



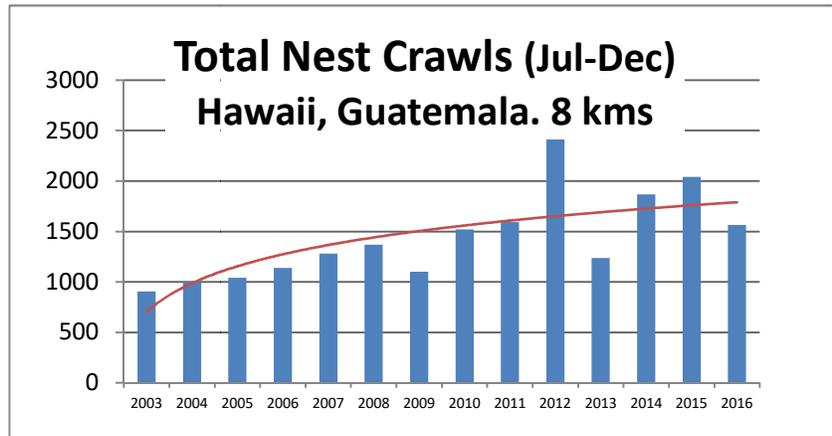
Situational Analysis of the Conservation of the Sea Turtle in Guatemala

Guatemala, August, 2017

Dear Friends of the Parlama,

With pleasure, we are sending you this updated English summary of the “Situational Analysis of the Conservation of the Sea Turtle in Guatemala”. This analysis includes the results of ARCAS’s sea turtle population monitoring program carried out in eight sites along the Pacific coast of Guatemala from 2013 to the present. Among the key findings:

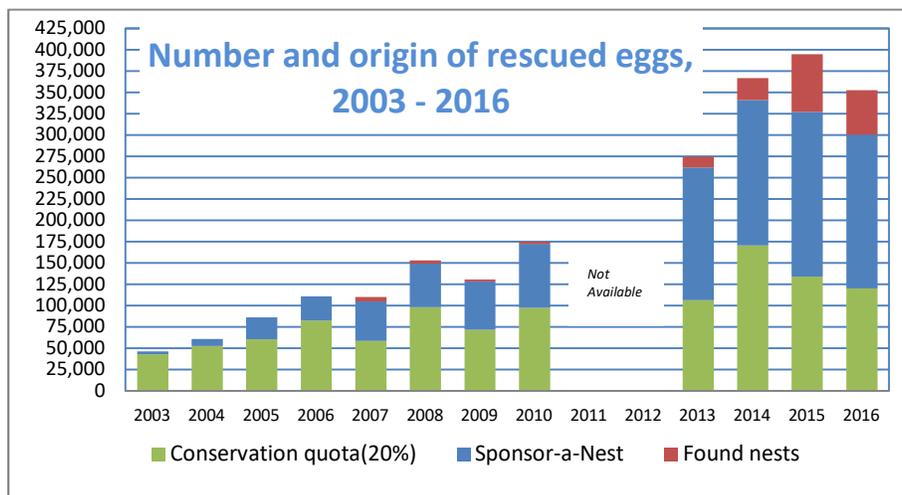
1. The olive ridley (*Lepidochelys olivacea*) population trend on the Pacific coast of Guatemala continues to be positive. The ARCAS crawl count program has documented a near doubling of nesting density in the last 13 years, with 850 crawls recorded in 2003 and 1564 in 2016.
2. However, 2016 saw a decline of 33% in nesting density relative to 2015 in all 8 monitoring sites, presumably due to El Niño (ENSO). It also saw the stranding of several Galapagos sea lions, something that had not been seen since the last El Niño in 1998. Hopefully nesting numbers will recuperate in 2017.

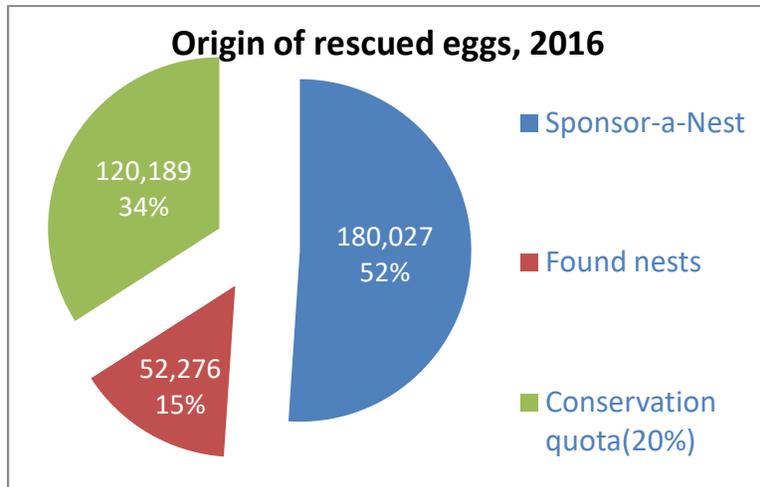


- Olive ridley nesting density is much higher in the southeast than in the southwest, with the peak area being Hawaii, followed by La Barrona and then Conacaste. Leatherback and green nesting, is also concentrated in the east.

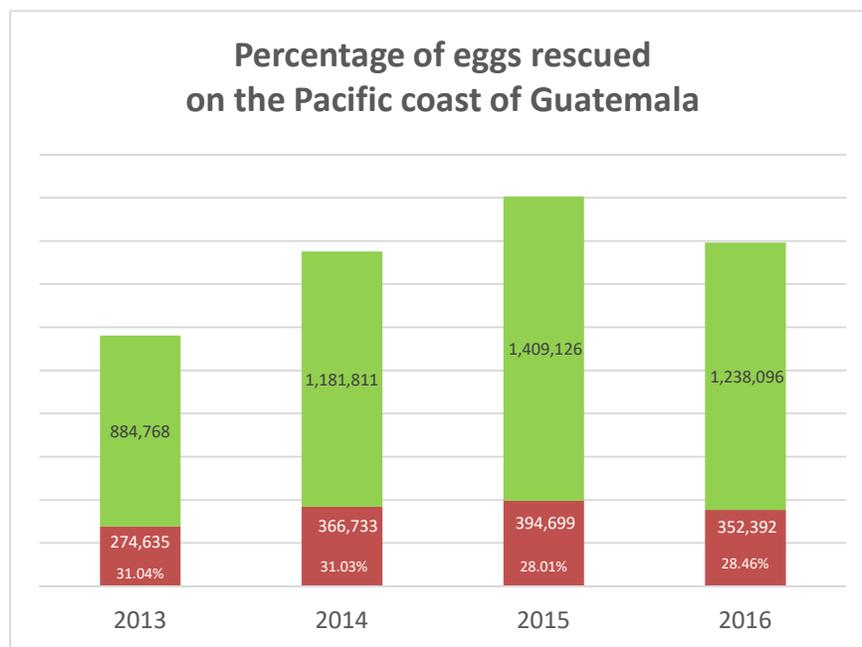


- The number of sea turtle eggs rescued and incubated on a national scale has increased from 60,000 in 2003 to 352,392 in 2016. This increase is mainly due to the various sponsor-a-nest programs operated by hatcheries, hotels and vacation home owners. In 2016, 67% of all eggs rescued were purchased or found on the beach, mainly by the private sector.



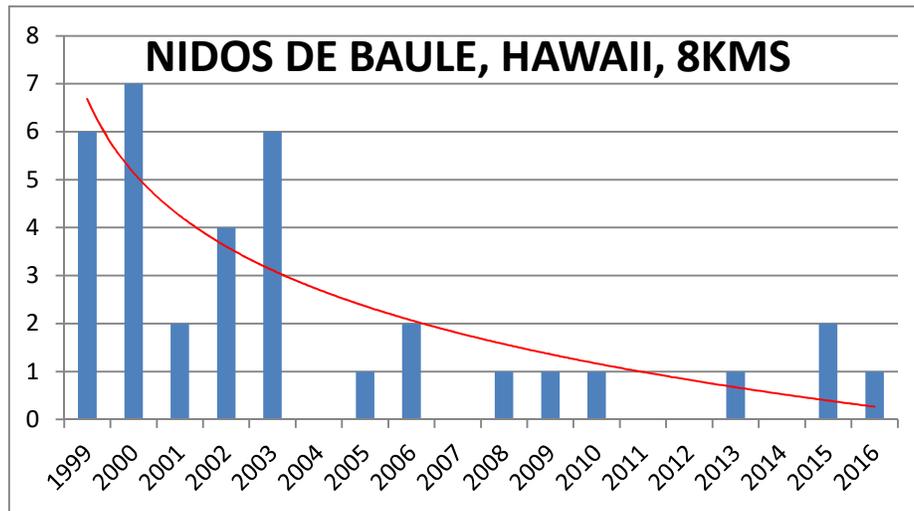


5. In 2016, 13,362 successful nests were laid on the Pacific coast of Guatemala for a total of 1,238,096 eggs. Of these, 352,392 eggs were rescued and incubated at 25 hatcheries, representing 28.46% of the total number of eggs laid.



6. In 2015, the economic value on the beach (wholesale price) of the market in olive ridley eggs on the Pacific coast of Guatemala was Q1,917,051 or US\$252,243. If we take into consideration the supply chain from collector, to buyer, to wholesaler and then consumer, the retail value of the sea turtle egg trade was Q6,763,806 or US\$889,974.

7. The population tendency for leatherbacks continues to decline, and in 2016, only three nests were reported on the 254kms of the Pacific coast of Guatemala. In the last four years, there have been alarming reports of very low hatching success rates for leatherback nests incubated in Guatemalan hatcheries. Two of the nests rescued in 2016 failed to hatch at all.



8. Although they are essential in supporting the 20% egg conservation quota system, Guatemala hatcheries lack the technical capacity and resources to incubate sea turtle eggs and collect data in a scientific manner. Nor do they exploit the hatcheries' potential as an educational tool.

This fourth update of the original Situational Analysis prepared by Colum Muccio of ARCAS, with the support of the Marine Turtle Conservation Fund of the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USF&WS-MTCF) and Idea Wild.

If you have any questions or concerns, or if you want the full Spanish report or the original data, please contact us at arcasguatemala@gmail.com or +502 7830-1374.

Sincerely,

Colum Muccio