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A SUMMARY OF THE INDIAN OCEAN AND SOUTH EAST ASIA REGIONAL MEETING AT NEW ORLEANS , USA

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This year, the Indian Ocean and South East Asia Regional Meeting (IOSEA) was held on 13th April in New Orleans, USA, prior to the 34th International Sea Turtle Symposium. Approximately 20 participants from 15 countries, including Australia, Bangladesh, France, Japan, Malaysia, Mozambique, Philippines, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom and United States, attended. Lalith Ekanayake (co-organiser of the meeting) gave a brief introduction to the meeting, its history, and welcomed new participants before introducing seven presentations.

Jeanne Mortimer described the status of sea turtle research and conservation in the Seychelles and Chagos Islands. She explained new initiatives for the outer island, progress of the satellite tagging programme and genetic studies, and the sand temperature monitoring programme. Peter Richardson discussed the IOSEA Western Indian Ocean Marine Turtle Task Force and 8th WIOMSA Scientific Symposium held in Mozambique in November 2013. Jeff Miller summarised the current research on sea turtles in Saudi Arabia. Teri Shore discussed threats from industrialisation of the Great Barrier Reef and potential harm to sea turtle nesting

beaches and marine habitat in the area. Andrea Phillott (co-organiser of the meeting) described her current research on hatchery management practices in the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia region. Hiroyuki Suganuma discussed broad aspects of sea turtle conservation and management issues in Japan, including protection of nests from monitor lizards.

During the general discussion, participants raised topics of general interest. Lalith Ekanayake described the recent theft of albino turtles from a turtle hatchery in Sri Lanka. Nick Pilcher raised a question about turtle by-catch and pointed out that there are very few studies on turtle by-catch in the region. He suggested regional participants consider focusing on small scale fishery by-catch of sea turtles and explained about the CMS dugong survey methodology and concurrent collection of turtle by-catch data within the same survey. Mark Guinea raised the potential impact of port development in Asian countries.

The next meeting will be held in Turkey before the 35th International Sea Turtle Symposium. We hope more regional participants will be able to attend as the venue is closer and travel will be cheaper.