

2.76 Regional action plan for the conservation of marine turtles in the Indian Ocean

RECOGNIZING that marine turtles represent a wealth of resources to many States in the Indian Ocean;

CONSIDERING that marine turtles migrate over several thousands of kilometers, frequently crossing the national boundaries of several States and spending substantial periods of time in international waters;

FURTHER RECOGNIZING that as a consequence of their biology, marine turtles are the shared resources of many nations;

NOTING that the Indian Ocean supports six of the seven species of marine turtles, with many populations being of global importance;

FURTHER NOTING that many populations of marine turtles have come under serious threat due to trawling-related mortality, habitat destruction, and harvesting for meat and shells;

CONCERNED that certain populations have suffered severe mortality in the past 10 years;

CONSIDERING that at least 75,000 Olive Ridley Turtles (*Lepidochelys olivacea*) have died as a consequence of trawling-related mortality in the past six years on the Orissa coast, India;

FURTHER CONSIDERING that habitats of juvenile turtles are poorly studied and little is known about the early stages of the life history of marine turtles; and

ACKNOWLEDGING that marine turtles need to be protected at all stages of their life history to ensure their long-term survival;

The World Conservation Congress at its 2nd Session in Amman, Jordan, 4–11 October 2000:

1. URGES the States of the region to jointly develop an action plan for the conservation and management of marine turtles in the Indian Ocean;
2. SUGGESTS that the success of these conservation programmes will depend on protecting these long-distance migrants at all stages of their life cycle;
3. ENTREATS all governments to take measures to reduce trawling-related mortality and loss of habitat;
4. ENCOURAGES the processes initiated in the region by the Governments of Australia and Malaysia towards an Indian Ocean and Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) agreement for the conservation of marine turtles;

5. REITERATES the need for a regional network, consisting of governmental agencies and non-governmental organizations from all relevant countries, for monitoring marine turtles and ensuring their conservation in the region.