



Indian Ocean – South-East Asian Marine Turtle Memorandum of Understanding

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IOSEA Marine Turtle e-News for January/February 2016

Profile of the Month

This month, the IOSEA website profiles the work of the [Gnaraloo Turtle Conservation Program](#) which is based in a remote part of Western Australia, about 1,100 km north Perth.

Since 2008, the program has conducted research, feral animal control, and education and outreach activities, all aimed at conserving a significant population of (mostly) loggerhead turtles.



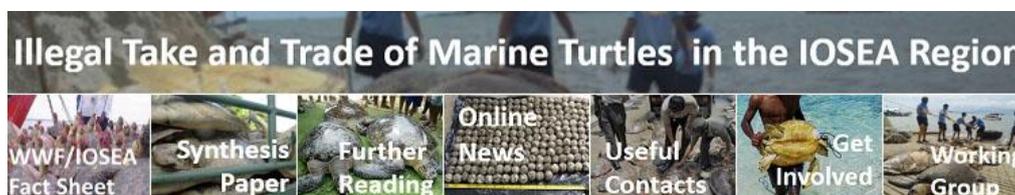
In case you may have missed it, the Profile of the Month for January – highlighting the celebration of “Marine Turtle Days” in Madagascar – can still be viewed in the [Profile of the Month Archive](#).

Also featured on the IOSEA website:

Articles featured on the website in January included: a report on [destructive “blast fishing” in Tanzania](#), a two-part article on marine turtle [conservation challenges in the Philippines](#), and a report of high mortality associated with the [mass nesting of olive ridley turtles](#) on the east coast of India. An interview with Jeanne Mortimer (the [‘Turtle Lady’ of Seychelles](#)) and a [new book launch involving Kartik Shankar](#) (India) – two individuals whose professional careers have been associated with IOSEA – round out the coverage.

New sections on ‘Illegal trade’ and ‘By-catch’

Informative sections on the topics of “Illegal take and trade” in marine turtles and “Fisheries-turtle interactions” have been revised, updated and restored on the homepage of the IOSEA website. (They appeared briefly in 2015 before they were lost in a hacking incident.) The [“Illegal Take and Trade”](#) section includes the Secretariat’s overview paper prepared for the seventh meeting of IOSEA Signatory States in 2014 (later revised and submitted as an Executive Summary to the CITES Standing Committee in January 2016), as well as links to many other online resources.



The [“Fisheries-Turtle Interactions”](#) section includes past analyses of information submitted to the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC), examples of other collaborative work in this area, and links to many online articles on the topic of by-catch.



IOSEA and the Global Environment Facility

Over the past two decades, the GEF has provided billions of dollars for biodiversity conservation work around the globe. Accessing this funding is challenging but the potential rewards are considerable. In January, the Secretariat developed and circulated to IOSEA Focal Points two papers that explore the possibility of tapping into this resource. The first paper, **Exploring the potential of GEF funding for the CMS/IOSEA Marine Turtle Site Network**, aims to get IOSEA Signatory States / Focal Points thinking about a longer-term strategy for funding conservation activities directly linked to the IOSEA Site Network. It describes various options currently available within the GEF, and gives an example of the comparable GEF project for Dugong conservation that started in 2015, which IOSEA might try to emulate.

The second paper, **Project Concept - GEF Enabling Activities in selected Indian Ocean countries (Madagascar: as demonstration country)**, proposes to bundle certain activities critical for IOSEA implementation (such as development of a national strategy/action plan, gap analysis, and capacity-building) into a package that could be framed as a "GEF Enabling Activity". The GEF Secretariat defines these as "activities aimed at enabling countries to prepare national inventories, strategies and action plans to guide and encourage the integration of convention objectives into national development efforts and sectors." Unfortunately, the GEF Secretariat has recently indicated that this particular funding is used only to support countries to revise their national plans and prepare various reports for the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The next opportunity for CBD Parties to reconsider their GEF funding priorities will be at COP13 in Mexico, in December 2016. Both papers are available upon request.

IOSEA Site Network developments

The membership of the informal [IOSEA Marine Turtle Site Network Discussion Group](#) has been extended to include representation from South Africa and the United Arab Emirates. The members, now numbering more than a dozen, have been asked to provide feedback on the design of a sample Site Network certificate. Plans are now underway to prepare and distribute the certificates to participating countries in March. Ideas for producing informative sign boards at network sites have also been circulated, with a view to reaching consensus on common design elements.

Sub-regional IOSEA meetings

As announced in the last e-News, Thailand and the United Arab Emirates have indicated their interest in hosting meetings for the IOSEA sub-regions of South-East Asia and Northwest Indian Ocean, respectively. A detailed programme/schedule has already been prepared for both meetings in anticipation of the plans being finalised and invitations issued. The NWIO gathering is now tentatively scheduled for period of September-November 2016, pending the conclusion of budget formalities.

Western Indian Ocean – Marine Turtle Task Force

Peter Richardson and Lindsey West, Chair and Vice-Chair of the [WIO-Marine Turtle Task Force](#) have recently invited members to submit nominations for renewal of these two positions for the present triennium (2016-2018). Both Peter and Lindsey have expressed their willingness to serve again.

Northern Indian Ocean – Marine Turtle Task Force

Only a few nominations from countries participating in the newly formed [NIO-Marine Turtle Task Force](#) (Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka) are still outstanding. New pages have been created on the IOSEA website to house relevant information about the Task Force. The Chair and Vice-Chair, Mr. M. Muralidharan and Ms. Khadeeja Ali, have indicated their intention to organise a conference call with Task Force members in the coming weeks.

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As always, if you would like to share information about your activities with the wider IOSEA constituency, feel free to contact the IOSEA Secretariat.

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