



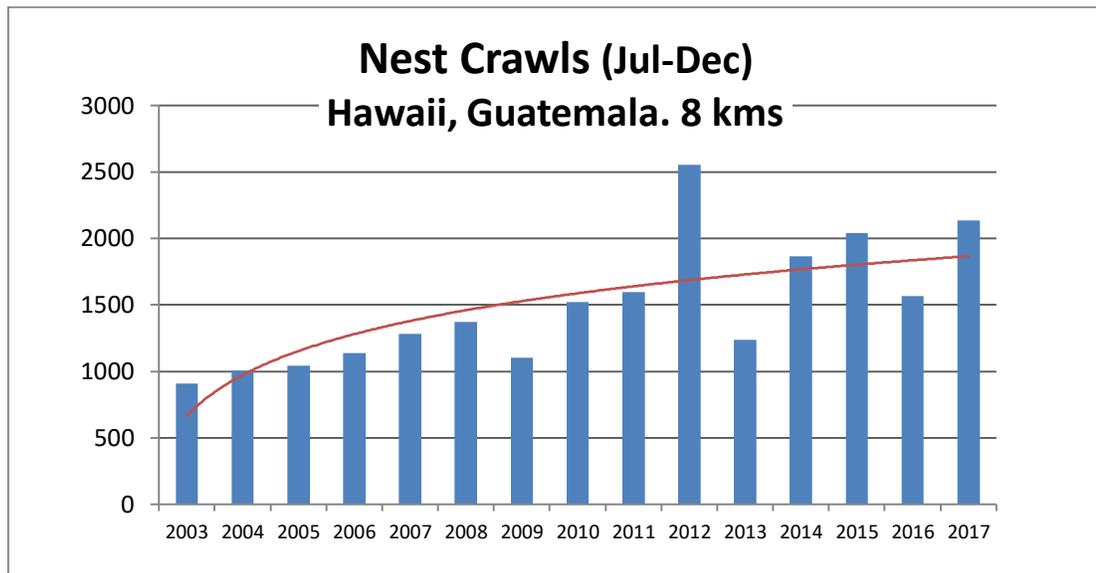
Situational Analysis of the Conservation of the Sea Turtle in Guatemala

Guatemala, September, 2018

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 seven 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 more than a doubling of nesting density in the last 14 years, with 906 crawls recorded in 2003 and 2134 in 2017.

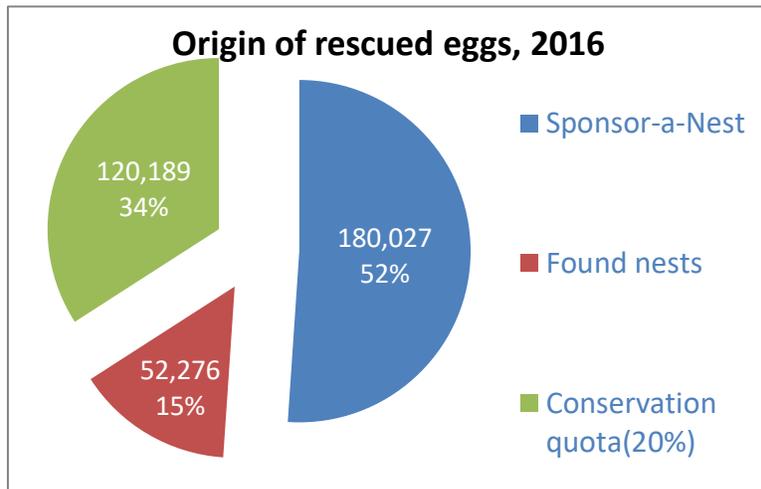
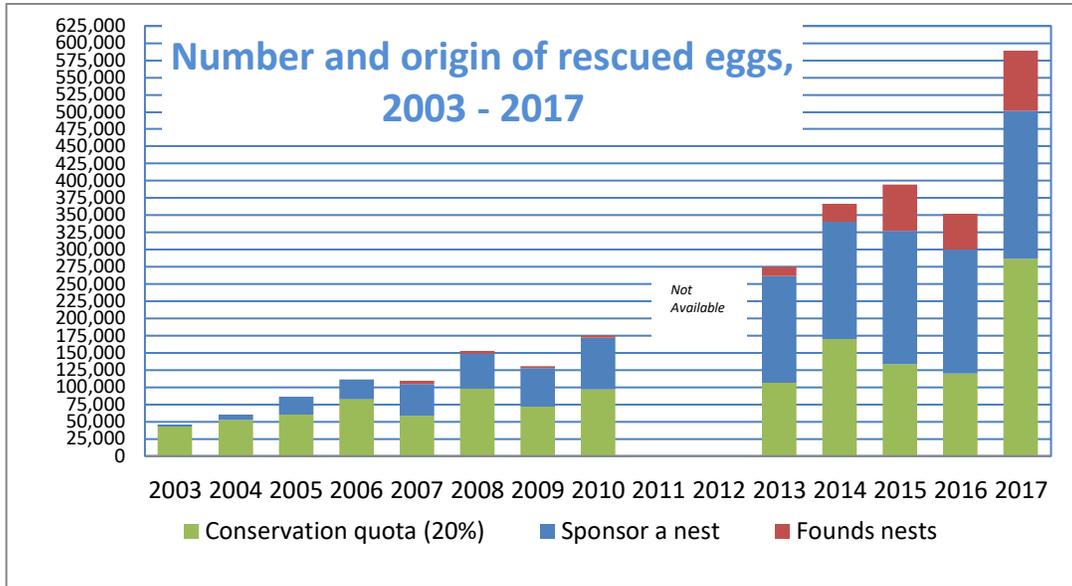


2. 2016 saw a decline of 33% in nesting density relative to 2015 in all 7 monitoring sites, presumably due to El Niño (ENSO). It also saw the stranding of several Galapagos sea lions, something that had not been seen since the last El Niño in 1998.
3. However, 2017 saw a strong recovery with an increase of 115% in nesting density, with 14,677 nests (or 1,228,452 eggs) laid in 2016 and 31,558 (or 2,641,360 eggs) in 2017.

4. 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.

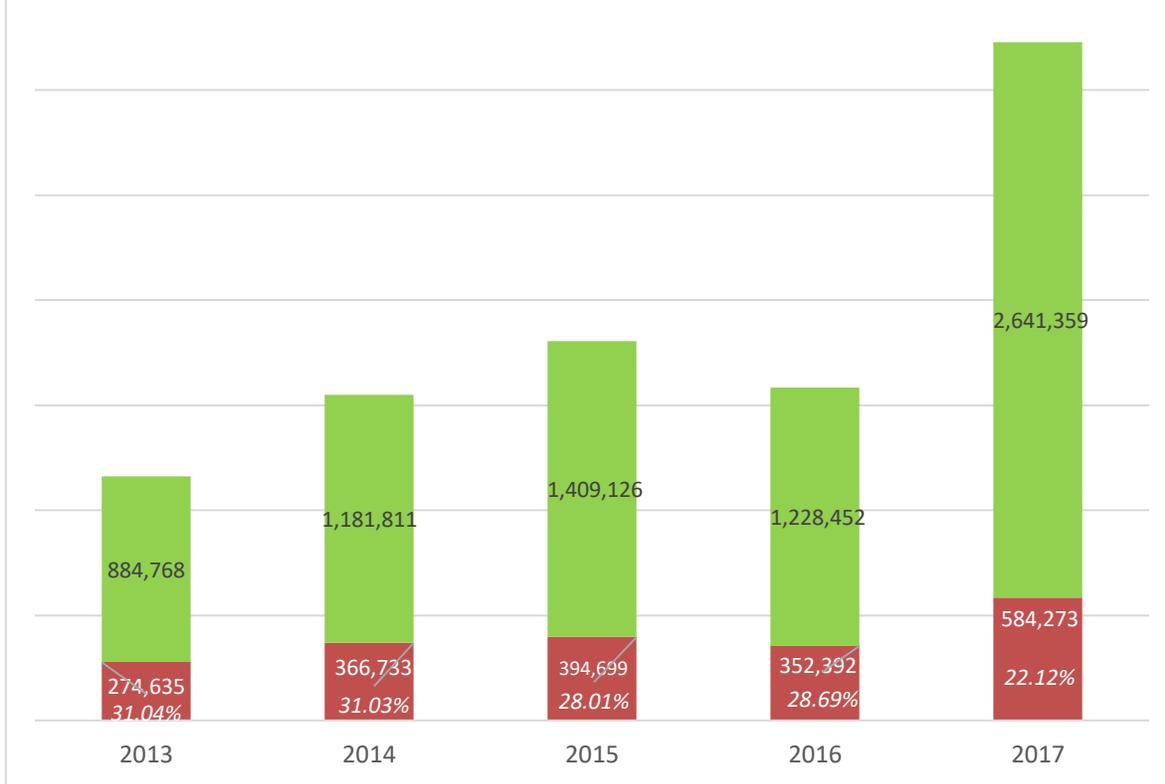


5. The number of sea turtle eggs rescued and incubated on a national scale has increased from 60,000 in 2003 to 589,273 in 2017. This increase is mainly due to the various sponsor-a-nest programs operated by hatcheries, hotels and vacation home owners. In 2017, 51.37% of all eggs rescued were purchased or found on the beach, mainly by the private sector.



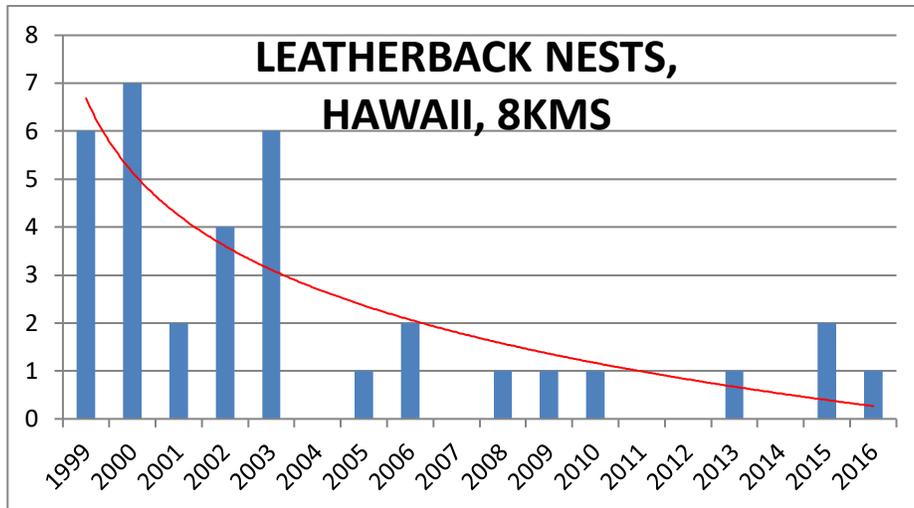
- In 2017, 28,506 successful nests (minus 9.67% of false crawls) were laid on the Pacific coast of Guatemala for a total of 2,641,359 eggs. Of these, 584,273 eggs were rescued and incubated at 25 hatcheries, representing 22.12% of the total number of eggs laid.

Number and percentage of eggs rescued on the Pacific coast of Guatemala 2013 - 2017



Although the percentage of eggs rescued over the last five years has declined, because of an increase in overall nesting, the total number of eggs incubated has double, and shows an increase in capacity in the Guatemalan conservation community to manage growing numbers of eggs.

7. For the first time, on July 22, 2018, the nesting of a hawksbill sea turtle was documented in the village of Madre Vieja, Taxisco, Chiquimulilla.
8. In 2015, the economic value on the beach (wholesale price) of the market in olive ridley eggs on the Pacific coast of Guatemala was Q 2,925,521 or US\$395,340. 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 Q12,678,526, or US\$1,668,227.
9. The population tendency for leatherbacks continues to decline, and in 2017, only three nests were reported on the 254kms of the Pacific coast of Guatemala. In the last five years, there have been alarming reports of very low hatching success rates for leatherback nests, and the hatching success of the three nests was zero.



10. 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 fifth update of the original Situational Analysis was 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), the Columbus Zoo and Idea Wild.

If you have any questions, 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

