECTIVE I: REDUCE DIRECT AND INDIRECT CAUSES OF MARINE TURTLE MORTALITY

## 1.1 Introduction to marine turtle populations and habitats, challenges and conservation efforts

Please introduce and summarise, in an abstract of less than a page, the marine turtle populations and their habitats in your country. Comment on their status and highlight the main conservation challenges and achievements to date. It is not necessary to list here by name the individual nesting beaches, feeding areas and developmental habitats that are important for marine turtles in your country, as this information can be generated from the 'Site-Threat' data sheets to be completed in Annex 1. **[INF]**

> The United States considers the U.S. territories of Guam, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), and American Samoa as within in the IOSEA region. Within those areas, the primary sea turtle nesting and foraging habitats are for green and hawksbill sea turtles. Based on our 2015 status review, two green turtle distinct population segments occur in these U.S. territories. The Central Western Pacific Green Turtle Distinct Population Segment occurs in Guam/CNMI and green turtles nesting in American Samoa are part of the Central South Pacific Distinct Population Segment.

Based on our latest review of these distinct population segments, we have determined that they are both endangered. Hawksbill turtles are also endangered throughout their global range. Both distinct populations segments face a host of threats from illegal harvest of eggs and turtles, coastal development, beachfront lighting, erosion from sand mining, fisheries bycatch, marine pollution, and climate change.

## 1.2 Best practice approaches to minimizing threats

Describe any protocol or approaches practiced in your country, which you consider exemplary, for minimising threats to marine turtle populations and their habitats, which may be suitable for adaptation and adoption elsewhere. **[BRP]**

> U.S. facilitated development of standardized hawksbill nesting population and foraging population monitoring protocols for index sites. The protocols were developed by a working group established at the CITES Wider Caribbean Hawksbill Dialogue Meeting. Available at CITES website or by contacting Earl\_Possardt@fws.gov

U.S. has established population monitoring protocols for loggerhead and green turtle nesting populations for index sites on southeast U.S. which may be useful with adaptation to other regions. Additional information on these monitoring protocols

can be obtained through Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission.

Lighting ordinances at the statewide and local community level are in place throughout the southeastern U.S. Model ordinances can be obtained through Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

Nest protection programs in southeastern U.S. are guided by the principle of the least manipulative approach to ensure nest/hatchling success with least likelihood of interference with natural behaviors or mechanisms such as imprinting, hatchling orientation and hatchling frenzy.

In the U.S. territories of Guam, CNMI, and American Samoa direct take (or poaching) remains a significant threat. Nests threatened with tidal inundation may be relocated to sites higher on the beach in some cases. Predator control and self release screens are used on some beaches. Beach hatcheries are rare and a last resort where beach erosion, highly developed beaches, beach driving prevent less manipulative approaches. In these cases hatchlings are released the night of emergence.

In September 2007, the U.S. National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) held an internal workshop to synthesize and review longline bycatch reduction activities, to evaluate current efforts and look towards future longline bycatch reduction efforts

and to discuss approaches to garner greater international support for the use of circle hooks and other identified bycatch reduction measures, such as bait type, abroad. In addition to sea turtles, the workshop reviewed the state of our knowledge of longline bycatch reduction efforts for marine mammals, seabirds, and billfish. The workshop will enable NMFS to continue moving forward on developing approaches to reduce the incidental capture and mortality of non-target species in longline fisheries.

Since the last report, the United States has released two recovery plans. On January 16, 2009 a revised Recovery Plan for Northwest Atlantic Loggerheads was released. This plan can be found at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/document/recovery-plan-northwest-atlantic-population-loggerhead-sea-turtle-caretta-caretta>.

On September 22, 2011, the United States and Mexico released the updated Kemp's Ridley Recovery Plan. This plan can be found at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/document/bi-national-recovery-plan-kemps-ridley-sea-turtle-2nd-revision>.

In addition to these recovery plans, the United States recently designated nine distinct population segments for Loggerhead sea turtles. In doing so, the protection status for the North Pacific loggerhead was changed from threatened to

endangered. More information can be found at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/species/loggerhead-turtle>. UPDATE (2014; website links updated in 2019)

The United States is currently conducting five year reviews of sea turtle species listed on the Endangered Species Act. This a requirement of the act to ensure that the listing remains accurate. The five year reviews can be found at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/endangered-species-conservation/endangered-species-act-5-year-reviews>.

The United States completed critical habitat designations for NW Atlantic Loggerhead turtles in 2013. Critical habitat was not designated for North Pacific loggerhead turtles. <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/action/critical-habitat-loggerhead-sea-turtle>.

NOAA Fisheries has celebrated Sea Turtle Week in June annually since 2014. This is a multimedia outreach (web page, twitter and facebook page) effort to publicize our sea turtle conservation efforts and help the public learn about sea turtles.

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/feature-story/saving-sea-turtles-science-sea-turtle-week>.

#### 2019 UPDATE

Since the last report, NOAA Fisheries has conducted a status review for green sea turtles and issued a new listing regulation. (See <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/action/listing-green-sea-turtles-under-endangered-species-act>).

We are also in the process of conducting a status review for leatherbacks. NOAA Fisheries and US Fish and Wildlife Service are required to carry out 5 year reviews on all listed sea turtles species, so that we can evaluate whether the species is improving or not. This regular review allows us to understand what other management actions and scientific research is needed. (See <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/action/90-day-finding-petition-identify-northwest-atlantic-leatherback-turtle-distinct-population>)

### 1.3 Programmes to correct adverse economic incentives

1.3.1 Describe any socio-economic studies or activities that have been conducted among communities that interact with marine turtles and their habitats. **[BPR, INF]**

Elaborate on the nature of the socio-economic study/ activity undertaken, the results obtained (successful or otherwise) and the desirability/ suitability for replication.

Include references to published reports, where available.

> The Southwest Fisheries Science Center conducted research from 2004-2008 on the economics of Pacific leatherback conservation. This included assessing the costs and benefits and community incentives of nesting beach conservation projects in Malaysia, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu. Interviews were conducted with project staff from all the above countries and community household surveys were conducted in Papua, Indonesia. In addition, the SWFSC collaborated with the WorldFish Center, World Wildlife Fund, and Department of Fisheries (DOF) Malaysia, to conduct surveys with fishermen in Malaysia to assess sea turtle bycatch and costs and earnings from fishing.

The following publications resulted from these efforts:

Ferraro, P. J. and H. Gjertsen. 2009. A Global Review of Incentive Payments for Sea Turtle Conservation. *Chelonian Conservation and Biology*. May 2009, Vol. 8, No. 1, pp. 48-56.

Gjertsen, H. 2011. Can We Improve our Conservation Bang for the Buck - Cost Effectiveness of Alternative Leatherback Turtle Conservation Strategies. In *Conservation of Pacific Sea Turtles*. Dutton, P. H., D. Squires, and M. Ahmed (Eds.) University of Hawaii Press. p 60-84.

Gjertsen, H. and T. Stevenson. 2011. Direct Incentive Approaches for Leatherback Turtle Conservation. In *Conservation of Pacific Sea Turtles*. Dutton, P. H., D. Squires, and M. Ahmed (Eds.) University of Hawaii Press. p 164-182.

Yeo, B., D. Squires, K. Ibrahim, H. Gjertsen, S. Kamil, R. Zulkifli, T. Groves, M. Hong, and C. Tan. 2011. Sea Turtle Fisheries Interactions in Coastal Fisheries: A Case Study of the East Coast of Peninsular Malaysia. In *Conservation of Pacific Sea Turtles*. Dutton, P. H., D. Squires, and M. Ahmed (Eds.) University of Hawaii Press. p 290-318.

Yeo, B.H., D. Squires, K. Ibrahim, H. Gjertsen, S. K. Syed Mohd Kamil, R. Zulkifli, T. Groves, M. C. Hong, and C.H. Tan. 2011. Can Coastal Fisheries Bear the Cost of Sea Turtle Conservation - Evidence from the East Coast of Peninsular Malaysia. In *Conservation of Pacific Sea Turtles*. Dutton, P. H., D. Squires, and M. Ahmed (Eds.) University of Hawaii Press. p 319-349.

Gjertsen, H., P. H. Dutton, and D. Squires. 2010. Conservation of the Leatherback Sea Turtle in the Pacific. In *Handbook of Marine Fisheries Conservation and Management*. Grafton, Q. and D. Squires (Eds.) Oxford University Press.

Steering Committee, Bellagio Sea Turtle Conservation Initiative. 2008. Strategic Planning for Long-term Financing of Pacific Leatherback Conservation and Recovery: Proceedings of the Bellagio Sea Turtle Conservation Initiative, Terengganu, Malaysia; July 2007. WorldFish Center Conference Proceedings 1805, The WorldFish Center, Penang, Malaysia. 79 p.

Yeo, B.H., D. Squires, K. Ibrahim, H. Gjertsen, S.K. Syed Mohd. Kamil, R. Zulkifli, T. Groves, M.C. Hong and C.H. Tan. 2007. Fisher profiles and perceptions of sea turtle-fishery interactions: case study of East Coast Peninsular Malaysia. *The WorldFish Center Discussion Series* 6, 69 p. The WorldFish Center, Penang, Malaysia.

Gjertsen, H. and C. Hitipeuw. 2006. Using Socioeconomic Surveys to Design Community Incentives for Conservation. In *Book of Abstracts from 26th Annual Symposium on Sea Turtle Biology and Conservation*.

Frick, M., A. Panagopoulou, A. F. Rees, and K. Williams (Eds.) International Sea Turtle Society, Athens, Greece, p. 346.

UPDATE 2014 (website links updated in 2019)

We do not currently have any economists or sociologists working on community level studies related to sea turtles. We will be putting forth an economic analysis of the impact of our forthcoming critical habitat designation for NW Atlantic loggerheads. See -- <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/map/loggerhead>

We do not currently have economics program directed at evaluating community interactions with marine turtles and their habitats.

### 1.3.2 Which of these adverse economic incentives are underlying threats to marine turtles in your country?

#### [TSH]

- High prices earned from turtle products relative to other commodities
- Ease of access to the turtle resource (e.g. by virtue of proximity or ease of land/water access)
- Low penalties against illegal harvesting
- Others (Please describe)

> Lack of funding for enforcement; Need for improved coordination between federal and local agencies

It is illegal under the U.S. Endangered Species Act to take sea turtles. While economic incentives to poach turtles exist to some extent, poaching is not a huge issue on the mainland. However, there are issues in CNMI and Guam.

### 1.3.3 Has your country taken any measures to try to correct these adverse economic incentives? [BPR]

- Yes (If yes, please describe these measures in detail)

> It is illegal under the U.S. Endangered Species Act to take sea turtles. However, where we do have issues we are undertaking the following activities. In Guam we are funding Haggan Watch, a group created by Guam Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources, that involves community members in monitoring beaches. Also we support education and outreach efforts of Guam DAWR, and there is a NOAA OLE officer stationed on Guam. In CNMI we are funding the CNMI Department of Lands and Natural Resources (DLNR) sea turtle program, and NOAA OLE supports CNMI's enforcement officers via a cooperative agreement. CNMI DLNR has recently received NOAA sect 6 funding to support an outreach specialist position to focus on issues related to harvest and implement strategies to reduce harvest. Also the program participates in fishing fairs and community festivals to promote awareness of turtles and laws regarding their protection.

## 1.4 Reduction of incidental capture and mortality

### 1.4.1 Indicate, and describe in more detail, the main fisheries occurring in the waters of your country, as well as any high seas fisheries in which flag vessels of your country participate and interact with marine turtles.

Tick 'YES' to indicate that a fishery is present and interacting marine turtles or 'NO' to indicate that a fishery is not present or is not interacting with marine turtles. [INF]

If a fishery is present, use the text box to indicate, for example, the approximate geographic distribution of the fishery, how long it has been operating, how many vessels are involved, etc.

#### a) Shrimp trawls:

- Yes (Please provide details)

> Shrimp trawls operate in much of the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic. The United States has regulations in place requiring the use of Turtle Excluder Devices in otter trawls. The current Turtle Excluder Device regulations can be found at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/southeast/bycatch/turtle-excluder-device-regulations>. The US National Marine Fisheries Service is conducting additional gear testing to demonstrate the effectiveness of using Turtle Excluder Devices in skimmer trawls.

Through the Sea Turtle Observer Requirement regulation, known as the Annual Determination, NMFS has identified several trawl fisheries as needing additional fisheries observer information. Please see <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/bycatch/sea-turtle-observer-requirement-annual-determination> for more information.

#### b) Set gill nets:

- Yes (Please provide details)

> Through the Sea Turtle Observer Requirement regulation, known as the Annual Determination, NMFS has identified several gillnet fisheries as needing additional fisheries observer information. Please see <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/bycatch/sea-turtle-observer-requirement-annual-determination> for more information.

#### c) Anchored Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs):

- Yes (Please provide details)

> Anchored FADs are found primarily in the State waters of Hawaii. U.S. Fishermen also fish on FADs in the IATTC waters of the Eastern Tropical Pacific, but those generally are not anchored FADs.

#### d) Purse seine (with or without FADs):

Yes (Please provide details)

> Many of the U.S. Fishermen operating in the tuna fisheries of the InterAmerican Tropical Tuna Convention use purse seines with and without FADs. In the Gulf of Mexico, the menhaden boats also use purse seine. NMFS has in the past placed observers on some of these boats, due to concerns about sea turtle and dolphin interactions.

Through the Sea Turtle Observer Requirement regulation, known as the Annual Determination, NMFS has identified purse seine fisheries as needing additional fisheries observer information. Please see <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/bycatch/sea-turtle-observer-requirement-annual-determination> for more information.

There are no purse seine fisheries operating in Guam, CNMI, Am. Samoa, or Hawaii, although there is an international purse seine albacore fishery that operates within the western and central Pacific.

e) Longline (shallow or deepset):

Yes (Please provide details)

> Shallow-set and deep-set longline fisheries occur in the Atlantic, the Gulf of Mexico and the Pacific. In the Northeast Distant fishery in the Atlantic NMFS requires fishermen to use 18/0 circle hooks. In the Gulf of Mexico and other parts of the Atlantic fishermen in the highly migratory species fishery (principally tuna and swordfish) must use 16/0 non-offset or greater than 16/0 non-offset circle hooks or 18/0 with a 10 degrees offset or greater. Further in the Northeast Distant, U.S. fishermen are required to use whole mackerel or squid. Elsewhere in the Atlantic and the Gulf of Mexico, whole finfish or squid is used. In the Gulf of Mexico, live bait is prohibited. In the Atlantic fisheries, fishermen are also required to take a course on safe handling and release of sea turtles and receive a certificate. Dehooking and release gear is required to be on board.

In the Pacific, U.S. fishermen in the Hawaii shallow-set fishery are required to use 18/0 circle hooks with a 10 degree offset with finfish-type bait. Fishermen also are not allowed to use lightsticks and must attend an annual protected species workshop and receive a certificate. Dehooking and safe handling measures (ie. release gear) are required. There is also 100% observer coverage and if the fishery interacts with a certain number of Leatherback and Loggerhead sea turtles (a cap) the fishery is closed for the remainder of the year. The fishery has been closed three times has only occurred twice, since these regulations went into place -- 2006, 2011, and 2018.

The Hawaii deep-set fishery operates under similar management measures as the shallow-set fishery, although observer coverage is 20%, and the fishery does not operate under an annual 'hard' cap, but is authorized via a 3-year incidental take statement (ITS). If the fishery exceeds the allowable ITS, NMFS must initiate consultation to examine operation of the fishery.

In 2011, NOAA Fisheries required that the American Samoa longline fishery fish deeper than 100m to avoid interactions with sea turtles. This rule is still in place.

<http://www.regulations.gov/#!documentDetail;D=NOAA-NMFS-2010-0192-0007>

f) Driftnet:

Yes (Please provide details)

> Driftnet gills are fished off the West Coast of the United States.

Through the Sea Turtle Observer Requirement regulation, known as the Annual Determination, NMFS has identified drift gillnet fisheries as needing additional fisheries observer information. Please see <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/bycatch/sea-turtle-observer-requirement-annual-determination> for more information.

g) Others (Please provide details)

> In several of the Atlantic fisheries, fishermen use finfish trawls. There are recorded incidents of bycatch in these trawl fisheries. It is under discussion what regulatory actions will occur in these fisheries.

> There are several other gear types that NMFS believes are likely to interact with sea turtles. Additional information can be found at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/bycatch/sea-turtle-observer-requirement-annual-determination>

**1.4.2 Please indicate the relative level of fishing effort and perceived impact of each of the above fisheries on marine turtles (e.g. in terms of by-catch) [TSH]. Select from one of the following descriptions: RELATIVELY HIGH, MODERATE, RELATIVELY LOW, NONE (i.e. not present), UNKNOWN (i.e. unable to answer for whatever reason).**

a) Shrimp trawls

*Please select only one per line*

	UNKNOW N	NON E	RELATIVELY LOW	MODERAT E	RELATIVELY HIGH
Fishing efforts:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Perceived impact:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
-------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	-------------------------------------

- Source of information / clarification

> Source: Now under the 2007 Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation Act, there is mandatory observer coverage. See amendment 13 which required mandatory observer coverage. Please see the updated National Bycatch Report for the latest estimates of sea turtle bycatch for each fishery where there is observer coverage. <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/document/national-bycatch-report>  
Note that in the Pacific Islands Region (Guam, CNMI, AmSamoa, Hawaii) there are no shrimp trawl fisheries and hence no impact from trawls.

b) Set gill nets

Please select only one per line

	UNKNOW N	NON E	RELATIVELY LOW	MODERAT E	RELATIVELY HIGH
Fishing effort:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Perceived impact:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- Source of information / clarification

> Source: Based on observed fisheries, NMFS has documented sea turtle bycatch in all gill net fisheries. Please see are updated National Bycatch Report for the latest estimates of sea turtle bycatch for each fishery where there is observer coverage. <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/document/national-bycatch-report>  
Note, in the Pacific Islands Region gillnets only operate in coastal state or territory-managed waters. There are interactions with green turtles in these coastal (typically recreational) fisheries.

c) Anchored Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs)

Please select only one per line

	UNKNOW N	NON E	RELATIVELY LOW	MODERAT E	RELATIVELY HIGH
Fishing effort:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Perceived impact:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- Source of information / clarification

> Source: The United States have a very small number fishermen that fish on FADs and mostly on the high seas. In the Pacific Islands Region, FADs are typically not anchored but free floating. Interactions with sea turtles has been observed but typically unlikely.

d) Purse seine (with or without FADs)

Please select only one per line

	UNKNOW N	NON E	RELATIVELY LOW	MODERAT E	RELATIVELY HIGH
Fishing efforts:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Perceived impact:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- Source of information / clarification

> Source: See U.S. National Bycatch Report for Estimates. <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/document/national-bycatch-report>  
In the Pacific, purse seine fisheries operate in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO).

e) Longline (shallow or deepset)

Please select only one per line

	UNKNOW N	NON E	RELATIVELY LOW	MODERAT E	RELATIVELY HIGH
Fishing effort:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Perceived impact:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
-------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	-------------------------------------

- Source of information / clarification

> Source: See U.S. National Bycatch Report for Estimates.

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/document/national-bycatch-report>

U.S. federally-managed longline fisheries operating in the Atlantic and Pacific operate under strict management regulations with specific turtle-safe handling guidelines.

f) Driftnet

Please select only one per line

	UNKNOW N	NON E	RELATIVELY LOW	MODERAT E	RELATIVELY HIGH
Fishing effort:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Perceived impact:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- Source of information / clarification

> Source: NMFS is answering this question based on our drift gillnet fisheries.

See U.S. National Bycatch Report for Estimates.

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/document/national-bycatch-report>

There are no driftnet fisheries operating in the Pacific Islands Region (Guam, CNMI, Am.Samoa, or Hawaii).

1.4.3 Describe any **illegal fishing** that is known to occur in or around the waters of your country that may impact marine turtles. Describe the measures being taken to deal with this problem and any difficulties encountered in this regard. **[TSH]**

> Under the amendments made to the High Seas Driftnet Fisheries Moratorium Protection Act in the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 2007, the Secretary of Commerce must certify to the United States Congress every two years a list of nations whose vessels have been identified under Section 609 on Illegal, Unreported, or Unregulated fishing. If countries are certified to be engaged in IUU fishing, the provisions of the High Sea Driftnet Fisheries Moratorium Protection Act can come into force. These provisions include the denial of port privileges. The most recent report to Congress can be found at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/international-affairs/identification-iuu-fishing-activities>

**1.4.4 Which of the following methods are used by your country to minimise incidental capture/mortality of marine turtles in fishing activities? [IND]**

a) **Appropriate handling** of incidentally caught turtles (e.g. resuscitation or release by fishers using equipment such as de-hooking, line cutting tools and scoop nets)

YES (Details/future plans)

> NMFS requires protected species training which includes safe-handling and release training in our longline fisheries and purse seine fisheries. Please see the final rules for the Atlantic and Pacific longline fisheries for further detail -- <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/atlantic-highly-migratory-species/safe-handling-release-and-identification-workshops>.

b) **Devices that allow the escape of marine turtles** (e.g. turtle excluder devices (TEDs) or other measures that are comparable in effectiveness)

YES (Details/future plans)

> Turtle Excluder Devices - <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/southeast/bycatch/turtle-excluder-devices>  
Bycatch Reduction Engineering Program - <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/bycatch/bycatch-reduction-engineering-program>  
National Bycatch Reduction Strategy - <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/bycatch/national-bycatch-reduction-strategy>

c) **Measures to avoid encirclement** of marine turtles in purse seine

YES (Details/future plans)

> Note, there are regulations under the Marine Mammal Protection Act to avoid encirclement of dolphins in purse seine fisheries but these regulations are not specific to sea turtles. However, the United States has been a strong proponent in several Regional Fisheries Management Organizations for resolutions that urge/require countries to avoid encircling turtles in FADs. Including the Western Central Pacific Fisheries Commission, where we helped to get this resolution adopted -- <http://www.wcpfc.int/system/files/Resolution%202005-04.pdf>.

d) **Appropriate combinations** of hook design, type of bait, depth, gear specifications and fishing

practices

YES (Details/future plans)

> Pelagic Longlines - <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/bycatch/fishing-gear-pelagic-longlines>  
Atlantic HMS - <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/action/atlantic-highly-migratory-species-pelagic-longline-final-rule>  
Hawaii Pelagic Longline - <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/document/hawaii-pelagic-longline-regulation-summary>  
Bottom Longlines - <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/bycatch/fishing-gear-bottom-longlines>

**e) Monitoring and recovery of fish aggregating devices (FADs)**

YES (Details/future plans)

> Under the InterAmerican Tropical Tuna Convention, sea turtle resolution (C-07-03) all purse seine vessels are to avoid encircling sea turtles in FADs. This applies to the US boats fishing in the IATTC area as well.

**f) Net retention and recycling schemes**

UNDER INVESTIGATION or NOT APPLICABLE (Details/future plans)

**g) Spatial and temporal control of fishing (e.g. seasonal closures of fishing activities)**

YES (Details/future plans)

> As mentioned above, the Hawaii longline fishery closes if a certain number of Loggerhead/Leatherback turtles are taken.  
See <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/action/revised-limits-sea-turtle-interactions-hawaii-shallow-set-longline-fishery> for more details.

**h) Effort management control**

YES (Details/future plans)

> See - <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/topic/population-assessments#endangered-species>

**1.4.5 Which of the following programmes has your country developed - in consultation with the fishing industry and fisheries management organisations - to promote implementation of measures to minimise incidental capture and mortality of turtles in national waters and in the high seas? [IND]**

Please use the corresponding text boxes to explain/clarify each of your responses, including 'NOT APPLICABLE' responses, and indicate future plans in this regard. [IND]

Please describe the collaboration, when/where the programmes were introduced, any difficulties encountered, and general results obtained (i.e. successful and unsuccessful). Provide references to publications, where available.

**a) Onboard observer programmes**

X

YES (Details/future plans)

> NMFS currently has over 47 observer programs operating. More details on NMFS' observer program can be found at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/fisheries-observers/national-observer-program>.

**b) Vessel monitoring systems**

YES (Details/future plans)

> More than 4,000 vessels in the U.S. fleet are required to use Vessel Monitoring Systems. More information can be found at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/enforcement/regional-vessel-monitoring-information>.

**c) Inspections (i.e. at sea, in port, at landing sites)**

YES (Details/future plans)

> NMFS Office of Law Enforcement together with state law enforcement agencies and the U.S. Coast Guard carries out inspections at sea, in port and at landing sites. For some fisheries, such as the Gulf and South Atlantic shrimp fishery, NMFS has a gear monitoring team which is composed of gear extension agents and office of law enforcement officials to conduct trainings and courtesy boardings. Through regular interaction with the shrimp fleet, NMFS aims for a high level of compliance with the Turtle Excluder Device regulations.

**d) Training programmes / workshops to educate fishers**

YES (Details/future plans)

> Several NMFS fisheries, particularly the longline fisheries, require annual protected species training which

teaches fishermen what to do when they interact with a marine mammal or sea turtles. See examples below --  
<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/pacific-islands/resources-fishing/pacific-islands-protected-species-workshops>  
<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/atlantic-highly-migratory-species/safe-handling-release-and-identification-workshops>

**e) Informative videos, brochures, printed guidelines etc.**

YES (Details/future plans)

> Below are links for several NMFS training materials related to sea turtles and release from fishing gear.  
<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/atlantic-highly-migratory-species/safe-handling-release-and-identification-workshops#handouts>  
<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resources/educational-materials>

- Other OR none of the above

None of the above

1.4.6 Are the mitigation measures described in 1.4.4 and 1.4.5 periodically reviewed and evaluated for their efficiency? **[SAP]**

YES (Please give details)

> NMFS reviews sea turtle mitigation measures whenever there are changes in the Fishery Management Plans, the ESA Recovery Plans and the ESA mandated five year reviews.

1.4.7 In your country, what types of data collection, research and development have been undertaken to support the reduction of marine turtle incidental catch (while taking into consideration the impact of various mitigation measures on other species)? **[SAP]**

> NMFS has a few programs that contribute to the research and development of bycatch reduction devices for sea turtles. The first is the Bycatch Reduction Engineering Program. More information on this program can be found at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/bycatch/bycatch-reduction-engineering-program>. The National Cooperative Research Program (<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/sustainable-fisheries/national-cooperative-research-program>) and Saltonstall-Kennedy Program (<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/grant/saltonstall-kennedy-grant-program>) can also provide funding to support bycatch reduction/conservation engineering work.

1.4.8 Has your country exchanged information and provided technical assistance (formally or informally) to other Signatory States to promote the activities described in 1.4.4, 1.4.5 and 1.4.7 above? **[SAP]**

YES (If yes, please give details of the exchanges/technical assistance)

> U.S. has an active program to exchange technical information related to Turtle Excluder Devices, circle hook technology and more recently modified gillnets with interested countries. A summary of these efforts can be found at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/webdam/download/69038214>.

1.4.9 What legislative and practical measures has your country taken in support of UN General Assembly Resolution 46/215 concerning the moratorium on the use of large-scale driftnets? **[SAP]**

> U.S. adopted the High Sea Driftnet Moratorium Protection Act to implement this UNGA resolution. NMFS reports annually to Congress on our implementation of this Act (see link below). This Act was amended by the 2006 Reauthorization of the Magnuson Stevens Fishery Conservation Act. These amendments gave NMFS broader scope to look across gear types (not just large scale drift gillnets), but all fisheries to identify countries for IUU or bycatch of protected living marine resources.

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/international-affairs/annual-driftnet-reports-congress>  
<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/international-affairs/identification-iuu-fishing-activities>

## **1.5 Addressing harvest of, and trade in, marine turtles; and protecting of habitat**

1.5.1 Does your country have legislation to prohibit direct harvest and domestic trade in marine turtles, their eggs, parts and products; and to protect important turtle habitats? **[IND]**

Please provide details (title/date) of the relevant legislation, as well as any exemptions (e.g. for traditional harvest) under that legislation.

YES

> Sea turtles are completely protected under the Federal Endangered Species Act and various state laws. Turtles, eggs or their parts cannot be taken except with permits for scientific or educational purposes.

**1.5.2 Which, among the following list, are economic uses and cultural values of marine turtles in your country? [INF]**

Please rate the relative prevalence / importance of each consumptive or non-consumptive use.

Use the text boxes below each rating to explain or clarify your responses.

**a1) Meat consumption**

NO

**b1) Egg consumption**

NO

**c1) Shell products**

NO

**d1) Fat consumption**

NO

**e1) Traditional medicine**

NO

**f1) Eco-tourism programmes**

YES

f2) Eco-tourism programmes: relative prevalence/importance

MODERATE

**g1) Cultural / traditional significance**

YES

g2) Cultural/traditional significance: relative prevalence/importance

MODERATE

1.5.3 Please indicate the relative level and impact of traditional harvest on marine turtles and their eggs.

**[IND, TSH]**

	RELATIVELY HIGH	UNKNOWN	NONE	RELATIVELY LOW	MODERATE
Level of harvest:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Impact of harvest:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Source of information / explanation:

> Source of information:

Six of the seven sea turtle species found globally are listed on the U.S. Endangered Species Act. Take of listed species is strictly prohibited; there is no legal harvest.

Note, in the US Pacific Islands, US territories and states, illegal harvest does occur.

1.5.4 Have any domestic management programmes been established to limit the levels of intentional harvest? **[SAP]**

Use the text box to give details.

NO

> Intentional take is prohibited by law.

1.5.5 Describe any management agreements negotiating between your country and other States in relation to sustainable levels of traditional harvest, to ensure that such harvest does not undermine conservation efforts. **[BPR]**

> N/A

**1.6 Minimizing mortality through nesting beach programmes**

**1.6.1 Measures and effectiveness**

**First, tick one of the YES/NO-boxes** to indicate whether or not your country has any of the following measures in place to minimise the mortality of eggs, hatchlings and nesting females. If yes, then **estimate the relative effectiveness** of these measures. **[IND, SAP]**

Use the text boxes below each rating to elaborate on your responses, including any lessons learned that

might be of value to other Signatory States, and indicate your plans for the coming year. Please explain any "Not Applicable (N/A)" responses.

**a1) Monitoring/protection programmes**

YES

> Territory of Guam: Regular patrolling of important green turtle nesting beaches between April and August.

**b1) Education/awareness programmes**

YES

**c1) Egg relocation/hatcheries**

NO

**d1) Predator control**

YES

> some as needed

**e1) Vehicle / access restrictions**

YES

**f1) Removal of debris / clean-up**

NO

**g1) Re-vegetation of frontal dunes**

YES

**h1) Building location/design regulations**

YES

**i1) Light pollution reduction**

YES

1.6.2 Has your country undertaken any evaluation of its nest and beach management programmes? **[SAP]**

Use the text box to elaborate on your response, if necessary.

YES

> Programs are continuously reviewed through scientific and permit review process.

## **OBJECTIVE II: PROTECT, CONSERVE AND REHABILITATE MARINE TURTLE HABITATS**

### **2.1 Measures to protect and conserve marine turtle habitats**

2.1.1 What is being done to protect critical habitats outside of established protected areas? (NB: It is assumed that legislation relating to established protected areas will have been described in Section 1.5.1) **[BPR, SAP]**

> In the United States critical habitat is defined as "specific areas within the geographical area occupied by the species at the time of listing, if they contain physical or biological features essential to conservation, and those features may require special management considerations or protection; and specific areas outside the geographical area occupied by the species if the agency determines that the area itself is essential for conservation." In recent years, NMFS and FWS have been asked to designate more and more critical habitat. Current and proposed critical habitat designations for all listed sea turtles species can be found at -- <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/endangered-species-conservation/critical-habitat>.

2.1.2 Are assessments routinely made of the environmental impact of marine and coastal development on marine turtles and their habitats? **[IND, SAP]**

Use the text box to elaborate on your response.

YES

> Federal Endangered Species Act requires federal agencies that carry out any action or permit or fund any action that may affect federal listed endangered species (all sea turtles except flatback) must consult with National Marine Fisheries Service or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to ensure these actions do not jeopardize the continued existence of listed species. In instances where an action does not jeopardize a species but will still result in the taking of individual animals, the Services must establish a permitted incidental take level after required reasonable and prudent measures are in place to minimize incidental or accidental take. Also Environment assessments or impact statements required for most government projects or government permitted projects.

2.1.3 Is marine water quality (including marine debris) monitoring near turtle habitats? If yes, describe the nature of this monitoring and any remedial measures that may have been taken. **[SAP]**

YES

> Federal and state statutes address water quality protection.

2.1.4 Are measures in place to prohibit the use of poisonous chemicals and explosives? **[SAP]**

Use the text box to elaborate on your response.

YES

> Yes, the Endangered Species Act and the National Environmental Policy Act require through analysis prior to any project using Federal funds. These analysis would cover chemicals and explosives, should they used in a project.

### **2.2 Rehabilitation of degraded marine turtle habitats**

2.2.1 Are efforts being made to recover degraded coral reefs? If yes, give details (location, duration, effectiveness, lessons learned, future plans etc.). **[IND, SAP]**

Provide sufficient details of the measures taken, especially those measures shown to have been effective in recovering degraded coral reefs. Please indicate future plans in this regard.

YES (Details/future plans)

> Our primary emphasis is on reef protection and reducing threats not active rebuilding. However, the NMFS Restoration Program does work to rebuild reefs if there has been a physical impact (such as a ship landing). With the listing of several coral species on the U.S. Endangered Species Act, there will be more emphasis on recovering certain coral species as well. <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/habitat-conservation/shallow-coral-reef-habitat>

2.2.2 Are efforts being made to recover degraded mangrove habitats that are important for turtles? If yes, give details (location, duration, effectiveness, lessons learned future plans etc.). **[IND, SAP]**

NO (Details/future plans)

> Mangrove and seagrass protection focuses on reducing threats rather than active restoration of particular sites.

2.2.3 Are efforts being made to recover degraded sea grass habitats? If yes, give details (location, duration, effectiveness, lessons learned future plans etc.). **[IND, SAP]**

NO (Details/future plans)

> Mangrove and seagrass protection focuses on reducing threats rather than active restoration of particular sites.

# **OBJECTIVE III: IMPROVE UNDERSTANDING OF MARINE TURTLE ECOLOGY AND POPULATIONS THROUGH RESEARCH, MONITORING AND INFORMATION EXCHANGE**

## **3.1 Studies on marine turtles and their habitats**

3.1.1 Give a list of available literature that includes baseline information from studies carried out in your country on marine turtle populations and their habitats. **[INF]**

> See 1.2.1 for monitoring of nesting populations.

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resources/all-publications>

3.1.2 Have **long-term** monitoring programmes (i.e. of at least 10 years duration) been initiated or planned for priority marine turtle populations frequenting the territory of your country? **[IND, BPR]**

Please give details of the nature, duration and continuity of these programmes.

YES

> See 1.2.1

3.1.3 Has the genetic identity of marine turtle populations in your country been characterised? **[INF, PRI]**

Please give details (e.g. which species, which populations?).

YES

> National Sea Turtle Genetics Center established at NMFS Research Center, La Jolla, California has active program to collect and analyse tissue samples to characterize genetics structure of nesting and foraging populations within and outside the United States.

<https://swfsc.noaa.gov/textblock.aspx?Division=PRD&ParentMenuId=212&id=1331>

**3.1.4 Which of the following methods have been or are being used to try to identify migration routes of turtles? Use the text boxes to provide additional details [INF, PRI]**

### **a) Tagging**

YES (Details/future plans)

> <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/feature-story/endangered-green-sea-turtles-northern-mariana-islands>

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/pacific-islands/sea-turtles-pacific>

### **b) Satellite tracking**

YES (Details/future plans)

> Nesting green turtle instrumented with satellite transmitter in Guam 2/22/04 . Turtle and transmitter recovered several months later in Philippines and transmitter returned by Philippine government.

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/pacific-islands/sea-turtles-pacific>

c) Other OR None of the above

None of the above

3.1.5 Have studies been carried out on marine turtle population dynamics and survival rates (e.g. including studies into the survival rates of incidentally caught and released turtles)? **[INF, PRI]**

YES

> NMFS launched in 2012 an internal effort to improve our stock assessment tools related to sea turtles. Many of these tools are still in development, but this process seeks to improve the quantitative and technological tools that the agency uses to conduct stock assessments.

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/protected-species-surveys>

3.1.6 Has research been conducted on the frequency and pathology of diseases in marine turtles? **[INF, PRI]**

YES

> NMFS Honolulu Lab is a centre for coordinating priority green turtle fibropapilloma research with U.S. academic institutions. NMFS also has a Veterinary Pathologist who works only on sea turtle issues. This person works with the Stranding Network on any unusual mortality events, including those caused by harmful algal blooms, oil spills and fisheries interactions.

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/document/report-technical-expert-workshop-developing->



recommendations-field-response  
<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/pacific-islands/sea-turtles-pacific>

3.1.7 Is the use of traditional ecological knowledge in research studies being promoted? **[BPR, PRI]**  
 YES

> Interview and cooperation with local peoples is encouraged in research.

### 3.2 Collaborative research and monitoring

- 3.2.1 List any **regional** or **sub-regional action plans** in which your country is already participating, which may serve the purpose of identifying priority research and monitoring needs. **[INF]**

Use the text box to elaborate on your response.

> NMFS Pacific Islands Region participates in the SPREP Marine Turtle Action Plan discussions and assists with implementation where possible.

NMFS and USFWS jointly work to implement the US Recovery Plans for sea turtles.

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/endangered-species-conservation/recovery-species-under-endangered-species-act#recovery-plans>

**3.2.2 On which of the following themes have collaborative studies and monitoring been conducted? Use the text boxes to describe the nature of this international collaboration or to clarify your response. Answer 'NO' if the studies/monitoring undertaken do not involve international collaboration. [INF, PRI]**

a) Genetic identity

YES (Details/future plans)

> See <https://swfsc.noaa.gov/textblock.aspx?Division=PRD&id=1226&ParentMenuId=212>

b) Conservation status

YES (Details/future plans)

> In the Pacific, there are several NMFS offices and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that work with international partners to improve the conservation status of listed species. More details about collaborative studies in the Pacific can be found at:

<http://www.fws.gov/international/wildlife-without-borders/marine-turtle-conservation-fund.html>

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/pacific-islands/sea-turtles-pacific>

<https://swfsc.noaa.gov/textblock.aspx?Division=PRD&id=1226&ParentMenuId=212>

c) Migrations

YES (Details/future plans)

> See links above from all the NMFS Science Center activities.

d) Other biological and ecological aspects

YES (Details/future plans)

> See links above.

### 3.3 Data analysis and applied research

3.3.1 List, in order of priority, the marine turtle populations in your country in need of conservation actions, and indicate their population trends. **[PRI]**

> NMFS and USFWS are obliged to recover all sea turtle populations listed under the U.S. Endangered Species Act. Per the act, a review is conducted every five years -- <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/endangered-species-conservation/endangered-species-act-5-year-reviews>

3.3.2 Are research and monitoring activities, such as those described above in Section 3.1, periodically reviewed and evaluated for their efficacy? **[SAP]**

YES

> Each NMFS Science Center program undergoes a program review on a periodic basis. All protected species programs were reviewed in 2015 - <https://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/science-program-review/program-review-reports/index>.

3.3.3 Describe how research results are being applied to improve management practices and mitigation of threats (in relation to the priority populations identified in 3.3.1, among others). **[SAP]**

> NMFS and USFWS's research results, as well as those from the academic community, are regularly used in

Biological Opinions for any Federal action that may occur and that will impact sea turtles. In addition, the best available science is required to be used for all five year reviews, status reviews, recovery plans and listing decisions. All gear modification regulations also rely on the best available science.

### **3.4 Information exchange**

3.4.1 Has your country undertaken any initiatives (nationally or through collaboration with other Range States) to standardise methods and levels of data collection? **[BPR, INF]**

YES [If yes, please give details of the agreed protocol(s)]

> see 1.2.1

3.4.2 To what extent does your country exchange scientific and technical information and expertise with other Range States? **[SAP, IND]**

OFTEN (SYSTEMATICALLY)

3.4.3 If your country shares scientific and technical information and expertise with other Range States, what mechanisms have commonly been used for this purpose? Comment on any positive benefits/outcomes achieved through these interactions. **[INF]**

> All of the above. NMFS and FWS scientists often publish their data in peer-reviewed journals and government technical memorandums. They present at the International Sea Turtle Symposium, and regional workshops.

3.4.4 Does your country compile and make available to other countries data on marine turtle populations of a regional interest?

Please give details **[INF]**

YES

> Our scientists are regularly collaborating with scientists from the IOSEA region on genetics, telemetry, bycatch reduction, etc and share information with their collaborators.

# OBJECTIVE IV: INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS OF THE THREATS TO MARINE TURTLES AND THEIR HABITATS, AND ENHANCE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES

## 4.1 Public education and information programmes

4.1.1 Describe the educational materials, including mass media information programmes that your country has collected, developed and/or disseminated. **[INF, PRI]**

Details/future plans:

> Numerous materials between federal, state governments and NGOs such as WIDECAST and The Ocean Conservancy.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service have websites with information on marine turtles as well as for all recovery plans under revision (Kemp's ridley and loggerhead). [seaturtle.org](http://seaturtle.org) and [cccturtle.org](http://cccturtle.org) are just a couple of the NGO sites featuring marine turtle information.

NMFS recently developed an online game for kids called "Quest to Nest." The game can be found at <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/education/>. We also recently produced a Kids' Times publications for sea turtles. This information can also be found at <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/education/turtles.htm>.

The United States can contribute to the development of a web-based information resource for marine turtle conservation by providing data on marine turtle populations, nesting data, migration data and information on projects. As mentioned in previous sections, the U.S. National Marine Fisheries Service also recently held its first Sea Turtle Week to promote over social media the importance of sea turtles conservation.

4.1.2 Which of the following groups have been the targets of these focused education and awareness programmes described in above in Section 4.1.1? **[PRI, INF]**

- Fishing industry
- Local/Fishing communities
- Tourists
- Teachers
- Students
- Additional information

> Fishing Industry

<http://www.sefsc.noaa.gov/labs/mississippi/fishermen.htm>

Tourists -- Wildlife Viewing Guidelines

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/topic/marine-life-viewing-guidelines>

Teachers

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/educator-opportunity/teacher-sea>

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resources/educational-materials>

Students

<http://games.noaa.gov/seaturtle/welcome.html>

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resources/educational-materials>

4.1.3 Have any community learning / information centres been established in your country? **[BPR, SAP]**

Please give details and indicate future plans

YES

> Community learning centers exist in many of the coastal states of the United States.

4.2 Alternative livelihoods opportunities Describe initiatives already undertaken or planned to identify and facilitate alternative livelihoods (including income-generating activities) for local communities. **[IND, BPR]**

> N/A

## 4.3 Stakeholder participation

4.3.1 Describe initiatives already undertaken or planned by your country to involve **local communities**, in particular, in the planning and implementation of marine turtle conservation programmes. Please include details of any incentives that have been used to encourage public participation, and indicate their efficacy. **[BPR, IND]**

> As part of creating a new regulation the United States government is required to notify the public. The public is notified via the Federal Register, the NMFS and FWS website, press releases, and emails to constituent list-servs. There are often public meetings held to get input and there is always a public comment period on the proposed regulation.

4.3.2 Describe initiatives already undertaken or planned to involve and encourage the cooperation of

**Government institutions, NGOs and the private sector** in marine turtle conservation programmes.  
**[IND, BPR]**

> Development and revision of recovery plans as a practice involve state and Federal government representatives, NGO and key academics in the recovery plan with conservation/research tasks assigned to specific entities. The public reviews and comments on these plans.

# OBJECTIVE V: ENHANCE NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

## 5.1 Collaboration with, and assistance to, signatory and non-signatory States

5.1.1 Has your country undertaken a national review of its compliance with Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) obligations in relation to marine turtles? **[SAP]**

NO

> We have consulted with the US CITES Management Authority. They have informed us we are not under any obligation to undertake a national review of our CITES compliance in relation to marine turtles. We implement the treaty for marine turtles according to their status as Appendix-I species under CITES. This means that permits are required for both import and export (except for specimens that meet the specific exemptions of the treaty), and trade for commercial purposes is prohibited. U.S. implementation of CITES for these species has never been the subject of a review by the CITES Secretariat or the CITES Animals or Standing Committees.

5.1.2 Does your country have, or participate/cooperate in, CITES training programmes for relevant authorities? **[SAP]**

YES (If yes, please provide details of these training programmes)

> The United States often provides funding and or personnel for CITES training programmes. The United States is particularly concerned about illegal trafficking of sea turtle parts. We are working to improve law enforcement training in the region.

5.1.3 Does your country have in place mechanisms to identify **international** illegal trade routes (for marine turtle products etc.)? Please use the text box to elaborate on how your country is cooperating with other States to prevent/deter/eliminate illegal trade. **[SAP]**

Please give details of particularly successful interventions and prosecutions; and/or mention any difficulties experienced that impede progress in this area. Please provide references to any published reports (e.g. already prepared for CITES purposes) that give a more ample explanation.

YES

> Yes we are an active member of CITES, ASEAN WEN and several other wildlife trafficking initiatives. With the recent Obama initiative on wildlife trafficking, there is intense work being done to combat wildlife trafficking. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/02/11/fact-sheet-national-strategy-combating-wildlife-traffickingcommercial-b>

5.1.4 Which international compliance and trade issues related to marine turtles has your country raised for discussion (e.g. through the IOSEA MoU Secretariat, at meetings of Signatory States etc.)? **[INF]**

> None, we have bilateral trade agreements or fisheries bilaterals where we directly raise issues with countries.

5.1.5 Describe measures in place to prevent, deter and eliminate domestic illegal trade in marine turtle products, particularly with a view to enforcing the legislation identified in Section 1.5.1. **[INF]**

> Active monitoring programs and all important nesting beaches, routine law enforcement investigation of rare poaching reports.

## 5.2 Prioritisation, development and implementation of national action plans

5.2.1 Has your country already developed a national **action plan** or a set of **key management measures** that could eventually serve as a basis for a more specific action plan at a national level? **[IND]**

Please explain.

YES

> Yes, we have recovery plans for each of the listed sea turtle species in the United States. <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/sea-turtles>

5.2.2 From your country's perspective, which **conservation and management activities**, and/or which particular **sites or locations**, ought to be among the highest priorities for action? (List up to 10 activities from the IOSEA Conservation and Management Plan). **[PRI]**

> Our Recovery Plans identify the priority conservation actions for each listed sea turtles species. Please see -- <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/sea-turtles>

5.2.3 Please indicate, from your country's standpoint, the extent to which the following **local** management

issues require **international** cooperation in order to achieve progress. **[PRI]**  
 In other words, how important is **international** cooperation for addressing these issues?  
 Please select only one per line

	NOT AT ALL	LIMITED	IMPORTANT	ESSENTIAL
Illegal fishing in territorial waters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Incidental capture by foreign fleets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Enforcement/patrolling of territorial waters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hunting/harvest by neighboring countries	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Poaching, illegal trade in turtle products	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Development of gear technology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Oil spills, pollution, marine debris	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Training / capacity-building	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Alternative livelihood development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Identification of turtle populations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Identification of migration routes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tagging / satellite tracking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Habitat studies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Genetics studies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### 5.3 Cooperation and Information exchange

5.3.1 Identify existing frameworks/organisations that are, or could be, useful mechanisms for cooperating in marine turtle conservation at the sub-regional level. Please comment on the strengths of these instruments, their capacity to take on a broader coordinating role, and any efforts your country has made to enhance their role in turtle conservation. **[INF, BPR]**

> International Sea Turtle Society and its symposiums which are partially supported by U.S. government, and U.S. based foundations, NGOs and organizations as well as others outside the United States. SPREP is also a helpful forum for us to coordinate sea turtle conservation in the South Pacific. The Coral Triangle Initiative and our bilateral work in IOSEA area have also been important forums for us.

5.3.2 Has your country developed, or is it participating in, any networks for cooperative management of shared turtle populations? **[BPR, INF]**

YES (if yes, give details)

5.3.3 What steps has your country taken to encourage Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs) to adopt marine turtle conservation measures within Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) and on the high seas? Please describe the interventions made in this regard, referring to specific RFBs. **[SAP]**

> The United States has promoted sea turtle conservation measures at the InterAmerican Tropical Tuna Convention (IATTC), the Western and Central Pacific Fishery Management Commission (WCPFC), the International Convention for the Conservation of Atlantic Tuna (ICCAT), the North Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) and throughout the Kobe Process.

### 5.4 Capacity-building

5.4.1 Describe your country's needs, in terms of human resources, knowledge and facilities, in order to build capacity to strengthen marine turtle conservation measures. **[PRI]**

> The United States has a large sea turtle conservation program composed of personnel at the Federal level from the USFWS and NMFS. In addition, many of the states have their own sea turtle program. The greatest challenge to all of these programs is and will continue to be consistent levels of funding.

5.4.2 Describe any training provided in marine turtle conservation and management techniques (e.g. workshops held, training manuals produced etc.), and indicate your plans for the coming year. **[PRI, INF]**

> The United States has run the International TED program for almost twenty years. This program provides training on the use of Turtle Excluder Devices. In addition, the United States has been actively working with several countries to test circle hook technology in longline gear and modification of gillnets and pound nets to reduce sea turtle bycatch.

5.4.3 Specifically in relation to **capacity-building**, describe any partnerships developed or planned with universities, research institutions, training bodies and other relevant organisations. **[BPR]**

> The United States has worked with World Wildlife Fund in the past in the Philippines, Indonesia and more recently in Vietnam on the promotion of circle hook technology. The United States also works in Papua Barat on nesting beach conservation, satellite tracking and genetic sampling. And as already mentioned we work with several Pacific Islands nations. More information can be found at:

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/feature-story/illuminated-nets-could-provide-brighter-future-sea-turtles>

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/podcast/putting-world-world-sea-turtle-day>

<http://www.fws.gov/international/wildlife-without-borders/marine-turtle-conservation-fund.html>.

## **5.5 Enforcement of conservation legislation**

5.5.1 National policies and laws concerning the conservation of marine turtles and their habitats will have been described in Section 1.5.1. Please indicate their effectiveness, in terms of their practical application and enforcement. **[SAP, TSH]**

> The Endangered Species Act is the main statute to protect sea turtles in the United States.

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/topic/laws-policies#endangered-species-act>. This statute has generally been very effective in protecting sea turtles

5.5.2 Has your country conducted a review of policies and laws to address any gaps, inconsistencies or impediments in relation to marine turtle conservation? If not, indicate any obstacles encountered in this regard and when this review is expected to be done. **[SAP]**

Please give details.

NO

5.5.3 From the standpoint of law enforcement, has your country experienced any difficulties achieving cooperation to ensure compatible application of laws across and between jurisdictions? **[TSH]**

Please give details.

YES

> At times the United States Federal government, has had inter-agency coordination issues on enforcement issues as well as coordination issues with state partners. In general though, these issues are resolved quickly.

# OBJECTIVE VI: PROMOTE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MOU, INCLUDING THE CMP

## 6.1 IOSEA Marine Turtle MoU membership and activities

6.1.1 What has your country already done, or will it do, to encourage other States to sign the IOSEA MoU? **[INF]**

> The United States has actively encouraged some countries to consider joining the IOSEA. We have provided contact information for key officials in China and have offered several times to facilitate conversations between the Secretariat and Chinese officials. The United States is happy to assist the Secretariat in any outreach.

6.1.2 Is your country **currently** favourable, in principle, to amending the MoU to make it a legally binding instrument? **[INF]**

YES

6.1.3 Would your country be favourable, over a **longer time horizon**, to amending the MoU to make it a legally-binding instrument? **[INF]**

YES (Use the text box to elaborate on your response, if necessary)

## 6.2 Secretariat and Advisory Committee

What efforts has your country made, or can it make, to secure funding to support the core operations of the IOSEA MoU (Secretariat and Advisory Committee, and related activities)? **[IND]**

> The Department of State, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service have consistently provided funding to the IOSEA. Depending on budget allocations, they will make every effort to try and do so in the future.

## 6.3 Resources to support implementation of the MoU

6.3.1 What funding has your country mobilised for **domestic** implementation of marine turtle conservation activities related to the IOSEA Marine Turtle MoU? Where possible, indicate the specific monetary values attached to these activities/programmes, as well as future plans. **[IND]**

> The United States government's sea turtle conservation funding is authorized under the implementation of the Endangered Species Act. By carrying out our Endangered Species Act obligations, we are able to fulfill our IOSEA obligations.

6.3.2 Has your country tried to solicit funds from, or seek partnerships with, other Governments, major donor organizations, industry, private sector, foundations or NGOs for marine turtle conservation activities? **[IND]**

YES (If yes, give details of the approaches made (both successful and unsuccessful))

> The United States Fish and Wildlife Service runs a matching grant program called the Marine Turtle Conservation Act.

6.3.3 Describe any initiatives made to explore the use of economic instruments for the conservation of marine turtles and their habitats. **[BPR]**

> N/A

## 6.4 Coordination among government agencies

6.4.1 Has your country designated a lead agency responsible for coordinating national marine turtle conservation and management policy? If not, when is this information expected to be communicated to the IOSEA MoU Secretariat? **[IND]**

Please elaborate, as necessary.

YES

> National Marine Fisheries Service and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service share national authority for the conservation of marine turtles. NMFS in the marine environment and USFWS on nesting beaches.

6.4.2 Are the roles and responsibilities of all government agencies related to the conservation and management of marine turtles and their habitats clearly defined? **[IND]**

Use the text box to elaborate.

YES

> The National Marine Fisheries Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have an memorandum of understanding that detail their roles and responsibilities.



6.4.3 Has your country ever conducted a review of agency roles and responsibilities? If so, when, and what was the general outcome? If not, is such a review planned and when? **[SAP]**

This question seeks to ascertain whether Signatories have made a serious examination of which agencies have a role to play in marine turtle conservation, either directly or indirectly, and which therefore should be apprised of the IOSEA MoU and its provisions.

If no internal review of interagency roles and responsibilities has been or will be undertaken, please elaborate if only to indicate that the necessary arrangements are already clear and not in need of further review.

NO (Use the text box to elaborate)

> The Endangered Species Act outlines what the statutory roles of NMFS and FWS are.

