

## 1. ANTECEDENTS

Sea turtles utilize a variety of coastal and marine habitats for their development and, depending on the species, sexual maturity is reached between 15-35 years. The long and complex life cycle means that any conservation effort toward these species must be done over a mid- or long-term schedule in order to yield useful scientific information and effective conservation results.

Of the five species of sea turtles which occur in Venezuelan waters, all are considered *endangered* by national legislation. Although, the distribution of sea turtle nesting grounds has not been completely documented in Venezuela; however, data are available to demonstrate that the northeastern mainland of the country is the most important nesting area. The most abundant species in this northeastern range, focused in the Peninsula of Paria, is the leatherback turtle, *Dermochelys coriacea*, a species currently considered "Critically Endangered" by the IUCN, and thus requiring long-term global conservation attention.

The project "Research and conservation of endangered sea turtles in the Peninsula of Paria, Sucre State, Venezuela" began following recommendations made in the "Sea Turtle Recovery Action Plan for Venezuela" (Guada, 2000; Guada and Solé, 2000). 2004 has represented the seventh year of activities without interruption. To date the project has tagged near 400 females and it has released over 35,000 turtle hatchlings, mainly of the leatherback turtle.

## 2. PROJECT GOALS

1. To execute the 7<sup>th</sup> year of activities of the Sea Turtle Research and Conservation Project in the Paria Peninsula.
2. To provide training for students and young professionals.
3. To involve local people in the sea turtle conservation through training and awareness activities.

### 3. STUDY AREA

Cipara and Querepare Beaches are located in the Municipality of Arismendi, Sucre State, Venezuela (62°42'W, 10°45'N, and 62°52'W, 10°42'N, respectively), in the Sucre State, northeastern Venezuela. Cipara Beach is nearly 2 km in length, with an adjoining village and Querepare Beach is 1,240 m in length with the village located at its east tip.

### 4. METHODS

#### 4.1.- Data collection

As occurs since the beginning of the project, the Licenses for Scientific Hunting were obtained from the Biological Diversity National Office of the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources (ONDB-MARN) N° 0540; N° 0668; N° 0671; N° 0669 and N° 0670. Nightly surveys were done to find the nesting females at Cipara and Querepare Beaches. The following information was registered in the forms:

- ❖ Time and place of the observation
- ❖ Identification of the species
- ❖ Standard curved length and curved width of the carapace
- ❖ Presence of metallic tags or signals of previous tags
- ❖ Tag and place of the metallic tag
- ❖ Presence of PIT tags (detected through a scanner AVID Power Track IV)
- ❖ Presence of the crown pink spot
- ❖ Condition of the caudal peduncle
- ❖ Presence of epifauna (fauna over the turtle body)
- ❖ Presence of cuts or other damages
- ❖ Number of eggs per nest

Metallic tags of the Caribbean Conservation Corporation and the WIDECAST Caribbean Marine Turtle Tagging Centre (MTTC) at the University of West Indies (Barbados) and the Archie Carr Center of Sea Turtle Research (University of Florida), were put in the left rear flipper of the gravid female. PIT tags were applied in the muscle portion of the right shoulder. Nesting females were photographed to document the individual "pink spot" on the crown of their heads, very important for the individual identification of each female. The species of the Cheloniidae family were tagged only with a metallic tag in the right fore flipper.

Daily surveys were made to estimate the total of reproductive events and related information (Alvarado and Murphy 2000; Hernández 2002).

## **4.2.- Nest management**

To protect nests from high tides and poaching, eggs were transferred to closed hatcheries on the same beach. However, the tide flowed over the hatcheries several times. The effects of a hurricane "Emily" by begins of July affected strongly the Cipara Beach hatchery by July 7<sup>th</sup>. The Querepare Beach hatchery was less affected.

In each nest, the numbers of live and dead hatchlings and the presence of eggs without apparent development were registered. Hatchlings were counted and released at night. Hatching and recruitment success were estimated following Sarti and García (1999).

## **4.3.- Environmental education and workshops**

Awareness activities were conducted between April to August 2005.

# **5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

## **5.1.- RESEARCH AND CONSERVATION**

### **5.1.1.- Nesting females and hatchlings released**

Local Assistants began beach patrols by March 15<sup>th</sup> in both beaches. The project team arrived by begin April to Cipara Beach, the choosen training place and, later to Querepare Beach. Field work finished by September.

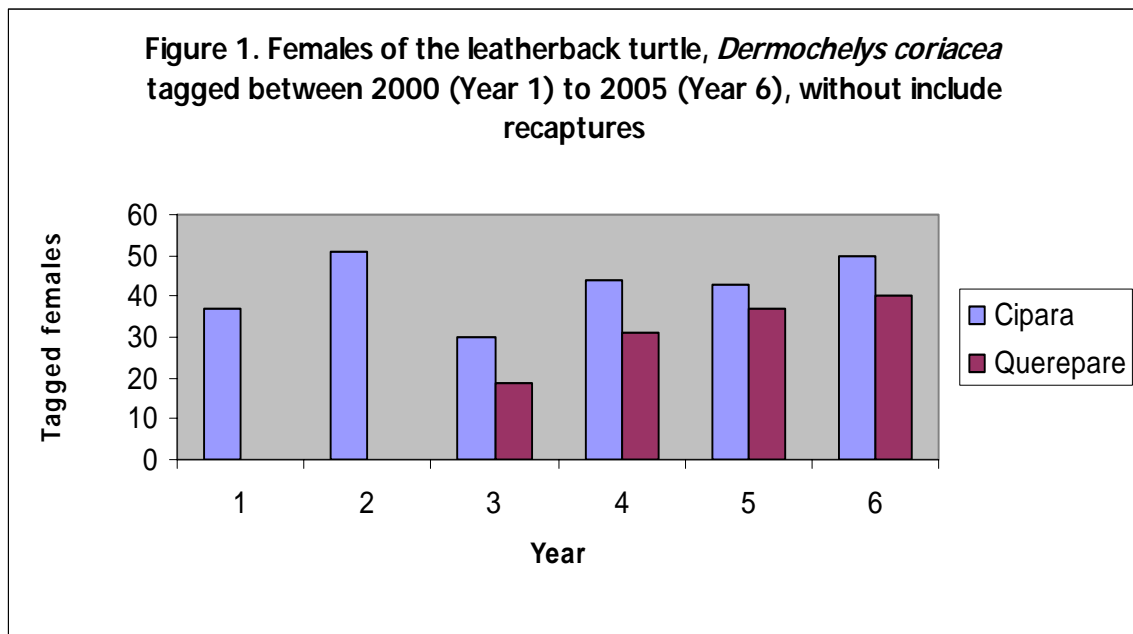
The work of the staff was initiated in April 4<sup>th</sup> 2005 nesting season in Cipara Beach and it permitted to tag 50 leatherback turtles (Figure 1). Six recaptures from previous nesting seasons were detected [2000 (n=1), 2001 (n=2), 2002 (n=2) and 2003(n=1)] (Rondon and Guada, 2006). Although it was expected to tag more females in Querepare Beach, only we tagged 40 females of the leatherback turtle (Figure 1), probably this is because of again to the delayed beginning of the staff activities in April 12<sup>th</sup> in this locality. Recaptures from 2002 (n=1) and 2003 (n=5) were found in the beach (Rondon and Guada, 2006). Two species more were tagged, a loggerhead turtle and a hawksbill turtle. The patrols finished by begin of August and the censuses finished by August 31<sup>st</sup> in both beaches (Plates 1,2).

The number of females tagged in Cipara Beach during 2005 is similar within the range of 40 to 50 obtained from 2002 to 2004 (Rondón et al., en prensa, Rondon and Guada, 2006). In Querepare Beach, the number of nesting

turtles is lesser than expected, however the field work always begins later in this beach, and we loose an important number of turtles.

In the Caribbean region several leatherback turtle nesting populations are declining (Troëng et al., 2004), with the exception of Trinidad which may have near 6,000 turtles nesting annually (Eckert, in press). Some populations with decades of protection have been recovering (Eckert, 2001).

Current results show that the Paria Peninsula is the most important nesting ground for *Dermochelys coriacea* in the mainland and contributes with a significant percent to the annual estimate of 200 to 300 females females in the northeastern region of Venezuela (CICTMAR-WIDECAS and Provita-Procosta, 2004; Guada, 2002; Rondón et al., in press).



In the Table 1 are presented the corresponding data of the nests and hatchlings in both beaches (Rondón and Guada, 2006). It must be noted that it was needed to built a new and small hatchery in Cipara Beach.

Although blood sampling it was made to perform health analysis in the Querepare Beach females, results are not available yet, because of the the biologist involved in this project began to work in another institution and the samples have not been completely examined yet.

**Table 1.** Reproductive success (%) of the leatherback turtles (*Dermochelys coriacea*) in Cipara and Querepare Beaches during 2005 nesting season.

Beach	Cipara (%)	Querepare (%)
<b>Nests in the hatcheries</b>	92 (Hatchery 1) 10 (Hatchery 2)	79
<b><i>In situ</i> nests</b>	10	23
<b>Leatherback turtle hatchlings released</b>	2371	2131
<b>Hatchlings released: other species</b>	60	500
<b>Hatching success (%)</b>	38.35 (Hatchery 1) 48.07 (Hatchery 2)	45.27
<b>Survival success (%)</b>	27.17 (Hatchery 1) 38.59 (Hatchery 2)	38.96

Interestingly, during 2005 the hatching success was lower for Cipara Beach, but the consequences of the hurricane by the mid of the nesting season could be partially responsible of this. On other side, the sand in the area of the hatchery brought a lot of problems to the nest preparation and further excavation.

#### **5.1.2.- Incidental caught in the fisheries and by unknown reasons**

Several turtle carcasses arrived to Cipara Beach, and reports indicated a frequent incidental caught of leatherback females during the nesting season along the northern Paria Peninsula, but particularly in Tacarigua and Puerto La Cruz beaches.

#### **5.1.3.- Killing of females and poaching of nests**

As usual, after the departure of the beaches, reports have been received about the killing of several drowned turtles. Again, several nests were poached at the beginning of the nesting season at Querepare Beach, but the poaching almost ceased during the field project execution. The military personnel based in San Juan de Unare patrolled the beach in some days during the nesting season.

#### **5.1.4.- Technical reports and presentations in scientific meetings**

#### **5.1.4.1.- Technical reports**

The technical report requested by the Ministry of the Environment (MARN) it was submitted to the Oficina Nacional de Permisiones and to ONDB-MARN (2 copies) as is required by the scientific licenses provided for the project execution: 0116, 0240, 0241.

**Rondón Médicci, M. y H. J. Guada 2006. Informe del Proyecto de Investigación y Conservación de Tortugas Marinas. Cipara, Península de Paria, Estado Sucre. Temporada 2005. Informe Técnico de CICTMAR. 15 pp.**

A report of the tags used was provided to Dr. Julia Horrocks, from the WIDECASST Caribbean Marine Turtle Tagging Centre (MTTC) at the University of West Indies, Barbados.

#### **5.1.4.2.- International scientific meetings**

Thanks to a kind invitation of CAP-AZA Venezuela Group, it was possible to present an oral summary of the sea turtle work in Venezuela in the 2005 AZA Conference, held in Chicago, USA, between September 13<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup>, 2005.

**The research and conservation of endangered sea turtles in Venezuela: Empowering the network, investing in our future. Hedelvy J. Guada**

This opportunity to share with the zoos involved in the CAP-AZA Venezuela Group was a very interesting and important opportunity, as well as to share with other Venezuelan colleagues supported by AZA, as Lic. Esmeralda Mujica, Lic. Maria Rosa Cuesta and Dr. Isaac Goldstein. Some person-to-person exchanges were maintained with key persons of several zoos as Cleveland Metroparks Zoo, Columbus Zoo, Dallas Zoo, Palm Beach Zoo, Santa Ana Zoo, Brookfield Zoo, between others. To have visited the Brookfield Zoo and the Shedd Aquarium, it was an impressive experience.

A poster of the results of the research and conservation project in Cipara and Querepare Beaches, it was presented at the "26th Annual Symposium on Sea Turtle Biology and Conservation" in Crete, Greece, April 4<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup>, 2006 (Annex 3):

**Results of the 2005 nesting season of the Sea Turtle Research and Conservation Project, in the Paria Peninsula, Sucre State, Venezuela. María de los Angeles Rondón Médicci, Hedelvy J. Guada, Ohiana Revuelta Avin and Alfredo Montilla.**

A second poster was showed with the results of the thesis developed in 2004 in the Querepare Beach (Annex 3):

**Some reproductive aspects of the leatherback turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*) in Querepare Beach, Peninsula de Paria, Sucre State, Venezuela, during the 2004 nesting season. Eneida Fajardo, Jim Hernández and Hedelvy J. Guada.**

In the symposium, Hedelvy Guada attended the WIDECAST Meeting (two-days), the International Sea Turtle Symposium Society Board of Director's Meetings, and the Marine Turtle Specialist Group Meeting. Beside the support provided by the Symposium, we got support from WIDECAST and the BP Conservation Programme for travel expenses.

**5.1.4.3.- Publications and other by-products**

- The graduate thesis project of Cassandra Marichal (Duke University). Cassy was finished with the title of **"Las tortugas marinas. Una guía educativa"**. Cassy came to Venezuela again during the 2005 nesting season, to get the opinion of several teachers in the Paria Peninsula about the document (Annex 4). The material is pending of validation during 2006.
- The thesis made by the Biology undergraduate Eneida Fajardo (La Universidad del Zulia), **"Evaluación del éxito reproductivo de la tortuga cardón (*Dermochelys coriacea*) en Querepare, Peninsula de Paria, Estado Sucre"**, was presented in January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2006 in the LUZ, Maracaibo, Zulia State (Annex 4). A copy it was sent to MARN.
- The M.Sc thesis from Maria de los Angeles Rondon was conducted since April 2005 to January 2006. The tittle is **"Evaluacion del impacto de la luz artificial sobre la anidaci[on de la tortuga cardon (*Dermochelys coriacea*) y percepcion de los conocimientos de los pobladores costeros sobre las tortugas marinas en la Peninsula de Paria, Estado Sucre, Venezuela"**, and it was presented on June 26<sup>th</sup> , 2006, in the Universidad Nacional, Heredia, Costa Rica.

**5.1.5.- Coordination of the Project**

The General Project Coordination (GPC) is managed by Hedelvy Guada. The Scientific Coordinator is Lic. María de los Angeles Rondón (SPC), which in addition developed her graduate thesis within the project. Lic. Rondón acted as the Research Coordinator (RCC) at Cipara Beach (RCC). The Research Coordinator at Querepare Beach was Biol. Oiana Revuelta Avin, a former Research Assistant during 2004.

For our project it is extraordinarily important to have people coming during consecutive years because it is people knowing the technical and procedures and, by other side, is important for the people of the villages where we leave. Then, we encourage to the people to come again in further years and we have had several Coordinators than before have been Research Assistants.

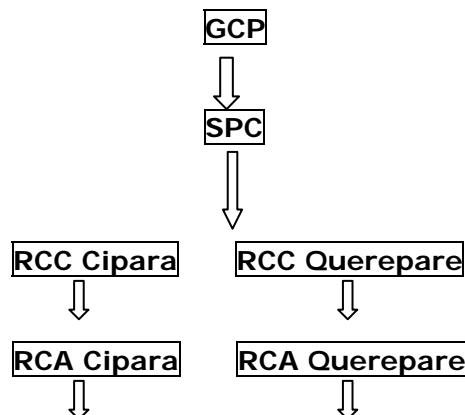
By 2005 it was not possible again to hire the part-time Coordinator at Rio Caribe, which provided a very important support in several aspects of the project development.

We attempted during 2005 with the position of Assistant of the Research Coordinator for each beach (RCA). The experience was partially successful and we decided to do not repeat again for 2006 just by money matters. The strategy was to have a second person "on board", to be in charge of the project, in the case of absences of the Research Coordinator.

The selection of the Coordinators, Assistants of the Research Coordinator and Research Assistants it was a very difficult process by the time invested and because some people which were selected finally did not come to Venezuela. This happens with the Cipara Research Coordinator which it would have been the same that for 2004 and in the last minute declined. This decision from him obligated us to look frenetically for a new Coordinator and we selected a person from Spain, a previous Research Assistant in 2004, Biol. Ohiana Revuelta. Regarding the Assist. of the Research Coordinator, one of them was finally found 12 days before the opening of the camps.

These late-selection problems brought a new complication. We could not request on time the 6 months visas for Ohiana Revuelta and Mary-Ann Bell, and the project had to assume the cost to sent them out of the country (Aruba) by two days, in order to get new 3-months visas to conclude their stay in Venezuela. This situation brought an important economic constraint to the project development.

The functioning scheme was as follows:





## Research Assistants + Local Assistants

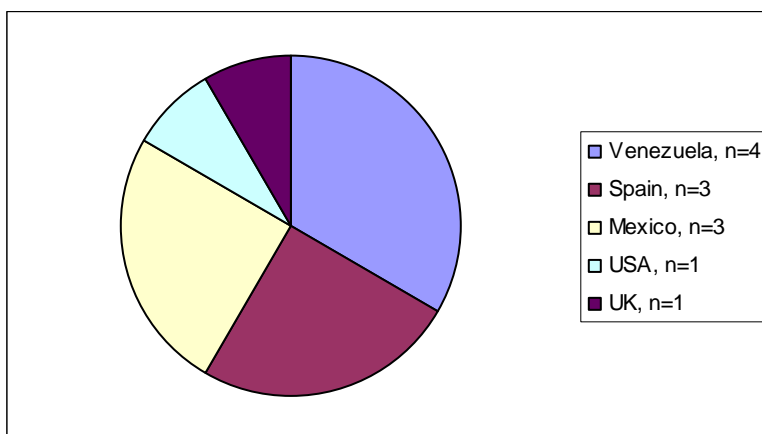
The administrative duties of the GPC involve usually much of the time. At least once visit per month was made to Cipara and Querepare Beaches.

### 5.1.6.- Participation of Research Assistants

#### 5.1.6.1.- Participation of Assistants of the Research Coordinator and of the Research Assistants

Two Assistants of the Research Coordinator and ten Research Assistants participated during the nesting season, coming from Venezuela, Mexico, Spain and USA. They were:

- Mary-Ann Bell, Assistant of the Cipara Beach Research Coordinator (England)
- Lic. Alfredo Montilla, Assistant of the Querepare Beach Research Coordinator (Venezuela)
- Lic. Patricia Arranz (Spain)
- Nelly Perez (Mexico)
- Denis Alvarez (Mexico)
- Joaquín Jiménez (Mexico)
- Lic. Daniela Chollet (Venezuela)
- Lic. Veronica de Los Llanos (Venezuela)
- Bs. M.Sc. Cassandra Marichal (USA)
- Lic. Juan Vilata (Spain)
- Lic. Judit Gonzalez Barcina (Spain)
- Karen Bautista (Venezuela)



**Figure 2.** Distribution of the Assistants of the Research Coordinator and of the Research Assistants per country of origin during the 2005 nesting season.

The number of Venezuelan participants continues being lower than the total number of the foreigner Research Assistants, although a high promotion of the project has been made within the country.

Two visitors from national universities and, one 2002 participant joined to the project by several days. One undergraduate student which made her thesis in Querepare Beach in 2004 was receiving technical advise during some days in Cipara Beach.

#### **5.1.6.2- Participation of Local Assistants**

The same four Local Assistants have continued involved in the project, David and Cleto Urbano (Cipara Beach) and Henry and Ellinson Cova (Querepare Beach).

### **5.2.- Training**

#### **5.2.1.- XIV Sea Turtle Course**

We decided to do not organize the XVIth Course because of it was not found additional funding. A deep analysis conducted to decide that the short Course will be held each two years, to provide better opportunity to find the enough money. It was decided that in the year between the Symposiums it may be organized an activity as workshop or a Symposium, taking advantage of some in-country scientific meeting.

#### **5.2.2.- Symposium on Sea Turtles in Feeding Areas**

##### **5.2.2.1.- Before the Symposium**

The Symposium was widely announced in several electronic lists, including one at in-country level (electronic list of the Sea Turtle Working Group, GTTM), another list at regional level (electronic list of the Red de Tortugas Marinas Neotropicales) and the world-wide CTURTLE (administrated by the University of Florida, Archie Carr Center for Sea Turtle Research).

It was brought a lot materials for review (books, posters, leaflets) and 40 posters of "Las tortugas marinas de Venezuela" were distributed. The leaflets included the original program, although after it suffered some changes (Annex 5).

The international guest it was Carlos Diez (Puerto Rico Department of Nature Resources) arrived by Tuesday November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2005. By Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup>, we flight to Maracaibo. In addition, we had an international participant, M. Sc. Zunilda Baldonado

Hogdson, from CORALINA, Environmental Agency of the San Andres Archipelago, Colombia.

#### **5.2.2.2.- Development of the Symposium**

The “Symposium on Sea Turtles in Feeding Areas: Importance, Methods and Research Strategies” was held at the VI National Congress of Ecology November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2005, Maracaibo, Venezuela. In the opening, it was made the historic review of the training activities on feeding areas. Changes in the program were mentioned. The program suffered two changes. Verónica de Los Llanos could not participate because she participated in a protected areas course. Alfredo Montilla could not arrive from Aves Island, a Wildlife Refuge and he did not presented the lecture. Carlos Diez suggested to include as presenters to Héctor Barrios and María Gabriela Montiel from GTTM-GV. Carlos Diez provided an additional lecture about his project with the green turtle in Culebra, Puerto Rico. Beside that changes, the program was completely accomplished.

We had 69 participants registered, although the list was circulated only during the morning. It was explained that the participants could be join to the electronic list of the GTTM, which is managed by Hedelvy Guada.

Prof. Joaquin Buitrago (EDIMAR-FLASA) and me summarized the main questions and points of discussions after the lectures. To the end of the sessions, we presented this summary for open discussion.

Carlos Diez offered to the Symposium participants the possibility to go to Puerto Rico, to participate in his field project.

It must be remarked that the organization provided by the “VI National Ecology Congress” it was excellent. The Symposium room at Hotel del Lago, Maracaibo, Zulia State, the multimedia projector, and the logistic team were very good. All the lecturers received their certificates of participation, with the exception of Hector Barrios, because he was not in the original program.

#### **5.2.2.3.- Activities after the Symposium**

##### **Document “Priorities and Methods of Research on Sea Turtles in Feeding Areas in Venezuela”**

The document was circulated for review between the main contributors during the discussion. The final document (Annex 6) containing recommendations for the research and conservation work in feeding areas, it was circulated to the main Governmental Organizations in Venezuela since end January 2006. The goal of this action is to create awareness at governmental levels, on the importance to know the sea turtle populations in feeding areas, to use the best scientific techniques, to promote the information about sea turtle between all the public levels and the need that this kind of efforts receive financial support. All the mentioned points are very important considering that there is a big program of oil and gas offshore exploration and production expected in some of the most important marine turtle feeding areas. The GOs what received the document were the Oficina Nacional de Diversidad Biológica-Ministerio del Ambiente (MARN), Instituto

Nacional de la Pesca, Instituto Nacional de los Espacios Acuáticos e Insulares, Ministerio de Turismo, Defensoría Ambiental, Ministerio Público, Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, between others.

### **Electronic list of the GTTM**

On other hand, a message was circulated to all the participants to invite them to join to the electronic list of the GTTM. To date, was 10 new subscribers have been added to the yahoo list.

### **Cooperation and field projects**

We have been discussing possibilities of a field trip from Carlos Diez to Venezuela, to identify an area for a research project in the water, however, some work constraint have prevented to make a reality this idea as well as, the idea to go to Puerto Rico to know Carlos Diez's projects in Mona and Culebra Islands during 2006.

Two specific points of cooperation arised after the Symposium. A biologist from La Universidad del Zulia (LUZ) which work in the field project in Paria during 2004 and 2006, Lic. Eneida Fajardo was selected to be a Research Assistant in the project of Mona Island next August 2006<sup>th</sup>. On other hand, Henio Briceño, a Biology student of LUZ and a former participant of one sea turtle course, will be traveling to Puerto Rico to be trained in the sampling and processing of DNA.

One of the students which was in the logistic team of La Universidad del Zulia during the Symposium, participated during April to June 2006 as Research Assistant in the field project in the Paria Peninsula.

### **Financial matters**

No funding from 2004-2005 donations was available for this activity. Hedelvy Guada received look for a fellowship and won \$1,500 to support the organization coming from BP Conservation Programme. In addition, Prof. Joaquin Buitrago requested complimentary support from National Fund for Science and Technology (FONACYT).

## **6.- COMPONENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION, AND COMMUNITY-BASED ACTIVITIES AND OUTREACH**

### **6.1.- Public awareness (Plate 3)**

- Near a dozen of lectures about sea turtles were taught to military personnel from San Juan de Unare, Rio Caribe and Carupano and in schools of Boca de Cumana, Cipara, San Juan de Unare and Querepare Beaches
- The posters and brochures developed between 2003 and 2004 have continued being distributed (The posters: "No todo lo que cae en la red es un pescado", "Las tortugas marinas de Venezuela", and the brochures "Las tortugas marinas....patrimonio natural de la Península de Paria", "The sea turtles ... natural patrimony of the Paria Peninsula").

- Wood announcements were installed in both beaches explaining the dangerous activities toward sea turtles. These announcements were prepared by one of the Research Assistants, an art-designer, Judit Gonzalez Barcina.
- The person which should be conducting the environmental education activities could not be identified to work during the 2005 nesting season (P.

## **6.2.- Community based activities**

No specific activities on this subject were made during 2005.

## **6.3.- Outreach at national level**

### **Press media**

- Notes on the project and interviews were published in the newspapers El Diario de Sucre and El Nacional (Annex 7).

### **TV**

One short interviews it was made during 2005 for the regional TV ("Tu TV").

### **Radio**

The radio station Radio Paria 103.7 FM, it was putting in the air short "micros" with a turtle role, "**Agutrot**" (tortuga in Spanish, but read from back to begin). In addition, the station leader, Lic. Tamara Rodriguez has made promotion of the turtle adoption campaign.

## **7.- IMPACT OF THE PROJECT**

It is presented a summarized and comprehensive project evaluation of the proposed 2005 outputs and the accomplishments to date (Table 2).

Table 2. Accomplishments according to the proposal presented to AZA.

<b>PROPOSED OUTPUTS AZA PROPOSAL 2005</b>	<b>OUTPUTS 2005</b>
<i>Research and Conservation Project</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tag 90-120 endangered leatherback turtles at Cipara and Querepare beaches during the 2005 nesting season; released (estimated, based on recent years' data) at least 8,000 hatchlings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 90 leatherback tagged at Cipara and Querepare Beaches. Eight recaptures and 2 turtles tagged of other species (hawksbill and loggerhead turtles). More than 5,000 hatchlings released.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data collection in Cipara, Querepare, Puy Puy will contribute to the territory planning and management in the Peninsula de Paria area. The recommendations will be submitted to local authorities and central government authorities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reports have been submitted to the regional authorities and central authorities as the Ministry of the Environment. Reports were not submitted to INAPESCA.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dramatically reduce poaching on monitored beaches, significantly enhancing the survival of egg-laden adult females.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poaching was high again in Querepare Beach before our arrival, but it was stopped with our presence in the beach.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scientific articles submitted to peer-reviewed journals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pending.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poster or oral presentations in a scientific in-country and international meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oral presentations in the AZA Conference, September 2005, and the "26<sup>th</sup> Annual Symposium on Sea Turtle Biology and Conservation", Crete, Greece, April 2006.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To improve the policy section of the Project Procedures Manual, particularly regarding the Project Coordinators for 2005 nesting season.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pending yet. It has been made a draft but it has not been concluded. Expected ending for September 2006.</li> </ul>

Table 2. Accomplishments according to the proposal presented to AZA (cont.)

<b>PROPOSED OUTPUTS AZA PROPOSAL 2005</b>	<b>OUTPUTS 2005</b>
<i>Training</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least six Research Assistants and 2 local Assistants will be trained per year in Cipara and Querepare.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ten Research Assistants trained to date. They were from Venezuela, Mexico, USA and Spain.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members of the local community will apprentice with project staff, becoming meaningfully involved in research and management activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pending.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Several specialized workshops for teachers will be offered at selected communities on the Paria Peninsula; these will be designed in partnership with local educators.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pending for 2006. The person to execute this project was not found.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The "XV Course on Sea Turtle Biology and Conservation" will be organized and hosted by CICTMAR.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pending for 2006. In its place it was organized the "Symposium on Sea Turtles in Feeding Areas: Importance, Methods and Research Strategies" at the VI National Congress of Ecology November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2005, Maracaibo, Venezuela.</li> </ul>

Table 2. Accomplishments according to the proposal presented to AZA (cont.).

<b>PROPOSED OUTPUTS AZA PROPOSAL 2005</b>	<b>OUTPUTS 2005</b>
<b><i>Community-based conservation</i></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The research and conservation project is providing some direct benefits to several members of the community: including paid research assistantships, the rental of local housing, boat rental, drivers, meal's preparation, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As it was proposed.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteer apprentices are trained in sea turtle conservation techniques, facilitating enhanced local sharing of technical information and conservation results.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Four Local Assistants work in the project.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The project will give follow-up to the two workshops on community organization offered in Querepare and Cipara Beaches.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>During the nesting season we discussed widely about organization possibilities, but we could not enforce this aspect with the organization of another workshop.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One workshop about ecotourism in Querepare and enforcing sessions during the nesting season.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It was executed by February 2006, with a guest from the NGO Nature Seekers Incorporated from Trinidad, Dennys Sammy and WIDECAS Country Coordinator for Trinidad.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organization of two workshops about preparation of handicrafts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pending for 2006.</li> </ul>
<b><i>Public awareness</i></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lectures in Cipara, Querepare and adjacent local towns or schools.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lectures in Cipara, Querepare, San Juan de Unare and Rio Caribe.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workshops about sea turtle biology and conservation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pending.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organization of meetings to establish a regional sea turtle group to be convened in Carupano.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pending.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project results will be disseminated within communities, regional and in-country authorities and, media.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Done.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At least two interviews in the local radio stations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Done, although the radio program could not be made in Querepare Beach.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interviews or press notes in the local newspaper, regional and national newspapers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Done</li> </ul>



Table 2. Accomplishments according to the proposal presented to AZA (cont.).

<b>PROPOSED OUTPUTS AZA PROPOSAL 2005</b>	<b>OUTPUTS 2005</b>
<b><i>Public awareness</i></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Printed materials (brochures about the Paria turtles and posters about the sea turtles of Venezuela) will be distributed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Done.</li> <li>• The poster on the incidental caught has been translated into "wayúu" but it has not been printed yet by La Universidad del Zulia (LUZ).</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Production of a poster focused to the sea turtles in the Paria Peninsula.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design done. Printing to be made by August-September 2006 (Plate 5).</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The quarterly e-bulletin, "Tortuga News", will continue.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pending.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comprehensive websites for both CICTMAR and the GTTM will be created</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pending. Not funding available.</li> </ul>
<b><i>Networking</i></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Four meetings of the GTTM and GTTM will be legally incorporated.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One meeting by 2005. Incorporating GTTM pending yet.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least two meeting for stakeholders of the Peninsula de Paria.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pending.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The review and update of the Sea Turtle Recovery Action Plan will be made.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was announced but formally it has not begun, It was solicited the participation of the Ministry of the Environment (MARN) and the Coordinator of the Caribbean Environment Programme at Jamaica was informed. No response has been received from MARN.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re-establishing of the CICTMAR and WIDECAS South America and Greater Antilles Office to provide technical support along the influence area.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Office only partially in use. Budget is not enough to cover expenses.</li> </ul>

## 8.- FINANCIAL AND INSTITUTIONAL ASPECTS

- We received financial support from the Palm Beach Zoo, Cleveland Metroparks Zoo, and Roosevelt Zoo through CAP-AZA Venezuela and from Rufford Small Grants and National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF).
- WIDECAS provided an important loan to cover the arrival of the NFWF funding and receives and wire the main part of the money arriving to CICTMAR without no administrative discounts.
- We have received in/kind contributions from:

- ❖ The British Embassy which provided an office-refrigerator which it was translated by the Comando de Guardacostas and Comando de la Zona Naval de Oriente to Cipara Beach. In addition, they provided a second-hand digital camera.
- ❖ Thomas Merle Foundation has continued providing support keeping field equipments, and promoting media contacts.
- ❖ Dr. Earl Possardt, the Sea Turtle coordinator of USFWS provided 50 PIT tags.
- ❖ Dr. Sheryan Epperly (NMFS) has provided kindly in a loan basis, two PIT tag readers Destron ® to work at Cipara and Querepare Beaches.

### **Pending payments**

The Municipality of Arismendi did not provided the support requested in 2003 during 2005 (Bs. 17.000.000,00).

Summarizing, as usually, we have not been able to cover at least the 80% of the project's expenses and we close 2005 activities with important debts. Some payments toward staff personnel (Ricardo Hernandez and Maria de los Angeles Rondon) have remained pending since 2003. There are payments pending to Hedelvy Guada since 2001 and no ways to solve those pending payments have been identified.

### **Self-sustainability**

Through the "Adoption a Turtle or a Nest Program", 20 adoptions were effective during 2005, for a total income of Bs. 920.000,00. A total of six Honorary Adoptive Parents were selected. They were selected in this category by their in-kind contributions to the project.

Adoptive Parents received sea turtle t-shirts, an identification as Adoptive Parent and e-bulletins about the project development. By the end of the year they received a summary of their adoptions. The "adoption kit" and the raffle established as an award clearly could not be completely covered with the income mentioned above. The raffle was made and the airfare was bought (>Bs. 500.000) and provided to the winner, Elena Sanz D'Angelo which could not fly in the day selected and further, she decided to donate the AVIOR ticket to Hedelvy Guada. One of the Adoptive Parents provided a discount in the rental of house at Cipara Beach.

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- To Dr. Karen L. Eckert (WIDECAS), because of her inspiring example and by the financial support to the general project.
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Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), Rufford Small Grants, National fish and Wildlife Foundation and the British Embassy at Venezuela The project received institutional support from the Municipality of Arismendi (Sucre State) and Thomas Merle Foundation.

- To the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MRE) which provided several courtesy visas again for the foreigner participants.
- To the Oficina Nacional de Permisiones (MARN) what it has provided scientific licenses for the project.
- Tags were provided through the WIDECAST Caribbean Marine Turtle Tagging Centre (MTTC) of the University of Barbados. We are using remaining tags from ACCSTR (University of Florida) and Caribbean Conservation Corporation.
- To Lic. Vicente Vera which has provided support with banking and cash loans.
- To Dr. Earl Possardt, the Sea Turtle Coordinator, USFWS.
- To Dr. Sheryan Epperly, the Sea Turtle Coordinator, NMFS.
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- To Lic. Beatriz Alcalá, currently at the Alcaldía del Municipio Arismendi which has continued providing logistic support and advise to the project.
- In addition, we are particularly grateful to the Research Assistants of the project and to the Local Assistants.
- The families Garcia Cova and Urbano in Cipara Beach and, Cedeño in Querepare Beach have provided a great support for the respective teams.
- Lic. Cristina Castillo (Pension Papagayos) has continued offering a special discount for the staff lodging during 2005 nesting season.
- To Emma Doyle and David Southall which continued providing encourage.
- To the Adoptive Parents to have believed in the project.
- The National Guard (Comando de la Guardia Nacional) at San Juan de Unare and Rio Caribe have provided very important support to protect nesting turtles and avoid poaching. The Navy at Carupano (Comando de la Zona Naval de Oriente) has provided a highly appreciated logistic support.
- Prof. Jim Hernandez from La Universidad del Zulia (LUZ) provided equipments for the blood sampling taking and preliminary analysis (microscope, centrifuge, others).

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