

Report of the 10th IAC COP

The Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles (IAC) is an intergovernmental treaty that provides the legal framework for countries in the Americas and the Caribbean to take individual and collective action for the benefit of sea turtles. There are six species of sea turtles in the Western Hemisphere, all of which are listed as threatened or endangered on the U.S. Endangered Species Act.

The Tenth Conference of the Parties (CoP) to the IAC took place in Panama City from June 15 through 17, 2022, as a continuation of a prior CoP session (CoP10 part I) conducted virtually on June 30, 2021 via videoconference. Of the sixteen total contracting parties to the IAC, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Mexico, the Netherlands, Panama, Peru, the United States, and Uruguay attended the in-person CoP. Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, and Venezuela were absent. The U.S. delegation was composed of a representative from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (U.S. focal point for the IAC) and one from the Office of Marine Conservation within the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs at the Department of State. Non-member country observers in attendance included Canada, Colombia, and Trinidad and Tobago.

Five key resolutions were discussed and adopted at the CoP: three distinct resolutions on exceptions allowing for limited subsistence harvesting of olive ridley eggs to meet economic subsistence needs of traditional communities in Costa Rica, Guatemala, and Panama; a resolution for the conservation of the eastern pacific leatherback turtle; and a resolution to reduce adverse impacts of fisheries on sea turtles. For the three exceptions resolutions the concerned countries each have 60 days to accept the language revisions. All five resolutions adopted represented an update and refinement to prior resolutions. Finalized documents from the CoP will be posted on the IAC website: <http://www.iacseaturtle.org/defaulteng.htm>.

Additional items considered and approved were a memorandum of collaboration with Stetson University, a memorandum of understanding with the Sargasso Sea Commission, as well as the work plans for the Secretariat, the Scientific Committee, and the Consultative Committee of Experts.

Ecuador was selected to host the next CoP (CoP11), tentatively scheduled to be held in Manta, Ecuador in June, 2024. Ecuador will also assume the chair position of the IAC. Peru was selected to host the following CoP (CoP12), to be held in Peru in 2026.