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MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN

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Fifteenth Meeting of SPA/BD Focal Points

Videoconference, 23-25 June 2021

Agenda item 5: Conservation of Species and Habitats

The Pan-Mediterranean Sea Turtle Stranding Protocol

Note:

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Note by the Secretariat

1. The necessity of the elaboration of a Pan-Mediterranean Stranding Protocol and Database, for data collection regarding sea turtles of the Mediterranean, has been identified as a priority within the Updated Action Plan for the Conservation of Mediterranean Marine Turtles (*Decision IG.24/7, 2019*) as well as by the Demography Working Group of the 5th Mediterranean Conference on Marine Turtles (Turkey, 19-24 April 2015)

2. The “Development of a Pan-Mediterranean Stranding Protocol & Database” has been launched by MEDASSET in the framework of the MAVA funded project “Conservation of Marine Turtles in the Mediterranean Region”.

3. The Pan-Mediterranean Stranding Protocol has been presented and discussed during a workshop organized by MEDASSET in February 2020 in Athens, Greece, chaired by Dr Flegra Bentivegna and participants included SPA/RAC, INFO/RAC and representatives from national authorities, research institutes and NGOs from nine Mediterranean countries: Italy, Greece, Croatia, Turkey, Lebanon, Israel, Libya, Tunisia, and Algeria, who are involved in national networks or in the collection of data in their country.

4. The Pan-Mediterranean Sea Turtle Stranding Protocol is hereby presented to the Fifteenth Meeting of SPA/BD Focal Points for review. The Focal Points are invited to take note of the Protocol.

Introduction

1. The Mediterranean Sea is a biodiversity hotspot of high importance worldwide and hosts significant sea turtle populations across its range for mating, nesting, as well as for feeding and wintering of adult, sub-adult and juvenile individuals. It is the largest semi-closed basin on our planet surrounded by 22 countries with a total coastline length of 46.000 km, consequently sea turtle strandings occur every day across the Mediterranean, either alive, injured or dead. It is important that these incidents are managed and recorded.
2. To date, some Mediterranean countries have setup a National Stranding Network and use a specific protocol for recordings, whereas others operate independently, applying different protocols within the same region. The necessity of the elaboration of a Pan-Mediterranean Stranding Protocol and Database, for data collection regarding sea turtles of the Mediterranean, has been identified as a priority (*2019 SPA/RAC Updated 'Action Plan for the Conservation of Mediterranean Marine Turtles'; Demography Working Group of the 5th Mediterranean Conference on Marine Turtles 'Demography of marine turtle nesting in the Mediterranean Sea: a gap analysis and research priorities'*). The setup and operation of a functional and harmonised pan-Mediterranean national stranding monitoring effort shall directly contribute to the implementation of the ongoing UNEP/MAP Ecosystem Approach and Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme (IMAP).
3. MEDASSET, perceiving this necessity and priority, implemented an activity for the “Development of a Pan-Mediterranean Stranding Protocol & Database” in the framework of the project “Conservation of Marine Turtles in the Mediterranean Region” (2018-2022) which is funded by the MAVA Foundation and is implemented by ARCHELON, DEKAMER, MEDASSET, MedPAN, NMPZ, SPA/RAC (leader), WWF Greece, WWF Turkey. MEDASSET distributed a questionnaire to all sea turtle related stakeholders across the Mediterranean, in order to map the current status, gaps and needs of National Stranding Networks. A workshop was organized in February 2020 in Athens, Greece, chaired by Dr Flegra Bentivegna and participants included SPA/RAC, INFO/RAC and representatives from national authorities (Ministries), research institutes and NGOs from nine Mediterranean countries: Italy, Greece, Croatia, Turkey, Lebanon, Israel, Libya, Tunisia, and Algeria. Representatives were directly involved in national networks or in the collection of data in their country. The purpose of the workshop was: a) to discuss the results of the survey with the invited experts and b) to formulate the first Draft for the common Pan-Mediterranean Stranding Protocol and discuss the technical specifications of a common Database. Detailed information is provided in the activity’s technical report which is available at www.medasset.org (Rae V., E. Touloupaki. 2020. *Development of a Pan-Mediterranean Sea Turtle Stranding Protocol & Database: Technical Report. A report by MEDASSET. 36 pp*).
4. The Pan-Mediterranean Sea Turtle Stranding Protocol is hereby presented to the Fifteenth Meeting of SPA/BD Focal Points for review and approval. The Focal Points are invited to take note of the Protocol, translate, and distribute it nationally for use by the National Stranding Network.
5. Next steps include the finalization of the technical specifications of a common Database in collaboration with SPA/RAC and INFO/RAC. This initiative, with the support of the RACs and Focal Points will ultimately result in the optimal collection of data, in a common and shared database, applying a common standardised methodology, through a harmonised approach, hence addressing the transboundary nature of the sea turtle life history strategy and effectively informing decision and policy making.

Pan-Mediterranean Marine Turtle Stranding Protocol

IMPORTANT HEALTH HAZARD NOTICE: Do NOT touch or attempt to move the sea turtle without appropriate protective garments/ equipment.

RELEVANT AUTHORITY DETAILS (Name, Tel.):

1) OBSERVER's DETAILS

Name:

Telephone number/ e-mail:

Recording source (e. g. 1st respondent):

2) AFFILIATION / POSITION (optional):

3) DISCOVERY OF THE TURTLE

Recording ID Code:

Date:

Time (24hr format):

Please circle: Beach In- water Other (state below)

4) STRANDING LOCATION

Country & Region:

Location (e. g. the name of the beach):

Latitude/ Longitude: /

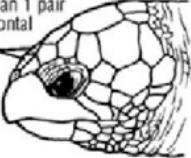
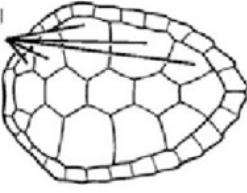
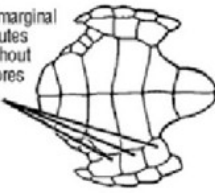
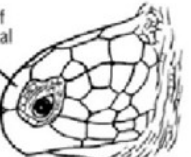
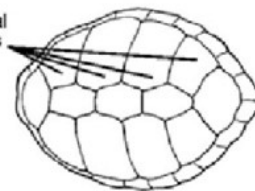
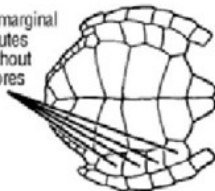

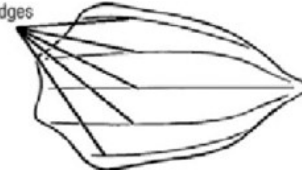

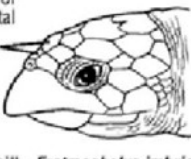
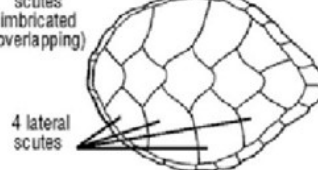
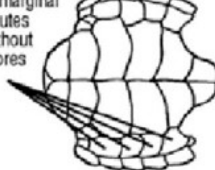
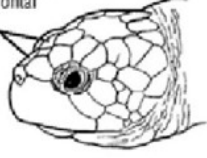
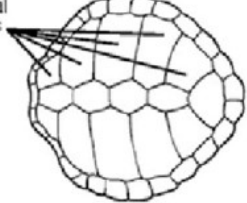
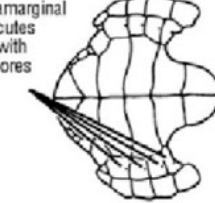
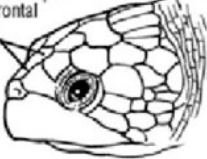
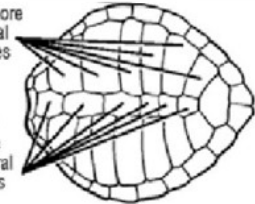
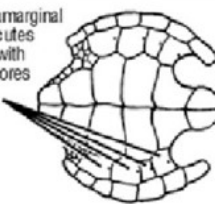
Closest town or landmark:

5) SPECIES ID

A. Species (Please tick box)

Photo taken with scaled object (please circle): YES NO

SPECIES IDENTIFICATION

<p>more than 1 pair of prefrontal scales</p>  <p>Loggerhead - <i>Caretta caretta</i></p>	<p>5 lateral scutes</p> 	<p>3 inframarginal scutes without pores</p> 	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>1 pair of prefrontal scales</p>  <p>Green turtle - <i>Chelonia mydas</i></p>	<p>4 lateral scutes</p> 	<p>4 inframarginal scutes without pores</p> 	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>no scales</p>  <p>Leatherback - <i>Dermochelys coriacea</i></p>	<p>ridges</p> 	<p>no scutes</p> 	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>head</p> <p>2 pairs of prefrontal scales</p>  <p>Hawksbill - <i>Eretmochelys imbricata</i></p>	<p>carapace</p> <p>scutes imbricated (overlapping)</p> <p>4 lateral scutes</p> 	<p>plastron</p> <p>4 inframarginal scutes without pores</p> 	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>more than 1 pair of prefrontal scales</p>  <p>Kemp's ridley - <i>Lepidochelys kempii</i></p>	<p>5 lateral scutes</p> 	<p>4 inframarginal scutes with pores</p> 	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>more than 1 pair of prefrontal scales</p>  <p>Olive ridley - <i>Lepidochelys olivacea</i></p>	<p>6 or more lateral scutes</p> <p>6 or more vertebral scutes</p> 	<p>4 inframarginal scutes with pores</p> 	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>UNKNOWN</p>			<input type="checkbox"/>

B. Reliability of species identification (please circle)

Uncertain

Probable

Certain

6) CONDITION OF TURTLE (please circle): *ALIVE* or *DEAD*

If *ALIVE*, is turtle *INJURED*: *YES* or *NO*

If *DEAD*, what decomposition state: *Freshly dead*

Moderately decomposed

Severely decomposed

Dried carcass

Skeleton bones only

7) MEASUREMENTS

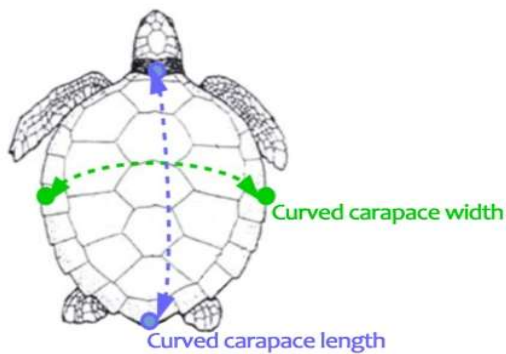
Measurement Type (please circle): *Accurate (tape measure)*

Approximate (include scaled photo)

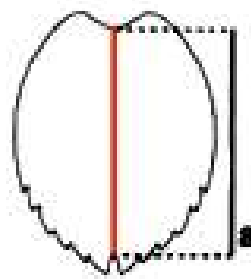
Curved carapace length:

Curved carapace width:

If possible, weight:



a. Minimum (CCL_{min} / SCL_{min})



8) TAG/Any other monitoring device (please circle):

Absent

Present (state details below)

LOCATION	TYPE (plastic/ metal/ device etc.)	CODE NUMBER	CONTACT DETAILS	PHOTO TAKEN
Front Right				
Front Left				
Rear Right				
Rear Left				
Carapace				

9) STATUS OF STRANDED INDIVIDUAL

If *ALIVE* (please circle): *Released* or *Injured*

If **INJURED**, state name & address of rehabilitation center:

If **DEAD**, (please circle):

Necropsy (State where):

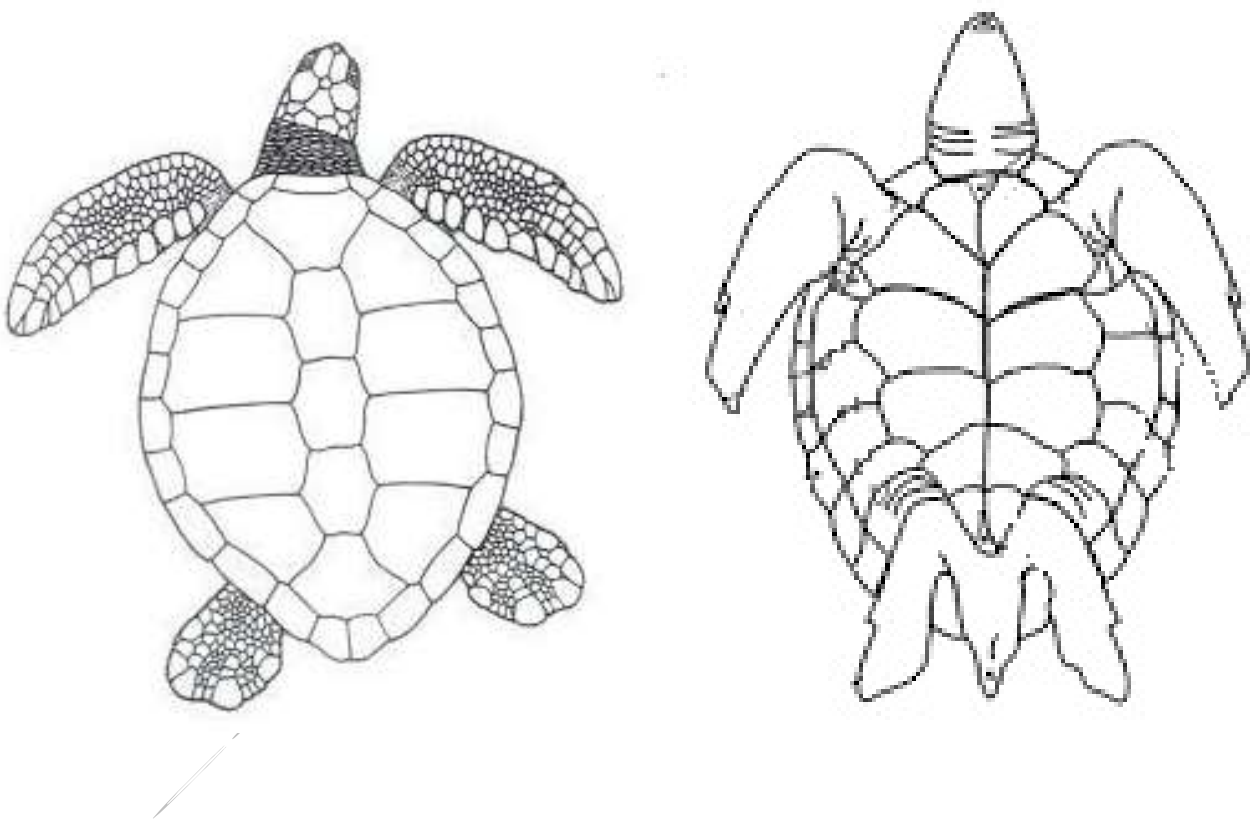
Samples Taken: YES or NO

Buried/ Discarded (State where):

Other:

10) REMARKS

Mark on the drawing the position of anything of interest e. g. injuries, debris, fishing gear entanglement etc. Label markings stating possible causes.



Please add turtle photos of dorsal, ventral and views

Observer Signature

Focal Point Signature