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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE  
AND NATURAL HABITATS

**Standing Committee**  
21<sup>st</sup> meeting

Strasbourg, 26-30 November 2001

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**1<sup>st</sup> Mediterranean Conference on Marine Turtles  
(Roma, Italy, 24-27 October 2001)**

**Key points of the Conference**

Document established by  
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the Directorate of Culture and Cultural and Natural Heritage

## **Key points of the Conference**

### **LEGISLATION**

#### *1. Strengthening the enforcement and implementation of existing instruments (legislation, programmes), including setting up of SPAMIs*

Mediterranean riverine states may be invited to conclude agreement in view of progressively setting up of a network of SPAMIs (Special Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance) for nesting, feeding and wintering sites of marine turtles, as well as on main migratory routes. Other legal instrument can be further explored.

### **Habitat protection and interaction with stakeholders**

#### *2. Identifying and mapping important marine habitats*

There is an acute need to better identify and map marine habitats relevant for turtles at sea. This is a priority for research as it is likely to provide valuable information for conservation purposes.

#### *3. Initiating and strengthening protection of already identified critical nesting areas*

There is urgent need to obtain better protection and enforcement of protection measures for key nesting sites

#### *4. Designating protected areas prior to development, following a precautionary approach*

Designation of protected areas for marine turtles should preferably precede development, thus applying the precautionary approach.

#### *5. Drawing management plans for areas of importance*

All areas of importance for marine turtles, and especially the ones with development, need to be subject to management plans containing measures aimed to minimise adverse impacts on marine turtles.

#### *6. Early involvement of local communities and stakeholders key to success*

In protected areas or in areas to be protected, involvement of local communities at an early stage is key to conservation success. It is recommended a wide consultation process with local communities and appropriate stakeholders. In this context it is of importance to connect with the fishing and tourism industry (locally and also international tourism operators).

#### *7. Reassessing tourism activities for the benefit of sea turtle conservation and implementing strict controls at critical nesting areas*

In areas where tourism interferes with marine turtle conservation, tourism needs to be modified so as to enhance the value of marine turtles in compatible ways with their conservation. In important nesting areas tourism activities should be strictly controlled to avoid interference with conservation priorities

### **FISHERIES INTERACTIONS**

#### *8. Determining real impacts of fisheries to be able to propose possible gear modification, changes in fishing practices, etc.*

Given the high number of marine turtles caught by fisheries, there is an acute need of more precise data on the real impact of fisheries on marine turtles population, so it may be possible to draw conservation conclusion such as the possible need of gear modification and/or changes in fishing practices.

#### *9. Emphasising action on high seas fisheries, requesting ICCAT and GFCM to collect information and report on bycatch*

Special emphasis for impact should be given to high sea fisheries, with data on by-catch reported to organisations such as GFCM and ICCAT.

## **RESEARCH AND MONITORING**

*10. Collecting necessary information (e.g. age of maturity, survivorship) so as to facilitate population modelling*

**In order to elaborate functional population models it is necessary to acquire reliable information on various population parameters.**

*11. Focussing research*

Research efforts to be focussed on:

- size, structure and dynamics of populations,
- better estimates needed of impact of each type of fishery in different fishing grounds (caution should be taking in extrapolating large scale total catch or mortality from local catch or mortality rates),
- delayed mortality estimates

*12. Extending migration studies (including satellite telemetry) and genetics so as to assist in the identification of critical habitats*

Migration studies and genetics should be seen as a priority line of research for their potential for providing useful conservation information.

*13. Establishing and continuing long-term monitoring programmes to permit informed management decisions*

The most important fact in monitoring is consistency over a long period of time.

## **AWARENESS/EDUCATION**

*14. Raising awareness and training of fishermen to reduce mortality*

As reduction of marine turtle mortality is so dependent on attitudes and knowledge of fishermen, it is vital to invest in awareness with them and training them, adapting techniques and tools to local realities and in the respect of their culture, values and views. Results of training and awareness efforts should be properly assessed.