

CGR4.MOT028

Conservation of Leatherback Turtles and Hammerhead Sharks in the Eastern Tropical Pacific Marine Corridor

CONSIDERING that Article 119 of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, "Conservation of the Living Resources of the High Seas", urges in its section 1(b) that in determining the allowable catch and establishing other conservation measures for the living resources in the high seas, States shall take into consideration the effects on species associated with or dependent upon harvested species with a view to maintaining or restoring populations of such associated or dependent species above levels at which their reproduction may become seriously threatened;

CONSIDERING ALSO that United Nations Resolution 61/105, paragraph 62, adopted on 8 December 2006, asks the States and the regional fisheries management organisations and mechanisms to urgently apply, as appropriate, the recommended measures in the Guidelines to Reduce Sea Turtle Mortality in Fishing Operations, which include the use of spatial and temporal closures of selected fisheries, in order to prevent the decline of sea turtle populations through the reduction of by-catch;

RECALLING that the Convention on Biological Diversity has recommended the establishment of a global network of Marine Protected Areas in the high seas for 2012, including networks that could protect the migratory corridors of sea turtles;

EXPRESSING CONCERN that eight years after a study in Nature (2000) reported that leatherback turtles (*Dermochelys coriacea*) had experience declines of over 90 percent during the past two decades, due in large part to fisheries interactions and impacts, and warning by prominent scientists that this population is facing imminent risk of extinction, the Pacific leatherback has continued to decline in spite of over a decade of protection and monitoring at nesting sites where egg harvesting and poaching has been effectively eliminated; and

CONCERNED ALSO because IUCN has included the Scalloped Hammerhead Shark (*Sphyrna lewini*) on its Red List of Threatened Species, classifying it as an Endangered species, and that this species is commonly caught in commercial and artisanal fisheries within the Eastern Tropical Pacific;

RECOGNIZING that 1,007 scientists from 97 countries, as well as representatives from 281 non governmental organizations (NGOs) from 62 countries, have gone as far as to urge the United Nations to call for a moratorium on pelagic long-line fishing in the Pacific;

RECOGNIZING ALSO that sea turtles and pelagic sharks migrate through the world's oceans, making international cooperation necessary to successfully conserve and protect them;

NOTING that new information from acoustic and satellite tracking shows that the Leatherback Turtle and Hammerhead Sharks share migration corridors in the marine waters of certain States, between Cocos Island (Costa Rica) and the Galapagos Islands (Ecuador) and Malpelo Island (Colombia); and

NOTING ALSO that Costa Rica, Ecuador, Panama and Colombia are working for the protection of the Eastern Tropical Pacific Marine Corridor, which includes marine protected areas, migration corridors and other critical habitats within and beyond these countries' Exclusive Economic Zones;

ACKNOWLEDGING that the InterAmerican Convention for the Conservation and Protection of Sea Turtles, the InterAmerican Tropical Tuna Commission, the Convention on Migratory Species and the Secretariat of the South Pacific have adopted measures to protect sea turtles and/or sharks and recognized the need for continued efforts by the Parties to these agreements;

The World Conservation Congress at its 4th Session in Barcelona, Spain, 5–14 October 2008:

1. REQUESTS the United Nations to urge States and regional fisheries management organizations to permanently protect the Leatherback Turtle and Hammerhead Sharks through the control and management of the fishing effort, including through the development and application of gear specific solutions as well as through the establishment of a network of spatial and temporal closures of those fisheries that interact with sea turtles and pelagic sharks in scientifically documented biological corridors in the Eastern Tropical Pacific and elsewhere, including areas beyond national jurisdiction during periods of high concentration of sea turtles and/or pelagic sharks;

2. CALLS on relevant coastal States as well as States and fishing entities whose vessels operate in the Eastern Tropical Pacific to immediately implement their domestic laws and regulations, and to carry out their obligations under relevant international treaties for the protection of Leatherback Turtles and Hammerhead Sharks in the Eastern Tropical Pacific, including gathering information on the bycatch of sea turtles and pelagic sharks and facilitating public access to the information, which are critical to the ecosystems of the region.

3. CALLS on the relevant coastal states of the Eastern Tropical Pacific to immediately adopt and implement policies in the Eastern Tropical Pacific Marine Corridor and elsewhere to include broad protection for the Leatherback Turtle, Hammerhead Sharks, and other threatened marine organisms that are critical to the marine biodiversity of the region.

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Endorsement:

Asociación Preservacionista de Flora y Fauna Silvestre