

**Draft resolution on the enhanced protection and management [Japan : replace “protection and management” by “conservation”] of sea turtle breeding, feeding and nursery areas and the designation of key areas as Ramsar Sites**

*Submitted by France and Senegal*

**Action required:**

- The Standing Committee is invited to study and validate the draft resolution below for its consideration and desired approval at the 13th Session of the Conference of the Parties.
- The implementation of this resolution does not require any financial means of the Ramsar Convention Secretariat.

**Introduction**

1. In its Article 2 regarding the List of Ramsar Sites, the Ramsar Convention considers that the ecological functions of wetlands as habitats supporting a characteristic flora and fauna are fundamental. The choice of sites can be based on their international importance from a zoological point of view, as waterfowl habitat, but not exclusively. Sea turtles constitute a group that meets Criterion 2.
2. Moreover, Point 1 of Article 4 of the Convention also specifies that for all wetlands, the Contracting Parties should promote the conservation of wetlands and waterfowl by establishing nature reserves, whether they are included in the List or not, and they should provide adequately for their wardening.

11. Thz Convention also already took resolutions concerning the marine turtles : RECALLING Resolution VII.21 of the Ramsar Convention on the need to enhance the conservation and wise use of intertidal wetlands, notably seagrass beds, mangroves and rocks that several species including sea turtles need to feed and grow;

12. ALSO RECALLING, Resolution VIII.4 and of the Ramsar Convention on wetland issues in integrated coastal zone management;

13. ALSO RECALLING Resolution VIII.32. of the Ramsar Convention on the conservation, integrated management, and sustainable use of mangrove ecosystems and their resources, which are important for the feeding and growth of some sea turtle species, as are coral reefs;

3. This draft resolution aims to urge the Parties on the one hand to reinforce the conservation and management measures for wetlands presenting challenges for the marine turtle target species and, on the other hand, to designate them as Ramsar Sites or reinforce their protection by other legal means.

## Draft resolution XIII.xx

### Enhanced protection and management of sea turtle breeding, feeding and nursery areas and the designation of key areas as Ramsar Sites

1. RECALLING that the seven species of sea turtle (Dermochelyidae: *Dermochelys coriacea* ; Cheloniidae: *Chelonia mydas*, *Caretta caretta*, *Eretmochelys imbricata*, *Lepidochelys olivacea*, *Lepidochelys kempii*, *Natator depressa*) have an unfavourable conservation status from vulnerable to critically endangered and ALSO RECALLING that in order to live and survive these species depend on the conservation of their breeding, feeding and nursery zones, which are marine and coastal areas;
2. CONSIDERING that furthermore all sites that are home to individuals belonging to the abovementioned species meet Criterion 2 of the Convention for inclusion in the List of Ramsar Sites, and that consequently, the Ramsar Convention should play a role as mobiliser by encouraging the Parties to strengthen their actions in favour of the wetlands that are essential to these species;
3. ALSO CONSIDERING that sea turtles are included in the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) also known as the Washington Convention (Appendix I), the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) also known as the Bonn Convention (Appendices I and II), the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles (CIT) for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles, the Cartagena Convention, the Berne Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats, the Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution or the Barcelona Convention, the Convention on Biological Diversity or the Rio Convention, and regional agreements (IOSEA, the Abidjan MoU), which encourage their respective Parties everyone to provide better protection for sea turtles;
4. NOTING the existence of numerous tools and mechanisms on an oceanic scale such as for example for the South Pacific and Western Pacific, the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), the Pacific Islands Regional Marine Species Conservation Action Plan, the Permanent Commission for the South Pacific (CPPS), and the Single Species Action Plan for the Loggerhead Turtle *Caretta caretta* in the South Pacific Ocean adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the CMS in Quito in November 2014 [USA : replace with the Indian Ocean Southeast Asian Marine Turtle MOU (IOSEA)];
5. -NOTING ALSO that some sea turtle subpopulations have increased in certain areas by the various efforts for conservation;
6. CONCERNED by the fact that several regional populations of sea turtle are facing a high risk of extinction, and NOTING the degradation of their coastal habitats, the significant impact from

~~fisheries bycatch the great impact of by catches at sea~~ and also NOTING the excessively high mortality rates due to the taking of eggs, the destruction of adult females on the nesting beaches by local human populations and the impact of introduced predators [Venezuela : replace “introduced predators” by “the exotic invasive species”], in addition to predation and natural mortality of the eggs and ~~hatchlings newly hatched turtles~~;

7. HIGHLIGHTING the fact that during their life cycle sea turtles use a wide variety of coastal habitats such as intertidal zones, estuaries, mangroves, rocks, seagrass beds, coral reefs;
8. CONSIDERING that marine and coastal feeding and nursery areas, in particular seagrass beds, coral reefs and mangroves, are often threatened physically and chemically by mineral, industrial and port, and hotel infrastructures as well as other human activities (agriculture, household and industrial effluents);
- [8. Oceania with slight rewriting : §. RECOGNISING the role of traditional owners, indigenous peoples local communities in turtle conservation and management]
9. CONSIDERING that the protection of nesting beaches, marine and coastal feeding and nursery areas will allow the survival rate of adult female, newly hatched and immature turtles to increase;
10. NOTING that UNEP/CMS/Resolution 12.25 “Promoting Conservation of Critical Intertidal and Other Coastal Habitats for Migratory Species” adopted by the Twelfth Session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) (Manila, October 2017) urges ~~CMS~~the Parties to conserve intertidal and coastal habitats for migratory species;
11. NOTING that 114 Ramsar Sites and 53 Contracting Parties already provide habitat for at least one species of sea turtle (see the annexed table);
- ~~11. RECALLING Resolution VII.21 of the Ramsar Convention on the need to enhance the conservation and wise use of intertidal wetlands, notably seagrass beds, mangroves and rocks that several species including sea turtles need to feed and grow;~~
- ~~12. ALSO RECALLING Resolution VIII.4 of the Ramsar Convention on wetland issues in integrated coastal zone management;~~
- ~~13. ALSO RECALLING Resolution VIII.32 of the Ramsar Convention on the conservation, integrated management, and sustainable use of mangrove ecosystems and their resources, which are important for the feeding and growth of some sea turtle species, as are coral reefs;~~
12. RECOGNIZING that the memorandum of understanding on sea turtles of the Atlantic coast of West Africa adopted resolutions whose application can help improve the conservation of sea turtles;
13. RECALLING that a MoU has been signed between IAC and the Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention and that its goal is to join the efforts made in the Frame of the Ramsar Convention and IAC, with the aim of building capacities for the Parties of both Conventions to identify and strengthen the conservation and rational use of Ramsar sites.

## THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

14. URGES [USA : replace with ENCOURAGES] the Contracting Parties whose coastlines contain sea turtle breeding areas, nesting beaches [Japan : add "important" before "nesting beaches"], coastal and marine feeding and nursery areas, to identify index nesting and foraging sites these sites and ensure the populations are monitored as precisely as possible, in order to improve our knowledge of the distribution, numbers and state of health of each of the species involved;
15. URGES [USA : replace with ENCOURAGES] the Contracting Parties to strengthen the conservation and management of ~~the zones~~ those identified index nesting and foraging sites, and notably if possible to designate them as Ramsar Sites, based on Criterion 2, ~~all the nesting sites and feeding and nursery habitats of the various species of sea turtle~~, and to strengthen this designation through the promulgation of the appropriate protective measures in accordance with their legislation, in particular through the creation of marine protected areas, as appropriate;
16. ENCOURAGES the Contracting Parties to develop and implement management plans for these sites, by integrating specific ~~operations~~ means for the protection or restoration of breeding, nesting, feeding and nursery habitats for the different species;
17. ~~RECALLS that sea turtles are migratory and~~ ENCOURAGES the Contracting Parties to consult each other, and work through existing regional agreements such as the Indian Ocean Southeast Asian Marine Turtle MOU, the Abidjan Agreement, SPREP and the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles as in, the Action Plan for the Loggerhead Turtle in the South Pacific Ocean, ~~the IOSEA Network of Sites of Importance for Marine Turtles, in the framewok of the CMS and of the Barcelona Convention~~, in order to protect habitats in networks allowing for greater safety for sea turtles during their life cycle and in their movements;
18. STRESSES the urgent need to take, whenever possible, the measures required to reduce the lightning and the erosion of the beaches used for breeding and to fight against the impact of predators introduced [Venezuela : replace "introduced predators" by "the exotic invasive species"] to these sites, and to develop good practices to sensibilise the inhabitants of coastal zones;
19. [USA : delete §20] RECOMMENDS that the Contracting Parties, research institutes and organisations devoted to the protection of coastal and marine biodiversity set up integrated conservation programmes, which can call on responsible and regulated ecotourism, including support for the training of guides and the launching of village community aid programmes, in order to increase respect for immature and adult turtles, their nests and their habitats, which can generate greater and more sustainable financial resources than poaching and the exploitation of dead turtle by-products (meat, fat, shells);
20. [USA : delete §21] CALLS ON the International Organizations to join forces to establish, in collaboration with all the stakeholders, regional cooperation, notably inside Ramsar regional initiatives, and at least in each key habitats s for the sea turtle's terrestrial and coastal cycle, an effective programme to monitor the conservation of sea turtle habitats at all stages of the animals' life cycle: eggs, hatchlings, juveniles and adults of both sexes;

21. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to review their Ramsar site management plans to seek to ensure they include sea turtle conservation actions, as appropriate;
22. REQUESTS the Secretariat to work with the secretariats of the Inter-American Sea Turtle Convention and the Indian Ocean Southeast Asian Marine Turtle MOU under the Convention on Migratory Species to further sea turtle conservation in Ramsar sites, and where possible and subject to the availability of resources, for these secretariats to work with Contracting Parties to include sea turtle conservation actions in their Ramsar site management plans.

**[USA : delete Annex 1] Annex 1**

**Existing Ramsar Sites with coastal and marine sea turtle habitats**

Jacques Fretey and Patrick Triplet  
February 2018

Species involved (nesting beaches, nursery areas, feeding areas)\*:  
*Lepidochelys olivacea* = Lo (IUCN Red List status: Vulnerable)  
*Lepidochelys kempii* = Lk (IUCN Red List status: Critically Endangered)  
*Chelonia mydas* = Cm (IUCN Red List status: Endangered)  
*Chelonia agassizii* or *C. mydas agassizii* = Ca (IUCN Red List status: Endangered)  
Cc = *Caretta caretta* (IUCN Red List status: Endangered)  
*Eretmochelys imbricata* = Ei (IUCN Red List status: Critically Endangered)  
*Dermochelys coriacea* = Dc (IUCN Red List status: Vulnerable)

**In red: Site considered to be a hotspot of regional or international interest for the species**

\*Note: Depending on the description of the Site; there may be errors in the identification of species or lack of knowledge about existing habitats

List of sites to be added :

- "Bahía de Samborombón" (N° 885) with the following turtles species: *Chelonia mydas* (Cm), *Caretta caretta* (Cc) and *Dermochelys coriacea* (Dc)
- Región: América Latina : N° 59 - N° Sitio: 290 - Bañados del Este y Franja Costera, Cerro Verde - Especies: Lo, Cm; Cc; Dc
- Japan : Yakushima Nagata-hama, the largest nesting beach for North Pacific population of Loggerhead turtle
- Asie-India : 'Bhitarkanika' which is one of the worlds largest rookeries of the Olive Ridley turtle
- Australian list to be inserted
- Exhaustive list to be established by the secretariat

<b>North America – Central America Region</b>				
N°	Site number	Country	Name of Site	Species present
01	590	USA	Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge	Lk, Cm, Cc, Ei
02	1595	Mexico	Corredor Costero La Asamblea - San Francisquito	Ca, Cc, Ei, Dc, Lo
03	1778	Mexico	Parque Nacional Cabo Pulmo	Ca, Cc, Ei, Dc, Lo
04	1349	Mexico	Playa Tortuguera El Verde Camacho	Ca, Ei, Dc, Lo
05	1824	Mexico	Sistema Lagunar Ceuta	Lo, Dc
06	1350	Mexico	Playón Mexiquillo	Lo, Cm, Dc
07	1327	Mexico	Playa Tortuguera Tierra Colorada	Dc, Lo
08	1821	Mexico	Playa Barra de la Cruz	Dc, Cm, Ei, Lo
09	1326	Mexico	Playa Tortuguero Rancho Nuevo	<b>Lk</b> , Ei, Cc, Cm
10	1348	Mexico	Playa Tortuguera Chenkán	Cm, Ei
11	1764	Mexico	Santuario Playa Boca de Apiza – El Chupadero – El Tecuanillo	Lo
12	1818	Mexico	Laguna Chalacatepec	Lo
13	1795	Mexico	Playa de Maruata	Lo, Dc, Ca
14	1823	Mexico	Sistema Estuarino Puerto Arista	Ei, Ca, Lo, Dc

15	1448	Mexico	Laguna Costera El Caimán	Cm/Ca ?
16	1345	Mexico	Islas Marietas	Lo
17	1792	Mexico	Estero Majahuas	Lo
18	1334	Mexico	Reserva de la Biosfera Chamela - Cuixmala	Dc, Lo
19	1328	Mexico	Reserva Estatal El Palmar	Ei
20	1360	Mexico	Area de Protección de Flora y Fauna Yum Balam	Ei ?
21	1449	Mexico	Parque Nacional Arrecifes de Cozumel	Cc, Ei, Cm
22	1323	Mexico	Parque Nacional Isla Contoy	Ca, Cc, Ei, Dc
23	1777	Mexico	Manglares de Nichupté	Cm
24	1921	Mexico	Manglares y Humedales del Norte de Isla Cozumel	Cc, Cm, Ei
25	1329	Mexico	Sian Ka'an	Cm, Cc, Ei, Dc
26	2134	Honduras	Sistema de Humedales de la Isla de Utila	Cm, Cc, Ei
27	2189	Honduras	Sistema de Humedales Laguna de Zambucco	Dc, Ei
28	1135	Nicaragua	Cayos Miskitos y Franja Costera Inmediata	Cm, Ei
29	1586	El Salvador	Complejo Bahía de Jiquilisco	Ca, Dc, Ei, Lo
30	2207	El Salvador	Complejo Barra de Santiago	Ca, Dc, Ei, Lo
31	1907	Panama	Humedal de Importancia Internacional Damani-Guariviara	Cc, Cm
32	1319	Panama	Bahía de Panamá	Cc
33	783	Costa Rica	Gandoca-Manzanillo	Cm, Dc, Ei

<b>Insular Caribbean Region</b>				
N°	Site number	Country	Name of Site	Species present
34	642	France	Grand-Cul-de-Sac-Marin de la Guadeloupe	Ei
35	2029	France	Zones humides et marines de Saint-Martin	Ei, Cm, Dc
36	1830	France	Etang des Salines en Martinique	Ei
37	493	United Kingdom	North, Middle and East Caicos Islands	Ei
38	2119	Netherlands	Northwest Curaçao	Ei, Cc, Cm
39	2120	Netherlands	Rif-Sint Marie	Dc, Ei
40	2270	Netherlands	Mullet Pond, St Maarten	Dc, Cm, Ei
41	1496	Trinidad and Tobago	Buccoo Reef – Bon Accord Lagoon Complex	Ei
42	1234	Cuba	Ciénaga de Lanier y Sur de la Isla de la Juventud	Cm, Cc
43	1135	Nicaragua	Cayos Miskitos y Franja Costera Inmediata	Cm, Ei
44	1820	Mexico	Parque Nacional Arrecife Alacranes	Ei ?
45	1768	Mexico	Laguna Xola-ParamáDc	Dc, Lo, Ca
46	856	Venezuela	Parce Nacional Archipiélago Los Roques	Ei Cm ?
47	2210	Dominican Republic	Humedales de Jaragua	Ei, Cc, Cm, Dc
48	1454	Jamaica	Palasadoes – Port Royal	Cm, Ei
49	1488	Antigua and Barbuda	Codrington Lagoon	Dc, Ei
50	2034	Grenada	Levera Wetland	Dc, Ei

Latin American Region				
51	Site Number	Country	Name of Site	Species present
52	643	France	Basse-Mana (réserve de l'Amana)*	<b>Dc</b> , Cm, Lo
53	1202	Ecuador	Humedales del Sur de Isabela	Ca
54	2259	Brazil	Atol das Rocas Biological Reserve	<b>Cm</b> , Cc, Ei
55	1902	Brazil	Abrolhos Marine National Park	Cc, Dc, Ei
56	2305	Brazil	Guaraqueçaba Ecological Station	Cm
57	414	Venezuela	Refugio de Fauna Silvestre de Cuare	Cm, Ei, Dc

\*First site to be designated as a Ramsar Site due to the importance of the terrestrial habitat for sea turtles \*\*\*

Africa Region				
N°	Site number	Country	Name of Site	Species present
58	250	Mauritania	Parc national du Banc d'Arguin	<b>Cm**</b> , Cc
59	1044	Mauritania	Chat Tboul	Cm, Cc
60	666	Mauritania	Parc national du Diawling	Cm, Cc
61	288	Senegal	Parc national du Delta du Saloum	Cm
62	1575	Cabo Verde	Curral Velho	<b>Cc</b>
63	2198	Guinea-Bissau	Archipel Bolama-Bijagós	<b>Cm</b> , Dc, Lo
64	572	Guinea	Iles Tristao	Cm, Lo, Ei
65	618	Guinea	Ile Blanche	Ei
66	1581	Côte d'Ivoire	Complexe Sassandra-Dagbego	Dc, Lo
67	1310	Equatorial Guinea	Río Ntem o Campo	Cm, Lo
68	1311	Equatorial Guinea	Reserva Natural del Estuario del Muni	Cm, Lo
69	1656	Gabon	Parc national de Pongara	<b>Dc</b> , Lo, Ei, Cm
70	352	Gabon	Petit Loango	Dc, Cm, Ei
71	353	Gabon	Setté Cama	<b>Dc</b>
72	1741	Congo	Conkouati-Douli	<b>Dc</b>
73	788	DRC	Parc marin des Mangroves	Lo

\*\*Feeding area of international importance

Indian Ocean – Red Sea Region				
N°	Site number	Country	Name of Site	Species present
74	1887	Seychelles	Aldabra Atoll	Ei, Cm
75	2073	France	Ile Europa	<b>Cm</b> , Ei
76	2002	France	Vasière des Badamiers - Mayotte	Ei, Cm
77	1077	United Kingdom	Diego Garcia	Ei, Cm
78	1015	Islamic Republic of Iran	Sheedvar Island	Ei, Cm
79	920	Bahrain	Hawar Islands	Cc, Cm, Ei, Dc
80	2293	United Arab Emirates	Bul Syayeeef	Ei, Cm ?



81	2125	United Arab Emirates	Aire protégée de mangroves et d'Alhafeya dans le Khor Kalba	Ei, Cm ?
82	2191	United Arab Emirates	Sir Bu Nair Island Protected Area	Ei
83	1079	State of Libya	Réserve Naturelle des Iles des Palmiers	Cc, Cm
84	1239	Djibouti	Haramous-Loyada	Cc, Cm
85	1860	Sudan	Suakin-Gulf of Agig	Ei, Cm
86	2082	Kenya	Tana River Delta	Ei, Cm, Lo
87	1443	United Republic of Tanzania	Rufiji-Mafia-Kilwa Marine Ramsar Site	Ei, Cm
88	344	South Africa	Turtle Beaches – Coral Reefs of Tongaland	Cc, Dc
89	2303	Madagascar	Iles Barren	Dc, Cc, Ei, Cm, Lo
90	2302	Madagascar	Mangroves de Tsiribihina	Ei, Cm

<b>South Pacific – Oceania Region</b>				
N°	Site number	Country	Name of Site	Species present
91	1	Australia	Cobourg Peninsula	Ei, Cc, Cm
92	632	Australia	Bowling Green Bay	Cm
93	1971	USA	Palmyra Atoll National Wildlife Refuge	Ei, Cm
94	2143	Kiribati	Nooto-North Tarawa	Cm
95	2072	Marshall Islands	Namdrik Atoll	Cm
96	1834	France	Lagon de Moorea – Polynésie française	Ei, Cm

<b>Asia Region</b>				
N°	Site number	Country	Name of Site	Species present
97	2203	Vietnam	Con Dao National Park	Dc, Ei
98	2152	Thailand	Ko Kra Archipelago	Ei, Cm
99	1931	Sri Lanka	Kumana Wetland Cluster	Cm, Lo, Cc
100	1910	Sri Lanka	Vankalai Sanctuary	Cm, Lo, Cc
101	2280	Myanmar	Meinmalha Kyun Wildlife Sanctuary	Ei
102	2062	Japan	Yonahawan	Ei
103	1546	Japan	Keramashoto Coral Reef	Ei, Cm, Cc
104	2249	China	Guangdong Nanpeng Archipelago Wetlands	Cc, Cm
105	1150	China	Huidong Harbor Sea Turtle National Nature Reserve	Cm
106	2271	Philippines	Negros Occidental Coastal Wetlands Conservation Area	Ei, Cm, Lo

<b>Mediterranean Region</b>				
N°	Site number	Country	Name of Site	Species present
107	2135	Montenegro	Tivat Saline (Tivatska solila)	Cc

108	1961	Algeria	Ile de Rachgoun (Wilaya de Aïn Temouchent)	Cc (Dc)
109	980	Lebanon/State of Libya	Tyre Cast Nature Reserve	Cc, Cm
110	1290	Albania	Butrint	Cc, Dc
111	1473	Morocco	Cap des Trois Fourches	Cc
112	2012	Tunisia	Iles Kerkennah	Cc, Cm, Dc
113	1704	Tunisia	Iles Kneiss avec leurs zones intertidales	Cc
114	62	Greece	Messolongi Lagoons	Cc, Cm

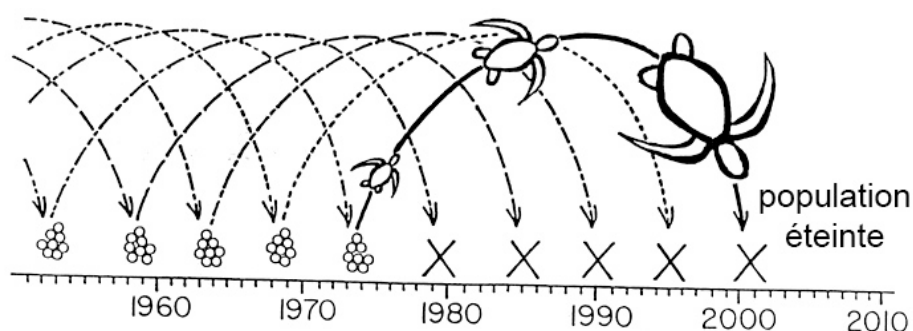


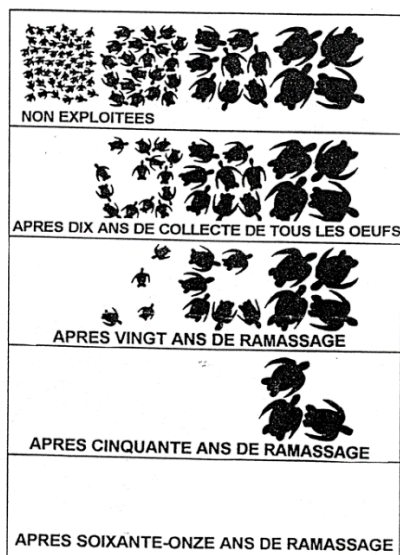
## NOTE TECHNIQUE DE PRÉSENTATION DU PROJET DE RESOLUTION

### Sur le renforcement de la protection et de la gestion des zones de reproduction, d'alimentation et de croissance des tortues marines, et sur la désignation au titre de Ramsar des sites à enjeux majeurs

Selon les systématiciens spécialisés sont reconnues 7 ou 8 espèces de tortues marines appartenant aux familles des Cheloniidés et des Dermochéliidés. Toutes (sauf *Natator depressus* dont les populations sont insuffisamment connues) ont un statut IUCN Red List allant de "vulnérable" à "en danger critique d'extinction".

Lorsque le Pr Archie Carr de l'Université de Floride, lança un cri d'alarme au milieu des années 50 à l'attention des Etats et de la communauté scientifique, annonçant un déclin des populations mondiales des tortues marines, les raisons anthropiques de cette situation paraissaient simples à combattre. Le massacre sur les plages de ponte des tortues femelles adultes et le braconnage des nids semblaient les activités humaines quasi uniquement responsables du déclin. Les schémas de Mortimer (1995) expliquaient alors très bien comment fonctionnait ce déclin du fait d'une maturité sexuelle excessivement tardive.





Les études scientifiques démontrent clairement que dans les conditions naturelles, les tortues marines, malgré une importante prédation naturelle dans les premières années de vie, ont une grande longévité et un grand pouvoir de reproduction.

Sur un grand nombre de plages de ponte furent créés à partir des années 1970 des projets associant recherche, identification des tortues femelles, surveillance des nids et sensibilisation des villageois. Les résultats des campagnes de conservation sont longs à obtenir puisque pour une espèce comme *Chelonia mydas* il faut attendre une cinquantaine d'années avant d'espérer une reproduction de tortues issues de nids protégés.

Quelques points noirs de massacres et de braconnage subsistent encore, surtout en Afrique occidentale.

Une surexploitation des adultes pour la viande, la graisse, l'écaïlle, depuis des siècles et la destruction totale de tous les nids sur de nombreuses plages ont conduit les populations de tortues à s'affaiblir considérablement à partir du XXe siècle. Progressivement de nouvelles menaces anthropiques sont apparues, comme la dégradation et l'aménagement des plages de ponte et l'enlèvement du sable, la pollution physique et chimique des eaux côtières, les captures accidentelles dans les engins de pêche (bycatch), l'entortillement dans des filets fantômes, la prédation des œufs et des tortues nouveau-nées par des espèces animales introduites ou envahissantes (rats, mangoustes, fourmis, coléoptères...), des porcs ou des chiens errants, le dérangement des femelles sur les plages de nidification par des lumières ou un tourisme non contrôlé, l'artificialisation du littoral,...

Autrefois, lorsqu'un villageois tuait une tortue pour nourrir sa famille, ce n'était pas plus grave pour la population concernée de tortues que la prédation naturelle d'une tortue de ce même stock, par exemple, par un Orque. Avec l'ouverture de villages vivant jusqu'alors en autarcie, l'envie d'acheter des produits manufacturés a nécessité l'utilisation d'argent donc le besoin d'en obtenir. Le commerce, voire le trafic transfrontalier, de produits issus des tortues marines était un moyen rapide de trouver de l'argent, mais a conduit à une augmentation des prélèvements sur les populations naturelles. Les quelques tentatives de ranching et farming n'ont fait qu'augmenter les prélèvements et augmenter les demandes commerciales, donc le braconnage.

Une érosion du littoral affecte de nombreux sites de ponte. L'érosion naturelle, en milieu tropical, est aggravée parfois fortement par les aménagements anthropiques tels que les épis, enrochements ou autres, qui engendrent des modifications dans les courants littoraux, voire la création de ports industrialo-minéraliers. Par le trafic intense des navires, une menace supplémentaire s'ajoutera.

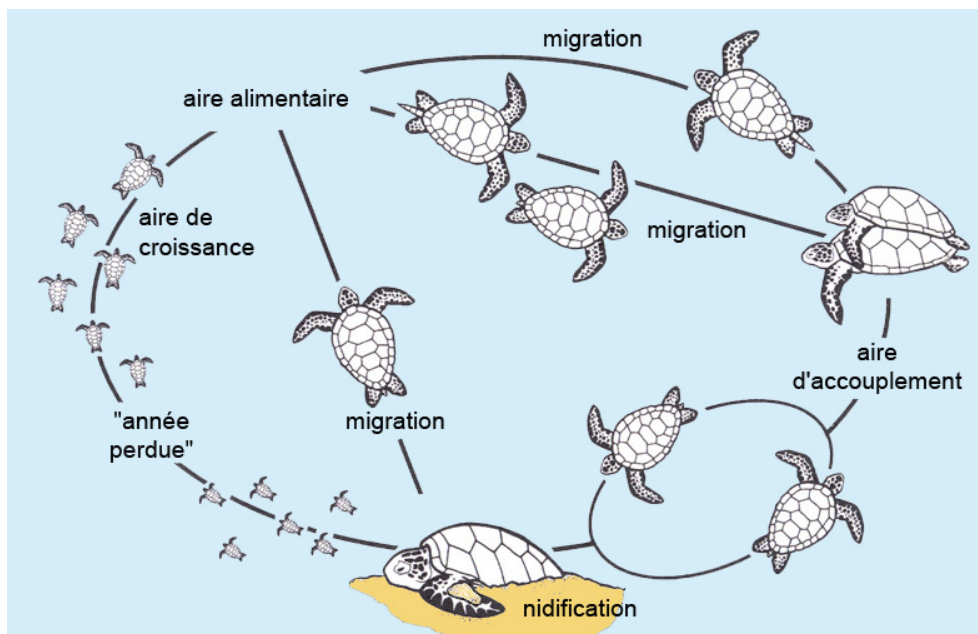
Le réchauffement climatique sera demain une nouvelle menace dont on peut déjà imaginer les répercussions sur la reproduction des tortues marines. La montée des eaux marines supprimera des plages de ponte, surtout en milieu insulaire. L'élévation de la

température du substrat conduira, par le jeu du déterminisme du sexe par la température en cours de développement embryonnaire, à une féminisation des populations.

Quelle que soit l'espèce, le cycle de vie nécessite toujours des zones d'accouplement, soit très près des côtes soit au large, et des plages où les femelles viennent creuser un nid et déposer des œufs qui seront abandonnés sans couvaion.

Il nécessite également une période dite "année perdue" où les tortues nouveau-nées s'éloignent des côtes, puis un retour vers une aire de croissance côtière.

Selon les espèces et les populations régionales, les adultes sont résidents ou bien effectuent de très longues migrations entre aires d'alimentation et sites de ponte. Plus une femelle sera en bonne santé et aura une alimentation riche, plus ses pontes seront rapprochées et nombreuses. En rapport direct avec l'alimentation et l'âge, les tortues marines sont plus ou moins inféodées à des zones côtières rocheuses, à des récifs coralliens, à des herbiers, à des estuaires, à des mangroves...



La Convention sur la conservation des espèces migratrices appartenant à la faune sauvage (connue également sous le sigle CMS ou en tant que Convention de Bonn) vise à conserver les espèces migratrices terrestres, marines et aériennes dans l'ensemble de leur aire de répartition. La CMS a un rôle unique à jouer en attirant l'attention sur les 76 espèces en danger inscrites actuellement à l'Annexe I. Toutes les espèces de tortues marines, à l'exception de *Natator depressus*, sont inscrites à l'Annexe I de la CMS. À l'Annexe II sont inscrites les espèces migratrices, dont les tortues marines, qui ont besoin ou qui bénéficieraient notablement d'Accords de coopération internationale au titre de la CMS. Ceux-ci peuvent aller de traités juridiquement contraignants à des mémorandums d'accords moins formels. La Convention de Bonn, avec des instruments régionaux multi-espèces tels que le Mémorandum d'Accord sur les mesures de conservation des tortues marines de la côte atlantique de l'Afrique (MdA d'Abidjan) et le Mémorandum d'Entente sur la conservation et la gestion des tortues marines et de leur habitat de l'océan Indien et de l'Asie du Sud-Est (IOSEA) est devenue la convention de référence pour ces espèces.

Il existe déjà plus d'une centaine de sites Ramsar concernés directement par des habitats de tortues marines.

Les rivages de la Basse-Mana en Guyane française ont été le premier classement Ramsar (numéro 643) d'un site en raison de son intérêt international pour la nidification d'une espèce de tortue marine (*D. coriacea*), en plus de l'intérêt pour ses oiseaux d'eau. Ce classement Ramsar a permis d'accélérer les procédures de mise en réserve naturelle nationale, donc d'améliorer la conservation de ces habitats exceptionnels et de supprimer la destruction des tortues et le braconnage des nids.

La proposition de résolution vise à inciter les Parties concernées à développer des mesures de protection accompagnées de plans de gestion sur les habitats de reproduction, d'alimentation et de croissance, et à désigner comme sites Ramsar les habitats présentant les enjeux les plus importants pour ces espèces.

Jacques Fretey

*Senior Advisor IUCN/SSC Marine Turtle Specialist Group*

*Coordonnateur scientifique du Mémorandum d'Abidjan CMS/PNUE*

*Président de Chélonée*