

Minutes of Kemp's Ridley Recovery Team Meeting  
February 17 - 19, 2003  
Brownsville, Texas

Attendance at the team's 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting was good (see attached attendance list) although Therese Conant and Kristy Long were unable to attend due to inclement weather in the northeast. Jaime Pena, Bryan Arroyo and Sonja Ortiz helped with translations since the meeting was bilingual. Robyn Cobb took the meeting minutes.

A decision was made to defer discussion of the Introduction section of the Recovery Plan and other parts of the team's writing assignments from the October meeting since Therese was compiling these assignments and she was not in attendance.

Earl asked the team to start the meeting by considering agreement on the following:

- 1) The Kemp's Recovery Plan will be bi-national. Although the first Recovery Plan for this species was not signed and approved by Mexico, the (goal) is to have this revision signed by both countries. The team meetings need to provide a forum that "smoothes the way" toward this (goal) by making sure that both countries are on board through the entire process.
- 2) The team will reach decisions by consensus. The definition of consensus is that decisions are something that everyone can live with. At the October meeting, the team agreed to (make) decisions by consensus, with a majority vote, and the minority opinion being made part of the record, if consensus is not reached. Concern was expressed by a team member from Mexico that a majority vote could generate a situation where Mexico will be outvoted since U.S. members outnumber Mexican members. Earl agreed and stated that the only way for a bi-national recovery plan to be workable would be to have consensus on all the important issues and the team would need to operate with that in mind.

The issue of the pending decision on the shark fishery in Mexico was briefly discussed. The original proposed regulation was withdrawn due to the amount of protests and because it was poorly written. However, a shark fishery law will be enacted. Currently it is being revised and reexamined. Dr. Morreale brought scientific articles, documenting the huge impacts to sea turtles from this type of fishery, to give to Mexican team members. This issue was tabled in order to revisit it later during the threats discussion.

### **SEMARNAT Presentation**

Jose Maria Reyes gave a presentation on Mexico's national sea turtle program. Mexico's President has made it a priority to conserve resources for present and future generations. The national program's mission is carried out by coordination, followed by public involvement. Senor Reyes presented a flow chart diagramming the federal agencies that have some level of involvement in sea turtles, including PROFEPA, INE, ZOFEMATAC, etc. The coastal zone is recognized as being one of the critically important zones for which the future must be assured. The ultimate goal is to reach a state of perpetual protection of these important zones and within the coastal zone, to ensure the future of turtle nesting beaches. There are 140 non-government turtle camps and 32 camps that SEMARNAT operates. There is also state and municipal government involvement in some of the turtle camps. Therefore, coordination is complex.

The federal laws are strict and any use of any species is punishable by jail time. Activities that SEMARNAT believes other entities should help with include:

- 1) Universities - do research and protect turtles on their own lands,
- 2) SAGARPA - focuses on implementing fishing regulations, especially TEDS,
- 3) Working with individual fishermen to educate them about resources and develop buy-in to conservation,
- 4) NGO's are very important to sea turtle projects. Alma Leo added information about the involvement of NGO's in Tamaulipas. The State of Tamaulipas runs the camps with concessions to other groups like the Gladys Porter Zoo to work with the camps. Also, other NGO's such as scouts.

The plan for recovery of leatherbacks is a priority for SEMARNAT. Senor Reyes was encouraged to see all the expertise at the Kemps RT meeting and indicated that he would like the team to help elevate the Kemp's recovery to the same priority level as the leatherbacks with the Mexican government. He brought up the importance of feeding areas and suggested that the team not focus solely on nesting beaches. The Mexican government has been monitoring, with scant resources, the Laguna de Terminos, near Campeche. Kemp's are known from this area and there are records of nests at Isla de Carmen beach, the nearest beach to Laguna de Terminos. Perhaps this is an important feeding area as well for Kemp's and may present an opportunity to work for Kemp's conservation. He would like to supplement this work, especially since this is also an area of high density of white shrimp. In answer to a question about levels of fishing in the lagoon, it was pointed out that the lagoon is a "closed area" with no commercial fishing but maybe some subsistence fishing.

The regulatory aspect of Mexico's federal program: The Federal maritime zone is where the turtles nest. The federal government has many agreements with NGO's, under planning processes approved by SEMARNAT. There are a list of requirements for NGO'S to participate including having a plan that is submitted and approved. SEMARNAT has total responsibility for 32 camps. They do have sufficient funds to run the camps presently and would benefit from additional funding. This administration is committed to continue the turtle camps at the same level as was done under PESCA. SEMARNAT is focused on a new part of their program that involves the state and local entities in sea turtle conservation. There is recognition of the importance of local efforts. Their hope is that the whole republic will have local committees organized and functioning. In conjunction with this, they want to ensure international cooperation and that agreements are complied with. The Inter-American Convention for Sea Turtle Conservation has become a regional forum for working out agreements and doing on-the-ground conservation.

Summary of the Annual Budget: Total = 21 million pesos. 3.2 million pesos for operation. 3 million pesos for human resources, some of which will eventually be contracted out. 7.5 million pesos for construction of camps and vehicle repair. On the average, they purchase one pickup and 2 ATVs/year/camp. The leatherback project has a 5.6 million peso budget (includes SEMARNAT and outside funds). Under Vida Silvestre, Senor Reyes hopes that Kemp's will rise to this level. 1.8 million pesos for the Sea Turtle Center for Mexico - a research and education center in Oxaca. He extended an invitation to the team to visit the center and expressed a desire to build a similar center in Tamaulipas some time in the future. There is also strong support from the Mexican congress and SEMARNAT believes they are effectively convincing more congressmen to approve funding for sea turtle conservation. Senor Reyes showed a table summarizing the results of the 2002 nesting season at SEMARNAT camps. The table included preliminary data from March - September, but only for SEMARNAT camps, not other's camps. This data also did not cover the entire season for leatherbacks and greens. A handout was provided with corrected numbers, however the camps at Veracruz and Campeche were not included because this data has not been made available yet.

SEMARNAT's FY03 goals are to reach a 60% release of Kemp's young. There are 3 important sea turtle projects in Mexico:

- 1) Baja California - government and NGO's to work together to resolve issue of high mortality in cooperative manner. The Wilcox Foundation is working on an approach to convert local residents from consumption of eggs/turtles to using them as a tourism resource;
- 2) Leatherback project, and
- 3) Kemp's project.

A question was raised about the relationship between Vida Silvestre and SEMARNAT for camps that are in protected areas. Senor Reyes explained that it was a situation similar to the different agencies within Department of Interior in the U.S. Vida Silvestre actually administers the camps in protected areas.

Senor Reyes agreed to provide hard copies of his Power Point presentation.

### **Dr. Wibbels' Sex Ratio Research Presentation**

Dr. Thane Wibbels was invited to the recovery team meeting to present a summary of his research projects at the ridley nesting beaches in Tamaulipas. Since sea turtles have temperature-dependent sex determination, human intervention can result in biased sex ratios, which can have implications for conservation. Monitoring of nest temperatures allows prediction of sex of hatchlings. Since 1998, Thane has been monitoring Kemp's nests for temperatures. Since almost 100% of the eggs are transferred into corrals, all the eggs incubate in virtually the same thermal environment, thus manipulating sex ratios so it is important to understand the impacts of this. Thane sends data loggers to the beach where they're inserted into the middle of nests, and later returned to him for analysis. All the data since 1998 shows that during the middle third of incubation, the nest temperatures have been above the pivotal temperature of 30.2 C (pivotal temp = temp. that produces a 1:1 ratio male:female). The general results: For the 1<sup>st</sup> three years, he monitored 80 - 100 nests/year throughout the season. These nests produced a significantly biased female ratio. In 2001 and 2002, continued monitoring eggs in the corrals but added some in-situ monitoring as well. In 2001, small sample size with the result showing the in-situ nest also produced primarily females. Although the in-situ nests are slightly cooler, they are not cool enough to significantly change the sex ratio. Thane used averages of temperature within the nest, however, research has shown that there are only slight fluctuations in temperature within sea turtle nests. Thane stressed that he is not generating a model, but instead is using empirical data to predict outcomes.

In 2002, he increased the geographic range of the in-situ nests and used 3 egg corrals. In answer to a question regarding use of blood sampling to look at sex, Thane indicated that he had tried using hormone levels to sex hatchlings but it wasn't always effective. Using gonadal tissue samples from dead hatchlings he can (determine) the sex. Also in 2002, he had a large number of in-situ nests, including some with metal frames and fences. Also used small screens to exclude ghost crabs. These were removed one week before hatching. In 2002, there were 147 protected nests at Rancho Nuevo and Playa Dos, approximately 50 of these with data loggers. None of the protected nests suffered from predation. The results from this: Good hatch rate (>80%) from protected nests. The team was reminded that although the eggs were protected in these in-situ nests, there was no protection for the hatchlings during their beach crawl. Hatch rate for the corrals is approximately 60% (80% would be a great year). An explanation was offered regarding the use of corrals. In the beginning of the Kemp's projects on the beaches of Tamaulipas, there was 100% take, therefore use of corrals was instituted. Unfortunately, we do not know the numbers, distribution or impact of predators. Since all forest up to the mangroves has been cleared, may mean that predators are being concentrated near the beaches. Dr. Wibbels picked zones on the beach with heavy nesting for his study. Results of the 2002 analysis showed a female bias. It appears that protection does work. The next step is to get a handle on predation. Pat & Jaime would like to have students working on analyzing this.

With regard to beach temperatures and sex ratios produced, lack historic beach temperatures, and are unsure what all of this means. Do not know if there were some years with male bias or always female? There is a slight shift in the in-situ nests toward producing males, but still mostly females. Only the early nests produce 100% males. There were questions about the reliability of basing hatchling sex predictions solely using nest temperatures. Thane went back to the fact that there is little temperature fluctuation within sea turtle nests unless there's a rain event. Also, he's using histology of dead nestlings to check predictions and feels the correlation is good.

Bottom line = egg corrals are consistently producing high percentage of females. In-situ nests also produce female bias, but not as strong as what's seen in the corrals. Corral placement is high on the beach due to loss of nests to spring tides in previous years. As the placement goes higher above the water table, the temperatures rise. Lack trees, therefore no shading. The placement of the Rancho Nuevo corral has been in the same area for over 20 years, so probably have similar conditions each year. The conservation implications of this are something that the team needs to think about. Seeing an increase in numbers of Kemp's nesting females due to protection, etc., but the rate of increase may be affected by the sex ratios being produced. Thus it's important to monitor sex ratios that are

being produced. Questions were raised about the affect on the sex ratio of juveniles that have been caught. From previous years work by several researchers, including Michael Coyne and Dr. Shaver, the ratio of female:male has ranged from 1:1.3 to 3:1 (in more recent years). Other factors must also be taken into account such as the potential for differential rate of maturity. Dr. Owens stressed that this topic is a big, complicated one, but that there is some recent research on loggerheads that may have some bearing. The loggerhead research shows that female hatchlings are evidently smaller. Some thought that perhaps at the temperatures to produce females, more metabolic energy is consumed, and that this may lead to differential fitness, the males being more fit. Other observations include males crawling and swimming more rapidly, perhaps leading to differential survivorship. In answer to a question about determining the numbers of in-situ hatchlings that make it to the water, Dr. Burchfield indicated that he is working a method to determine that.

In summary, the team needs to keep this sex ratio question in mind. The research is looking at in-situ ratios on a beach that's been significantly altered. Now looking at sex ratios that may not be natural or historical. There are many factors that may be acting to increase temperatures on the nesting beach. In the early years of the Kemp's projects, 85% of eggs were fertile. Need to get a handle on fertility or fecundity. A discussion of using data from Grand Cayman Turtle Farm ensued. Evidently fertility of eggs was high at the farm, but viability was low due to early embryonic mortality. Dr. Morreale pointed out that low fertility was seen at a leatherbacks nesting beach where nests were left in-situ on a protected beach and one potential conclusion was that there was a sex ratio problem, and therefore, in that case, in-situ was not a solution.

Dr. Shaver was asked how she determines sex ratios and her answer was through monitoring temperatures, and incubation period, and later examining gonads from dead embryos and hatchlings. Her hatching success is approximately 85%, but does occasionally have nests that are total failures. One of the head-started female has laid three clutches in 2 different years that produced 0 hatchlings (no embryonic development was seen).

In Mexico, they had an 80 - 90% hatch in 1987 and '88 with a random sample of 20 nests showing 80-90% fertile. Now there is a question about what factors are influencing the dropping hatch rate: Age of the females - maybe what's being seen is a nesting population of younger, smaller females compared to the few older females that were nesting at the beginning of the Rancho Nuevo project. There may be a decline in the clutch size and hatch success with a neophyte nesting population. In answer to a question about whether clutches are ever seen at Rancho Nuevo with 100% lack of success, it was indicated that there have been failures in the corrals and in-situ. Embryos produce antibodies for protection but if the embryo dies, bacteria or fungal infections can develop and obscure determination of whether the egg was fertile or not. Since infertility is rare in the wild, if there are numbers of infertile clutches, it may be due to a lack of males. The Zoo candles reptile eggs and Pat suggested in 2003 perhaps candling a sample of Kemp's eggs on the beach to look at fertility, then using fertility as a measure of effectiveness of the sex ratio. Maybe develop a protocol for Kemp's. A discussion of "pink" nests (eggs that take on a pinkish hue) produced the observation that these were 100% unsuccessful. Candling was not universally acceptable to the team, but Dr. Luevano suggested that a study of the pink nests may be useful. Dr. Burchfield indicated that Mexican microbiologists have examined some "rosy" nests at Rancho Nuevo, so it would be useful to track that information down. Aside from the "rosy" nests, there are other nests that look normal but do not develop. Dr. Owen's suggested the possibility of using the population of Kemp's at Ixcaret(sp?) for research on these kind of reproductive questions.

Earl pointed out that the Recovery Team's role does not include making immediate recommendations on nesting beach management issues as this is the function of the Kemp's Ridley Working Group. Bryan pointed out that with the number of overlapping members from the Recovery Team and the Working Group together at this meeting, it might be useful to hear recommendations for needed research and it would help in the permitting process as well. Although the Recovery Team is focused on identifying recovery actions for the species, the impact of sex ratios could affect recovery and could lead to significant management actions. Since the issue of fertility is so important and there is not consensus on what should be done to investigate it, team members should think this over, develop "straw dogs", and bring them to the Recovery Team for consideration. Dr. Owens and Dr. Morreale will further look into this, consult with others, and bring their findings to the next team meeting in June. Alma will check on the results of the research done in Mexico on the pink eggs. Senor Reyes will look into getting Dr. Marquez's data and potentially bringing Dr. Marquez to meet with the team to answer questions.

## Threats Analysis

Earl introduced the team to the concept and table format for threats analysis that was developed by Dr. Bolton for the Loggerhead Recovery Team's use. In addition to listing threats and the life stages affected by them, the table also shows literature citations that support the team's statements. The team will identify threats by category, enter appropriate information into the table, and make a list of what each team member will further investigate and document. This allows for a more methodical approach and better enables comparison. Additionally, using the 7 categories tends to keep this closer to the 5-factor threats analysis used for listing. Threats are to be those factors, both current and projected, and described in comparison to the past. Since this will be the first iteration of this threats analysis, anyone with further information or ideas that come up after the meeting should email Earl or bring them up at the next meeting. It was agreed that the discussion and decisions on reproductive equivalents would be deferred to the next meeting when more background information can be available. Sheryan will gather the available information on Kemp's that will allow the team to determine the appropriate conversion factor to calculate the Kemp's adult equivalents for use in the table.

### DEFINITIONS FOR THE KEY SYMBOLS USED IN THE TABLE:

- + Mortality is believed to occur at this life stage, however, there are no data to allow quantification
- +d Mortality has been documented to occur at this life stage, however, there are insufficient data to quantify the magnitude
- I Non-lethal effects at this stage that may result in lowered fitness.
- # Numbers (mortality statistics) are available

For purposes of dealing with oceanic life stages vs neritic ones, the team decided to define open ocean as out beyond the Continental Shelf or >200 m depth. The team also agreed to use the size division at 60 cm straight-line between juveniles and adults. **\*The team must decide whether there is indeed an adult stage of Kemp's ridley that is oceanic.**

For some threats, there was discussion about what categories they belong in - whether they are threats to individuals or should be considered alterations to habitat. Some discussion regarding whether to restructure the 1<sup>st</sup> list of threats to more closely mirror what was developed in the table. **Earl will compare the table list and the original and see if any changes are needed to what we have done with the table at this meeting. Tom will email the tables to everyone. Team members need to closely check the threats analysis tables since this is where assignments are most clearly delineated.**

Earl suggested that the team might benefit from finding experts on some of these topics and inviting them to speak at future team meetings.

### RESOURCE USE:

Fisheries - There were a number of fishery-related questions raised when the team worked on the Resource Use category of threats. Among these questions were whether bottom trawling takes place in the ocean zone and Sheryan agreed to look into this. Also, questions about evidence of juvenile Kemp's along the coast of Mexico? Lilia indicated that she was unfamiliar with any data on juveniles but with regard to neritic zone bottom trawling, adults were definitely caught in this zone. Other questions had to do with mid/top trawling (jellyfish trawling), seabob fishery, dredge fishery, demersal longline, gillnets, drift gillnets, pound nets, pot fisheries, haul seine fisheries, channel nets, purse seines, commercial hook & line, and recreational hook & line. Sheryan agreed to look into numbers for some of these and Therese was assigned to check on demersal longline and demersal gillnets. With regard to longline pelagic fishing, although there is only one record of a Kemp's caught in the U.S., Mexico has documented Kemp's on longlines, but they were unsure of the sizes of turtles caught. For the question of pound

nets, which are in widespread use, Mexico has “charangas” just in the neritic zones - used in the lagoons in Mexico but there is not an associated take of turtles. For purse seines Sheryan indicated that although turtles can be caught, they can surface to breathe. Dr. Owens recalled an incident in which 50-60 Kemp’s stranded near the Aquarium of the Americas in Louisiana due to purse seining and Sheryan has also seen similar events. This was not considered to be a fishing technique used in the foraging grounds or off the nesting beaches in Mexico, but is a documented problem for dolphins. **Sheryan will get diagrams of each type of fishery. Someone from PESCA will be invited to come to future meetings to address fishery-related questions (Lilia and Alma will get a contact name). It would be most beneficial if team members would compose questions ahead of time so that the visitor(s) would have a chance to do some background work.**

Poaching - was still considered to occur in Mexico although infrequently. In Texas, on Boca Chica beach (most southern Texas beach), visitors still seem ready to take turtles and/or eggs, feel that nests must be protected there.

Industrial Plant Intake/entrainment - Check with cooling pond people at power plants. Also, check with stranding network. In Mexico, possibly at Veracruz.

Boat Strikes for neritic zone, look into numbers of juveniles. The Zoo staff does note deformities in their annual report from Mexico beaches.

Beach Cleaning - Only terrestrial. There are personal observations of nest burial (P. Burchfield).

Foot Traffic - Terrestrial only. In Mexico, not usually a problem for females, eggs or hatchlings. There is a peak of activity during Spring Break (Holy Week), the dates of which change annually. Late Spring Break of ‘03 may be a good opportunity for observation. In Texas, may be an issue for nesting females, cause false crawls. Maybe decrease fitness in nesting females. Horse and cattle traffic?

Recreational Beach Activities and Equipment - Terrestrial. Not problem in Mexico. In U.S., potential problem. Currently in Texas, not assumed to be a big problem. For eggs and hatchlings, bonfires could potentially be a problem.

Beach Vehicular Driving - In Mexico, for nesting females, at La Pesca may scare females occasionally. In Texas, Dr. Shaver has information.

## **CONSTRUCTION**

Beach Nourishment - not issue in Mexico currently. For eggs - in 2002, a nest on Galveston Island, Texas was laid in dredged material - poor hatching success. Hatchlings from this nest had some abnormalities.

Beach Armoring - no information from Texas or Mexico. In Florida, 20% state’s beaches are armored, impacts habitat, interferes with sand accretion.

Other Shoreline Stabilization Including Sand Fences, Groins and Jetties - Hatchlings in swim frenzy perhaps washed onto groins or jetties.

## Dredging

Oil & Gas Exploration, Development, Production and Removal - Nesting females - potential impact - 18-wheelers on Padre Island beaches. Hatchlings - potential disorientation from lights. Juveniles - seismic, demolition of platforms - are numbers in biological opinions.

**ECOSYSTEM ALTERATIONS** - most of the habitat-related threats will be I’s. Ecosystem alterations are hard to get a handle on, but may help the team identify research needs.

Trophic Changes from Overfishing - changes to the prey base. Is identified as a potential threat in the narrative.

Trophic Changes from Benthic Habitat Alteration - can change the ecosystem, flattens out the physical and community structure

Beach Erosion -

Dams & Fresh-water Diversions - Potentially change prey base – affects the neritic stages. Analysis of trawl surveys in Texas bays - look at crab species composition and numbers related to inflows. Trends analysis on crabs.

Runoff - combined agricultural and residential inputs, including stormwater, into runoff. Affects on prey base and possibly on health of individuals.

Vegetation Alteration in Terrestrial Coastal Habitat - Deforestation, concentration of predators, easier access for beach visitors. Changes in microclimate and regional climate. Changes in water quality - destruction of seagrass beds (may be covered under trophic changes. Salt marsh and mangrove destruction and affects to crab prey base. Lilia and Dr. Luevano will look for data.

## **POLLUTION**

Marine Debris Ingestion - there is some data from Mexico. Jaime will consult with Dr. Luevano and Lilia. Dr. Shaver will have some data.

Marine Debris Entanglement - Combined fishing and non-fishing. Lot of trash on Texas beaches, as well as in Mexico. No data on turtles getting entangled on the beach. Is a problem for the nesting females encountering buried trash as they try to dig. Should be data in the stranding network.

Beach Debris Obstruction - Questions about sargassum load. Note that Sargassum events can be major and prolonged. Terrestrial - nesting females, assumed that they may move on down the beach. Eggs - could impact the nest - bury it deeper - decompose above it. Hatchlings - obstruct their emergence and/or crawl to the water.

Oil Pollution - from well blowouts, big and small spills, bilge cleaning. The only data for sea turtles is from sublethal experiments - Peter Lutz?? Some old data in literature, National Academy of Science. Stranding network. Robyn - Citations/information for terrestrial species. Sheryan - help with marine phases.

Light Pollution - Not a problem in Mexico. Texas has some light issues - has disoriented hatchlings.

Low frequency Noise Pollution - Anything < 1,000 hz. There's a lot of background noise. Dr. Morreale.

Toxins - Heavy metals analysis - Dr. Landry's 2002 carapace scrapings for heavy metals. His student, Amy Wang, has already done this for Sabine Pass, Texas and also in stranded turtles. Jaime will check with him. Organochlorines, pesticides. Concerns in Mexico might be located around Altamira and Tampico due to industry there. Alma will get results of analysis of seawater, using Japanese technique, from the Mexican national water commission. Endocrine disrupters. Use of antibiotics, producing new bacteria. Review of NIST publication by Paul Becker - Pollutants in Sea Turtles or Impacts of Pollutants in Marine Turtles? (Rebecca ??)

## **SPECIES INTERACTIONS**

Predation - some data from Mexico. Terrestrial: Nesting females - no. Eggs - Jaime can get numbers. Hatchlings - Dr. Wibbels and Dr. Luevano. On Texas beaches, actively chase predators away from hatchlings. Predatory flies - larvae - affect eggs and hatchlings. In swim frenzy phase - fish are predators. Les and Pat - hatchlings found in stomachs of fish caught by recreational fishermen. Dr. Luevano will talk to fishermen, try to get an idea of frequency of fish with hatchlings inside. Dr. Marquez's summary - 1994- Kemp's synopsis. Also Chavez '67 - 12-15% of nesting females attacked by sharks.

Pathogens - all sea turtle species have been documented with fibropapilloma. Terrestrial: Nesting females. Eggs - "rosy" nests. This topic needs research. Jaime and Alma will provide numbers of rosy eggs from Mexico. Dr.

Shaver - Texas numbers. Try for a total number of eggs, all years. Hatchery in South Miami - abnormalities and lesions occurred at a much higher rate from "old" hatchery beaches vs ones used more recently. In Rancho Nuevo, huge bacterial and fungal load from years of huge arribadas. Alma - are some "younger" corrals that continue to have problems. Dr. Landry may have some data on fibropapilloma. Jaime - although they kept track of numbers of turtles with fibropapilloma, for the past 3 years they have not really seen much.

## **EXOTIC SPECIES**

Predation - Terrestrial: Eggs - red imported fire ants (2 cases in Texas). Hatchlings - possibly.

Habitat Modification by Exotics - Terrestrial: Eggs - Australian pine may affect sex ratio through shading, exacerbate beach erosion and may impede nesting females with root obstructions.

## **OTHER FACTORS**

Climate Change

Natural Catastrophes -

Conservation & Research Activities - Terrestrial: Nesting females - recognition that there could be impacts from handling if individuals are not well trained. FWS Section 10 Recovery permits.

## **Website**

The loggerhead web site was projected for the team to view and to discuss the merits of using as a template. Meeting schedules, meeting minutes, the 1991 recovery plan, information about recovery in general, etc. are available on this website for the general public's access. There are no password-protected areas on the loggerhead site and the team carries on its conversations/business via email. The USFWS biologist who developed the loggerhead website has indicated that he is amenable to sharing everything that the Kemp's team would need to copy this website. If the Kemp's team wants to do this, Region 2 of USFWS will set the website up and maintain it. Questions were raised about the need for translations into Spanish. Bryan Arroyo offered to investigate setting up an agreement to contract with a translator. Several team members would like to link their home pages to this website.

The team agreed to use the loggerhead format for the Kemp's website. For now, no desire to add the password protected links for discussion threads, instead the team will continue to use the email address. Can add these more sophisticated components at a later time if so desired. Robyn will work with the Region 2 Regional Office on setting up the Kemp's site. SEMARNAT and SEDUE would like to have links established to their websites - would like to be able to put information from the individual camps up on the web. It will be necessary for the state or federal people to put their own information up on their sites. Although the State of Tamaulipas does currently have a website, it does not contain sea turtle information. A caution was raised - perhaps do not put all the camps up on the website because that may produce increased interest in visiting the camps. Only La Pesca and Altamira are set up for tourism, therefore, don't activate the website until Pat provides the camp info. **Will need the logos for FWS, NMFS, SEMARNAT and State of Tamaulipas as well as needing good photographs for the website - send these to Robyn.**

## **Deadlines for Assignments**

New deadline for total completion of the 1<sup>st</sup> assignments (those given out in October '02). Everything should be sent to Therese by April 1.

Several reassignments were made including: Listing Status in Mexico - now Jose Marie Reyes (not Pat Burchfield). Also for Mexico information on Population Trends & Distribution, Life History/Ecology, Habitat Characteristics/Ecosystem, substituted Alma for Dr. Luevano.

Deadline for new assignments on threats and threats analysis (from this meeting): May 1, 2003.

The system for having translations done will be worked out between Earl, Pat and Bryan.

### **Stakeholder Participation**

Stakeholder participation will be a main agenda item at the next team meeting. Allen Bolton, team leader for the loggerhead team, will be invited to attend the Kemp's team meeting to share with us the process the loggerhead team went through to develop its stakeholder participation plan and results of its first stakeholder meeting that will be held in April.

### **Next Meeting**

2<sup>nd</sup> week of June, Rancho Los Ebanos

Travel on 6/10. Visit camps on 6/11. Meeting on 6/12-13. Travel on 6/14. Flights – there is a 3 pm flight from Houston to Tampico (arrives 4 pm). Mexican team members will take care of logistics.

The 2 main topics: Stakeholders and Threats Analysis; if a major arribada occurs during our meeting we may have to suspend the meeting to lend assistance with the nesting beach work.

### **Shark Fishery**

The original proposal for the law would only have protected the area right in front of Rancho Nuevo and only during the nesting season. Concern regarding netting of sharks in front of nesting beaches everywhere. Telemetry study on male Kemp's - they were there year round. Could be very adverse impact if only the beach in front of RN was protected and only during nesting. Dr. Luevano suggested that the Recovery Team should make recommendations to the Mexican government regarding any new law. Lilia and Alma recommended having participation in this discussion by someone from fisheries (SAGARPA), then have the state and SEMARNAT meet with ? and make recommendations. No one is sure what the new proposed law will look like. SAGARPA is an advocate for the shark fishery.

Earl - the Recovery Team was convened with the sole purpose of revising the recovery plan and has no authority to speak as an entity except to present recommendations to the signatory agencies of the plan itself.

At this time, public comment can be received. Once the law is published, there is a 90-day comment period. Dr. Luevano, representing the State of Tamaulipas, composed a proposal that would:

- 1) include more of the coast; and
- 2) protect those areas year round. She would like supporting information for this.

There will be a joint meeting of NMFS and SAGARPA in Mexico City, April 8-9. Perhaps this can be a topic of discussion.

Dr. Shaver suggested that it may be worthwhile to try to pass a resolution about this issue at the upcoming Sea Turtle meeting.

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