

ANNOUNCEMENTS



36TH ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM ON SEA TURTLE BIOLOGY AND CONSERVATION, FEBRUARY 29–MARCH 04, 2016, IN LIMA, PERU

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Mi Casa es su Casa: Bienvenidos al Peru! The Annual Symposium on Sea Turtle Biology and Conservation hosted every year by the International Sea Turtle Society (ISTS) is moving to South America for the first time. This event gathers multidisciplinary participants from around the world with a shared interest: conserving sea turtles and their environment.

The 36th Annual Symposium will be held from February 29- March 04, 2016, at the Maria Angola Convention Center and Universidad Científica del Sur, both located in the capital of Peru, Lima, a city full of rich flavors, unique experiences, and the mystic union of the past and the present. Besides providing common advantages of a big city, Lima gives you the opportunity to learn about the Peruvian culture and as a coastal city, it reflects how we have related to the sea for many years. It may also serve as a starting point towards other Peruvian natural destinations such as the Amazon rainforest, Andes Mountains and northern subtropical beaches.

We expect over 700 participants from around the world. This year the Symposium's theme will be 'Crossroads', highlighting the need for multi-disciplinary, multi-taxa, multi-national, and multi-gender efforts in advancing marine conservation worldwide. This meeting seeks to break down barriers and boundaries between people and countries in order to achieve marine conservation through its most global flagship, the sea turtle.

Our website will contain all the vital information about the 36th symposium (www.internationalseaturtlesociety.org), and will be updated throughout the year. Here you will find important information about Lima and Peru, as well as registration, costs, and general information regarding the symposium. We hope you find it useful.

Mark your calendars, start practicing your Spanish, and begin planning your trip to the 36th Symposium on Sea Turtle Biology and Conservation!

GHOST GEAR WORKSHOP

MARTIN R. STELFOX

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On February 29th 2016, at the 36th Annual Symposium on Sea Turtle Biology and Conservation in Lima, there will be a special workshop on ghost gear and the need for collaboration within the Indian Ocean. Lost, discarded or abandoned fishing gear (also referred to as ghost gear) is an important

threat to sea turtles in the Indian Ocean. The UN estimates around 640,000 tons of fishing gear are lost globally each year. While efforts are in place to try to quantify and stem the effects of ghost gear within various parts of the world, gaps in data on quantity and type of gear lost and its effects on marine

life still exist in the Indian Ocean. The transboundary nature of ghost gear means that turtle habitats are often encroached on and reports of turtle entanglements are frequently reported throughout the Indian Ocean

This workshop will explore the need for a collaborative approach to tackle this problem. Currently the Olive Ridley Project [as part of the Global Ghost Gear Initiative (GGGI)] is working towards quantifying the amount of gear lost and developing best practices for ghost gear removal and

recycling. The workshop will teach standardised data collection protocols developed by ORP and the IUCN detailing how to record data on ghost gear and entangled turtles. The session will also look into fisher surveys that can be used to understand why gear is lost in the first place, in order to see gaps in data and identify problematic areas. The session will end with a series of discussions on how to fine tune data recorded to accommodate various fisheries found in the region. Workshop participants will be invited to discuss their experience with ghost gear and sea turtle entanglements.

STUDY SITES NEEDED TO INVESTIGATE ARTISANAL BYCATCH

KIMBERLY RISKAS

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Dear IOTN readers,

I am a PhD student at James Cook University, Australia, and would like to take this opportunity to ask for your collective knowledge and assistance.

My PhD project aims to investigate how fisheries bycatch impacts sea turtle populations in the Indian Ocean. Part of my data collection will entail on-ground case studies of artisanal (subsistence) fisheries where turtles are caught as bycatch.

However, to ensure the success of these case studies, it is vitally important to choose sites where turtle bycatch is high enough to furnish meaningful data for my thesis. As the Indian Ocean is a vast region encompassing the coastlines of nearly forty countries and territories, I am reaching out to the IOTN readership asking for suggestions for countries and/or specific areas that you believe would provide suitable study sites for investigating artisanal turtle bycatch.

I am particularly enthusiastic to connect with all of the following:

1. Individuals or organisations working in areas where turtle bycatch in artisanal fisheries is believed to be high (i.e., turtles are caught incidentally—not intentionally—on a regular or seasonal basis).
2. Contacts within artisanal fishing communities and national fisheries management agencies in any country in the Indian Ocean region.
3. Anyone with suggestions for on-ground support during field work and possible collaborations with existing projects.

Thank you in advance for your valuable input. Please email your suggestions for countries and/or specific areas, as well as any other helpful information, to Kimberly Riskas kimberly.riskas@my.jcu.edu.au or Dr Mark Hamann mark.hamann@jcu.edu.au, James Cook University, Australia.