



Technical Workshop on Minimizing Sea Turtle Interactions in Coastal Net Fisheries

Sea turtles are adversely affected by a range of different factors, some natural and others caused by human activities, such as fishing operations. As a result, many sea turtle populations have dramatically declined in recent decades and all sea turtle species whose conservation status has been assessed are threatened or endangered. There is growing evidence of relatively high sea turtle mortality in coastal gillnet and other net fisheries from various regions. Small-scale fisheries have the potential to substantially contribute to sustainable development, but need to mitigate problematic bycatch of sea turtles and possibly other sensitive species groups to secure their long-term economic viability. There has been limited progress in identifying solutions to turtle interactions in net fisheries from only three fisheries. Research in multiple fisheries, where gear designs can be highly variable between and within a fishery, is necessary to determine what gear modifications are effective at reducing turtle interactions. A technical workshop will be convened to catalyze needed research to determine if gear modifications are effective and commercially viable solutions to turtle interactions in net fisheries.

Workshop aims include:

- (i) Reviewing the state of knowledge of effective and commercially viable methods for avoiding and reducing sea turtle entanglement in artisanal coastal gillnet and other fixed and drift net fisheries;
- (ii) Developing partnerships to conduct fishery-specific assessments of turtle bycatch, and commercial demonstrations and experimental trials of modified fishing gear; and
- (iii) Developing research plans and experimental designs for fishery-specific assessments and trials.

Participants will include gear technology experts with experience in gillnet-turtle avoidance methods, fixed and drift net industry representatives and fishery management authorities from priority fisheries known to have problematic turtle bycatch.

CONTACTS

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DATE AND VENUE

20-22 January 2009
Ala Moana Hotel, Honolulu, USA

CONFIRMED CO-HOSTS

International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
Western Pacific Fishery Management Council
Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC)
Indian Ocean – South-East Asian Marine Turtle MoU (IOSEA)
U.S. National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Fisheries Science Center