

PACIFIC LEATHERBACK SURVIVAL CONFERENCE
APRIL 22-25, 2002
RESOLUTION

WHEREAS leatherback sea turtles have existed in Earth's oceans for over a hundred million years;

WHEREAS leatherback sea turtles are an important component of marine ecosystems;

WHEREAS we deeply believe in and firmly assert the leatherback turtles' right to exist;

WHEREAS leatherback turtles are valued for scientific, socioeconomic, and cultural reasons;

WHEREAS the Pacific leatherback turtle nesting population has plummeted from 91,000 in 1980 to less than 5,000 in 2002;

WHEREAS the Pacific leatherback turtle has shown a 95% decline throughout its range in the last 22 years and is in imminent danger of extinction;

WHEREAS the principal threats to Pacific leatherback turtles are pelagic longlines, gillnets, unsustainable exploitation of eggs and destruction of nesting habitat;

WHEREAS pelagic longline and gillnet fisheries are causing unsustainable mortality to sea turtles, seabirds, sharks, bluefin tuna, billfish and other species;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

The undersigned Pacific Leatherback Survival Conferees:

Request that the governments of all nations where Pacific leatherback turtles nest immediately protect these sites, stop egg collection and maximize hatchling survival;

Request that emergency national and international funds be appropriated to implement all conservation actions necessary for the survival of the species;

Call on the United Nations, United States and all other nations to institute a moratorium on pelagic longline, gillnet and other fisheries harmful to Pacific leatherback turtles until such activities can be conducted without harm to the species, with allocation of transitional aid to affected fishers and communities.

Signed this day the 25th of April, 2002, at the Asilomar Conference Center, Monterey, California,

Conference Organizing Committee:

Larry Crowder
Stephen Toth Professor of Marine Biology
Nicholas School of the Environment
Duke University Marine Lab

Pamela Plotkin
Director, Office of Research and Sponsored
Programs
Frostburg State University

Sylvia Earle,
National Geographic Explorer in Residence
Executive Director for Marine Programs,
Conservation International

James R. Spotila
Drexel University

Rod Mast,
Vice President, Conservation International

Todd Steiner
Director
Sea Turtle Restoration Project

Conference Participants:

Randall Arauz
Central American Director
Sea Turtle Restoration Project

Mario A. Boza
Wildlife Conservation Society, Costa Rica

Juan Carlos Cantu
Greenpeace Mexico

Didiher Chacón
ANAI, Costa Rica

Brendan Cummings
Center for Biological Diversity

Chris Dumas
University North Carolina, Wilmington
Dep't. of Economics and Finance

Scott Eckert
Hubbs Sea World Research Institute

Tim Eichenberg
Environmental Lawyer

Nina Fascione
Defenders of Wildlife

Charlotte Flinn
Sustain

Isaac Harp
Kahea Ocean Program Director

Erica Heimberg
Sea Turtle Restoration Project

Ken Hinman
NCCM
National Coalition for Marine Conservation

Doug Israel
Sea Turtle Restoration Project

Steve Katz
Earthjustice
Turtle Island Restoration Network Board Chair

Samuel LaBudde
Biologist

Hock Chark Liew
Sea Turtle Research Unit
University College of Science and Technology,
Malaysia

Rod Mast
Conservation International

Sheda Morshed
Sea Turtle Restoration Project

Wallace J. Nichols
WILD COAST

Frank Paladino
Leatherback Task Force, Indiana Purdue University

Gil Radonski
Recreational Fishing Alliance

Georgita Ruiz,
Procuraduría Federal de Protección al Ambiente
Delegación Oaxaca

Carl Safina
Author, and VP for Marine Conservation, Audubon

Debbie Sivas
Earthjustice

Kelly Stewart

Lynn Stone
Ruckus Society

Read Vanderbilt,
Sea Turtle Restoration Project

Reuven Walder,
Turtle Island Restoration Network

N. B. Woody
Retired Nat'l. Sea Turtle Coordinator,
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service