



WIDER
CARIBBEAN
SEA TURTLE
CONSERVATION NETWORK

**FINAL REPORT OF THE
WIDECAST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

RENAISSANCE MIAMI – BISCAYNE BAY HOTEL

2 – 3 APRIL 2002

Prepared by

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Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network (WIDECAST)

June 2002

- MINUTES -

2002 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network (WIDECAST)

“ Orange Bowl Longview Meeting Room ”
Renaissance Miami - Biscayne Bay Hotel
2 – 3 April 2002

On 2 April 2002 at 0800 hr, breakfast was catered for participants in the Annual Meeting. At 0900 hr the Meeting was called to order in the “Orange Bowl Longview Meeting Room” (Renaissance Miami – Biscayne Bay Hotel) by Karen Eckert, WIDECAST Executive Director.

Karen Eckert welcomed Meeting participants, each of whom introduced themselves in turn. The WIDECAST roster was circulated and participants were asked to make needed corrections. Observers were asked to provide their names and email addresses. Announcements were made regarding accommodations, transportation, and meals, as well as registration for the 2002 Symposium on Sea Turtle Biology and Conservation later in the week.

The Meeting was attended by 65 members and Guests of WIDECAST from 33 States and territories of the Wider Caribbean Region (including Bermuda and Brazil), as well as 23 regular Observers (see Appendix I) and several students and short-term Observers. In total, forty-one (41) States and territories were represented, including ten (10) outside of the Wider Caribbean Region: Australia, Canada, Congo, Egypt, England, Gabon, Ghana, Greece, Togo, and Wales.

Karen Eckert highlighted some of the many informative materials featured in the Meeting packet (see Appendix II) and expressed gratitude to various agencies of the U. S. Government, the United Nations Environment Programme, New England Aquarium, CORAL (the Coral Reef Alliance), Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Wildlife Conservation Society (‘Sea Turtles of Nicaragua’ calendar), EcoGroup Data Solutions, and other donors of educational and technical materials included in the meeting packet and offered to meeting participants.

The agenda, presented in both English and Spanish, was reviewed (see Appendix III). The first order of business was the Executive Director’s Report (Appendix IV), followed by Country Reports (Martinique and Guadeloupe, Guyana, St. Eustatius-N.A., Aves Island-Venezuela, British Virgin Islands), lunch, and invited presentations on “Conventions and International Issues”. Following the afternoon coffee break, invited presentations continued with a summary of the Hawksbill Monitoring Workshop (Miami, March 2002) and an overview, provided by the Chairman of the IUCN/SSC Marine Turtle Specialist Group, of advances made in population monitoring (mainly using genetic techniques) on foraging grounds.

The day ended with an Open Forum and the presentation of Resolutions. Three Resolutions (concerning SPAW and the IAC; as well as internal issues in Nicaragua and Trinidad) were presented for consideration by the Meeting on Wednesday.

Most speakers spoke from prepared notes or PowerPoint presentations that are available upon request.

On 3 April 2002 at 0800 hr, breakfast was catered for participants in the Annual Meeting. At 0830 hr the Meeting was called to order in the “Orange Bowl Longview Meeting Room” (Renaissance Miami – Biscayne Bay Hotel) by Karen Eckert, WIDECAST Executive Director.

Karen Eckert welcomed new Meeting participants, each of whom introduced themselves in turn. The WIDECAST roster was circulated and participants were asked to make needed corrections. Observers not in attendance on Tuesday were asked to provide their names and email addresses. Announcements were made regarding accommodations, transportation, and meals, as well as registration for the 2002 Symposium on Sea Turtle Biology and Conservation later in the week.

The morning session featured Country Reports (Costa Rica, Colombia, Nicaragua, Venezuela) and presentations on regional WIDECAST initiatives, including the “Caribbean Marine Turtle Tagging Centre” (based at University of the West Indies, Barbados), the “Regional Sea Turtle Conservation Program and Action Plan for the Guianas” (undertaken in partnership with WWF), and the “Central American Sea Turtle Product Use and Trade Study” (undertaken in partnership with the Central American Sea Turtle Network).

After lunch there were invited presentations on “Public Awareness and Educational Tools”, as well as “Research and Management Tools” (including population modeling, investigations of mortality, and performing a necropsy). The day concluded with an Open Forum and the adoption of 3 Resolutions and various other decisions (see “Decisions of the Meeting”), with the understanding that the exact wording of the Resolutions would be circulated for final approval (via email) after the meeting had been concluded.

Decisions of the Meeting:

Convene the 2003 Annual General Meeting of WIDECAST in Caracas. Considering that the 2003 annual Symposium on Sea Turtle Biology and Conservation will convene in Malaysia, the Executive Director was asked to work collaboratively with Hedelvy Guada, Country Coordinator in Venezuela, to organize (and fundraise for) a 2003 meeting in Caracas. The AGM is to be convened in partnership with the *First Venezuelan National Sea Turtle Conference*.

Finalize the text for a **Resolution** commending the long-standing co-management agreement between the Government of Trinidad and community-based groups that monitor important sea turtle nesting beaches, and encourage all parties to reach an agreement that will continue this model arrangement into the future. Send the Resolution, along with a WIDECAST cover letter and endorsements from organizations throughout the Region, to the relevant parties. Presenter: Dennis Sammy (Nature Seekers, Trinidad) [Note: Dennis Sammy, Country Coordinator in Trinidad, later confirmed that the situation had resolved itself and the Resolution was not needed ... at least not at the present time.]

Finalize the text for a bilingual **Resolution** supporting implementation of the SPAW Protocol (which came into force in 2000) and the Inter-American Convention (which came into force in 2001). Circulate the final text, along with a WIDECAST cover letter and endorsements from organizations throughout the Region, to all Governments eligible to ratify these instruments. Presenters: Alessandra Vanzella-Khoury (UNEP) and Jack Frazier (Smithsonian Institution). [Note: Final text still pending.]

As for the **Resolution** concerning the Pearl Cays in Nicaragua – which was also slated to come before the 2002 international Sea Turtle Symposium later in the week - the Meeting voted to endorse the Resolution

emerging from the Symposium, since many present at the WIDECAST meeting would be joining with colleagues from around the world to adopt the Resolution at the Symposium. The Meeting asked that the Executive Director draft a cover letter from the WIDECAST network to the relevant authorities in Nicaragua, and that the letter should both support the Resolution and alert the authorities that sea turtle scientists, conservationists, and managers throughout the Region value the Pearl Cays sea turtle project and recognize the unique ecological importance of the area. Presenter: Cynthia Lagueux (Sea Turtle Conservation Program of Nicaragua). [Note: Our letter was sent to the new Government following the 2002 elections in Managua, see Appendix V)

Regarding the 2002-2003 Workplan proposed by the Executive Director (see Appendix IV), there was consensus from the Meeting that the projects outlined for 2002 should be completed; these include a bycatch assessment, sea turtle eco-tourism manual, the www.widecast.org website, finalizing the database management software unveiled at the training workshop in Barbados in October 2001, developing procedures and protocols for the regional tagging centre at the University of the West Indies in Barbados, completing and publishing STRAPs [Sea Turtle Recovery Action Plans] for Panama, Anguilla, Jamaica, and Trinidad & Tobago, producing a trilingual slide show on Caribbean sea turtles, and translating WIDECAST "Visualizing the Future" brochure into Spanish.

In addition, the network will involve itself in the issues to be raised at the 12th Conference of Parties to CITES (Santiago, November 2002) and at the various national and regional meetings that will lead up to COP12, as well as continue to support UNEP's regional SPAW Programme and the Inter-American Convention (which will convene COP1 in Costa Rica in August).

To assist in the development of the website, Mervin Hastings Chaired an informal Working Group tasked with providing the Executive Director with a mock-up of the Country WebPages to be included on the site. The Working Group recommended that each Country Page feature the following information:

- WIDECAST Country Coordinator (including address and contact numbers)
- Summary (including species present, estimated populations, and nesting seasons; this should be just one paragraph)
- Current Projects (for EACH project please include the project title, location and species involved, 2-3 sentence description of project objective(s), and contact address)
- Relevant Reports (including STRAP, annual project reports, and whatever else you would like to feature; we can link to the UNEP/ CEP site for .pdf STRAP files, but all other reports should be submitted to widecast@ix.netcom.com in .pdf format)
- Laws and Regulations (including history; the text should be submitted verbatim and correctly cited)
- How Can You Help? (are there 'turtle watching' programs you want to promote, a turtle-friendly hotel you want visitors to know about, a 'wish list' of items needed that you'd like to advertise?)
- Learn More! (please provide Internet addresses for relevant country/ NGO websites)

The Meeting also agreed with the Executive Director that an "institutional home" – preferably a university – is needed to support the office of the Executive Director and her efforts to manage the ever-expanding WIDECAST program. The Meeting agreed that the move should be associated with access to more dependable sources of funding, technical support, and human resources. At the same time, the Meeting agreed that the Executive Director should continue to explore means of support for in-region offices, in particular an office in Latin America and one in the insular Caribbean.

The meeting was adjourned at 18:00.

"A network is non-hierarchical. It is a web of connections among equals. What holds it together is not force, obligation, material incentive, or social contract, but rather shared values and the understanding that some tasks can be accomplished together that could never be accomplished separately. One of the important purposes of a network is simply to remind its members that they are not alone."

Meadows, Donella H., Dennis L. Meadows, and Jørgen Randers. 1992.
Beyond the Limits. Chelsea Green Publishing.
Post Mills, Vermont.

APPENDIX I

- WIDECAST Annual General Meeting -
2-3 April 2002

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APPENDIX II

**- WIDECAST Annual General Meeting -
2-3 April 2002**

MEETING PACKET DOCUMENTS

General Documents and Educational Resources (Meeting Folder):

- Meeting Agenda (English, Spanish)
- Meeting Participant List
- 2001 Major Projects Summary
- WIDECAST Roster: Country Coordinators, Staff/Volunteers, Board of Directors
- WIDECAST sea turtle species identification leaflets (English, French, Spanish, Portuguese)
- “Visualizing the Future: WIDECAST and the Conservation of Sea Turtles” (brochure)
- “What is WIDECAST?” (leaflet)
- “Turtle Watching” guidelines (leaflet), produced by CORAL and WIDECAST
- ‘Certificate of Pride’ (vendor certificate/placard confirming that sea turtle products are not offered for sale) (English, Spanish)
- “Help us Survive, Watch Where you Drive” (sticker), produced by WIDECAST (English, Spanish)
- WIDECAST ‘QUIZ’ (English, Spanish)
- Bermuda Turtle Project: 2002 Training Course Announcement
- EcoGroup Data Solutions: Data Security Newsletter Volume 1 (developed for WIDECAST)
- “2002 Calendario de Tortugas Marinas” (calendar), produced by the WCS Sea Turtle Conservation Program in Nicaragua (Spanish)
- “Sea Turtles and Lights” (brochure), produced by Florida Power & Light
- “Caribbean Environment Programme” (brochure) produced by UNEP (English, Spanish)
- “Help Hawaiian Sea Turtles with Safe Fishing Practices” (sticker), produced by NOAA

Technical Resources (WIDECAST Country Coordinators only):

- **Oceans for the Future: The Making of Marine Protected Areas** (video), produced by the New England Aquarium and The Pew Charitable Trusts
- Lutz, P. L. and J. A. Musick. 1997. **The Biology of Sea Turtles**. CRC Press. Boca Raton, Florida. 432 pp. (textbook)
- Reichart, H., L. Kelle, L. Laurent, H. L. van de Lande, R. Archer, R. Charles and R. Lieveld. 2002. **Regional Sea Turtle Conservation Program and Action Plan for the Guianas** (Karen L. Eckert, ed). World Wildlife Fund – Guianas Forests and Environmental Conservation Project, Paramaribo. WWF Technical Report GFECF#10. (“Introduction and Summary” chapter only)
- “**Sea Turtle Trek**” (environmental education manual), developed by Hammocks Beach State Park, North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission
- ‘Marine Turtle Tags and Tagging Equipment’ (application), developed by the WIDECAST Caribbean Marine Turtle Tagging Centre in Barbados
- Bulk packets of ‘Certificate of Pride’ and ‘Turtle Watching’ (see above) for in-country distribution

Technical Publications (available at the Meeting for the taking by any participant):

- Eckert, K. L. K. A. Bjorndal, F. A. Abreu G. and M. A. Donnelly (eds.). 1999. **Research and Management Techniques for the Conservation of Sea Turtles**. IUCN/SSC Marine Turtle Specialist Group Publ. No. 4. Washington, D.C. (English, Spanish)
- Eckert, K. L. and F. A. Abreu-Grobois (eds). 2001. **Proceedings of the Regional Meeting: “Marine Turtle Conservation in the Wider Caribbean Region: A Dialogue for Effective Regional Management”**, Santo Domingo, 16-18 November 1999. WIDECAST, IUCN-MTSG, WWF and UNEP-CEP. xx + 154 pp. (English, Spanish)
- TRAFFIC North America. 2001. **Swimming Against the Tide: Recent Surveys of Exploitation, Trade and Management of Marine Turtles in the Northern Caribbean**. Washington D.C. 161 pp.
- Turtle Conservation Project (TCP). 2002. **A Summary of TCP’s Community-Based Environmental Conservation Activities, with Special Reference to Sea Turtle Conservation**. Turtle Conservation Project. Tangalle, Sri Lanka. 23 pp.
- Witherington, B. E. and R. E. Martin. 2000. **Understanding, Assessing, and Resolving Light-Pollution Problems on Sea Turtle Nesting Beaches (revised edition)**. Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, FMRI Technical Report TR-2. 73 pp. (English; Spanish reportedly available in 2002)
- Work, T. M. 2000. **Sea Turtle Necropsy Manual for Biologists in Remote Refuges**. U.S. Geological Survey National Wildlife Health Center, Hawaii Field Station. 25 pp. (English, Spanish)

Note: In addition, a great variety of materials -- including project reports, local educational materials, and program literature -- were shared by meeting participants from throughout the Wider Caribbean Region.

APPENDIX III

**- 2002 Annual General Meeting -
Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network
(WIDECAST)**

" Orange Bowl Longview Meeting Room "
Renaissance Miami - Biscayne Bay Hotel
2 - 3 April 2002

**AGENDA
Tuesday, 2 April**

08:00 *Juice and Pastries* outside the Meeting Room (please, only for those who signed up)

09:00 Welcome and Opening Remarks - *Karen Eckert, WIDECAST Executive Director*

09:10 Introductions

09:30 Announcements

- Meeting Secretary
- List of Participants
- Accommodations, transportation, meals
- Symposium registration
- Others

Session I: 2001 Executive Director's Report

09:40 Executive Director's Report – *Karen Eckert, WIDECAST Executive Director*

10:30 Coffee Break

Session II: Country Reports (12-15 min each)

11:00 Martinique & Guadeloupe - *Johan Chevalier, Chargé de mission Tortues marines dans les Départements Français d'Amérique, DIREN Martinique*
Guyana – *Shyam Nokta & Romeo De Frietas, Guyana Marine Turtle Conservation Society*
St. Eustatius, Netherlands Antilles – *Kay Lynn Plummer, Parks Manager, St. Eustatius National Parks Foundation*
Venezuela (Aves Island) – *Vicente Vera, Geographer, MARN*
British Virgin Islands – *Mervin Hastings, Marine Biologist, Conservation and Fisheries Department*

12:30 LUNCH

13:30 Open Room – Displays and Sharing

Session III: Conventions and International Issues

14:00 Introductory Remarks: Migratory Turtles and the Imperative of Regional Planning – *Karen Eckert, WIDECAST Executive Director*

14:10 An Update on the SPAW Protocol to the UNEP ‘Cartagena Convention’ – *Alessandra Vanzella-Khoury, SPAW Programme Officer, UNEP Caribbean Environment Programme*

14:40 An Update on the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles – *Jack Frazier, Research Associate, Smithsonian Institution*

15:00 CITES Regional Hawksbill Workshops (México, May 2001; Cayman Islands, May 2002): Update on the Status and Biology of the Caribbean Hawksbill -- *Alberto Abreu G., Chair, IUCN/SSC Marine Turtle Specialist Group*

15:30 Coffee Break

16:00 Hawksbill Monitoring Workshop (USA, March 2002): Overview and Recommendations – *Julia Horrocks, CITES Scientific Authority, Barbados*

16:15 Population Monitoring on Foraging Grounds: New Techniques, Old Challenges – *Alberto Abreu G., Chair, IUCN/SSC Marine Turtle Specialist Group*

Session IV: Conclusions

16:45 Open Forum

- Q/A
- Resolutions
- Decisions of the Meeting

17:30 Closing Remarks and Adjourn

Thank You for Joining Us,

Have a Relaxing Evening!

**- 2002 Annual General Meeting -
Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network
(WIDECAST)**

" Orange Bowl Longview Meeting Room "
Renaissance Miami - Biscayne Bay Hotel
2 - 3 April 2002

**AGENDA
Wednesday, 3 April**

08:00 *Juice and Pastries* outside the Meeting Room (please, only for those who signed up)

08:30 Welcome and Opening Remarks - Karen Eckert, *WIDECAST Executive Director*

08:40 Introductions

08:50 Announcements

- Meeting Secretary
- Attendance
- Symposium registration
- Others

Session V: Country Reports (12-15 min each)

09:00 Costa Rica (Gandoca-Manzanillo Wildlife Refuge) - *Didiher Chacón C., Coordinador, Proyecto de Conservación de las Tortugas Marinas, Asociación ANAI*
Colombia – *Diego Amorcho & Fabián Andrés Sánchez, Asociación WIDECAST-Colombia*
Nicaragua – *Cynthia Lagueux & William McCoy, Miskito Cays Hawksbill Project*
Venezuela – *Hedelvy Guada, WIDECAST Coordinadora para Sur America y las Antillas Mayores y Directora, CICTMAR*

10:30 Coffee Break

Session VI: Regional WIDECAST Initiatives

Introductory Remarks – *Karen Eckert, WIDECAST Executive Director*

11:00 Caribbean Marine Turtle Tagging Centre – *Julia Horrocks, Director, Barbados Sea Turtle Project and Coordinator, Caribbean Marine Turtle Tagging Centre*

11:15 Regional Sea Turtle Conservation Program and Action Plan for the Guianas – *Henk Reichart, WIDECAST Guayana Shield Program Officer*

1:30 Central American Sea Turtle Product Use and Trade Study (w/ Certification) - *Didiher Chacón C., WIDECAST Coordinador Nacional de Costa Rica*

12:00 Open Forum/Resolutions

12:30 LUNCH

13:30 Open Room - Displays and Sharing

Session VII: Public Awareness and Educational Tools

13:45 A Synergetic Approach to Marine Education Program Activities – *Argelis Ruiz, Marine Education Specialist, Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute, Panamá*

14:30 Research and Education Initiatives in Puerto Rico - *Lesbia Montero, Marine Educator, Sea Grant College Program, University of Puerto Rico*

15:00 Coffee Break

Session VIII: Research and Management Tools

15:30 Leatherback Population Modeling: Bridging Biology and Policy - *Milani Chaloupka, Research Consultant, CRC (Coastal), University of Queensland*

16:15 Principles of Mortality Investigations on Wildlife - *Thierry M. Work, DVM, Wildlife Disease Specialist, USGS National Wildlife Health Center*

16:45 Performing a Sea Turtle Necropsy - *Thierry M. Work, DVM, Wildlife Disease Specialist, USGS National Wildlife Health Center*

Session IX: Conclusions

17:00 Open Forum

- Q/A
- 2002 – 2003 Work Plan
- Decisions of the Meeting

17:30 Closing Remarks and Adjourn

Thank you for joining us!

*Enjoy the 22nd Symposium on Sea Turtle Biology and
Conservation!*

**- 2002 Asamblea General Annual -
Red para la Conservación de las Tortugas Marinas
en el Gran Caribe (WIDECAST)**

" Salón de Reuniones Orange Bowl Longview"
Hotel Renaissance Miami - Biscayne Bay
2 - 3 Abril 2002

**AGENDA
Martes, 2 de Abril**

08:00 Jugos y pastas fuera de la Sala de Reunión (por favor, sólo para aquellos que firmaron)

09:00 Bienvenida y Señalamientos de Apertura - *Karen Eckert, Directora Ejecutiva de WIDECAST*

09:10 Presentaciones

09:30 Anuncios

- Secretario/a de la Reunión
- Lista de Participantes
- Alojamiento, transporte, comidas
- Inscripción en el Simposio
- Otros

Sesión I: Informe del 2001 del Director Ejecutivo

09:40 Reporte del Director Ejecutivo – *Karen Eckert, Directora Ejecutiva de WIDECAST*

10:30 Receso

Sesión II: Reportes o Informes Nacionales (12-15 min cada uno)

11:00 Martinique & Guadeloupe - *Johan Chevalier, Encargado del Proyecto Tortues marines de los Departamentos Franceses de América, DIREN Martinica*

Guyana – *Shyam Nokta & Romeo De Frietas, Sociedad de Conservación de Tortugas Marinas de Guyana*

St. Eustatius, Netherlands Antilles – *Kay Lynn Plummer, Administrador de Parques, Fundación de Parques Nacionales de San Eustacio*

Venezuela (Refugio de Fauna Silvestre Isla de Aves) – *Vicente Vera, Geógrafo, MARN*

British Virgin Islands – *Mervin Hastings, Biólogo Marino, Departamento de Conservación y Pesquerías*

12:30 ALMUERZO

13:30 Sala abierta – Exhibiciones y Compartir Experiencias

Sesión III: Convenciones y Asuntos Internacionales

- 14:00 Lineamientos introductorios: Tortugas Migratorias y el Imperativo de la Planificación Regional – *Karen Eckert, Directora Ejecutiva de WIDECAST*
- 14:10 Una actualización del Protocolo SPAW a la “Convención de Cartagena” del PNUMA – *Alessandra Vanzella-Khoury, Oficial del Programa SPAW, Programa Ambiental del Caribe del PNUMA*
- 14:40 Una actualización de la Convención Interamericana para la Protección y Conservación de las Tortugas Marinas – *Jack Frazier, Investigador Asociado, Instituto Smithsonian*
- 15:00 Talleres Regionales de CITES sobre la Tortuga Carey (México, Mayo 2001; Islas Caimán, May 2002): Actualización sobre el Estatus y la Biología de la Tortuga Carey del Caribe - *Alberto Abreu G., Presidente, IUCN/SSC Grupo de Especialistas en Tortugas Marinas*
- 15:30 Receso
- 16:00 Taller de Monitoreo de la Tortuga Carey (USA, Marzo 2002): Resumen y Recomendaciones – *Julia Horrocks, Autoridad Científica CITES, Barbados*
- 16:15 Monitoreo de Poblaciones en Areas de Alimentación: Nuevas Técnicas, Viejos Retos – *Alberto Abreu G., Presidente, IUCN/SSC Grupo de Especialistas en Tortugas Marinas*

Sesión IV: Conclusiones

- 16:45 Foro Abierto
- Preguntas/Respuestas
 - Resoluciones
 - Decisiones de la Reunión
- 17:30 Observaciones de Cierre y Despedida

*Gracias por Unirse a Nosotros -
Tenga una Noche Relajante!*

**- 2002 Asamblea General Annual -
Red para la Conservación de las Tortugas Marinas
en el Gran Caribe (WIDECAST)**

" Salón de Reuniones Orange Bowl Longview"
Hotel Renaissance Miami - Biscayne Bay
2 - 3 Abril 2002

**AGENDA
Miércoles, 3 de Abril**

08:00 Jugos y pastas fuera de la Sala de Reunión (por favor, sólo para aquellos que firmaron)

08:30 Bienvenida y Señalamientos de Apertura - *Karen Eckert, Directora Ejecutiva de WIDECAST*

08:40 Presentaciones

08:50 Anuncios

- Secretario/a de la Reunión
- Lista de Participantes
- Alojamiento, transporte, comidas
- Inscripción en el Simposio
- Otros

Sesión V: Reportes o Informes Nacionales (12-15 min cada uno)

09:00 Costa Rica (Refugio de Vida Silvestre Gandoca-Manzanillo) - *Didiher Chacón C., Coordinador, Proyecto de Conservación de las Tortugas Marinas, Asociación ANAI*

Colombia – *Diego Amorocho & Fabián Andrés Sánchez, Asociación WIDECAST-Colombia*

Nicaragua – *Cynthia Lagueux & William McCoy, Proyecto de Tortuga Carey en los Cayos Miskitos*

Venezuela – *Hedely Guada, WIDECAST Coordinadora para Sur América y las Antillas Mayores y Directora, CICTMAR*

10:30 Receso

Sesión VI: Inicitivas Regionales de WIDECAST

11:45 Señalamientos Introdutorios – *Karen Eckert, Directora Ejecutiva de WIDECAST*

11:00 Centro de Marcaje de Tortugas Marinas – *Julia Horrocks, Directora, Proyecto de Tortugas Marinas de Barbados y Coordinadora del Centro de Marcaje de Tortugas Marinas*

11:15 Programa Regional de Conservación de Tortugas Marinas y su Plan de Acción para las Guayanas – *Henk Reichart, Oficial del Programa WIDECAST para el Escudo Guayanés*

11:30 Uso de Productos de Tortugas Marinas y Estudio del Comercio (con/ Certificación) - *Didiher Chacón C., WIDECAST Coordinador Nacional de Costa Rica*

12:00 Foro Abierto / Resoluciones

12:30 ALMUERZO

13:30 Sala abierta – Exhibiciones y Compartir Experiencias

Sesión VII: Sensibilización del Público y Herramientas Educativas

13:45 Una Aproximación Sinérgica hacia las Actividades del Programa de Educación Marina –
*Argelis Ruiz, Especialista en Educación Marina, Instituto de Investigación Tropical
Smithsoniano, Panamá*

14:30 Actividades de Investigación e Iniciativas de Educación en Puerto Rico - *Lesbia Montero,
Educatora Marina, Sea Grant College Program, Universidad de Puerto Rico*

15:00 Receso

Sesión VIII: Investigación y Herramientas de Manejo

15:30 Modelaje de Poblaciones de Tortuga Laúd: Enlazando la Biología y las Políticas - *Milani
Chaloupka, Consultor de Investigación, CRC (Coastal), Universidad de Queensland*

16:15 Principios de las Investigaciones sobre Mortalidad en Vida Silvestre - *Thierry M. Work, DVM, Especialista
en Enfermedades de Vida Silvestre, USGS Centro Nacional de Salud de Vida Silvestre*

16:45 Realización de Necropsias en Tortugas Marinas - *Thierry M. Work, DVM, Especialista en
Enfermedades de Vida Silvestre, USGS Centro Nacional de Salud de Vida Silvestre*

Sesión IX: Conclusiones

17:00 Foro Abierto

- Preguntas/Respuestas
- Decisiones de la Reunión

17:30 Observaciones de Cierre y Despedida

*Gracias por Unirse a Nosotros
Disfrute el Simposio de Tortugas Marinas!*

APPENDIX IV

**- WIDECAST Annual General Meeting -
2-3 April 2002**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Karen L. Eckert, Ph.D.

Introduction and Overview

The Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network (WIDECAST) is a unique consortium of professionals. The network was chartered more than 20 years ago as a result of recommendations made at a Santo Domingo meeting of Caribbean NGOs, which convened to discuss sustainable development in the region. The meeting recommended that a "Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Recovery Action Plan should be prepared ... consistent with the Action Plan for the Caribbean Environment Programme." A volunteer network of experts was envisioned to develop that regional action plan, and WIDECAST was born. With Country Coordinators and partner organizations now based in more than 30 nations and territories, we have a long history of unified and effective action at all levels -- community, national, regional, and international.

Our goal is "to realize a future where the all inhabitants of the Wider Caribbean Region, human and sea turtle alike, can live together in balance." Perhaps more than anything else, "conservation" is about *balance*. And one of the reasons we are so successful as a working coalition is that balance has a lot to do with what we stand for. We value our common ground and our common objectives, but we also honor the fact that each of us comes from a unique place -- we work in different socio-economic contexts, we have different levels of expertise, we are constrained by different political realities. Yet we come together to visualize a future where shared populations of sea turtles survive as functioning components of the Caribbean ecosystem.

We come together because there is more to unite us, than to divide us. We have in common, after all, the timeless and consistent biology of sea turtles. As biologists we are trained to work in a natural system that is largely devoid of political, geographic, economic, and linguistic variables. Sea turtle biology is sea turtle biology. We know that sea turtles are not going to alter their rates of survival, their migratory instincts, their growth rates, or their reproductive potential based on our political or economic desires. Our job, as a scientific network, is to work together to ensure that political and socio-economic decisions are made with as much genuine scientific input as possible. For example, that fisheries laws, which may include legal size limits and open seasons, make sense with regard to the biology of sea turtles; that we can defend protectionist measures when needed, including moratoria and trade bans, based on scientific evidence and not emotion; and that we can give communities and govern-ments credible choices when biological realities and political realities clash.

As I noted in my opening remarks last year, we really do need hundreds more sea turtle biologists and community-level conservationists - and millions of dollars - in order to fully meet these common objectives. But since that's not likely to happen anytime soon, we need to depend heavily on one another

– working together, seeking expertise from each other, so as not to waste limited human and financial resources “re-inventing the wheel”; working together to define national and regional priorities that ensure that finite resources are targeted in ways that matter; and utilizing the power of our combined voices rather than speaking out in isolation. Talking to one another, working collaboratively, speaking with solidarity ... these are the things that are best facilitated by joining together as a community of nations ... by joining together as a network.

Networks encourage information-sharing, and one of the things that WIDECAS^T has always done well is to provide governmental and non-governmental stakeholders with updated information on the status of sea turtles, specific recommendations for their management and recovery, and a framework for effective collaboration. And that framework extends from the grassroots all the way through to inter-governmental organizations. The UNEP Caribbean Environment Programme, which oversees implementation of the ‘Cartagena Convention’ and its SPAW Protocol – which we’ll hear more about later today - relies on consortia such as this one to provide the policy-making community with updated information and science-based recommendations for conservation and management action. Without that type of input we’re left with a political decision-making process, without the counter-balance of ecological complexities and vulnerabilities.

Another thing that WIDECAS^T does well is that we really *are* “rooted in the belief that conservation must be nurtured from within, it cannot be commanded from outside.” Our emphasis on information-sharing has the beneficial result of building a technical understanding of sea turtle biology and management among individuals and organizations throughout the entire region and at all decision-making levels. The goal is for information *not* to be centralized, but rather to be as decentralized as possible. Most sea turtles live or die at the hand of a fisherman who encounters them far away from a conservation group or a law enforcement officer. If sea turtles are going to survive, we have to find new ways of getting people - at all levels - to participate in decision-making that *promotes and encourages* the sustainable use and management of all biological resources, including turtles.

We do have a very real challenge in this region, and that is to somehow ensure the future of these ancient creatures despite the disappearance of so many of their populations over the course of the last century. The Wider Caribbean Region once supported populations of sea turtles that numbered in the uncounted millions. Seventeenth and eighteenth century mariner records document flotillas of turtles so dense and so vast that net fishing was impossible, even the movement of ships was curtailed. Their teeming numbers were a dominant force in the ecology of coral reefs and seagrass meadows . . . and in the economies of man.

To be successful in meeting the challenge that we now face, which is to ensure that sea turtles survive in ecologically and economically viable numbers, we – each of us, in our own context - need to prioritize habitat protection, long-term population monitoring, and technical training emphasizing standardized protocols for field staff and volunteers. We need to collaborate – there’s that word again! - to ensure data compatibility amongst projects, we need to *urge* public participation, we need to continually educate our policy-makers, we need to embrace stakeholders in all sectors and at all levels, and we need to do a better job of attracting money and other resources to the cause.

Sea turtle populations can and do recover. There are examples of populations throughout the region that are rising as we speak. And I don't think it's any coincidence that this region boasts some of the healthiest populations left on Earth. One by one, Caribbean governments have been responding to the concerns of the scientific community. National legislation is increasingly protecting breeding-age adults from harvest, safeguarding eggs and nests at all times, creating marine reserves and protected areas, and adopting reasonable coastal zone planning measures. The sea turtles of the Caribbean also enjoy very strong protection from regional treaties. Rising population trends are also helped along by shrinking markets for turtle products, booming eco-tourism profits, and a generally more ecologically aware citizenry.

That said, and despite measurable progress which has clearly been facilitated by the fact that Caribbean stakeholders in and out of government have been passionately discussing and promoting our shared obligations to sea turtle protection for two decades now, we all know that serious challenges press down upon us.

Among the most pervasive of these challenges is the loss of thousands – some would argue tens of thousands - of sea turtles as drowned bycatch every year. This is an unconscionable waste of one of the most valuable creatures on earth. Equally important are the large and unregulated harvests that continue in some states and that result in persistently depleted breeding populations. This is a *shared* challenge because declines in one range state spell trouble for other range states, as well. We also face increasing development of the coastal zone, bringing lights and traffic and a built and armoured shoreline often incompatible with sea turtle nesting. And we stand aghast at data documenting staggering losses of living coral and seagrass communities, which provide irreplaceable habitat for sea turtles and indeed support nearly all coastal life ... including our own.

I believe that today, now, we are at a cross-roads. I believe that we are on the verge of making real, measurable progress in sea turtle population recovery ... and I would argue that evidence of such recovery is the first step in creating sustainable management regimes. We can't sustainably manage a declining resource. We can slow the rate of decline, we can put off the inevitable loss, but we really don't have anything to write home about until the tide turns and the resource is responding in ecologically relevant ways to our efforts to protect it. We can almost reach out and touch that point with Caribbean sea turtles – we can see populations that have been protected now for many years responding; we can see populations, relieved from large commercial harvests, responding; we can see populations where breeding-age adults are completely protected, responding.

Do we know *everything* we need to know? No. Do we know *enough* to recognize the way forward? Yes. And tomorrow – just to illustrate how much we know – Milani Chaloupka, an Australian statistician, is going to give what I'm certain will be a very informative presentation on sea turtle population responses to various management decisions.

But, for now, since this is really your meeting and not mine, let me move on to the next section of my Annual Report by stating the obvious, ... and that is that that sea turtles cannot be managed unilaterally; that is, through the heroic efforts of one or two or three range states. Their survival depends on management decisions made by literally dozens of range states spread over millions of square miles of the Greater Atlantic basin. Their survival depends on what we do, each of us, on a day to day basis.

And so we come to the purpose of our meeting over the next two days.

Every year we gather to discuss how we're doing -- how well we're meeting the challenges we face, our well we're addressing our program priorities, and what our emphasis should be for the coming year. Recognizing that we cannot manage sea turtles unilaterally, or in isolation from one another, and that we are, in fact, far more powerful as a coalition than we could ever be as individuals or single organizations, we come together *for the explicit purpose* of accomplishing more together than we could alone. And for that reason, I think the bulk of our combined attention, as a consortium, should continue to be directed toward a work plan that benefits all of us in one way or another.

To that end, WIDECAST has five primary areas of activity:

- field-level research and conservation, including population monitoring and assessment;
- management intervention, including developing national recovery plans, making recommendations to governments, and participating in the policy-making process;
- training and capacity building at individual and organizational levels;
- environmental education and public awareness; and
- fund-raising.

And each year you can see those areas of activity reflected in the work plan.

2001 Work Plan and Accomplishments: Office of the Executive Director

If you'll refer to the 2001 Project Summary in your meeting packets, I'll summarize the actions of the Executive Director's office in 3 broad categories:

- **programs that began in prior to 2001, but continued into last year;**
- **ongoing programs; and**
- **programs that were new in 2001, ...**
... including mandates from our AGM last February.

First, there were a few projects, as there always are, that began in previous years and were finished last year. These include:

Regional Marine Turtle Conservation Program and Strategic Plan for the Guianas

Donor: WWF-Suriname

Project Officers: Henk Reichart (WIDECAST) and Laurent Kelle (WWF-France)

Notes: Henk gave a presentation on this project at our 2000 AGM, two years ago, and the document is now complete, including an international peer-review that some of you participated in. This project is a good example of collaboration

between a major donor (in this case WWF) with its own program agenda, and our collective expertise in sea turtle management and national and regional planning.

The final document, entitled “Regional Marine Turtle Conservation Program and Strategic Plan for the Guianas”, is a complicated document with significant levels of input from the governments of the Guayana Shield region, as well as from academic, NGO, and indigenous stakeholders. I think that all those who were involved with its development hope that it will set an example for planning and program execution at the subregional level among range states that clearly share management obligations for local populations of sea turtles.

Henk Reichart will give us a more detailed review later in the meeting.

Caribbean Marine Turtle Tagging Centre

Donors: UNDP/GEF NGO Small Grants Fund (Barbados), National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

Project Officers: Julia Horrocks (WIDECAS- Barbados), Karen Eckert (WIDECAS Executive Director)

Notes: Based on Working Group recommendations adopted at our annual meeting in 2000, this project included the development of data management software, the development of standardized field methods and record-keeping protocols, the hosting of an international training workshop on database use as well as on the proper design and implementation of sea turtle tagging projects, and the provision of free tags and tagging equipment to participating projects.

This is the first time that software tools have been developed to enable range states to compile sea turtle data in a standardized electronic format that will allow them to pool their data, and to work cooperatively to assess trends at true “population levels”, as opposed to simply at the political level of a range state. A Working Group of range states – including BVI, St. Lucia, Barbados and others – have been beta-testing the software on their national databases for the last few months. And based on this feedback, we’ll finalize the software, and make it available to all of you.

The Regional Tagging Centre is based at the University of the West Indies in Barbados, and hosted by the Barbados Sea Turtle Project. The Centre will offer a range of services when it’s fully up and running, including complimentary tags to projects that have participated in a WIDECAS training course. This is a significant undertaking for us as a network, and I know that I speak for all of us in thanking Julia Horrocks, and her colleagues at the Barbados Sea Turtle Project, for hosting the Centre! Julia will provide a more detailed review later in the program.

I should say at this point that one of the recommendations that came out of the first regional training workshop, held in Barbados last October, was that we develop a “White Paper on Computer and Database Security”, to provide guidance to resource managers who are responsible for the security and content integrity of long-term databases. However, because the field of computer security is changing so constantly, and especially in response to the events of last September in the US, we decided that a static “White Paper” may not be that useful to you. So, in collaboration with Eco-Group Data Solutions, we will be providing you with regular, probably quarterly, bilingual newsletters on computer and database security. The first issue is included in your meeting packets, and subsequent issues will be posted to the WIDECASST website.

Promoting the Conservation of Sea Turtles by Caribbean Vendors and the Traveling Public

Donors: UNEP Caribbean Environment Programme, Conservation Treaty Support Fund, and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
Project Officer: Karen Eckert (WIDECASST Executive Director)

Notes: In response to your request for some means of offering positive feedback to vendors – shops, boutiques, restaurants – that don’t offer sea turtle products for sale, the primary objectives of this campaign are to: promote sea turtle survival by encouraging public and private sector participation in their conservation and recovery; enhance public understanding of the *Endangered* (cf. IUCN 1996) status of Caribbean sea turtles; direct consumers to vendors that don’t offer sea turtle products; encourage conservation partnerships between Caribbean Hotel Association members and local conservation activities; and support implementation of the SPAW Protocol and CITES in the region.

The basic point is that when a sea turtle product is sold to a tourist, the usual result is an illegal export – a violation of CITES. If tourists were more aware of the role they play in the illegal trafficking of endangered species products, the hope is that they would direct their purchasing power in more informed and more positive ways. The bilingual certificate is included in your packets, and later in the year we’ll be distributing it in partnership with UNEP and with the Caribbean Hotel Association. WIDE-CAST Country Coordinators will play an important role in ensuring that local vendors are aware of the campaign, and that as many as want to participate are given a certificate to display.

Parallel to this effort, the Central American Sea Turtle Network, under the leadership of Didiher Chacón (Costa Rica), has developed a certification process, whereby a vendor participates in an investigative procedure, which may be repeated over time, to ensure that once the vendor is “certified”, turtle products do not re-appear in their inventory. This certification process is currently being trial-tested in Costa Rica. Didiher will provide more information on *his* program just before we break for lunch tomorrow.

There were also a number of smaller projects, started in previous years, that were completed in 2001. For example, revision of our species identification leaflets, the design of two new brochures, and an electronic inventory of the WIDECASST library.

Then there are projects that are ongoing; in other words, projects that WIDECASST is involved in on an annual basis. These include the Jumby Bay Hawksbill Research Program in Antigua, Hedelvy's training course in Venezuela, and the unique *at-sea* training course hosted by the Bermuda Aquarium each year. Hedelvy Guada – WIDECASST Country Coordinator in Venezuela - will discuss her course tomorrow, and Jennifer Gray – Country Coordinator in Bermuda - gave a presentation last year, and did a very fine job of making us all want to visit! So I'll just say a few words about the Jumby Bay project.

Jumby Bay Hawksbill Research Project

Donors: Jumby Bay Island Company

Project Officer: Dr. Jim Richardson (Scientific Director)

Notes: This ongoing project, started by WIDECASST in 1987, is a comprehensive demographic study of nesting hawksbills. Jumby Bay provides unique data to support decision-making not only at the national level, but at the international level as well. As there are relatively few places where we can intensively study a particular species, these long-term saturation tagged populations provide fundamental information to all other projects that focus on that particular species, and as such they are shared treasure with immense value far beyond their host countries.

At the present time, the Jumby Bay field directors are finalizing nearly a dozen papers on survivorship, recruitment, remigration and fecundity patterns; the use of intensive surveys to derive sampling methodology for stock assessment of nesting hawksbills; sampling error and the effect of bias on estimating population parameters; nest distribution and site selection preferences that can teach us something about the potential for improving degraded nesting habitat; and other important results that can only be gained by observing and tagging each and every hawksbill in a reproductive population.

OK ... there are also projects that were new last year (2001), and these included:

Meeting Ecological and Economic Goals: Best Practices for Sea Turtle Eco-Tourism

Donors: USFWS Office of International Affairs and The Beverly Foundation

Project Officers: Claire Shirley (WIDECASST Grenada) and Ocean Spirits staff

Notes: Again this is a project that emerged from ongoing discussion at this meeting over the years, with the recognition that "turtle watching" was gaining popularity in the region, and had the potential to generate significant levels of income for communities, protected areas, and shorefront hotels. It was also clear that while some programs were developing in very professional ways, benefiting

both sea turtles and communities, others were a disaster. With this in mind, the recommendation was that we pool our expertise, throughout the region, and come up with guidelines broadly applicable in at least three familiar contexts:

- low-impact, community-based eco-tourism initiatives that seek to provide incentives for resource preservation and employment in rural areas,
- beach hotels and other commercial ventures that seek to create “turtle-friendly” marketing opportunities, and
- park managers and conservation groups that seek to promote turtle-watching as a non-consumptive activity in support of species and habitat protection goals.

Our friends at Ocean Spirits in Grenada, struggling themselves to define what constitutes a sustainable sea turtle eco-tourism project, have done a great job at creating the first draft of a field manual that I think will be very useful, both in the Caribbean and elsewhere. The completed manual will include recommendations for program development and marketing, staff training, regulations and enforcement, carrying capacity, impact monitoring, interpretative materials, transportation and accommodation for visitors, user fees, and other aspects.

Later in the year the draft will be circulated for your review and input. And hopefully the published document will be in your meeting packets next year!

Develop ‘Sea Turtle Recovery Action Plans’ for Anguilla, Jamaica, Panamá, and the Republic of Trinidad & Tobago

Donor: NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service

Project Officers: Karen Eckert (WIDECAST), Karim Hodge (WIDECAST-Anguilla), Rhema Kerr (WIDECAST-Jamaica), Argelis Ruiz (WIDECAST Panama) and Kenneth Fournillier, Wendy Herron and Dennis Sammy (WIDECAST Trinidad & Tobago)

Notes: The development of standardized Sea Turtle Recovery Action Plans – or STRAPs – was one of the first activities that WIDECAST undertook. The first Action Plan- written for the Netherlands Antilles - was published in 1992. Eleven STRAPs have been completed to date, the most recent for Venezuela. Stakeholders at all levels are involved in the development of each Action Plan, and the basic objective is to build local capacity to design and implement scientifically sound sea turtle management programs.

In order to adequately protect migratory sea turtles and achieve the objectives of the SPAW Protocol, *The Strategy for the Development of the Caribbean Environment Programme* calls for “development of specific management plans for economically and ecologically important species”, making particular

reference to endangered, threatened, or vulnerable species of sea turtle. This is consistent with Article 10 of the Cartagena Convention (1983) which states that Contracting Parties shall “individually or jointly take all appropriate measures to protect ... the habitat of depleted, threatened or endangered species in the Convention area.” And Article 10 of the SPAW Protocol specifies that Parties “carry out recovery, management, planning and other measures to effect the survival of [endangered or threatened] species”

As a Partner Organization to the UNEP Caribbean Environment Programme, WIDECAS has been very involved in this aspect of regional policy and management for many years. As each STRAP is completed, it undergoes a national and regional peer-review before being published by UNEP as part of the Caribbean Environment Programme Technical Report Series.

widecast.org : An Internet Source for Caribbean Sea Turtle Information

Donors: NOAA [2002: additional support has come in from SPAW Regional Programme of UNEP, and from CMS in Bonn, Germany]

Project Officer: Karen Eckert (WIDECAS Executive Director)

Notes: This is a wonderful initiative, and one that has the potential to transform the way in which we communicate with each other, and with the public at large. The website will feature current projects and local contacts; species identification and taxonomy; sea turtle biology and conservation status; the distribution of critical nesting and foraging habitats, including relevant protected areas; major threats faced by sea turtles in the region and any best practices associated with mitigation; the provisions of national legislation and international treaties; publications, training workshops and conferences; current needs (such as for money, volunteers, equipment); and, of course, how people can help and participate in the survival of Caribbean sea turtles.

With a small seed grant from NOAA last year, I was able to hire a site designer ... but now the real work begins. And that is the posting of content. [*Mervin*, will you please convene a Working Group over lunch and provide us with a standard format for the national pages?]

Assessment of Sources of Sea Turtle Bycatch in Commercial and Artisanal Fisheries Operating in the Wider Caribbean Region

Donor: WWF-US

Project Officer: Karen Eckert (WIDECAS Executive Director) [expert/contractor yet to be determined]

Notes: This project arose from recommendations made by a Working Group at our 2000 Annual Meeting, chaired by Rafe Boulon, Country Coordinator in the USVI, and the project proposal that resulted from those recommendations has now been funded by WWF. It's a 'desk study', and narrower in scope than we

had originally anticipated, but since there is no formal information on the subject, I think this is the best way to begin. The objectives of the study are to:

- Document the spatial (geographic scope) and temporal (seasonality) fishing effort of at least eight (8) widely practiced Caribbean fisheries;
- Evaluate the extent to which sea turtle populations exhibit coincident spatial and temporal distribution with these fisheries;
- Characterize the various fisheries that have the greatest potential for capturing sea turtles;
- Provide a qualitative analysis (ranking) of the potential role of these fisheries in the incidental capture of sea turtles;
- Characterize the fate of sea turtles hauled as bycatch (e.g., turtles are discarded at sea, consumed by vessel crew, marketed ashore);
- Identify potential bycatch “hot spots” (i.e., areas of highest interaction between fisheries and sea turtles);
- Describe existing data gaps; and
- Make recommendations for follow-up action.

A Caribbean-based Fisheries Expert will be contracted to do the study, which we hope will be concluded by the end of the year. If you have any recommendations for someone qualified to undertake this study, please let me know.

Finally, funding for a number of national initiatives, primarily in Costa Rica, Venezuela, Barbados, Bonaire, and Grenada, was raised through my office ... and again you can see some of the details in the Project Summary in your meeting packet. In addition, both Hedelvy Guada (Venezuela) and Didiher Chacón (Costa Rica) will discuss these projects later in the meeting.

Well, those are some of the year's highlights! And when you combine our *collective* efforts, such as the regional tagging centre and data management software, the eco-tourism manual, ongoing research projects, the website, training courses, and various public awareness promotions and materials ... with everything you're involved with at the local level, and all of the activity at the intergovernmental level (which we'll be discussing in more detail tomorrow), Caribbean sea turtles are receiving a good share of our time, energy and commitment.

It's quite obvious, however, that there is much more to be done. I expect that few – if any - of us would be confident in declaring that the survival of sea turtles and the coastal habitats upon which they depend are secure for our children and our grandchildren.

And so we come to the last section of my Annual Report to you this morning ... and that is, what should we focus on during 2002?

2002-2003 Provisional Work Plan: Office of the Executive Director

We already have a handful of projects underway for 2002, and many of these I've mentioned – these include the bycatch assessment, the sea turtle eco-tourism manual, the website, finalizing the database management software unveiled at the training workshop in Barbados last fall, developing procedures and protocols for the regional tagging centre at the University of the West Indies in Barbados, publishing STRAPs for Panama, Anguilla, Jamaica, and Trinidad & Tobago, and finishing the trilingual slide show on Caribbean sea turtles.

In addition, we will, no doubt, find ourselves involved in issues raised at the 12th Conference of Parties to CITES in Chile later this year (and the various national and regional meetings that will lead up to COP12), as well as involved in the continuing development of the regional SPAW Programme and the Inter-American Convention which will convene their own conferences of parties this year. These initiatives represent an enormous investment of time and talent, both on your parts and on mine.

We have an awesome assemblage of talent in this room, and in our colleagues throughout the region who were unable to join us this week, and the network is growing every year. The number of programs we support each year is also growing, and our annual budget is nearly 10 times what it was as recently as 1995. What this means for me is that my days are increasingly consumed with bookkeeping and budgets, correspondence and administrative minutia, and I have significantly less time to work on your behalf in creative and proactive ways. Simply put - the momentum and success of our coalition has grown beyond what one person can realistically coordinate and support.

So I would like to suggest to you that I invest time this coming year seeking an institutional home – preferably a university – for the office of the Executive Director. And that that move be associated with access to more dependable sources of funding, technical support, and human resources. In my view, there really isn't anything that I can do to make your work more efficient and more effective, than to relocate myself from a home office to a more visible and more professional setting. At the same time, I will continue to explore ways in which we can support in-region offices, and in particular one in Latin America and one in the insular Caribbean. I look forward to having very positive news on this front at our next meeting.

So there you have it - a full workplan of projects, and all dedicated to inclusive, science-based and locally implemented sea turtle management. There is no question but that sea turtles will not survive in the Caribbean Sea without unflinching regional co-operation and coordination. I want to say what it is a privilege it is to continue to be a part of this particular cooperative mechanism, and, more than that, this incredible network of friends and colleagues. I wish us much continued success. *Thank you*

Closing Remarks:

Sadly our time together has, once again, drawn to a close. Over the course of the last two days representatives from some 30 Caribbean States and territories and the UNEP Caribbean Environment Programme have gathered both to learn from one another and to enjoy invited presentations from colleagues in Hawaii and Australia. In addition, we welcomed Observers from Egypt and Greece in the Mediterranean, and Togo, Ghana and Gabon in Africa, among others.

With 23 speakers from 17 countries, we've shared information on everything from database security, international treaties and environmental education, to field project results, investigations of mortality, and genetic and computer tools for population management. (Be honest, how many of us will dream of "parameter sensitivity analysis" tonight?) We've reminded ourselves that managing sea turtles successfully demands skills not only in research and data analysis, but also in policy, management, computer programming, fund raising, education and outreach, sociology, and socio-economics ... not to mention negotiation and conflict resolution.

In addition to the technical aspects of the meeting, we've renewed friendships, made and welcomed new friends, updated ourselves on important local, national and regional issues, and re-committed ourselves to continued cooperation and collaboration during the coming year and the time beyond. I will adjourn the meeting with the same sentiment with which I opened it – and that is that it continues to be my greatest privilege to work in partnership with this circle of professionals, friends and colleagues. I wish you all every success.

The meeting is adjourned.

**1800 hr
3 April 2002
Karen Eckert
Executive Director**

APPENDIX V

Appeal to the Government of the Republic of Nicaragua to Take Stronger Measures to Ensure Protection of the Critically Endangered Hawksbill Sea Turtle and its Habitats



WIDER
CARIBBEAN
SEA TURTLE
CONSERVATION NETWORK

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11 de noviembre de 2002

Sr. Enrique Bolaños, Presidente
Presidencia de la República de Nicaragua
Managua, Nicaragua

Su Excelencia:

En nombre de los expertos sobre tortugas marinas y profesionales sobre recursos naturales de más de 30 naciones y territorios del Caribe, quienes comprenden la Red para la Conservación de las Tortugas Marinas en el Gran Caribe (WIDECAST) [ver pie de nota 1], es un honor hacerle llegar nuestro fuerte respaldo a la Resolución adjunta: **“Llamado al Gobierno de la República de Nicaragua Para Que Tome Medidas Más Fuertes Para Asegurar la Protección de las Poblaciones Críticamente Amenazadas de Tortugas Carey y de Sus Hábitats”**.

Dicha Resolución se aprobó unánimemente en el 22º Simposio Internacional Anual Sobre la Biología y Conservación de las Tortugas Marinas (Miami, 4 al 7 de abril de 2002) con la participación de 73 países de las Américas (y el Caribe), Europa, África, Austral-Asia, y el Pacífico. Este evento anual es el más grande encuentro de este tipo en el mundo.

Con esta carta quisiéramos enfatizar el fuerte apoyo con el que cuenta el Gobierno de Nicaragua por parte de científicos y conservacionistas de tortugas marinas de toda la Región del Gran Caribe, quienes valoran las iniciativas de manejo de tortugas marinas en la costa Caribe de Nicaragua, y especialmente en el área de los Cayos Perlas (Pearl Cays), como un modelo para los esfuerzos de manejo de toda la Región.

Estamos concientes que la costa Caribe de Nicaragua es una de las áreas de mayor diversidad biológica en América Central. Con sus numerosas lagunas costeras, arrecifes de coral, bosques de manglar, y praderas marinas, alberga una amplia gama de fauna, incluyendo especies en peligro de extinción como lo son las tortugas verde (*Chelonia mydas*), carey (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), cabezona (*Caretta caretta*), y laúd (*Dermochelys coriacea*), el manatí y cocodrilos. El exitoso manejo de estos recursos depende de la colaboración activa entre el

gobierno, las comunidades locales y los expertos no gubernamentales, incluyendo a los educadores y biólogos.

Una de las alianzas de comanejo más motivantes en Centro América es la estrategia de comanejo basada en la comunidad para la conservación de las tortugas marinas de la costa Caribe de Nicaragua que está siendo liderada por la Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) y el Ministerio del Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (MARENA). Este programa es una inspiración para otros programas similares en Nicaragua y más allá. La Red Regional de WIDECAST está particularmente impresionada por el proyecto "Conservación de la Tortuga Carey en los Cayos Perlas" de la Wildlife Conservation Society.

La importancia del área de anidación de la tortuga carey en los Cayos Perlas para las poblaciones regionales y mundiales de la tortuga carey es clara. Con más de 150 nidos de carey documentados en el 2000, 2001, y nuevamente en el 2002, esta área provee importantes hábitats para estos reptiles ancestrales, que han sido clasificados por la UICN como "en peligro de extinción crítico" a todo lo largo de su ámbito tanto en el Caribe como en el mundo.

Como indicáramos en nuestra carta al Ministro Jorge Salazar de MARENA en febrero de 2002 (ver carta anexa), estamos concientes de la alteración y destrucción de los hábitats de anidación que actualmente ocurre en los cayos de Baboon, Crawl, Grape, Lime, Vincent, Water y Wild Cane. Aparentemente la destrucción incluye la eliminación de la vegetación herbacea de la plataforma alta de la playa, así como la tala y eliminación de manglares y vegetación y el relleno de áreas de los pantanos.

Estamos concientes también de las amenazas que presenta el desarrollo de infraestructura (tales como viviendas, tanques sépticos, pozos y muelles) y la creciente presencia de humanos en estas áreas. Junto con estas actividades de desarrollo vienen también actividades que son generalmente incompatibles con la anidación y desove de las tortugas marinas, así como amenazas directas a las tortugas y sus juveniles, tales como iluminación costera, perros, etc.

Teniendo en cuenta todo lo anterior, estamos alarmados al saber que un grupo de personas que viven en las islas importantes para la tortuga carey, han creado una amenaza muy seria para la conservación de las careyes en los Cayos Perlas. Estas mismas personas fueron citadas por MARENA (durante el gobierno anterior) por la destrucción ambiental de las islas que habitan. Pareciera que ellas buscan detener los esfuerzos de manejo de las tortugas en el área y han llevado sus acusaciones tanto a su gobierno, así como al gobierno de los EE.UU. Aplaudimos los esfuerzos recientes de los gobiernos de Nicaragua y los Estados Unidos para asegurar que las actividades de conservación e investigación de la tortuga carey puedan ejecutarse de una manera segura y no interrumpida, pero nos preocupa que aún se requiere de medidas más fuertes para asegurar la conservación y recuperación de estas poblaciones y la protección de los hábitats de los cuales ellas dependen.

No podemos sobre enfatizar nuestro apoyo a los actuales esfuerzos de MARENA de fortalecer el marco regulador para proteger las tortugas marinas de Nicaragua, y los esfuerzos de esta agencia de colaborar con las comunidades costeras en el manejo efectivo de las tortugas marinas. El hábitat de los Cayos Perlas es vital para la sobrevivencia de las tortugas de carey en peligro de extinción en Nicaragua y más allá (las tortugas marinas son migratorias), la

investigación en el área es capaz de proveer de manera única a MARENA y la comunidad científica internacional con datos sobre la reproducción de las poblaciones locales de tortugas, así como servir de modelo útil para el manejo basado en las comunidades.

Nosotros apoyamos fuertemente la Resolución adoptada en el simposio internacional en abril, y les ofrecemos la solidaridad de la comunidad científica del Gran Caribe en sus esfuerzos por prevenir la destrucción de los Cayos Perlas y los hábitats cercanos por los acaparadores de fuera que buscarían destruir este ecosistema tan frágil por su arrogancia, ignorancia y su avaricia. Puede estar usted seguro que cuenta con nuestro apoyo conjunto y unificado en sus esfuerzos por proteger efectivamente los Cayos Perlas no solamente para las generaciones de Nicaragüenses, pero para nuestros hijos también.

Atentamente,

Dra. Karen Eckert, Directora Ejecutiva

Red para la Conservación de las Tortugas Marinas en el Gran Caribe

Cc/ Presidente de Consejo Regional Autónomo Atlántico Sur Bluefields, RAAS
Presidente de Consejo Regional Autónomo Atlántico Norte, Bilwi, RAAN
Sr. Lisandro D'León Mairena, Procurador Nacional para la Defensa del Medio Ambiente
y los Recursos Naturales
Sr. Jorge Salazar, Ministro, Ministerio del Ambiente y los Recursos Naturales
Lic. Carlos Rivas, Director General de Biodiversidad y RR.NN., MARENA
Lic. Liza González, Directora General de Areas Protegidas (ai), MARENA
Lic. Medardo López, Coordinador, Dirección Gernal Territoriales, MARENA
Lic. Maria Antonieta Rivas, Asesoría Legal MARENA
Lic. Hilberto Downs, Alcalde de Laguna de Perlas
Robin Meyer, Consejero Político, Embajada Americana EEUU

ANGUILLA

Anguilla National Trust
Ijahnya Christian, Executive Director

ARUBA

FANAPA
Tom Barmes, President

ANTIGUA & BARBUDA

Environmental Awareness Group
Carole McCauley, Executive Director

BARBADOS

Barbados Sea Turtle Project
Dr. Julia Horrocks, Director

BELIZE

Belize Audubon Society
Jose Garcia, President
Wildlife Conservation Society-Belize
Janet Gibson, Conservation Scientist

SYMBIOS

Linda Searle, Director
Bacalar Chico Marine Reserve/Natl. Park
Isaias Majil, Manager

BERMUDA

**Bermuda Turtle Project / Bermuda Aquarium,
Museum and Zoo**
Jennifer Gray, Project Coordinator

BRAZIL

Fundação Pró-Tamar
Maria Angela Marcovaldi, Presidente
Projeto Tamar-Ibama
Guy Marcovaldi, National Director

BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

Marine Turtle Monitoring Project
Mervin Hastings, Coordinator

CAYMAN ISLANDS

Marine Turtle Research Project
Catherine Bell, Coordinator

COLOMBIA

**RETOMAR - Red Colombiano para la
Conservación de las Tortugas Marinas**
Diego F. Amoroch, Coordinador
Fundación Darien
Claudio Madaune, Coordinador de
Proyectos

COSTA RICA

**Red Regional para la Conservación de
Tortugas Marinas en Centroamérica**
Didiher Chacón Chaverri, Coordinador
Asociación ANAI
Gerardo Matute, Director, Proyecto de
Gandoca

**PRETOMA -- Programa Restauración
Tortugas Marinas**

Randall Arauz, President
**Red Nacional para la Conservación de
Tortugas Marinas**
Rolando Castro, Coordinador

DOMINICA

Dominica Conservation Association
Henry M. Shillingford, Program Director

FRENCH GUIANA

Natural Reserve of Amana
Noemi Morgenstern, Director

FRENCH WEST INDIES

Marine Turtle Conservation Project
Johan Chevalier, Chargé de mission Tortues
marines dans les Départements Français
d'Amérique
**Eastern Caribbean Coalition for
Environmental Awareness (ECCEA)**
Lesley Suttty, CEO

GRENADA

Ocean Spirits
Rebecca King and Carl Lloyd, Directors

GUATEMALA

**ARCAS - Asociación Rescate y Conservación
de Vida Silvestre**
Colum Muccio, Director Administrativo
**Grupo de Trabajo en Tortugas Marinas de
Guatemala**
Anabella Barrios, Coordinadora

GUYANA

Guyana Marine Turtle Conservation Society
Annette Arjoon, President

HAITI

The Panos Institute
Ir. Jan J. Voordouw, Environmental
Communications Specialist

HONDURAS

MOPAWI

Adalberto Padilla, Director Tecnico
Carlos Molinero, Coordinador Centro de Documentacion

JAMAICA

Sea Turtle Recovery Network

Andrea Donaldson, Coordinator

National Wildlife Foundation

Rhema Kerr, Member, Board of Directors

NETHERLANDS ANTILLES

CARMABI Foundation Curaçao

Leon Pors, Manager
Curaçao Underwater Park

Reef Care Curaçao

Menno van der Velde, President

CORAL (Coral Reef Alliance) Parks

Programme

Kalli de Meyer, Director

Sea Turtle Conservation Bonaire (STCB)

Imre Esser, President

Foundation to Preserve Klein Bonaire

Bruce Bowker, President

Saba Marine Park

David Kooistra, Manager

St. Maarten Marine Park

Andy Caballero, Manager

St. Eustatius National Parks Foundation

Kay Lynn Plummer, Manager

NICARAGUA

Wildlife Conservation Society

Dr. Cynthia Lagueux, Director-Nicaragua

PANAMA

STRI Marine Exhibition Ctr, Punta Culebra

Argelis Ruiz, Coordinator

St. LUCIA

Desbarras Turtle Watch Group

Moses Wilfred, Coordinator

St. KITTS & NEVIS

Nevis Historical and Conservation Society

John Guilbert, Director

St. Christopher Heritage Society

Kate Orchard, Biodiversity Co-ordinator

TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

Nature Seekers

Dennis Sammy, Manager

"S.O.S. Tobago" (Save Our Sea Turtles)

Wendy Herron, President

TURKS & CAICOS ISLANDS

Marine Turtle Monitoring Project

Jasmine Parker, Coordinator

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS

St. Croix Marine Turtle Conservation Project

Amy Mackay, Principal Investigator

Sandy Point NWR Leatherback Turtle

Research Project

Rafe Boulon, Scientific Advisor

VENEZUELA

Centro de Investigación y Conservación de Tortugas Marinas-CICTMAR

Lic. Hedelvy J. Guada, Directora

Grupo de Trabajo en Tortugas Marinas del Estado Nueva Esparta

Ana Trujillo, Miembra

Grupo de Trabajo en Tortugas Marinas de Venezuela

Lic. Genaro Solé, Miembro

Grupo de Trabajo en Tortugas Marinas del Golfo de Venezuela (GTTM-GV)

Lenin Parra, Tatiana Leon, Hector Barrios, Coordinadores

Pie de Nota [1]:

La Red para la Conservación de las Tortugas Marinas en el Gran Caribe (WIDECAST) es una red científica de voluntarios integrada por Coordinadores Nacionales y expertos en tortugas marinas residentes en más de 30 estados y territorios del Gran Caribe. WIDECAST fue fundada en 1981, en respuesta a una recomendación de la Reunión de las Organizaciones No Gubernamentales del Caribe sobre la Conservación de Recursos Vivos para el Desarrollo Sostenible en el Gran Caribe - UICN/CCA (Santo Domingo, 26 al 29 de agosto de 1981) que convino "se debería de" preparar un Plan de Acción para la Recuperación de las Tortugas Marinas del Gran Caribe ... consistente con el Plan de Acción del Programa Ambiental del Caribe."

La misión central de WIDECAST es revertir la tendencia descendente en las poblaciones de tortugas marinas en el Gran Caribe utilizando la mejor información científica disponible. La red promueve la capacidad regional y nacional para diseñar e instrumentar medidas de conservación y manejo científicamente adecuadas, fomentando la comprensión técnica sobre la biología y manejo de las tortugas marinas, tanto en los individuos como en las instituciones, así como el incremento de la conciencia pública de que las tortugas marinas y los hábitats de los cuales ellas dependen, están seriamente amenazados. WIDECAST está enraizado en la creencia de que la conservación debe nutrirse desde adentro, no puede ser comandada desde afuera. Además de eso, la conservación sólo puede ser efectiva en el grado que las acciones instrumentadas estén basadas en la mejor evidencia científica disponible y estén hechas a la medida de las circunstancias locales.

WIDECAST es una organización afiliada al Programa del Ambiente del Caribe (PAC) del Programa Ambiental de las Naciones Unidas para el Medio Ambiente (PNUMA). "Planes de Acción para la Recuperación de las Tortugas Marinas" nacionales se preparan por la red para las Partes del "Convenio de Cartagena" (Convenio para la Protección y el Desarrollo del Medio Ambiente Marino de la Región del Gran Caribe, 1983) y se publican y distribuyen como parte de la Serie de Informes Técnicos del PAC. Este portafolio único de Planes de Acción ha proporcionado un valioso ímpetu para una amplia variedad de acciones de conservación, además de proporcionar a la comunidad científica y a los formuladores de políticas con información abundante sobre las especies de tortugas marinas de la Región. La red también está involucrada en una amplia variedad de iniciativas de investigación, monitoreo, educación y capacitación a través de toda la región del Atlántico Occidental.



WIDER
CARIBBEAN
SEA TURTLE
CONSERVATION NETWORK

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ENGLISH TRANSLATION

11 November 2002

Sr. Enrique Bolaños, Presidente
Presidencia de La República de Nicaragua
Managua, Nicaragua

Su Excelencia:

On behalf of sea turtle experts and natural resource professionals in more than 30 Caribbean nations and territories comprising the Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network (WIDECAST) [see Footnote 1], it is my privilege to convey our strong endorsement of the enclosed Resolution: **“Appeal to the Government of the Republic of Nicaragua to Take Stronger Measures to Ensure Protection of the Critically Endangered Hawksbill Sea Turtle and its Habitats”**.

The Resolution passed unanimously at the 22nd Annual International Symposium on Sea Turtle Biology and Conservation (Miami, 4-7 April 2002), featuring participants from 73 countries in the Americas (and Caribbean), Europe, Africa, Austral-Asia, and the Pacific. This annual event is the largest gathering of this type in the world.

With this letter we would like to emphasize the strong support that the government of Nicaragua has from sea turtle scientists and conservationists throughout the Wider Caribbean Region who view the sea turtle co-management initiatives on Nicaragua’s Caribbean coast, and especially in the Pearl Cays area, as a model for management efforts throughout our Region.

We are aware that Nicaragua’s Caribbean Coast is one of the most biologically diverse areas in Central America. With its many coastal lagoons, coral reefs, mangrove forests, and seagrass pastures, it harbors a wide range of fauna, including endangered species such as green (*Chelonia mydas*), hawksbill (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), loggerhead (*Caretta caretta*), and leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*) sea turtles, manatee, and crocodiles. The successful management of these resources depends on active collaboration between Government, local communities, and non-governmental experts, including educators and biologists.

One of the most aspiring co-management partnerships in Central America is the community-based co-management strategy for the conservation of sea turtles on Nicaragua’s Caribbean coast being led by the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and the Ministerio del Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (MARENA). This program provides inspiration for other such programs in Nicaragua and

beyond. The regional WIDECAST network was been particularly impressed by the Wildlife Conservation Society's "Pearl Cays Hawksbill Conservation Project".

The importance of the hawksbill nesting area in the Pearl Cays to the regional and global populations of hawksbill sea turtles is clear. With more than 150 documented hawksbill nests in 2000 , 2001, and again in 2002, this area provides important habitat to these ancient reptiles, which are classified by IUCN as "Critically Endangered" throughout their Caribbean and global ranges.

As indicated in our letter to Minister Jorge Salazar of MARENA in February 2002 (see attached letter), we are aware of the alteration and destruction of nesting habitat currently occurring on Baboon, Crawl, Grape, Lime, Vincent, Water and Wild Cane cays. Apparently this destruction includes the clearing of upper beach platform herbaceous vegetation, as well as the cutting and clearing of mangroves and understory vegetation, and the filling of swamp areas.

We are also aware of threats posed by the development of infrastructure (such as houses, septic tanks, wells, and docks) and the increasing presence of humans in these areas. Along with such development come activities that are generally incompatible with nesting and hatching sea turtles, as well as direct threats to turtles and their young, such as coastal lighting, dogs, etc.

With all of this in mind, we are alarmed by the knowledge that a group of people living on several of the islands important to hawksbills have mounted a serious challenge to the conservation of hawksbills in the Pearl Cays. These same people were cited by MARENA (during the former government) for environmental destruction on the islands they inhabit. They appear to be seeking to halt sea turtle management efforts in the area and have taken their accusations both to your government, as well as to the Government of the USA. We applaud recent efforts by the governments of Nicaragua and the USA to ensure that the hawksbill conservation and research activities can be conducted in a safe and uninterrupted manner, but we are concerned that still stronger measures are needed to ensure the conservation and recovery of these populations and the protection of habitats upon which they depend.

We cannot over-emphasize our support for MARENA's ongoing efforts to strengthen the regulatory framework to protect Nicaragua's sea turtles, and the agency's efforts to collaborate with coastal communities in the effective management of sea turtles. Because the Pearl Cays habitat is vital to the survival of endangered hawksbill turtles in Nicaragua and beyond (sea turtles being migratory), research in the area is uniquely capable of providing MARENA and the international scientific community with reproductive data on local turtle populations, as well as a useful model for community-based co-management.

We strongly endorse the Resolution adopted at the international Symposium in April, and we offer the solidarity of the Wider Caribbean scientific community to you in your efforts to prevent the destruction of the Pearl Cays and surrounding habitat by outside profiteers who would seek to destroy this highly fragile ecosystem by their arrogance, ignorance and greed. Please be assured that you have our collective and united support in your efforts to effectively protect the Pearl Cays not only for generations of Nicaraguans, but for our children as well.

Yours Respectfully,

Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network
Dr. Karen Eckert, Executive Director
