

Every single one of the Special Session and Workshop Chairs and Organizers and the Regional Meeting Chairs. Chuck Shaffer for planning the Terrapin, Tortoise, and Freshwater Turtle Meeting.

Elena Mustakova-Possardt and Earl Possardt for their very special presentations.

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Erin Seney and Kiki Jenkins for a brilliant effort with the carbon offsets for the Symposium.

The school children and teachers of Baltimore City and County for their participation in our outreach program.

My special guests, Kevin Muhammad, Nicholas Alexander, Marcia Barker and David Silverthorn, from the turtle village of Grande Riviere, Trinidad, for attending the meeting and sharing the story of their amazing home site.

Manjula Tiwari for her gentle nudges in the general direction of success.

Margaret Lamont for making things happen and keeping things going.

The Staff of the Baltimore Marriott Waterfront for

accommodating our unique community.

Donna Broadbent and the Zenith Group for exemplary event coordination services (and for keeping me laughing in the face of adversity!).

ALL OF THE VOLUNTEERS FROM ISTS AND THE AQUARIUM!

Those of you un-named here, but who gave freely of your time, toil, and enthusiasm when I called you.

*Postscript- As I send this report off to the Marine Turtle Newsletter and our sponsors, the global sea turtle community is reeling from the shocking and tragic death of young Costa Rican biologist and conservationist Jairo Mora Sandoval. He was killed while doing what many of us take for granted –surveying and protecting a nesting beach- and likely for those very actions. I hope that the themes imparted from the Connections Symposium, why we do what we do and our importance to each other, honor Jairo's memory and provide all of you with comfort, strength, resilience and resolve as we continue our work. ■*

## A SUMMARY OF THE INDIAN OCEAN SOUTH EAST ASIA REGIONAL MEETING AT BALTIMORE, USA

LALITH EKANAYAKE<sup>1</sup> & ANDREA D. PHILLOTT<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Turtle Conservation Project, Sri Lanka<sup>#</sup>

<sup>2</sup>Asian University for Women, Bangladesh

<sup>#</sup>lalitheml@yahoo.com

The Indian Ocean South East Asia Regional Meeting was held on 4<sup>th</sup> February, 2013 in Baltimore, USA, prior to the 33<sup>rd</sup> International Sea Turtle Symposium. The meeting was chaired by Lalith Ekanyake and Andrea Phillott, and attended by more than 25 participants from 15 countries, including Australia, Bangladesh, China, France, Kenya, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom and United States. After a brief introduction about the meeting and its history, nine participants presented a brief summary of activities within the region.

Teri Shore discussed the major liquid natural gas (LNG) projects under development in Australia with significant actual or potential ramifications for marine turtles. Jeff Miller discussed a nearly completed review which will provide direction for future IOSEA technical support and capacity-building activities. Nick Pilcher

described progress on the Gulf Satellite Tracking Project, a multi-year hawksbill satellite tracking project in the Gulf. Alan Rees, who has recently assumed the role of regional MTSG Vice-Chair for the Middle East, described his goals to develop better networking within the Middle East region and with ISTS and IOSEA. Creusa Hitipeuw presented a brief on leatherback turtle conservation in Indonesia, including campaigns to change community members' consumptive behaviour.

Mariana Fuentes reported on climate change research investigating the adaptive capacity of sea turtles, potential geographical shifts, and factors influencing resilience. Although previous work on climate change impacts mainly focused on green turtles, other species (e.g. loggerhead and flatback turtles in Western Australia) are also being studied. Shwetal Shah explained the work of the Prakruti Nature Club in Gujarat, India, in wildlife conservation.

Andrea Phillott explained the mission of IOTN and requested the participants contribute to future issues. She also drew attention to her ongoing study documenting turtle hatcheries in the Indian Ocean. Douglas Hykle reported on developments under the IOSEA Marine Turtle Memorandum of Understanding over the past year, notably the ongoing work related to the IOSEA Site Network, workshops and training activities, and further development of useful tools on the IOSEA website.

General topics, suggested by the participants prior to

the meeting, were also discussed, including the ongoing illegal take of sea turtles by Chinese fishers in south-east Asian waters, and a new, concerning trend for turtles to be collected by local collaborators then sold to Chinese buyers. Triet M. Truong initiated a discussion on his proposed study of sea turtle epibionts and fibropapillomas in the region. Truong requested samples of marine leeches, collected from marine turtles, for his worldwide study. Other topics of discussion included unregulated hatchery operations in the region, continued poaching of marine turtles, and the conflict between tourism and conservation. ■

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS



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# 34<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM ON SEA TURTLE BIOLOGY AND CONSERVATION, APRIL 10-17, 2014 IN NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA, USA

ROLDÁN A. VALVERDE

President, International Sea Turtle Society

roldan.valverde@selu.edu

The theme of the New Orleans Symposium is “Cultures”, in honor of all the cultures that have interacted, and continue to interact today, with sea turtle populations around the world. During the Symposium we will also honor the Culture of our Society, which focuses on the conservation and study of sea turtle species and their environments. The city of New Orleans is the perfect place for such celebration given its rich heritage; indeed, the region was first inhabited by Choctow, Houma, and other pre-Colombian native cultures. Later, the city was also influenced by French, Spanish, English, African and Cajun cultures. As a result, the multi-cultural life of the unique city of “Nawlins” (New Orleans) is dominated by festivals (two of the largest being Mardi Gras and the Jazz and Heritage Festival) and its amazing food. This rich cultural heritage and relative proximity to major southern cities, in addition to the exciting scientific program, likely will contribute to attract over 1000 attendees from nearly 80 countries to the Symposium.

Besides the regular sessions usually held at Symposia, the Nawlins Symposium will feature special sessions on Collaborative Fisheries, and the Biology and Conservation of Sea Turtles in the Gulf of Mexico and on the Eastern US Seaboard. Among the topics

included in the program are 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. On 11-13 April, 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. On 14-17 April, we will have the themed oral and poster sessions, an outstanding group of returning and new Exhibitors and Vendors, as well as traditional Symposium activities.

Evidence indicates that sea turtles evolved well over 100 million years ago; some evidence suggests that the early forms may have evolved over 200 million years ago, before dinosaurs. As a group, these reptiles have withstood various extinction events. However, current species are under significant stress, mainly as a result of technology and industrialization.

Indeed, data show that current populations are only a fraction of historical levels; this awareness and reality is what gave rise to our Society, to our Culture of conserving and understanding sea turtle species. This