

## **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;

CONCERNED because eight years after an article published in the scientific magazine *Nature* reported that the population of Leatherback Turtles (*Dermochelys coriacea*) in the Pacific had declined by 95% due to overfishing, and warned that the population could become extinct in a period of 5–30 years, this species is now continuing its downward trend, without showing signs of recovery;

CONCERNED ALSO because IUCN has included the common Hammerhead Shark (*Sphyrna lewini*) on its Red List of Threatened Species, classifying it as an endangered species, and that this species constitutes a common by-catch in long-line fisheries in the Eastern Tropical Pacific;

RECOGNIZING that 1,007 international scientists from 97 countries, as well as representatives from 281 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from 62 countries, have urged the United Nations to implement 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 the common Hammerhead Shark share migration corridors in the marine waters of certain States, such as the Cocos Submarine Ridge between Cocos Island (Costa Rica) and the Galapagos Islands (Ecuador); and

NOTING ALSO that Costa Rica, Ecuador, Panama and Colombia are working for the protection of the Eastern Tropical Pacific Marine Corridor, which includes migration corridors and marine habitats that extend beyond the Cocos Submarine Ridge to the waters of these countries' Exclusive Economic Zones;

**The World Conservation Congress at its 4<sup>th</sup> Session in Barcelona, Spain, 5–14 October 2008:**

1. REQUESTS the United Nations to urge:
  - a. States and regional fisheries management organizations to permanently protect the Leatherback Turtle and the common Hammerhead Shark through the control and management of the fishing effort, 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, including areas beyond national jurisdiction during periods of high concentration of sea turtles and/or pelagic sharks; and
  - b. States whose vessels operate in the Pacific using fishing gear known to interact with sea turtles and pelagic sharks, to continue gathering information on the by-catch of sea turtles and pelagic sharks and to facilitate public access to the information generated;
2. CALLS on the States of Costa Rica and Ecuador to establish the Cocos Ridge Marine Wildlife Corridor to protect these marine waters from activities that are harmful to the sea turtle and the common Hammerhead Shark during periods of high concentration of these sea turtles and pelagic sharks; and
3. CALLS on the States of Costa Rica, Ecuador, Panama and Colombia to immediately adopt policies in the Eastern Tropical Pacific Marine Corridor to include broad protection for the Leatherback Turtle, the common Hammerhead Shark, and other endangered and threatened marine organisms that are critical to the marine biodiversity of the region.

Sponsors:

Programa Restauración de Tortugas Marinas  
Marviva  
Asociación Terra Nostra  
Centro de Derecho Ambiental y de los Recursos Naturales  
Departamento de Ambiente, Paz y Seguridad, Universidad para la Paz

Endorsement:

Asociación Preservacionista de Flora y Fauna Silvestre

Comment:

*Fisheries closures are only one way to contribute to conservation of vulnerable by-caught species. Given the remote nature of the fishing areas, and the off-shore and international fleet operations, fishing closures would need strong enforcement measures. Other approaches need to be considered such as by-catch reduction through gear modification, monitoring and enforcement of fisheries regulations and trade-related measures.*

*This motion is referred to Plenary for consideration.*