



# Indian Ocean – South-East Asian Marine Turtle Memorandum of Understanding



## Islamic Republic of Iran

### GENERAL INFORMATION

**Agency or institution primarily responsible for the preparation of this report:**

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**Other agencies, institutions, or NGOs that have provided input:**

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## **OBJECTIVE I. REDUCE DIRECT AND INDIRECT CAUSES OF MARINE TURTLE MORTALITY**

### **1.1 Introduction to marine turtle populations and habitats, challenges and conservation efforts. [INF]**

Persian Gulf:

Nakhiloo, Ommolkaram, Khark, Kharkoo and Farsi Islands, Nayband Bay, in Booshehr Province.

Shidvar, Hendourabi, Queshm, Lavan, Kish, Hengam, Hormoz and Larak Islands in Hormozgan Province.

Oman Sea area (Sistan and Balochistan Province): Karatti, Tang, Pozm, Chabahar, Kohpansar, Ramin, Miami.

The sites mentioned above are the main nesting and feeding grounds of sea turtles in the northern Persian Gulf and Oman sea. Hawksbills and Green turtles are the main sea turtles species in the country as the major nesting and feeding populations in the habitats, respectively. There are some occasional nesting for the greens too but it is very sporadic and the main nesting for the species in in Oman sea area.

All sea turtle species are classified as "Threatened species" of the country and are legally under protection. Any harvest on the species are prohibited and subject to fine. Their habitats also are under management and the most important nesting sites are designated as "Protected areas". In the past decade, tagging of the turtles, collecting information on their nesting biology, threatening factors, genetic study, satellite tracking have been as the main activities on these species.

The main nesting sites for the hawksbills are small and large Islands in the Persian Gulf region, some influenced by fisheries activities which seems to be as one of the main threatening factors for the species. Some of the Islands are non residential and have a high potential for the conservation activities.

Public education and awareness have been as another activity carried out to reduce the threats to the turtles. As the populations of the species are shared with other countries, international and regional cooperation is very important. The last regional project on satellite tracking on Hawksbill species in the Gulf region provided clear information on the migration route of the populations.

**1.2.1 Describe any protocol or approaches practiced in your country, which you consider exemplary, for minimising threats to marine turtle populations and their habitats, which may be suitable for adaptation and adoption elsewhere. [BPR]**

Employment of local people as Environment Guards, and their participation in research and protection activities.

Legal protection of sea turtles and the establishment of fines for any related harvest.

Designation of turtle habitats as legally protected areas (National parks, protected areas, wild life refuges).

The best practice approaches adapted and/or adopted with success are:

Legal measures for the protection of turtles prohibiting any harvest (of a legally protected wildlife species) and related fines for any turtles or eggs taken.

Local participation in conservation and protection activities, as on Qeshm Island or Shidvar Island.

**1.3.1 Describe any socio-economic studies or activities that have been conducted among communities that interact with marine turtles and their habitats. [BPR, INF]**

Sea turtles and local people, a study by Asghar Mobaraki, Department of Environment, in the Oman Sea area (2003).

Note: Local people are traditionally, rather than economically, dependent on sea turtles.

**1.3.2 Which of these adverse economic incentives are underlying threats to marine turtles in your country? [TSH]**

- High prices earned from turtle products relative to other commodities
- Lack of affordable alternatives to turtle products
- Ease of access to the turtle resource (eg. by virtue of proximity or ease of land/water access)
- Low cost of land near nesting beaches
- Low penalties against illegal harvesting
- Other1: Income generation for some families, derived from turtle eggs
- Other2:
- Other3:
- None of the above or Not Applicable

Traditional/cultural use: in most parts of Iran, turtle eggs are used as traditional medicine for different illnesses, as well as for aphrodisiac effects. So egg harvest is usual in all areas for personal use and for sale to local markets.

### 1.3.3 Has your country has taken any measures to try to correct these adverse economic incentives? [BPR]

YES  NO  NOT APPLICABLE (no adverse economic incentives exist)

Banning and prohibition of the buying and selling of turtle eggs and related products, as well as more legal protection for turtles. Public awareness would also be a useful tool to prevent any adverse economic activities. turtles are classified as e"Endangered species: of the country and in order to more legal protection the fine for any harvest of turtles and their eggs increased.

We are trying to persuade people to stop using turtle eggs, and in this regard have gained judgements from Grand Ayatollahs stating that, from a religious point of view, the eating of turtle eggs and meat is prohibited (Haram).

### 1.4.1 Indicate, and describe in more detail, the main fisheries occurring in the waters of your country, as well as any high seas fisheries in which flag vessels of your country participate, that could possibly interact with marine turtles. [INF]

**a) Shrimp trawls:**  YES  NO

Shrimp trawling is permitted for about 45-60 days a year in late summer and early fall in Booshehr and Hormozgan provinces - at other times it is forbidden. In the Oman sea area there are trawling ships which are mainly active in the fall and winter. Out of 76 ships, 49 of them are authorized for shrimp trawling. There are 3047 large wooden boats, of which an unknown number of them undertake shrimp trawling.

Other main part of fishing activities are through motor boats in numerous numbers that use different methods all year long and some times there is not sufficient control s on them.

**b) Set gill nets:**  YES  NO

This method (in different forms) is used all year long in the Oman sea and Persian Gulf. There are 10 709 vessels in total (motor boats: 7520, large wooden and fiberglass boats (Doves): 3135 and ships: 54) that conduct fishing activities, and one of the usual methods used is gill nets.

Note: this information comes from an Iran Fisheries Organization statistics report(1381-1391 national date).

**c) Anchored Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs):**  YES  NO

there are traditional FADs in country named as "Gargoor" but the entrance has small size and only very small turtles could pass through, there have not been any records in this regard.

**d) Purse seine (with or without FADs):**  YES  NO

This method is mainly used for sardine fishing in very low numbers in spring in two most important areas, Djask in Hormozgan and Daier in Booshehr. Only 8 ships are engaged in this fishing activity.

**e) Longline (shallow or deepset):**  YES  NO

This method is not so popular and takes place at a local scale. Mostly small boats use it to catch specific fish species like croacker and mackerel. There are some foreign ships that are authorized to carry out long line fishing in international waters. In the past 10 years it is getting popular for shark catch. There has not been record on turtle catch by this method.

**f) Driftnet:**  YES  NO

As for the set gill nets.

**g) Other1:**

This method is traditionally used in some locations, mainly in Hormozgan and Booshehr. It takes place in different seasons, but not for long times. The target species are small fishes.

**h) Other2:**

None of the above

**1.4.2 Please indicate the relative level of fishing effort and perceived impact of each of the above fisheries on marine turtles (e.g. in terms of by-catch). [TSH]**

**a) Shrimp trawls**

**Fishing effort:**

RELATIVELY HIGH  MODERATE  RELATIVELY LOW  NONE  UNKNOWN

**Perceived Impact:**

RELATIVELY HIGH  MODERATE  RELATIVELY LOW  NONE  UNKNOWN

Source: All the answers related to fisheries are based on information from the Iran Fisheries Organization.

**b) Set gill nets**

**Fishing effort:**

RELATIVELY HIGH  MODERATE  RELATIVELY LOW  NONE  UNKNOWN

**Perceived Impact:**

RELATIVELY HIGH  MODERATE  RELATIVELY LOW  NONE  UNKNOWN

Source:

**c) Anchored Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs)**

**Fishing effort:**

RELATIVELY HIGH  MODERATE  RELATIVELY LOW  NONE  UNKNOWN

**Perceived Impact:**

RELATIVELY HIGH  MODERATE  RELATIVELY LOW  NONE  UNKNOWN

Source: -

**d) Purse seine (with or without FADs)**

**Fishing effort:**

RELATIVELY HIGH  MODERATE  **RELATIVELY LOW**  NONE  UNKNOWN

**Perceived Impact:**

RELATIVELY HIGH  MODERATE  **RELATIVELY LOW**  NONE  UNKNOWN

Source:

**e) Longline (shallow or deepset)**

**Fishing effort:**

RELATIVELY HIGH  MODERATE  **RELATIVELY LOW**  NONE  UNKNOWN

**Perceived Impact:**

RELATIVELY HIGH  MODERATE  **RELATIVELY LOW**  NONE  UNKNOWN

Source:

**f) Driftnet**

**Fishing effort:**

RELATIVELY HIGH  **MODERATE**  RELATIVELY LOW  NONE  UNKNOWN

**Perceived Impact:**

RELATIVELY HIGH  **MODERATE**  RELATIVELY LOW  NONE  UNKNOWN

Source:

**g) Other1 (from 1.4.1): Trapping (Traditional cages)**

**Fishing effort:**

RELATIVELY HIGH  **MODERATE**  RELATIVELY LOW  NONE  UNKNOWN

**Perceived Impact:**

RELATIVELY HIGH  MODERATE  RELATIVELY LOW  **NONE**  UNKNOWN

Source:

**h) Other2 (from 1.4.1):**

**Fishing effort:**

RELATIVELY HIGH  MODERATE  RELATIVELY LOW  NONE  UNKNOWN

**Perceived Impact:**

RELATIVELY HIGH  MODERATE  RELATIVELY LOW  NONE  UNKNOWN

Source:

**1.4.3 Describe any illegal fishing that is known to occur in or around the waters of your country that may impact marine turtles. Describe the measures being taken to deal with this problem and any difficulties encountered in this regard. [TSH]**

The Iran Fisheries Organization (IFO) has legally prohibited the use of monofilament nets for any fishery activities, but some fishermen especially in the western part of the Persian Gulf use these for fishing. The impact of this type of fishing on turtles is not considerable.

**1.4.4 Which of the following methods are used by your country to minimise incidental capture/mortality of marine turtles in fishing activities? [IND]**

a) **Appropriate handling** of incidentally caught turtles (e.g. resuscitation or release by fishers using equipment such as de-hooking, line cutting tools and scoop nets)

YES  NO  NOT APPLICABLE

Generally, as a fishing regulation and rule approved by IFO, any catch of protected species including sea turtles is forbidden and subject to penalties. So all fishermen release any captured turtles to the sea. However there is no specific equipment used for this purpose.

b) **Devices that allow the escape of marine turtles** (e.g. turtle excluder devices (TEDs) or other measures that are comparable in effectiveness)

YES  NO  NOT APPLICABLE

Preliminary studies and the first phase of a project using TEDs to reduce bycatch in shrimp fishing have been completed. The final report for this international effort supported by GEF/ UNEP and the FAO is now under preparation.

Based on the results, all of the 49 ships authorized for shrimp fishing in Iran will be required to use TEDs in their trawls. Notably, the main aim of this project was to reduce fisheries bycatch in general, rather than turtle capture. there is not clear respond based on the results of this project

c) **Measures to avoid encirclement** of marine turtles in purse seine fisheries

YES  NO  NOT APPLICABLE

d) **Appropriate combinations** of hook design, type of bait, depth, gear specifications and fishing practices

YES  NO  NOT APPLICABLE

e) **Monitoring and recovery of fish aggregating devices** (FADs)

YES  NO  NOT APPLICABLE

f) **Net retention and recycling schemes**

YES  NO  NOT APPLICABLE

g) **Spatial and temporal control of fishing** (e.g. seasonal closures of fishing activities)

YES  NO  NOT APPLICABLE

There are temporal and spatial controls in place, which consider the target species and are based on fish biology. The program is concerned with fisheries resources control and protection, not turtle bycatch.

h) **Effort management control**

YES  NO  NOT APPLICABLE

For the same reason, there is seasonal control of the methods used and net limitations are imposed. As an example, shrimp trawling is only permitted during specific 3-6 month periods. Bans on drift nets and set nets also is another measure.

Other (list and explain):

None of the above

**1.4.5 Which of the following programmes has your country developed - in consultation with the fishing industry and fisheries management organisations - to promote implementation of measures to minimise incidental capture and mortality of turtles in national waters and in the high seas? [IND]**

**Onboard observer programmes**

YES  NO  NOT APPLICABLE

As a general rule any fishing related activities carried out outside of set times and places are forbidden and subject to penalty - to enforce this vessels and their catch are checked by resource protection guards.

**Vessel monitoring systems**

YES  NO  NOT APPLICABLE

Vessels use remote control system to record their movements. Also, observers from the Iran Fisheries Organization check them at different times.

**Inspections** (i.e. at sea, in port, at landing sites)

YES  NO  NOT APPLICABLE

In each fishing port there are observers from the Iran Fisheries Organization who check the catch of fishermen. The guard of DOE sometimes checks the main fishing areas.

**Training programmes / workshops** to educate fishers

**YES**  NO  NOT APPLICABLE

Official meetings and negotiations with Fisheries Organization of Iran have been held to enhance fishers' knowledge and awareness. These have also enabled the monitoring of activities in fishing areas.

Based on an announcement by the Iran Fisheries Organization, fishermen are prohibited from harming to turtles and must release them if they become entangled.

**Informative videos, brochures, printed guidelines** etc.

YES  NO  NOT APPLICABLE

**Other (list and explain):**

YES  NO  NOT APPLICABLE

**None of the above**

**1.4.6 Are the mitigation measures described in 1.4.4 and 1.4.5, periodically reviewed and evaluated for their efficacy? [SAP]**

YES  **NO**  UNSURE

**1.4.7 In your country, what types of data collection, research and development have been undertaken to support the reduction of marine turtle incidental catch (while taking into consideration the impact of various mitigation measures on other species)? [SAP]**

**1.4.8 Has your country exchanged information and provided technical assistance (formally or informally) to other Signatory States to promote the activities described in 1.4.4, 1.4.5 and 1.4.7 above? [SAP]**

YES  NO  UNSURE

**1.4.9 What legislative and practical measures has your country taken in support of UN General Assembly Resolution 46/215 concerning the moratorium on the use of large-scale driftnets? [SAP]**

None

**1.5.1 Does your country have legislation to prohibit direct harvest and domestic trade in marine turtles, their eggs, parts and products; and to protect important turtle habitats? [IND]**

**YES**  NO  UNSURE

Sea turtles have been listed as an "endangered" wildlife species In Iran. Any killing of turtles originally was carried a penalty of 3 200 000 Rls, and the harvest of eggs was punished (fines are equivalent to US \$400 and \$120, respectively).

The fine amounts were doubled in 2006 to 6 400 000 Rials- about US\$670 for any turtle and \$225 for any egg, with the approval of the Environment High Council , but in order to have more intensive control and protection the fine increased to 30 million Rls in 2013( about US\$ 1000). The fine is also proposed to has more increase.

**1.5.2 Which, among the following list, are economic uses and cultural values of marine turtles in your country? Please rate the relative prevalence / importance of each consumptive or non-consumptive use.**  
**[INF]**

**USES /  
VALUES**

**RELATIVE PREVALENCE /  
IMPORTANCE**

**Meat consumption**

**YES**  NO

HIGH  MODERATE  **LOW**  UNKNOWN

Turtle eggs and in some places, turtle meat, are used for aphrodisiac purposes as well as traditional medicine. In some parts of Iran, such as the Oman sea area, this take is too high. The usage is almost at local level and is part of the traditional believes.

**Egg consumption**

**YES**  NO

HIGH  MODERATE  **LOW**  UNKNOWN

Turtle eggs and in some places, turtle meat, are used for aphrodisiac purposes as well as traditional medicine. In some parts of Iran, such as the Oman sea area, this take is too high. This kind of poaching is more usual but supposed to be decreased cased by legal controls and public awareness activities.

**Shell products**

YES  **NO**

HIGH  MODERATE  **LOW**  UNKNOWN

**Fat consumption**

YES  **NO**

HIGH  MODERATE  LOW  UNKNOWN

**Traditional medicine**

**YES**  NO

HIGH  **MODERATE**  LOW  UNKNOWN

As mentioned eggs are used traditionally as medicine for different purposes.

**Eco-tourism programmes**

**YES**  NO

HIGH  MODERATE  **LOW**  UNKNOWN

In the past years, based on activities in Queshm Island there are some Eco-Turism activities during thr nesting season under the control of the people engaged with management plan.

**Cultural / traditional significance**

YES  NO

HIGH  MODERATE  LOW  UNKNOWN

**Other**

**1.5.3 Please indicate the relative level and impact of traditional harvest on marine turtles and their eggs. [IND, TSH]**

**Level of harvest:**

RELATIVELY HIGH  MODERATE  RELATIVELY LOW  NONE  UNKNOWN

**Impact of harvest:**

RELATIVELY HIGH  MODERATE  RELATIVELY LOW  NONE  UNKNOWN

Source of information:

In some places the level of traditional harvest is high, e.g. Sistan and Balochistan Provinces. (Source: Field observations; Mobaraki, A.: Wildlife and Aquatic Affairs Bureau reports)

**1.5.4 Have any domestic management programmes been established to limit the levels of intentional harvest? [SAP]**

YES  NO  UNKNOWN

Department of Environment guards routinely check and control turtle nesting sites at nesting seasons. There are some programmes in some sites conducted by DOE . like Sheedvar and Nakhiloo- Ommolkaram Islands which covers some parts of the nesting season. Another program with the support of Department of environmnet is conducted in Hengam Island by a local NGO. More over in the past years there have been programmes in Queshm and Kish Islands that entirely protect the nesting beachec and the nests

**1.5.5 Describe any management agreements negotiated between your country and other States in relation to sustainable levels of traditional harvest, to ensure that such harvest does not undermine conservation efforts. [BPR]**

There is no recorded international or regional trade. The subject needs for more cooperation between states, specially Iran and UAE to could get some related information.

**1.6.1 First, select one of the options at left to indicate whether or not your country has any of the following measures in place to minimise the mortality of eggs, hatchlings and nesting females. If yes, then estimate the relative effectiveness of these measures. [IND, SAP]**

**MEASURES**

**RELATIVE EFFECTIVENESS**

**Monitoring/protection programmes**

YES  NO  N/A

EXCELLENT  GOOD  LOW  UNKNOWN

Through the programmes are conducted in Queshm, kish and Hengam Islands, turtle nesting sites and nests are being protected. Also, some nests are translocated to suitable places to reduce the threats to nests. We are planning to start a nest protection programme in the Oman sea area for Green turtles too.

Nesting season of the turtles are monitored at least for some part of the season in the main nesting sites.

#### Education/awareness programmes

YES  NO  N/A

EXCELLENT  GOOD  LOW  UNKNOWN

Posters have been produced and distributed in all coastal provinces. In a beach cleaning up project funded by MOU-IOSEA secretariat, in 2006, different activities conducted and in some sites, Sheedvar and Nakhiloo, education and awareness activity by participation if the local people was one of the important part.

Production of different posters, brochures, sea turtles stamp were the other activities. Publishing of some papers and information on sea turtles in the popular journals as well as production of posters and brochures in Environment annual fairs are the other usual activities.

#### Egg relocation/hatcheries

YES  NO  N/A

EXCELLENT  GOOD  LOW  UNKNOWN

As noted above, some nests on Queshm Island are translocated to suitable places to reduce the threats to hatchlings. Results of the programme have not been published, hatching success seems to be fair. The GEF-funded UNDP project ended in 2006. In the past 3 years a project started in Hengam Island which is in improvement and progress.

#### Predator control

YES  NO  N/A

EXCELLENT  GOOD  LOW  UNKNOWN

#### Vehicle / access restrictions

YES  NO  N/A

EXCELLENT  GOOD  LOW  UNKNOWN

#### Removal of debris / clean-up

YES  NO  N/A

EXCELLENT  GOOD  LOW  UNKNOWN

for the first time in the country, beach cleaning up in main nesting sites( Shidvar and Nakhiloo) was implemented. It was through a small project funded by MOU-IOSEA secretariat.me similar works have been in Hengam Island for 2 times in the past 3 years.

#### Re-vegetation of frontal dunes

YES  NO  N/A

EXCELLENT  GOOD  LOW  UNKNOWN

**Building location/design regulations**

YES  NO  N/A

EXCELLENT  GOOD  LOW  UNKNOWN

**Light pollution reduction**

YES  NO  N/A

EXCELLENT  GOOD  LOW  UNKNOWN

Increasing development in some sites, like Hendourabi, kish could provide some problems .

**Other (list and rate them)**

YES  NO  N/A

**1.6.2 Has your country undertaken any evaluation of its nest and beach management programmes? [SAP]**

YES  NO  NOT APPLICABLE

**OBJECTIVE II. PROTECT, CONSERVE AND REHABILITATE MARINE TURTLE HABITATS**

**2.1.1 What is being done to protect critical habitats *outside* of established protected areas? (NB: It is assumed that legislation relating to established protected areas will have been described in Section 1.5.1) [BPR, SAP]**

sea turtles have classified as 'The Threatened Species' of the country and any harvest and harm on them is forbidden subject to fine, in case of happening. Destruction of their nests and nesting sites also is prohibited. The public awareness and education activities in some sites, helps to the local people have better understanding about the turtles, preventing them from any harm to nests and turtles. The most part of the habitats are subject to protection by DOE.

**2.1.2 Are assessments routinely made of the environmental impact of marine and coastal development on marine turtles and their habitats? [IND, SAP]**

YES  NO  NOT APPLICABLE

Not directly on sea turtles, but on the marine environment and habitat. Any activity proposed adjacent to the sea has to submit an EIA for approval by the Department of Environment (DOE). The main nesting sites are monitored routinely in nesting season and there are sever limitations on act ivies in the sites.

**2.1.3 Is marine water quality (including marine debris) monitored near turtle habitats? If yes, describe the nature of this monitoring and any remedial measures that may have been taken. [SAP]**

YES  NO  NOT APPLICABLE

Some regular sampling and studies have been carried out all across coastal waters. Oceanographic research cruises in the Persian Gulf have collaborated with other ROPME states to provide water and sediment samples. These have been analyzed to determine and monitor pollution levels in the area every 2 or 3 years. more over some occasional sampling in some parts alsofor chking the water quality are conducted.

Moreover any kind of activity causing marine pollution is subject to a fine. The DOE offices in different parts and cities of Iran check and control any activities causing pollution.

**2.1.4 Are measures in place to prohibit the use of poisonous chemicals and explosives? [SAP]**

YES  NO  NOT APPLICABLE

They are not used in Iran, but as a general rule any kind of activity causing pollution is legally forbidden.

**2.2.1 Are efforts being made to recover degraded coral reefs? If yes, give details (location, duration, effectiveness, lessons learned, future plans etc). [IND, SAP]**

YES  NO  NOT APPLICABLE (no degraded coral reefs)

Work on the identification of critical coral reef areas has recently finished but there have not been any programs to recover degraded parts. One small scale program conducted in Chabahar Bay, in which some coral communities trans located to reduce the effects of construction of waterfront and jetties.

**2.2.2 Are efforts being made to recover degraded mangrove habitats that are important for turtles? If yes, give details (location, duration, effectiveness, lessons learned, future plans etc.) [IND, SAP]**

YES  NO  NOT APPLICABLE (no mangrove habitats important for turtles)

Some efforts to recover mangrove forests are being undertaken in Booshehr (Nayband, Mele Gonze) and Hormozgan (Hara protected area in Queshm Island) Provinces. The results achieved are satisfactory. The works in ushehr which is conducted by natural resources organization is developing.

**2.2.3 Are efforts being made to recover degraded sea grass habitats? If yes, give details (location, duration, effectiveness, lessons learned, future plans etc.). [IND, SAP]**

YES  NO  NOT APPLICABLE (no degraded sea grass habitats)

**OBJECTIVE III. IMPROVE UNDERSTANDING OF MARINE TURTLE ECOLOGY AND POPULATIONS THROUGH RESEARCH, MONITORING AND INFORMATION EXCHANGE**

**3.1.1 Give a list of available literature that includes baseline information from studies carried out in your country on marine turtle populations and their habitats. [INF]**

In some areas these studies have been conducted but they do not cover all of the Persian Gulf and Oman Sea areas.

Also the results of some of these studies have not been published and presented yet. The only available publications and literature are:

- 1) Asghar Mobaraki, Nesting of Hawksbill Sea Turtle in Shidvar Island, 2003, Marine Turtle Newsletter and

www.ioseaturtles.org website

- 2) Asghar Mobaraki, Sea Turtle Status in Iran, 23rd symposium on sea turtles, 2003, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 3) Asghar Mobaraki, Green Sea Turtle Nesting in Iran, Marine Turtle Newsletter and www.ioseaturtles.org website 2004
- 4) Hamzeh Valavi, Sea Turtle Nesting in Nakhiloo Island, Booshehr Province, Quarterly Journal of DOE, No 25, 1998
- 5) Asghar Mobaraki, Amir Mohammad elmi, First Sea Turtle Tagging Program in Iran, MTN, No 110, 2005
- 6) Asghar Mobaraki, Global Strategy for the Conservation of Sea Turtles (IUCN), Translation, Quarterly Journal of DOE, No 30, 2000
- 7) Asghar Mobaraki, Amir Mohammad Elmi, Marine Turtle Tagging Program in Iran, 2005, www.ioseaturtles.org website
- 8) Asghar Mobaraki, Sea turtle study and situation in Iran, Marine conservation forum, Abu Dhabi, UAE, Sep 2006.
- 9) Mobaraki.Asghar, Nancy Fitzsimmons, and Michael Jensen, 2010 " Reproduction and Genetic Study of Hawksbill Sea turtles in Iran" , 30th annual sea turtle symposium, Goa, India
- 10) Abtin, Elham., Asghar Mobaraki, 2014, Sea turtles, Journal od Zoology Education, (in Farsi)
- 11) Mobaraki. Asghar, Nancy Fitzsimmons, 2008, Studies on Sea Turtle and their situation in Iran, first Int. congress: Documenting, Analyzing and managing Biodiversity in Middle East, Aqaba, Jordan
- 12) Mobaraki.Asghar., 2011, Sea turtle situation, studies and conservation in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Profile of the month, April 2011, MOU-IOSEA website

**3.1.2 Have long-term monitoring programmes (i.e. of at least 10 years duration) been initiated or planned for priority marine turtle populations frequenting the territory of your country? [IND, BPR]**

YES  NO  UNSURE

For about more than 10 years Sheedvar ,Island, one of the most important nesting sites, has been visited during the Hawksbill turtle nesting season. More over other important sites like Nakhiloo, Ommolkaram, Hendourabi Islands have beeb regularly visited and studied during the past 5 years (see reports from A. Mobaraki). Monitoring of some sites like Hangam is for 3 years that has been started.

**3.1.3 Has the genetic identity of marine turtle populations in your country been characterised? [INF, PRI]**

YES  NO  UNSURE

Based on some national plans and international cooperation , genetic study of the nesting Hawksbill populations in main rookeries started in 2009, in cooperation with Canberra university. The results are ready and the related paper is almost ready for publication. The results were very interesting and some new haplotypes were identified. The plan is still is on the way to expand the works on some sites and species. The sites that were covered are: Nakhiloo, Ommolkaram, Sheedvar and Hendourabi.

**3.1.4 Which of the following methods have been or are being used to try to identify migration routes of turtles? Use the text boxes to provide additional details. [INF, PRI]**

**Tagging**  YES  NO

Through the kind donation of the IOSEA MoU, and great help of Mr. Douglas Hykle, Iran received turtle flipper tags for the first time in 2006.

A tagging program has been started in the country since 2006 - over short stays in the Sheedvar, Nakhiloo Ommolkaram, Hendourabi and Hengam Islands, more than 600 sea turtles has been tagged, which the main part belongs to Hawksbills. Some small part also belongs to Green turtles.

After the gaining more tags by Marine office, now, some provinces do the tagging in addition to the efforts of wildlife Bureau. Tagging is conducted in Queshm and Kish Islands as a separate work conducting by environment office of the free zone of the Island.

**Satellite tracking**  **YES**  **NO**

Satellite tracking of Hawksbill populations started for the first time in Iran since 2010 through a regional Cooperative project initiated by WWF-EWS and MRF in the Persian Gulf region. For the first year, 2010, 5 nesting Hawksbills tagged with ST equipment in Sheedvar(Shidvar) Island in Hormozgan province. For the second year, 2011, another 5 Hawksbills were tagged in Nakhilli Island, Bushehr Province. The project supposed to be continued for one more year.

Iran couldn't participate in the third year of the project due to some internal problems, but the results of the project are available and clearly defines the migration route of the Hawksbills. The most important point is that the turtles don't leave the Persian Gulf during the inter nesting seasons.

**Other**

**None of the above**

**3.1.5 Have studies been carried out on marine turtle population dynamics and survival rates (e.g. including studies into the survival rates of incidentally caught and released turtles)?** [INF, PRI]

**YES**  **NO**  **UNSURE**

**3.1.6 Has research been conducted on the frequency and pathology of diseases in marine turtles?** [INF, PRI]

**YES**  **NO**  **UNSURE**

In the studies conducted on nesting and foraging turtles, no diseases observed and recorded.

**3.1.7 Is the use of traditional ecological knowledge in research studies being promoted?** [BPR, PRI]

**YES**  **NO**  **UNSURE**

In a study conducted in the Oman Sea area (Asghar Mobaraki, Marine Environment Bureau, 2003), local people and fishermen were asked about sea turtles in the area in a simple questionnaire.

Visiting the different sites, usually the information from the local people are collected. As a general and usual situation, in most parts the local people are not directly engaged with turtles and try not to harm them in cases of like by catch.

**3.2.1 List any regional or sub-regional action plans in which your country is already participating, which may serve the purpose of identifying priority research and monitoring needs.** [INF]

An MoU is in place between the Wildlife and Aquatic Affairs Bureau of DOE, Iran and the Environment Agency (and ERWDA) in Abu Dhabi, UAE.

Collaborative works on the conservation and management of sea turtles have been recommended, but not yet confirmed/undertaken. Specific projects should be defined related to each species group.

Some international Environmental agreements and cooperation at National levels have been signed between regional countries (Iran-Oman), in which conservation and research on the shared species is important part.

**3.2.2 On which of the following themes have collaborative studies and monitoring been conducted? Use the text boxes to describe the nature of this international collaboration or to clarify your response. Answer 'NO' if the studies/monitoring undertaken do not involve international collaboration. [INF, PRI]**

**a) Genetic Identity**  YES  NO  NOT APPLICABLE

Hawksbill populations have been studied as genetic point of view in main nesting sites through 2 projects in Biodiversity and WILDLIFE bureau initiated in 2008 as well as Marine Eco-Biology bureau of Marine Environment Deputy in 2010. The sites of study were: Nakhiloo, Sheedvar, Ommolkaram, Hendourabi Islands. some planned are underway to have more extended works both an the sites and the species.

**b) Conservation status**  YES  NO  NOT APPLICABLE

In some regional meetings conducted, Marine conservation Forum, Tracking projects, CMS aims and activities, the conservation status of the turtles and need for regional cooperation have been emphasized.

**c) Migrations**  YES  NO  NOT APPLICABLE

The tracking and migration study of Hawksbill turtles initiated and conducted through a regional project and the results are available in WWF-EWS web site.

**d) Other biological and ecological aspects**  YES  NO  NOT APPLICABLE

a complete data on the nesting, clutch size, nesting sites, eggs and hatch lings have been collected.

Other

**3.3.1 List, in order of priority, the marine turtle populations in your country in need of conservation actions, and indicate their population trends. [PRI]**

- 1) Green sea turtle population in the Oman Sea area.
- 2) Hawksbill population in Oman Sea area, for which the only reports are from many years ago.
- 3) No studies have been conducted on other populations, but in general, due to different factors, the nesting populations of Hawksbills in different islands of the Persian Gulf are under threat and in need of conservation.

**3.3.2 Are research and monitoring activities, such as those described above in Section 3.1 periodically reviewed and evaluated for their efficacy? [SAP]**

YES  NO  UNSURE

**3.3.3 Describe how research results are being applied to improve management practices and mitigation of threats (in relation to the priority populations identified in 3.3.1, among others). [SAP]**

Research results are being used to improve the efficacy of conservation actions through management, threat mitigation and the assessment of habitat loss. based on the results important sites with need for more protection have been recognized, as an example designation of Hendourabi Island as protected area due to its importance for sea turtles.

**3.4.1 Has your country undertaken any initiatives (nationally or through collaboration with other Range States) to standardise methods and levels of data collection? [BPR, INF]**

YES  NO  UNSURE

almost a unique data collection table prepared by Biodiversity and wildlife Bureau are used for recording and collecting data.

**3.4.2 To what extent does your country exchange scientific and technical information and expertise with other Range States? [SAP, IND]**

OFTEN (SYSTEMATICALLY)  OCCASIONALLY  RARELY  NEVER

**3.4.3 If your country shares scientific and technical information and expertise with other Range States, what mechanisms have commonly been used for this purpose? Comment on any positive benefits/outcomes achieved through these interactions. [INF]**

By publishing the results of studies in related journals and publications like the DOE Journal, through websites, newsletters as well as participating in regional meetings and workshops.

**3.4.4 Does your country compile and make available to other countries data on marine turtle populations of a regional interest? [INF]**

YES  NO  UNSURE

We are trying to assist any interested bodies by sharing information from Iran. At the regional scale, more co-operation is needed on this issue.

**OBJECTIVE IV. INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS OF THE THREATS TO MARINE TURTLES AND THEIR HABITATS, AND ENHANCE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES**

**4.1.1 Describe the educational materials, including mass media information programmes that your country has collected, developed and/or disseminated. [INF, PRI]**

Some documentary movies on sea turtles have been produced in Booshehr and Sistan and Baluchestan Provinces.

We have also had reports and articles published in popular newspapers, journals and magazines to give more general information for the all people. Publishing of catalog, brochures by the provincial offices of Booshehr, Hormozgan and S and Baluchestan in Environment fairs by cooperation of oil companies and industrial bodies. Kish and Queshm free zones also has published some educational and awareness materials providing for the turists and visitors.

**4.1.2 Which of the following groups have been the targets of these focused education and awareness programmes described in above in Section 4.1.1? [PRI, INF]**

- Policy makers
- Fishing industry
- Local/Fishing communities**
- Indigenous groups
- Tourists**
- Media**
- Teachers**
- Students**
- Military, Navy, Police
- Scientists**
- Other:All people interested in the subject.**
- None of the above

**4.1.3 Have any community learning / information centres been established in your country? [BPR, SAP]**

YES  **NO**

**4.2 Alternative livelihood opportunities [IND, BPR] Describe initiatives already undertaken or planned to identify and facilitate alternative livelihoods (including income-generating activities) for local communities.**

None

**4.3.1 Describe initiatives already undertaken or planned by your country to involve local communities, in particular, in the planning and implementation of marine turtle conservation programmes. Please include details of any incentives that have been used to encourage public participation, and indicate their efficacy. [BPR, IND]**

We have successfully drawn the attention of local people through research and conservation programs, and attracted their cooperation in some areas eg. Queshm and Shidvar Islands. The local industrial parts also are getting interested and providing some support s and helps.

**4.3.2 Describe initiatives already undertaken or planned to involve and encourage the cooperation of Government institutions, NGOs and the private sector in marine turtle conservation programmes. [IND, BPR]**

Our activities provide income for local people, for example when we hire boats and ask people to accompany us in the field. after long years and negotiations with local industrial bodies, specially oil companies, they started a very good cooperation regarding the study and conservation of sea turtles. using the local people capacity, providing some incomes to them, accepting them as the local cooperators of DOE are the other incentives.

**OBJECTIVE V. ENHANCE NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

**5.1.1 Has your country undertaken a national review of its compliance with Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) obligations in relation to marine turtles? [SAP]**

**YES**  NO  NOT APPLICABLE

The expert group and the focal point of IOSEA is in direct contact and cooperation with CITES and participates in the proposals related to marine turtles. There is not legal international trade on the species in Iran and any illegal trade in subject to fine.

**5.1.2 Does your country have, or participate/cooperate in, CITES training programmes for relevant authorities? [SAP]**

YES  NO  NOT APPLICABLE

CITES Management and Scientific Authority of Iran has participated in regional workshops on CITES implementation. More over a provincial experts of DOE, including the coastal provinces, participated in a international treaties workshop conducted in 2010 in Iran in which 1 day was for CITES. Participating in some workshops held by CITES, attending in standing committee meetings and COP meetings are the other parts related to the subject.

**5.1.3 Does your country have in place mechanisms to identify international illegal trade routes (for marine turtle products etc.)? Please use the text box to elaborate on how your country is cooperating with other States to prevent/deter/eliminate illegal trade. [SAP]**

YES  NO  NOT APPLICABLE

There is no international trade on sea turtle products in Iran.

**5.1.4 Which international compliance and trade issues related to marine turtles has your country raised for discussion (e.g. through the IOSEA MoU Secretariat, at meetings of Signatory States etc.)? [INF]**

None

**5.1.5 Describe measures in place to prevent, deter and eliminate domestic illegal trade in marine turtle products, particularly with a view to enforcing the legislation identified in Section 1.5.1. [INF]**

Taking into account that marine turtles are listed as protected marine fauna, there are a series of criteria and regulations in place to impede people from harvesting these species. Through a monitoring program carried out specially in the nesting season, DOE game guards monitor nesting beaches.

There is fine for any harvest on turtles and the eggs, which increased considerably and is subject for more increasing.

**5.2.1 Has your country already developed a national action plan or a set of key management measures that could eventually serve as a basis for a more specific action plan at a national level? [IND]**

YES  NO

**5.2.2 From your country's perspective, which conservation and management activities, and/or which particular sites or locations, ought to be among the highest priorities for action? [PRI]**

- 1) Conduct baseline studies. (3.1)
- 2) Initiate long-term monitoring of sea turtle populations. (3.1)
- 3) Identify and document threats to sea turtle populations. (1.1)
- 4) Adopt the best conservation and management practices for sea turtle populations. (1.2)

- 5) Determine those populations affected by sources of mortality. (1.1)
- 6) Reduce the mortality of eggs and hatchlings to maximize their survival. (1.6)
- 7) Use research results to improve management, mitigate threats and assess the efficacy of conservation activities. (3.3)
- 8) Identify areas of critical habitat such as migratory corridors, nesting beaches, inter-nesting and feeding areas.(2.1)
- 9) Prioritise populations for conservation actions (3.3)
- 10) Designate and manage protected/conservation areas, sanctuaries, or temporary exclusion zones in areas of critical habitat or take other measures. (2.1)

**5.2.3 Please indicate, from your country's standpoint, the extent to which the following local management issues require international cooperation in order to to achieve progress. [PRI]**

<b>Illegal fishing in territorial waters</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ESSENTIAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>IMPORTANT</b> <input type="checkbox"/> LIMITED <input type="checkbox"/> NOT AT ALL
<b>Incidental capture by foreign fleets</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ESSENTIAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>IMPORTANT</b> <input type="checkbox"/> LIMITED <input type="checkbox"/> NOT AT ALL
<b>Enforcement/patrolling of territorial waters</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ESSENTIAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>IMPORTANT</b> <input type="checkbox"/> LIMITED <input type="checkbox"/> NOT AT ALL
<b>Hunting/harvest by neighboring countries</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ESSENTIAL <input type="checkbox"/> IMPORTANT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>LIMITED</b> <input type="checkbox"/> NOT AT ALL
<b>Poaching, illegal trade in turtle projects</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ESSENTIAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>IMPORTANT</b> <input type="checkbox"/> LIMITED <input type="checkbox"/> NOT AT ALL
<b>Development of gear technology</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ESSENTIAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>IMPORTANT</b> <input type="checkbox"/> LIMITED <input type="checkbox"/> NOT AT ALL
<b>Oil spills, pollution, marine debris</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>ESSENTIAL</b> <input type="checkbox"/> IMPORTANT <input type="checkbox"/> LIMITED <input type="checkbox"/> NOT AT ALL
<b>Training / capacity-building</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>ESSENTIAL</b> <input type="checkbox"/> IMPORTANT <input type="checkbox"/> LIMITED <input type="checkbox"/> NOT AT ALL
<b>Alternative livelihood development</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ESSENTIAL <input type="checkbox"/> IMPORTANT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>LIMITED</b> <input type="checkbox"/> NOT AT ALL
<b>Identification of turtle populations</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>ESSENTIAL</b> <input type="checkbox"/> IMPORTANT <input type="checkbox"/> LIMITED <input type="checkbox"/> NOT AT ALL
<b>Identification of migration routes</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>ESSENTIAL</b> <input type="checkbox"/> IMPORTANT <input type="checkbox"/> LIMITED <input type="checkbox"/> NOT AT ALL
<b>Tagging / satellite tracking</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>ESSENTIAL</b> <input type="checkbox"/> IMPORTANT <input type="checkbox"/> LIMITED <input type="checkbox"/> NOT AT ALL
<b>Habitat studies</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>ESSENTIAL</b> <input type="checkbox"/> IMPORTANT <input type="checkbox"/> LIMITED <input type="checkbox"/> NOT AT ALL
<b>Genetics studies</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>ESSENTIAL</b> <input type="checkbox"/> IMPORTANT <input type="checkbox"/> LIMITED <input type="checkbox"/> NOT AT ALL

**5.3.1 Identify existing frameworks/organisations that are, or could be, useful mechanisms for cooperating in marine turtle conservation at the sub-regional level. Please comment on the strengths of these instruments, their capacity to take on a broader coordinating role, and any efforts your country has made to enhance their role in turtle conservation. [INF, BPR]**

Regional or sub-regional agreements, such as ROPME could play a very effective role in starting co-operation between the States for conservation measures, particularly on shared turtle populations. We have carried out preliminary activities to initiate such co-operation. as a most important initiative, satellite tracking of the Hawksbill turtles with cooperation of UAE, Iran, Qatar, Oman was a important stride.

**5.3.2 Has your country developed, or is it participating in, any networks for cooperative management of shared turtle populations? [BPR, INF]**

YES  NO  NOT APPLICABLE

**5.3.3 What steps has your country taken to encourage Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs) to adopt marine turtle conservation measures within Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) and on the high seas? [SAP]**

None

**5.4.1 Describe your country's needs, in terms of human resources, knowledge and facilities, in order to build capacity to strengthen marine turtle conservation measures. [PRI]**

More participation in regional and international gatherings.  
Regional cooperation.  
Establishment of a regional databank.  
Regional expertise information exchange and co-operation.  
More support by DOE and appreciation to the existing capacity in the country.  
More attention and supports by the international organizations

**5.4.2 Describe any training provided in marine turtle conservation and management techniques (e.g. workshops held, training manuals produced etc.), and indicate your plans for the coming year. [PRI, INF]**

**5.4.3 Specifically in relation to **capacity-building**, describe any partnerships developed or planned with universities, research institutions, training bodies and other relevant organisations. [BPR]**

DOE offices supports the university students aiming to work on turtles as their thesis, and we are in contact with some university members working on turtles in the region.

**5.5.1 National policies and laws concerning the conservation of marine turtles and their habitats will have been described in Section 1.5.1. Please indicate their effectiveness, in terms of their practical application and enforcement. [SAP, TSH]**

Considering the high fines on turtles and eggs and the information-gathering systems in place, the laws are quite effective.

The main problem for turtle conservation, considering the numbers of sites involved, is a lack of staff and equipment to check and control these areas. Some awareness and educational activities are under way to increase the public information on the conservation status of turtles and give information to enforcement bodies to have better judgement and control on illegal taking.

**5.5.2 Has your country conducted a review of policies and laws to address any gaps, inconsistencies or impediments in relation to marine turtle conservation? If not, indicate any obstacles encountered in this regard and when this review is expected to be done. [SAP]**

YES  NO  UNSURE

In last review, the fine amounts for harvesting turtles and eggs were increased.

**5.5.3 From the standpoint of law enforcement, has your country experienced any difficulties achieving cooperation to ensure compatible application of laws across and between jurisdictions? [TSH]**

YES  NO  **UNSURE**

Each provincial office of DOE has a legal and legislation expert, who stays in close contact with local jurisdictions. This means that judges are well aware of environmental crimes like the hunting or harvesting of protected species, and related punishments like fines. However, sometimes problems do exist.

## **OBJECTIVE VI. PROMOTE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MoU INCLUDING THE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN**

**6.1.1 What has your country already done, or will it do, to encourage other States to sign the IOSEA MoU? [INF]**

This could be achieved through sub-regional or regional agreements, or MoUs.

**6.1.2 Is your country currently favourable, in principle, to amending the MoU to make it a legally binding instrument? [INF]**

**YES**  NO  NO VIEW

**6.1.3 Would your country be favourable, over a longer time horizon, to amending the MoU to make it a legally-binding instrument? [INF]**

YES  NO  NO VIEW

### **6.2 Secretariat and Advisory Committee**

**6.2.1 What efforts has your country made, or can it make, to secure funding to support the core operations of the IOSEA MoU (Secretariat and Advisory Committee, and related activities)? [IND]**

some requests have snet to DOE and foreign affairs to provide some supports to the MOU. Iran would be happy to host some meetings and workshops and have some contributions in the expenses.

**6.3.1 What funding has your country mobilised for domestic implementation of marine turtle conservation activities related to the IOSEA Marine Turtle MoU? Where possible, indicate the specific monetary values attached to these activities/programmes, as well as future plans. [IND]**

We have requested funds from related sections of DOE for a turtle tagging program on some islands or other areas. The results are satisfactory and some improvements are in place.

**6.3.2 Has your country tried to solicit funds from, or seek partnerships with, other Governments, major donor organisations, industry, private sector, foundations or NGOs for marine turtle conservation activities? [IND]**

**YES**  NO

We had submitted proposals to the IOSEA MoU Secretariat to support tagging or conservation programmes at important sites in Iran as well as beach cleaning up programs which have been accepted

**6.3.3 Describe any initiatives made to explore the use of economic instruments for the conservation of marine turtles and their habitats. [BPR]**

Turtle nesting sites are used as turistic attractions in Queshm Island, but it is controlled and limited.

**6.4.1 Has your country designated a lead agency responsible for coordinating national marine turtle conservation and management policy? If not, when is this information expected to be communicated to the IOSEA MoU Secretariat? [IND]**

YES  NO

At the national and international level, Iran's Department of the Environment (DOE) is responsible for any works and activities related to the environment.

Within the DOE, the Wildlife and Aquatic Affairs Bureau is the legally authorized section for work on wildlife species. It could take a leading role in co-ordinating with related organizations and bureaus.

**6.4.2 Are the roles and responsibilities of all government agencies related to the conservation and management of marine turtles and their habitats clearly defined? [IND]**

YES  NO  UNSURE

The responsibilities of all organizations and related bureaus are defined, however far more clarification and coordination is necessary.

**6.4.3 Has your country ever conducted a review of agency roles and responsibilities? If so, when, and what was the general outcome? If not, is such a review planned and when? [SAP],**

YES  NO  UNSURE

There are no specific programs for such a review, although there have not been any impediments either.

Maybe this is why there has not been a specific conservation and management program on sea turtles and their habitats to date.

**Comments/suggestions to improve the present reporting format:**

**Additional information not covered above:**

We would like to acknowledge the IOSEA MoU Secretariat, especially Mr. Douglas Hykle, for their kind help in providing and donating turtle tags. These enabled us to start a tagging program for the first time in Iran, and considerably helped to accelerate our work on sea turtles.

Note: the present report was lightly edited by the Secretariat (09 February 2006) the report was edit in June 2014.