



33RD ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM ON SEA TURTLE BIOLOGY AND CONSERVATION, 2-8 FEBRUARY, 2013 IN BALTIMORE, MARYLAND, USA

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Yes, we are going to Baltimore! The Annual Symposium on Sea Turtle Biology and Conservation hosted every year by the International Sea Turtle Society (ISTS) is a unique event that draws participants from around the world, from across disciplines and cultures to a common interest and objective: sea turtle conservation. The Symposium encourages discussion, debate, and the sharing of knowledge, research techniques and lessons in conservation to address questions on the biology and conservation of sea turtles and their habitats.

The 33rd Annual Symposium will be held in Baltimore, Maryland, USA, which is within the National Capital Region- a hub for important scientific research, policy and decision-making by the nation's government and many leading conservation organizations. The pioneering 1st World Conference on Sea Turtle Conservation was held in Washington, D.C., 26-30 November 1979 and now, just over 33 years later, a major sea turtle meeting will revisit the National Capital Region.

Baltimore is located in the heart of the Mid-Atlantic States, where nearly one-third of the U.S. population resides. The city is well-situated for visitors arriving by car (just off I-95), it is only 15 minutes from Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport (BWI) and it is a main train station along Amtrak's Northeast Corridor. Baltimore offers visitors many great activities in the city and the opportunity to explore its rich cultural history; you can tour the home of the American National Anthem at Fort McHenry, eat world-famous Maryland crabs and seafood, explore the National Aquarium and the Maryland Science Center, or spend time in Baltimore's Inner Harbor.

Although most things you will want to do and see will be within easy walking distance, Baltimore also has a fast,

free, and green Charm City Circulator (shuttle buses that travel 3 routes daily in the city, www.charmcitycirculator.com). You can also venture out to explore the natural beauty of the Chesapeake Bay Area, or take an inexpensive train ride to Washington, D.C. to lose yourself in the museums of the Smithsonian Institution.

For the 2013 Symposium we expect over 1000 participants from more than 75 countries around the world. The Symposium's venue will be the Baltimore Marriott Waterfront [https://resweb.passkey.com/Resweb.do?mode=welcome_gi_new&groupID=9575293], located in the Inner Harbor, about 12 miles from BWI airport, 52 miles from Washington Dulles International Airport (IAD), 3 miles from Greyhound Bus Lines, and 1 mile from Penn Station-Baltimore (train) and the Baltimore Metro Subway.

The Baltimore Marriott Waterfront has luxury guest rooms and suites with great views of the city and the Inner Harbor, and is conveniently located downtown near the National Aquarium, Oriole Park, and many restaurants, shops, and nightclubs. The well-appointed conference facilities and meeting halls, as well as proximity to urban recreation, will promote interaction with other delegates, networking and catching up with old friends.

This year the Symposium will focus on Connections in sea turtle biology, research and conservation: marine turtle ecological interactions, linkages among scientists, coastal communities, turtles, humans, consumptive and non-consumptive use, collaborative research, community-based conservation, policy-makers, and managers, and any that YOU may care to share. From February 2nd to 4th, we will convene and host several regional meetings and special workshops that will enrich

our knowledge and complement our capacities for reaching our conservation goals, and have some unique opportunities to interact with the local community. On February 5th through 8th we will have the themed oral and poster sessions, an outstanding group of returning and new Exhibitors and Vendors, traditional Symposium activities, and a few new things as well!

Sea turtles have been an integral part of ecosystems for over 60 million years, and have been linked with humans throughout recorded history. In 2013 we hope to explore, discuss, and expand upon these connections. Stay tuned

for the Symposium Registration and Reservations website to go live next month, AND, with the meeting coming in early February next year, start preparing for an October 1st, 2012 deadline for poster and presentation abstracts!

Let's CONNECT in Baltimore in February!!!

Ray Carthy, President
International Sea Turtle Society
33rd Annual Symposium - "CONNECTIONS"
Inner Harbor, Baltimore, MD, USA
Feb. 2-8, 2013. ■

REQUEST FOR DUGONG GENETIC SAMPLES

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Concern about the plight of the dugong in many parts of its range has led to the development of a Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Dugongs and their Habitat, which is administered by the UNEP/ Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) office in Abu Dhabi. The UNEP/CMS Dugong MOU Secretariat (the Secretariat) has recognised the value of a study on dugong genetics across the range states. Such a study will provide information on the recent evolutionary history of the species (where they lived in the past and where they live now), on the extent of gene flow mediated by movement of individuals between dugong populations and localities, and on the genetic diversity remaining in different dugong populations. The Secretariat is supporting the development of a network of scientists in range states who can obtain samples suitable for this work (usually small pieces of skin) and who are willing to contribute information to a range-wide study. Researchers at James Cook University in Townsville, Australia, have

already established a set of methods that are being used to obtain genetic information from Australian dugongs. Samples from other range states can be sent to Australia for analysis. However, it is important to build capacity in other countries and this is being encouraged by the Secretariat.

During the course of other work, it is possible turtle researchers might come across dugongs (dead and stranded, drowned in nets etc.) If so, a small skin sample taken from such animals can provide a lot of genetic information. We normally collect a piece of skin (the coloured part of the skin, not the underlying white dermis or fat) about 10 x 10 mm and 1-2 mm thick. In the field, preservation in ethanol (70-90%) is appropriate. Remember to have a ratio of about 1 volume of tissue to at least 10 volumes of preserving fluid. For further information and advice, or to report sightings of dugongs (hopefully alive), in rarely-visited places, please contact david.blair@jcu.edu.au. ■
