

2021 Report

IUCN SSC Marine Turtle Specialist Group



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NUMBER OF MEMBERS

293

SOCIAL MEDIA AND WEBSITE

Website: seaturtle.org;
<https://www.iucn-mtsg.org>

Mission statement

The mission of the IUCN SSC Marine Turtle Specialist Group is to develop and support strategies, set priorities, and provide tools that promote and guide the conservation of marine turtles and their ecological roles and habitats.

Projected impact 2021–2025

During the 2021–2025 quadrennium, the Marine Turtle Specialist Group (MTSG) will disseminate essential knowledge about the status of sea turtles globally through reports and networking that will inform scientific publications, management strategies and action plans. The group will also update Regional Management Units (RMUs) and conservation priorities for sea turtles, which guide IUCN Red Listing as well as conservation and management strategies at local, national and international levels. The MTSG's work over the quadrennium will provide sea turtle researchers and conservationists with the most up-to-date and essential information to take the most effective action to protect sea turtles and their habitats at regional or local levels, thereby benefiting the status of sea turtles all over the world.

Targets 2021–2025

ASSESS

T-001 Complete global and subpopulation Red List assessments of the Olive Ridley (*Lepidochelys olivacea*), Green (*Chelonia mydas*), Hawksbill (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) and Flatback (*Natator depressus*) turtles.

T-002 Produce 10 Regional Reports (at least partially completed) covering >80% of countries where sea turtles occur.

T-003 Plan, fundraise, conduct pre-workshop analyses and implement the seventh MTSG 'Burning Issues' Workshop (BI-7) focused on validating RMUs, re-assessing vulnerability of all taxa, and creating a framework for 'Important Marine Turtle Areas'.

T-004 Publish three Regional Reports through IUCN.

Activities and results 2021

ASSESS

Red List

T-001 (KSR 6)

Number of global Red List reassessments completed: 0

Result description: Flatback subpopulation Red List assessments are underway. Most Green Turtle subpopulation Red List Assessments are either published (Hawaii, South Atlantic, North Indian) or about to be submitted (East Indian/West Pacific, Southwest Indian, East Pacific, Central



Olive Ridley Turtles (*Lepidochelys olivacea*) nesting during an arribada on Playa Escobilla, Mexico
Photo: Ashleigh Bandimere



Olive Ridley Turtles (*Lepidochelys olivacea*) nesting during an arribada on Playa Escobilla, Mexico
Photo: Ashleigh Bandimere



Post-nesting Green Turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) on Playa Colola, Mexico
Photo: Ashleigh Bandimere

South Pacific). There are a couple still in draft form, such as the Mediterranean and North Atlantic.

Research activities

T-002 (KSR 5)

Number of publications produced in internal journals of SSC groups: 9

Result description: In 2017, the IUCN SSC Marine Turtle Specialist Group launched a regional reporting initiative that aims to harness the collective power of our global expert members to compile and summarise the most relevant data for conservation of sea turtles in each of the 10 MTSG regions and their respective marine turtle Regional Management Units (RMUs). Through this initiative, the MTSG aims to publish annual Regional Reports that summarise all known published data and pertinent unpublished data (at the authors' discretion) for each country and region in which sea turtles occur. Our hope is that the information in these Regional Reports will become a valuable reference for conservationists worldwide, and moreover will facilitate the production of future Red List assessments,

a process that heretofore has been painstaking. In short, the Regional Reports are intended to: (1) help the MTSG fulfil its role as the global authority on sea turtles, and (2) spread the labour of Red List assessments to a broader force of MTSG members. In 2021, we completed nine draft reports that cover 72% of the countries where sea turtles occur. Four of these reports are considered complete and are in the publication process through IUCN.

T-003 (KSR 5)

Workshop held, results published: 1

Result description: The primary goal of BI-7 is to improve how we assess sea turtle conservation status and priorities, and to go beyond the limits of Red List criteria (that principally assess the level of extinction risk) by providing specific indications for priority conservation measures. To date, we have developed a process for defining global 'Important Marine Turtle Areas' (IMTAs) for all sea turtle species, using the best available data and expert opinion. This is the world's first global delineation and prioritisation of in-water habitats for sea turtles and would serve as an urgently

needed tool to inform fisheries managers, governments, and organisations who are working to protect sea turtles and their habitats worldwide. We are in the process of updating Regional Management Unit boundaries and expanding and assessing the criteria used to classify population vulnerability and threats.

T-004 (KSR 5)

Number of publications produced in internal journals of SSC groups: 4

Result description: Four Regional Reports are in the publication process through the IUCN.

Summary of achievements

Total number of targets 2021–2025: 4

Geographic regions: 4 Global

Actions during 2021:

Assess: 4 (KSR 5, 6)

Overall achievement 2021–2025:

