

The French Guiana Sea Turtle Recovery Plan (2007-2012)

Ordered by the French Ministry of Ecology, Energy, Sustainable Development and Territorial Planning (MEEDDAT), the recovery plans aim to conserve one or several animal species considered endangered on a national or international scale. Today, approximately twenty species are covered by recovery plans throughout French territory.

In French Guiana, the Sea Turtle Recovery Plan (STRP) covers three species that regularly nest in this French overseas department, namely: the leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*), the olive ridley (*Lepidochelys olivacea*) and the green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*).

The French Guiana STRP is the result of significant documentary research and concerted action by players in the sustainable development field started in 1999 and that enabled the creation of 2 distinct national documents :

- 1- Inventory and diagnosis : An overview of knowledge about the conservation status of sea turtles in French Guiana and the threats confronting these species.
- 2- Action plan : Defines goals for a 5-year period, broken down into concrete actions listed by order of importance with budget figures.

Validated for the 2007-2012 period and coordinated by WWF and ONCFS (French National Hunting and Wild Life Agency) under DIREN (Regional environmental authority) supervision, the French Guiana STRP aims three main goals :

1- Reduce threats

Threats at sea : Captures and killings of sea turtles by French Guianese fisheries (prawn trawlers, gill nets, long liners, etc.) and by illegal fishing activity

Threats on the beaches : Human-related deaths (poaching, attacks by dogs, etc.), disturbances and degradation of terrestrial habitats.

2- Strengthen demographic monitoring, based on existing data, to define new study goals for sea turtle populations.

3- Consolidate and strengthen the regional approach to achieve sustainable management of transborder areas.

Within its steering committee and 3 associated working groups (threat management, demographic monitoring, regional approach), the STRP currently brings together almost thirty partners from local nature protection societies, local authorities, government agencies, public institutions, the scientific community, the private sector as well as international organisations (Guianas region and the Caribbean).

Supported by the MEEDDAT, the Regional environmental authority and european funds (CARET2 program), the French Guiana STRP is the first recovery plan that targets marine species, as well as the first implemented in an overseas department.

Contact:

Linda Rieu, Irieu@wwf.fr