

TURTLE TRACKS

Issue: 34

January-April 2006

Publisher: T. Benos-Palmer

Editor: T. Karkoulia

The articles were written
by: D. Margaritoulis, Aliki

Panagopoulou, Olga

Karadaki, G. Koukelis, Chris

Dean, T. Karkoulia.

Translation: G. Parchas



Solomou 57, GR-104 32
Athens, GREECE

Tel-Fax: +30 210 52 31 342

e-mail: stps@archelon.gr

URL: www.archelon.gr



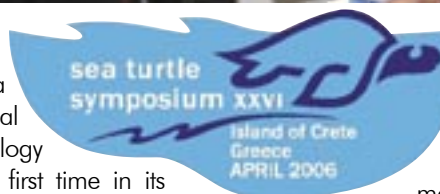
THE 26th SEA TURTLE SYMPOSIUM ON CRETE: A GREAT SUCCESS

We did it!

And, admittedly, it was a great success! The 26th Annual Symposium on Sea Turtle Biology and Conservation, done for first time in its long history in the Mediterranean, in Greece, on the island of Crete, fulfilled our expectations and above all gave the opportunity to many colleagues from under-represented countries to participate in this important annual event. With more than 700 participants from 78 countries it fulfilled completely its motto: "Diverse Cultures, One Purpose".

The Island of Crete, at the crossroads of Europe, Asia and Africa proved an excellent selection. Also the Symposium venue, Capsis Hotel at Aghia Pelaghia, provided adequate facilities, proximity to the Heraklion airport, and good prices.

The number of submitted abstracts surpassed five hundred (500!), a record breaking of all previous Symposia. This, of course, loaded intensely the 35-member Program Committee from all over the world and of a diversity of expertise; a task which was culminated in the timely preparation of the



376-page Book of Abstracts, distributed at registration.

On 3 and 4 April, three important 2-day regional meetings took place: The 5th Mediterranean Reunion, the Latin American (RETOMALA) meeting and the WIDECAST (Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network) meeting. Further, on 4 April other two meetings were added: the IOSEA (Indian Ocean and South-East Asia) meeting, and the African meeting. For details on the Mediterranean Reunion please see specific article in this issue of Turtle Tracks.

The official opening took place in the morning of 5 April, with speeches from the Symposium President Dimitris Margaritoulis, the Prefect of Heraklion and the Coordinator of UNEP/MAP Mr Paul Mifsud. The invited speaker was Dr Michael Wolf Iwand of TUI, the largest tour operator in the world, who talked about the interaction of turtles with the tourist industry and how these two could best benefit from each other; a real



challenging and impressive talk.

From 5 through 7 April, 107 oral and 340 poster contributions were presented, covering the following thematic categories: Behavior and Movements; Conservation, Management and Policy; Population Biology and Monitoring; Fisheries Interaction; Anatomy, Physiology and Health; Ecology and Evolutionary Biology; Social Science Research; Education, Outreach and Advocacy; Turtles and Climate Change; Ecological Roles of Marine Turtles.

On 6 April, an important Panel Discussion "Cooperative Approaches to Implement Sea Turtle Bycatch Solutions in Longline Fisheries" took place on the global problem of longline turtle captures and associated mortality. The Panel Discussion provided the opportunity to those working with turtles at sea to be informed on recent findings.

Nine student awards were given, among 111 candidates, to the best oral and poster presentations. In total, 146 student presentations were judged by a 22-member Committee.

Thanks to UNEP/MAP who provided its excellent translators we were able to have simultaneous interpretation to French during the African meeting and the first day plenary.

In the context of the Symposium, five Resolutions were unanimously adopted, among them one concerning the Marine Park of Zakynthos. This resolution can be found at the ARCHELON website.

Many people have contributed towards the Symposium success. Restricted space does not allow me to mention them individually. I will mention only the invaluable contribution of the long-time ARCHELON member Thanos Belalidis, assigned with the very important and responsible position of Symposium Coordinator. Further, I can assure you that the Symposium wouldn't have been such a success without its full endorsement by ARCHELON, and its dedicated staff, members and volunteers.

I thank all participants, all sponsors and donors, all members of the various Committees and Task Forces, the staff of ARCHELON, and all volunteers for making this event a memorable one.

*Dimitris Margaritoulis
President, 26th Sea Turtle Symposium
Member of ARCHELON's
Board of Directors*

The Symposium's Auction

A traditional and a very important part of the Symposium is the Auction. Although its main purpose is to raise funds it comprises a great part of the Symposium's entertainment.

Many participants, as well as local businesses, donated several items, some turtle related and some not so turtle related, but still highly appreciated (like exotic beverages). For two days, T-shirts, mugs, soaps, pins, coat hangers, books, jewellery and other funny things like a turtle toilet seat were on display. For some of these, it was possible to make bids (this is called Silent Auction) and whoever bid the last (and therefore the most), before the doors were shut on the last day, was the

winner. The Silent Auction, needing great care to keep track of items and prices, was successfully managed by ARCHELON's Director Theodoros Benos-Palmer.

But the most important part of the auction was the so-called Live Auction, held by the long-time Symposium auctioneer Rod Mast. Nearly everyone was there and soon they were carried away by the good spirits of everyone involved (or perhaps it was the consumption of spirits that helped along?) and they were happily bidding a lot of money to the items showed by Rod Mast with the help of the Symposium volunteers.

The Auction managed to raise in total about 11,000 Euro, surpassing all expectations. This money will be used for student travel grants at the next year's symposium, to be held on Myrtle Beach, South Carolina in late February 2007.



Long-time ARCHELON volunteer gets a PhD

Karen Reid, a long-time ARCHELON volunteer and field assistant succeeded in taking her PhD at the University of Aberdeen, Scotland. She has send us her 305-page thesis, with the subject: "Incubation conditions of the loggerhead sea turtle *Caretta caretta* in Kyparissia Bay, Western Peloponnesus, Greece". We congratulate Karen for her hard work and we thank her for helping ARCHELON all those years.

The 5th Mediterranean Reunion

An important aspect of the Annual Sea Turtle Symposium is the regional meetings that take place before the Symposium proper.

In the context of the 26th Sea Turtle Symposium (Island of Crete, 3-8 April 2006), the 5th Mediterranean Reunion was held on 3 and 4 April. About 100 sea turtle experts from almost all Mediterranean countries participated. Due to the very favourable location of the Symposium venue, this has been the biggest Mediterranean Reunion so far. The meeting addressed various matters concerning sea turtle conservation in the region.

One of the most important aspects of this Mediterranean Reunion, was the country-by-country reports on sea turtle status and conservation, presented by country members of the IUCN's Marine Turtle Specialist Group. This was the first time that such presentations took place, providing a fairly complete picture on the status of sea turtles and describing the currently conducted monitoring & research projects in the Mediterranean countries. Other highlights of the Mediterranean Reunion included:

- A panel discussion on Community Based Conservation, facilitated by Mohammed Nada, with the participation of the Mayor of Cirali, Turkey, the President of Katelios Group for the Protection of Marine and Terrestrial Life (Island of Kefalonia, Greece) and the Deputy-Mayor of Platanias in Chania, Crete
- A panel discussion concerning the

situation of the National Marine Park of Zakynthos, facilitated by Dimitrios Dimopoulos, with the participation of representatives of the Ministry for the Environment, the Management Body of the Marine Park, and from each of the following NGOs ARCHELON, MEDASSET and WWF Greece. This discussion was followed-up by a press conference, organized on the same day, for the information of local and international journalists.

- A discussion on the contribution of LIFE-Nature projects in sea turtle conservation in the Mediterranean, especially in the issue of sea turtle interaction with fisheries and mitigation methods. LIFE-Nature beneficiaries from Spain, Italy and Greece presented and evaluated their results, and this was followed by a discussion with the participation of local authorities (Coast Guard, Fisheries Department), Research Institutes (Hellenic Marine Research Institute) as well as local fishermen who were able to provide their opinion and share the problems they face
- The wish to have a Mediterranean Network of Rescue Centres was re-affirmed and steps were made for its realization

The Mediterranean Reunion was a success, and this was largely due to the active participation of everyone involved. However, special thanks are due to Paolo Casale who organised and chaired it.



THE MOBILE EXHIBITION IN KAVALA

The mobile exhibition of ARCHELON traveled to Kavala (northern Greece), in the context of the project LIFE-Nature. From 14 to 16 March the exhibition was presented in the multiple use assembly room of the 4th TEE and the 3rd Lyceum of Kavala. With the excellent cooperation of the representatives of the Primary & Secondary Education Departments of Kavala, Mrs. Toula Tseleksidou and Mrs. Natassa Grigoriadou the event turned out to be very productive for raising awareness to many schools. Hundreds of children received a message for the protection of sea turtles and their interactions with humans, mainly through fisheries. Through the LIFE project it has been assessed that fisheries, and particularly coastal fisheries, interact increasingly with sea turtles in Greece. A major objective of the project is to find ways to mitigate this interaction. As Kavala harbours a large fishing fleet it was hoped that many of the children that received the message belong to fishermen families. The presentations in Kavala were made by the ARCHELON project members Jason Margaritoulis and Theoni Karkoulia.

NEW BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR ARCHELON

The Annual General Assembly of ARCHELON took place on 19 February 2006 and a new Board of Directors was elected. Here is the new Board of Directors:

President: Anna Kremezi-Margaritoulis

Vice-President: Ilias Pitsikas

General Secretary: Evi Gerokosta

Treasurer: Thomas Arapis

Advisors: Dimitris Margaritoulis, Dimitrios Dimopoulos, Vivi Raissi



ZAKYNTHOS NEWS

The Zakynthos project always starts with the notion that this season will be harder than ever before. I would like to say that this is never the case but on the contrary it always seems to be this way. In order to handle what seems to be an ever-increasingly difficult situation you need to have people in charge who have the ability to react to an ever-changing situation. These people need to think for themselves and remain calm in desperate situations.

The Zakynthos project has a well deserved reputation for partying as this is essential stress relief without which we would have 9 nervous breakdowns a season. This years leading team are professional, hard working and brimming with passion and enthusiasm for ARCHELON's cause. With the right resources and support there is nothing we could not achieve with this team.

PELOPONNESE NEWS

ARCHELON's summer projects in Peloponnesus (Kyparissia Bay, Lakonikos Bay, Koroni) begin in May. Volunteers with enthusiasm and passion will participate again this year. Our volunteers will arrive soon and start work in the field. With enthusiasm also, the High School and the 13th Primary School of Kyparissia visited the Environmental Station of Agiannaki and attended a presentation on the protection of sea turtles. There are 10 more schools to come until the end of the school season. We shouldn't forget that this year ARCHELON took part in the carnival festivities in the town of Kyparissia, featuring a *Caretta caretta* model (named Esmeralda) and everybody enjoyed watching this terrific creature walking in the streets with the help of two young friends of the Society.

CRETE NEWS

The summer projects of ARCHELON on Crete are very successful. Highly involving local communities and tour operators have reached a high position in monitoring work results, local appreciation and public support. These projects will begin very soon for the incoming nesting season. With the help of volunteers from all over the world ARCHELON will monitor nesting beaches, and protect sea turtles and their habitats in three main areas of Crete

(Rethymno, Bay of Chania, Bay of Messaras). In these three areas, information kiosks will be erected at vantage points and live presentations will be organized to nearby hotels. All these activities aim towards the sound awareness of tourists, an important economic asset of the island, who eventually become ambassadors of ARCHELON's work and strong supporters of sea turtle protection.

SPONSORS-THANKS



For placing ARCHELON's donation box and financial support



For publishing ARCHELON's Colourbook and sponsoring turtles' transmitters.



For conservation activities in Killini.



for support.



For free Internet Access



for financial support.



for support.

Want to become a volunteer?

Now is the time to apply for volunteer work

Apply by visiting ARCHELON website:

<http://www.archelon.gr>

TURTLE TRACKS straight to your computer

For those who wish to receive TURTLE TRACKS in electronic format please send a message to stps@archelon.gr with your request. This will cut production and mailing costs and it will also save few trees.