

## FAO GUIDELINES TO REDUCE INTERACTION WITH SEA TURTLES

1. Implement the FAO Guidelines to reduce bycatch, injury, and mortality of sea turtles in fishing operations and ensure safe treatment of all sea turtles captured, in order to improve their survival.

### 2. Current Status

Ecuador, based on the guidelines established by FAO, applies the following methods to reduce interaction with sea turtles:

- Amendments to the arts and fishing gear and fishing methods (change Buoy string to monofilament)
- Post-catch practices that can improve the prospects of survival of sea turtles after their release (fishing observer's longliners)
- Restrictions areas or closed seasons for fishing operations. (Closed seasons for different species apply)
- Voluntary communication between the fishing fleet to avoid hotspots of marine turtles (Longliners-Nodrizas)
- Inputs controls (supplies), such as controlling the type and/or amount of gear or fishing gear (Grants gear)
- Imposition of payment for bycatch or other compensatory methods (Sanctions set out in the Fisheries Act bycatch when turtles are injured, beaten and mortality)
- Avoid losing and discarding fishing gear and other waste into the sea. (On-board observer program implemented to reduce and punish if these cases occur)
- Recovery and fishing gear and other waste abandoned at sea. (Longliners -Nodrizas)

With the above guidelines, it is essential to consider the following points of view that Ecuador considers important when incidental catch a sea turtle:

- In practice, in most cases, the turtle is not observed by the captain, crew or even the observer.
- When making a set, the activity of the crew is fishing, for this reason, they do not realize about the bycatch until the turtle is near of the net or when coming up entangled.
- In many cases the rescue of sea turtles is complicated, even making all the necessary effort, because it threatens the lives of the crew at the time to be doing fishing, so the easiest way to remove it is to wait until the turtle is in the perimeter of the net and release it either using a dip net or cutting the net.
- When analyzing the measures for the conservation of turtles from vessels flying the flag of Ecuador, is taken into account the release of the turtle without

apparent damage, hits, accepting the use of dip net, as long as they do not hit turtle or cause injuries on it.

- Similarly, Ecuador sees no infringement when the net is cut or when the turtle is released by the crew, as long as no present injury.
- Cases with injuries, beatings and acts of malevolence by the crew with the sea turtle are considered as infringements.
- The implementation of the Guidelines must be in accordance to what happens at sea, because in many cases, the crews make the effort to rescue turtles involving risks, to avoid being singled out for alleged violations, from the point of view of conservation, we would not be committing infringements, because turtles are released alive without apparent damage.