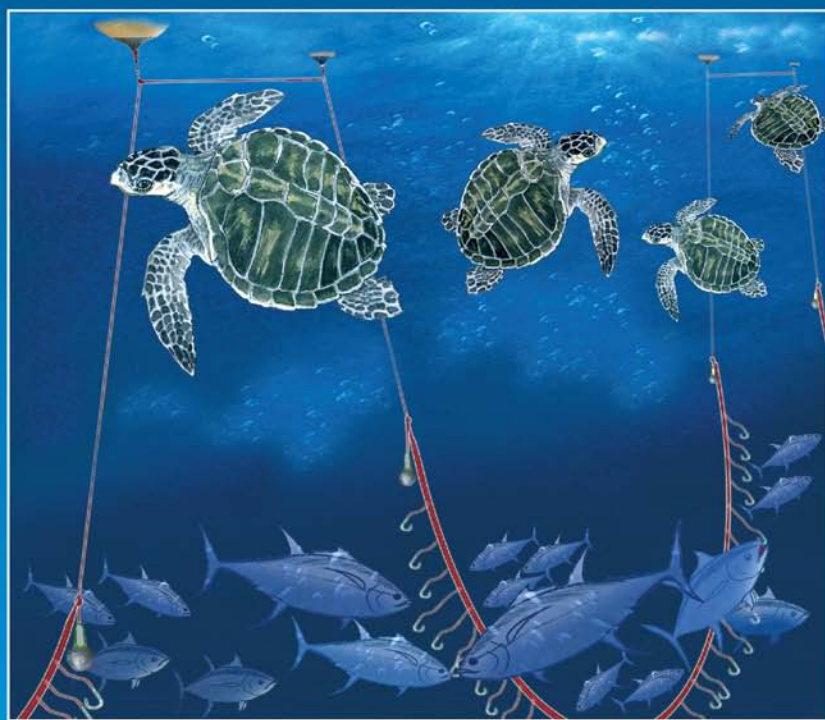


GUIDELINES TO REDUCE SEA TURTLE MORTALITY IN FISHING OPERATIONS



Cover:

Illustration by Emanuela D'Antoni.



***GUIDELINES TO REDUCE
SEA TURTLE MORTALITY
IN FISHING OPERATIONS***



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Preparation of this document

Reports and materials prepared at two international meetings were central to the development of these technical guidelines. The meetings were the Expert Consultation on Interactions between Sea Turtles and Fisheries within an Ecosystem Context (Rome, 9–12 March 2004) and the Technical Consultation on Sea Turtles Conservation and Fisheries (Bangkok, 29 November to 2 December 2004). The important contribution of the participants to both meetings is acknowledged.

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ABSTRACT

Sea turtles are affected by a range of different factors, some natural and others caused by human activities, including fishing operations. As a result, all sea turtle species whose conservation status has been assessed are considered to be threatened or endangered. These guidelines provide assistance for the preparation of national or multilateral fisheries management measures and industry initiatives that may help to conserve sea turtles by reducing the negative impacts that fisheries may have on them. The guidelines are voluntary and non-binding. Their scope is global, but when they are implemented, national and regional diversity, including cultural and socio-economic differences, should be taken into account. These guidelines present our best understanding of how to reduce interactions between sea turtles and fishing gear and reduce the proportion of caught turtles that are killed as a result of interactions with marine capture fisheries. They include information about how to change fishing gear and fishing methods and how the fishing industry can adopt voluntary approaches to reduce sea turtle mortality. The guidelines make suggestions about implementing management actions, such as input and output controls and bycatch fees, and they cover subjects such as bycatch hotspot avoidance, best practices for the handling and release of caught turtles and reducing derelict fishing gear and other marine debris. They also identify fisheries and areas where fishing may be a relatively important cause of sea turtle deaths. Research, monitoring, information exchange, capacity-building, financial support, socio-economic, cultural and legal aspects are also discussed.

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Abbreviations and acronyms

BRD	bycatch reduction device
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CCRF	FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries
CCSBT	Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
CMS	Convention on Migratory Species
COFI	FAO Committee on Fisheries
EEZ	exclusive economic zone
FAD	fish aggregating device
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GFCM	General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean
IAC	Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles
IATTC	Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission
ICCAT	International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas
IGO	intergovernmental organization
IOTC	Indian Ocean Tuna Commission
IPOA	international plan of action
IUU	illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing
MoU	memorandum of understanding
MPA	marine protected area
MSC	Marine Stewardship Council
NAFO	Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization
NGO	non-governmental organization
OFCT	Overseas Fishery Cooperation Foundation
OLDEPESCA	Latin American Organization for Fisheries Development
OPRT	Organization for the Promotion of Responsible Tuna Fisheries
RFB	regional fishery body
RFMO	regional fisheries management organization
SEAFO	South East Atlantic Fisheries Organization
SSH	sea surface height
SST	sea surface temperature
TAC	total allowable catch
TED	turtle excluder device
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
UNFSA	United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement
VMS	vessel monitoring system
WCPCF	Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission

