

February 1, 2006

Mr. Donald McIsaac
Executive Director, Pacific Fishery Management Council
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 200
Portland, OR 97220-1384

Dear Mr. McIsaac:

At its March 5-10, 2006 meeting, the Pacific Fisheries Management Council will take a final vote on proposals that, if implemented, will undermine conservation measures protecting the critically endangered leatherback sea turtle as well as seabirds, marine mammals and sharks and other fish by allowing drift-gillnets and pelagic longlines to be used in areas along the California and Oregon coastline in which these destructive gear types are currently prohibited.

Since 2001, areas north of Point Conception to an intersect with the Oregon coast and out beyond the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) to 129° West longitude have been closed to drift-gillnet fishing from August 15th through November 15th in order to protect leatherback sea turtles which seasonally inhabit these waters. Similarly, pelagic longline fishing has been banned within 200 miles of the California coast for well over a decade, and in March 2004 this ban was extended to the entire West Coast EEZ for all pelagic longlining, and to the high seas beyond the EEZ for West Coast-based shallow-set pelagic longlining. The proposals under consideration by the PFMC would allow drift-gillnets back into the seasonally closed area when leatherbacks are present, as well as allow an „exempted%o longline fishery in the EEZ off California.

The leatherback sea turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*) is at the top of the list of species being driven to the brink of extinction in the Pacific by the global expansion of industrial fishing. The Pacific leatherback turtle, s nesting population has plummeted from 91,000 in 1980 to fewer than 5,000 in 2002. Leatherback sea turtle populations are in decline throughout their range. Leatherback sea turtles are listed as endangered under the U.S. Endangered Species Act and critically endangered by the World Conservation Union on the IUCN red list of threatened species. Leading scientists warn that unless immediate and significant steps are taken, the leatherback sea turtle, which has swum the oceans since the time of the dinosaurs 100 million years ago, will soon become extinct. Moreover, the plight of the leatherback sea turtle, the world's largest and most wide-ranging sea turtle, may foreshadow a host of extinction events

that may significantly alter the oceans, ecosystem functions.

The current drift-gillnet and longline closures have provided a successful working balance between the interests of fishers and the urgent need to protect the critically endangered leatherback sea turtle. During the past three years of the drift-gillnet closures, this fishery, which targets swordfish, tuna and sharks, had no recorded takes of leatherback sea turtles. Such successful time/area closures, which eliminate the overlap of longline and drift gillnet fishing gear with the presence of leatherback sea turtles, should serve as a successful model that should be replicated elsewhere in the Pacific where the leatherback is at the greatest risk of extinction.

Last year, 1,007 scientists from 97 countries and 281 non-governmental organizations from 62 countries delivered a letter to the United Nations urging it to implement a moratorium on harmful gillnet and longline fishing in the Pacific. The current restrictions on the longline and gillnet fisheries off California and Oregon are a model conservation measure in the spirit of this statement that should be emulated not abandoned.

The ban and time and area closures both demonstrate that the US is complying with not only the UN but also best scientific practices to protect our marine resources.

We, the undersigned, therefore urge the Pacific Fisheries Management Council to do the following:

- * Maintain the current ban on all pelagic longline fishing within the West Coast U.S. EEZ and on shallow-set or swordfish longlining on the high seas beyond the U.S. EEZ.
- * Maintain the current time/area closures that prohibit the deployment of drift-gillnet fishing gear in areas off the California and Oregon coasts when leatherback sea turtles likely to be inhabiting these waters.

Sincerely,

David Ehrenfeld
Professor of Biology
Dept. Ecology, Evolution, and Natural Resources
Cook College, Rutgers University
New Brunswick, NJ 08901-8551
USA
Founding Editor of *Conservation Biology*

As of February 26th, 133 scientists from 24 countries (74 from the U.S.) have signed this letter. Affiliation for identification purposes only. Listing of affiliation does not imply endorsement by that institution.

Donat Agosti
Research Associate
American Museum of Natural History and Smithsonian Institution
Switzerland

Prof. Alex Aguilar
Professor of Animal Biology and Conservation
University of Barcelona
Spain

Homero Aridjis
President
Grupo de los Cien
Mexico

Susan Arter
Research Associate
San Diego Natural History Museum
California
United States of America

Peter J. Auster, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
University of Connecticut
Connecticut
United States of America

Stefan Avramov
Biodiversity Coordinator
Bulgarian Biodiversity Foundation
Bulgaria

Barbara Bell, Ph.D.
University of the Sciences in Philadelphia
Pennsylvania
United States of America

Dr. Bregje Beyst, Ph.D.

Marine Biologist
Flanders Marine Institute
Belgium

Ali Bloomfield
Research Officer
Marine Protected Areas
Australia

Christelle Bouchard
Post-Doctoral Research Associate
The Whitney Laboratory, University of Florida
Florida
United States of America

Richard Bradley
Associate Professor
Department of Evolution, Ecology and Organismal Biology
The Ohio State University, Marion
Ohio
United States of America

Dr. Clare Bradshaw
Research Fellow
Department of Systems Ecology, Stockholm University
Sweden

Dr. Daniel K. Brannan, Ph.D.
Professor of Biology
Abilene Christian University
Texas
United States of America

Tormod V. Burkey
Senior Scientist
DNV
Norway

John R. Cannon, Ph.D.
Conservation Biologist
University of Maryland
Maryland
United States of America

Heidi Perez Cao, MSc.
Zoomarine Curator

Oceanographic Park
Portugal

Dr. Andrew Chan
Department of Industrial and Manufacturing Systems Engineering
The University of Hong Kong
Hong Kong

Ngai-lai Cheng, Ph.D.
The University of Hong Kong
Hong Kong

Peter Chesson
Professor
Section of Evolution and Ecology
University of California, Davis
California
United States of America

Janeen Collings
Biodiversity Assets Ranger
Department of Conservation
New Zealand

Sarah Coote
Marine Biologist
University of Western Australia
Australia

Dr. Brian W. Darvell
Reader in Dental Materials Science
The University of Hong Kong
Hong Kong

Thomas Davis
Wildlife Biologist
Garcia and Associates
California
United States of America

Dr. R. W. Day
Senior Lecturer in Zoology
The University of Melbourne
Australia

Prof. Bijan Dehgan

Professor
University of Florida
Florida
United States of America

Bill Dewey
Professor Emeritus
Dept. of Radiation Oncology, UCSF
California
United States of America

Dr. Mia W. Doron
Associate Professor of Pediatrics
University of North Carolina
North Carolina
United States of America

John Dziak
Graduate Student in Statistics
Penn State University
Pennsylvania
United States of America

E.A. Elsayed
Industrial and Systems Engineering
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
New Jersey
United States of America

Ana C. Fonseca Escalante, MSc.
Professor
Ecología de Arrecifes Coralinos y (UCR)Geo-informática Marino Costera
Centro de Investigación en Ciencias del Mar y Limnología (CIMAR)
Universidad de Costa Rica
Costa Rica

Raimundo Espinoza, M.Sc.
Sustainable Development and Conservation Biology
University of Maryland
Maryland
United States of America

Miasa Eustache
Doctor in Oceanology/Littoral Assesment-Aquaculture
Centre de Formation, Gestion de Ressources Naturelles et Environnement (GRENE)
Université Toamasina République de Madagascar

Madagascar

Julie Fekete
Ph.D. Student
Drexel University
Pennsylvania
United States of America

Stuart Field
Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Biology
University of Newcastle
Australia

Myra Finkelstein
Postdoctoral Researcher
University of California, Santa Cruz
California
United States of America

Dr. Nancy FitzSimmons
Researcher
Applied Ecology Research Group, University of Canberra
Australia

Hugh Forehead
Ph.D. Student
CSIRO Marine Research
Australia

Debra Frankiewicz
GIS Officer, Marine Programs
Coast and Marine Conservation Branch
Department for Environment and Heritage
Australia

Dan Franklin
Postdoctoral Researcher
University of East Anglia
School of Environmental Sciences
United Kingdom

Dr. Juan Pablo Gallo Reynoso Gallo Reynoso
Investigador Titular
CIAD, Unidad Guaymas
Mexico

Alexander Gaos
Beach Projects Director
PRETOMA
Costa Rica

Barrie Gilbert
Emeritus Faculty
Dept. of Forest, Range and Wildlife Sciences
Utah State University
Utah
United States of America

Anthony J. Giordano, M.S.
Field Projects Director & Conservation Biology
LifeScape International
New York
United States of America

Carlos Ricardo Guzman Ricardo
Ecological Engineer
Universidad Popular Autónoma del Estado de Puebla
Mexico

Healy Hamilton, Ph.D.
Head, Center for Biodiversity Research and Information
California Academy of Sciences
California
United States of America

Gary Hannon, M.Sc.
Fisheries Officer
Shannon Regional Fisheries Board
Ireland

Dr. Rebecca Harris
Program Coordinator
SEANET
Tufts University
Massachusetts
United States of America

Dr. Emma Harrison
Research Officer
St. Eustatius National Parks Foundation
Netherlands

Brian Hauk
Research Assistant
The Oceanic Institute
Hawaii
United States of America

Dr. Julie Hawkins
Research Associate
University of York
United Kingdom

Jane Higgins
Ph.D. Student
IASOS University of Tasmania
Australia

Ross Hill
Ph.D. Candidate
University of Technology, Sydney
Australia

Lotte Horn
Ph.D. student
Murdoch University
Australia

Motonori Hoshi
Professor
Department of Biosciences & Informatics
Keio University
Japan

Malcolm Hunter
Libra Professor of Conservation Biology
University of Maine
Maine
United States of America

Maria Candela Iglesias
Ph.D. Student(Molecular Medicine Dept.)
Institut Pasteur
France

Maria Ikonomopoulou
Ph.D. Candidate
School of Biomedical Sciences

University of Queensland
Australia

Dr. David W. Inouye
Director
Graduate program in Sustainable Development and Conservation Biology
University of Maryland
Maryland
United States of America

Aerin Jacob
Wildlife Biologist
University of British Columbia
Canada

Dr. Pamela C. Jensen
Researcher
University of Washington
Marine Molecular Biotechnology Lab
Washington
United States of America

John Keinath, Ph.D.
Adjunct Faculty
Columbia College of Missouri
Missouri
United States of America

Carol Keiper
Marine Ecologist, Director
Oikonos Ecosystem Knowledge
California
United States of America

Michelle Kinzel
Scientist, GIS Instructor
Coastal Ecosystems Research Foundation
California
United States of America

Arthur H. Kopelman
President
Coastal Research and Education Society of Long Island
New York
United States of America

Dr. Frithjof C. Kuepper
Postdoctoral Research Associate
Department of Chemistry
University of California, Santa Barbara
California
United States of America

Juanita A. R. Ladyman, Ph.D.
Ecologist and Botanist/Managing Director
JnJ Associates LLC
Colorado
United States of America

Judith C. Lang, Ph.D.
Scientist
Sea-Care
Virginia
United States of America

Dr Ivan Lawler
Lecturer
James Cook University
Australia

William Z. Lidicker, Jr.
Professor
Integrative Biology
University of California Berkeley
Museum of Vertebrate Zoology
California
United States of America

Harvey B. Lillywhite
Professor of Zoology
University of Florida
Florida
United States of America

Anne Luehrmann
Biologist
IFM Geomar
Universitat Kiel
Germany

Shaheed Karl MacGregor
Veterinary Microbiologist

Zoological Society of London
United Kingdom

Nathan Mantua, Ph.D.
Research Scientist
University of Washington Climate Impacts Group
Washington
United States of America

Dr. Rene Marquez-M.
Vice president – Scientific Committee
Inter-american Sea Turtles Convention
Mexico

Dusty Marshall
Biological Research Tech
NOAA Fisheries
Marine Turtle Research Program
Hawaii
United States of America

Christina Mattis
Assistant Scientist
GlaxoSmithKline Pharmaceuticals
Pennsylvania
United States of America

Neil Mattocks
Senior Conservation Officer
Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service
Australia

Dr. Peter A. Meylan
Professor of Biology and Marine Science
Eckerd College
Florida
United States of America

Lance Morgan, Ph.D.
Chief Scientist
Marine Conservation Biology Institute
California
United States of America

Jon Nevill
Ph.D. Candidate

University of Tasmania
Australia

Wallace J. Nichols, Ph.D.
Director, Graduate Program in Marine Biology, Research Associate Professor in Center
for Environmental Science
Department of Herpetology at California Academy of Sciences
Board Member, WILDCOAST
California
United States of America

Thomas M. Niesen
Professor of Marine Biology
San Francisco State University
California
United States of America

Reed F. Noss, Ph.D.
Davis-Shine Professor of Conservation Biology
University of Central Florida
Florida
United States of America

Danielle O'Neil
Animal Care Supervisor
National Marine Life Center
Massachusetts
United States of America

Stefanie Ouellette
Project Manager
Nova Southeastern University Oceanographic Center
Florida
United States of America

Shyama Pagad
Invasive Species Specialist
IUCN SSC Invasive Species Specialist Group
University of Auckland
New Zealand

Frank V. Paladino Ph.D.
Professor and Chair Department of Biology
Indiana - Purdue University
Indiana
United States of America

Karl Partridge, Ph.D.
Chairman
Sea Turtle Trust
United Kingdom

Andrew Peri, MA.
Lecturer
Geography Department
San Francisco State University
California
United States of America

Jacqueline Pocklington
Ph.D. Candidate
The Museum of Victoria
Marine Invertebrate department
Australia

Whitney Pollard
Field Biologist
UCF Marine Turtle Research
Florida
United States of America

Thomas B. Prebble, MD
Marshfield Clinic
Wisconsin
United States of America

Mónica Revelles, Ph.D.
Department of Animal Biology
University of Barcelona
Spain

Elizabeth Rich, Ph.D.
Department of Bioscience and Biotechnology
Drexel University
Pennsylvania
United States of America

Sarah Richards
Marine Ecologist
National Marine Science Centre
Australia

Naomi A. Rose, Ph.D.
Marine Mammal Scientist
The Humane Society of the United States
Washington, D.C.
United States of America

Carl Safina, Ph.D.
President
Blue Ocean Institute
New York
United States of America

Alaa Ed-Dine Shaker Saleh
Chemist
Atomic Energy Authority
Egypt

Sue Sargent
Coastal and Marine Coordinator
Burnett Mary Regional Group for NRM Inc.
Australia

Dr. Raymond A. Saumure
Senior Conservation Biologist
Shark Reef at Mandalay Bay
Nevada
United States of America

C. Thomas Schaefer
Lecturer
University of Washington School of Oceanography
Washington
United States of America

Dr. Christiane Schelten
Programme Officer
Frankfurt Zoological Society
Tanzania

Beatrix G. Schramm
Conservation Biologist
University of California, San Diego
California
United States of America

Jerry R. Schubel

President and CEO
Aquarium of the Pacific
California
United States of America

F. Richard Sheffield, Ph.D.
General Curator
Parque Zoologico de Leon
Mexico

David Sinn, Ph.D.
Research Fellow
University of Tasmania
Australia

Dr. Cleo Small
International Marine Policy Officer
BirdLife International Global Seabird Programme
United Kingdom

Ronald M. Smith
Instructor
Mercer County Community College Department of Biology
New Jersey
United States of America

Gill Sorg, M.S., TSP
President
Mesilla Valley Audobon Society
New Mexico
United States of America

James R. Spotila
Professor of Environmental Science
Drexel University
Pennsylvania
United States of America

Lowell Spring
Professor of Biology
Western Oregon University
Oregon
United States of America

Ed Standora, Ph.D.
Biology Department

State University College
New York
United States of America

Nadia Halina Stegeman
DVM/MPH student
Tufts School of Veterinary Medicine
Massachusetts
United States of America

Todd Steiner
Director
Turtle Island Restoration Network
California
United States of America

Edna Stetzar
Biologist
Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control
Division of Fish and Wildlife
Delaware
United States of America

Anthony Steyermark
Assistant Professor
University of St. Thomas
Minnesota
United States of America

Anawat Sukhotanang
Senior Forestry Official
Royal Forest Department
Thailand

Mei Sun, Ph.D.
Professor
Department of Zoology
The University of Hong Kong
Hong Kong

Jack S. Suss
Ph.D. Student
Department of Bioscience and Biotechnology Drexel University
Pennsylvania
United States of America

Andrea Swensrud
Program Manager
Marine Science Institute
California
United States of America

Paul Switzer
Associate Professor of Biological Sciences
Eastern Illinois University
Illinois
United States of America

Dr. John Terborgh
James B. Duke Professor of Environmental Science
Co-Director of the Center for Tropical Conservation at Duke University
Duke University
North Carolina
United States of America

Allen To Wai-Lun
Research Postgraduate
Department of Ecology & Biodiversity, The University of Hong Kong
Hong Kong

Elaina Todd
Marine Biologist
UnderWater World
Guam
United States of America

Dr. Marcus Trett
Scientific Director
Physalia Limited Consultant & Forensic Ecologistsx
United Kingdom

Sue Tuxbury
Restoration Ecologist
Save The Bay Narragansett Bay
Rhode Island
United States of America

Mário E. C. Vieira
Associate Professor
Oceanography Department
U.S. Naval Academy
Maryland

United States of America

Rachel Warren
Director
School of Environmental Sciences
University of East Anglia
United Kingdom

Simon C Wilson
Marine Environmental Consultant
Warwick University
United Kingdom

Dr. Nerida Wilson
Research Fellow
University of Adelaide
Australia

David Wimpfheimer
Naturalist
The California Naturalist
California
United States of America

Eugenia Zandona
Ph.D. Student
Department of Bioscience and Biotechnology
Drexel University
Pennsylvania
United States of America

John Zardus
Research Fellow at Kewalo Marine Lab
University of Hawaii
Hawaii
United States of America