



NEWSLETTER

REGIONAL NORTHWEST ATLANTIC LEATHERBACK ACTION PLAN (RAP) PROJECT

ISSUE 1 | JANUARY - AUGUST 2021

This newsletter is to provide our stakeholders with the updates and the next steps of the Regional Northwest Atlantic Leatherback action plan (RAP) project in the region with the focus on French Guiana, Suriname, Guyana, and Trinidad & Tobago.

UPDATES

MONTHLY WORKING GROUP MEETINGS

Every month there is a working group update meeting for the Regional Northwest Atlantic Leatherback Action plan project held and led by WWF-Guianas (Suriname and Guyana) with the representatives of the partners organizations including WWF-Canada, the Environmental Management Authority (EMA) in Trinidad and Tobago, French Office of Biodiversity (OFB) in French Guiana and WWF-Netherlands to discuss the progress on the project.

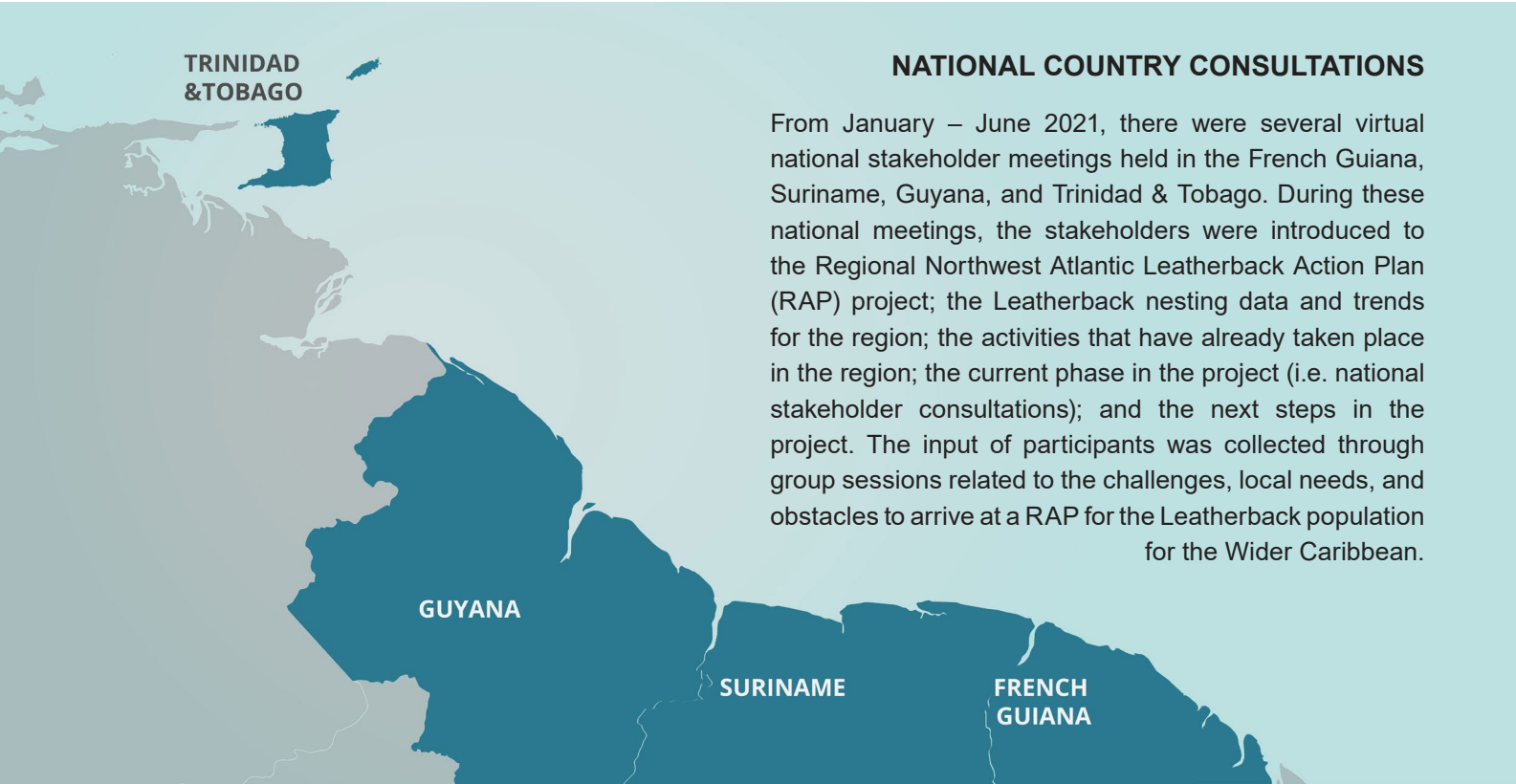
THREAT SURVEY

The threat survey is collecting knowledge from stakeholders throughout the broader Caribbean region on the prevalence of threats to leatherbacks and solutions which stakeholders have employed with success. The consultant, Mrs. Karen Eckert of Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Network (WIDECAST), updated the threat survey for the period January to August 2021. Data collection in the Wider Caribbean region will start in August 2021. The late start was as a result of technical issues with the publication of the survey in three languages (French, English, and Spanish). The results of this survey will be presented by WIDECAST at the regional meeting in November 2021.

THE BEACHES OF THE GUIANAS AND THE CARIBBEAN REMAIN THE MAJOR NESTING BEACHES OF THE LEATHERBACK TURTLE. THEIR PROTECTION CONTINUES TO BE A TOP PRIORITY FOR WWF AND ITS PARTNERS.



NATIONAL COUNTRY CONSULTATIONS



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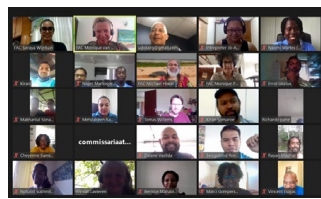
From January – June 2021, there were several virtual national stakeholder meetings held in the French Guiana, Suriname, Guyana, and Trinidad & Tobago. During these national meetings, the stakeholders were introduced to the Regional Northwest Atlantic Leatherback Action Plan (RAP) project; the Leatherback nesting data and trends for the region; the activities that have already taken place in the region; the current phase in the project (i.e. national stakeholder consultations); and the next steps in the project. The input of participants was collected through group sessions related to the challenges, local needs, and obstacles to arrive at a RAP for the Leatherback population for the Wider Caribbean.

FRENCH GUIANA



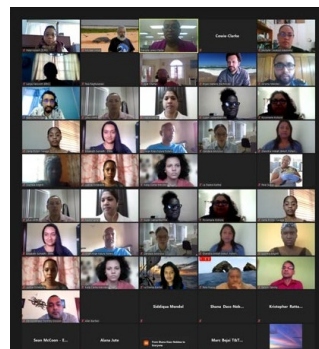
On February 24, there was a virtual introductory stakeholder meeting held with WWF-Guianas for the main stakeholder. The OFB had meetings with four different working groups which were held between January - June 2021. These working groups were threats at sea, threats on land, research for conservation, and environmental education.

SURINAME



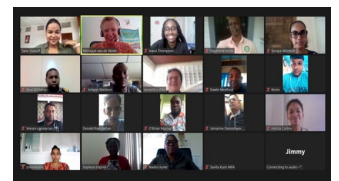
On February 23, the 2nd national virtual stakeholder meeting was held. There were 36 participants attending the meetings from 16 organizations which represented NGOs, government, local community-based organizations, academia, and civil society.

TRINIDAD & TOBAGO



On January 14, WWF-Guianas introduced the RAP project to the National Sea Turtle Task Force. On April 15, the national virtual consultation was organized by the EMA with the support of WWF-Guianas. There were representatives from 25 organizations present at the session.

GUYANA



On January 13, the first national stakeholder (introductory) meeting was held. There were 10 participants attending this meeting representing various stakeholder groups including government and academia. On March 23, the second national stakeholder meeting was held. There were 18 participants attending the meeting representing various stakeholder groups including NGO, government, academia and CSO.



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UPDATES

CANADA

Since January 2021, WWF-Canada has advocated for the Canadian government to join the Inter-American Convention on Sea Turtles (IAC). In collaboration with Sea Life Law, we held meetings with bureaucrats from Fisheries and Oceans Canada to discuss merits of Canada joining IAC and highlighting their commitments for international partnerships and collaboration as documented within Canada's Species at Risk Act and the Leatherback Sea Turtle Recovery Strategy and Action Plan. In March, we followed up with formal correspondence to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans Canada and as a result, the Canadian government responded in April, indicating that it is seriously considering joining the IAC.

COMMUNICATION MATERIALS

REGIONAL LEATHERBACK INFOGRAPHIC POSTER

May 2021

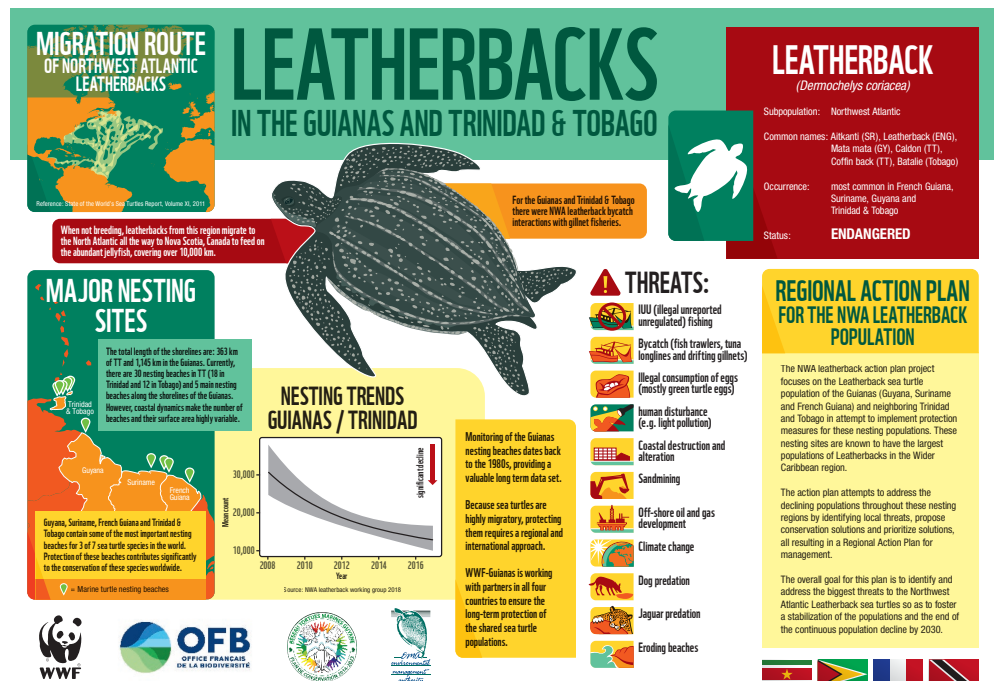
Development of the regional leatherback infographic poster began.

June 2021

The English version of the regional leatherback infographic poster was completed.

July – August 2021

Translation of the infographic to Dutch and French commenced.

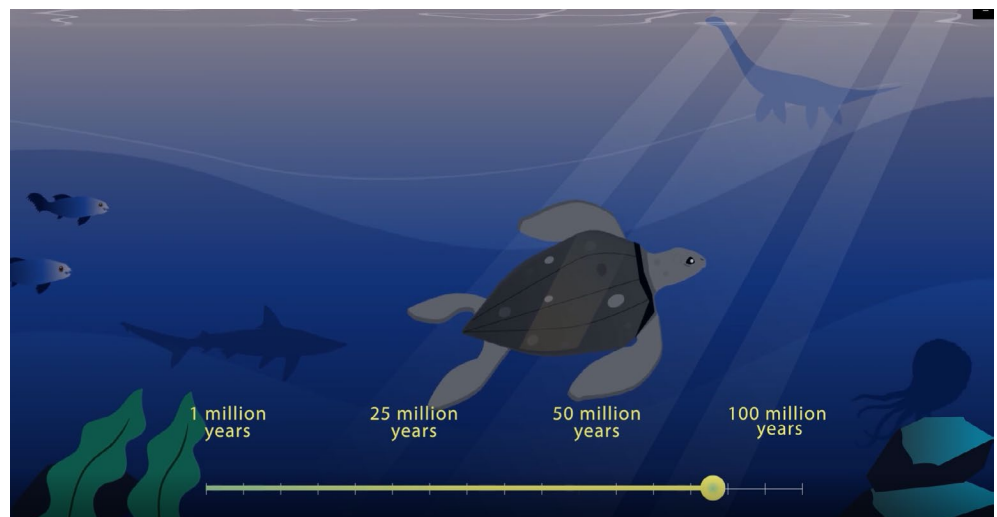


LEATHERBACK ANIMATION MOVIE

June – August 2021

Development of the regional leatherback animation movie began. The English version is finished and currently the animation is being translated to French and Dutch.

WATCH VIDEO





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COMMUNICATION MATERIALS

LEATHERBACK EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS FOR CANADIAN FISH HARVESTERS

WWF-Canada conducted education and outreach with Canadian fish harvesters to reduce by-catch of leatherback sea turtles within select fisheries in Atlantic Canada.

We provided:

- Educational factsheets to fish harvesters on sea turtle biology, physiology, behaviour;
- Training for how to safely disentangle sea turtles caught in fishing gear;
- Disentanglement tools to fish harvesters to allow for the safe disentanglement of sea turtles as well as an instructional video demonstrating the proper use of the tool.

[WATCH VIDEO](#)

REGIONAL STAKEHOLDER MEETING

The regional meeting was planned for end of June/beginning of July 2021, however due to delays with the technical issues of publishing the threat survey with the participants in the region and COVID-19, it is postponed until November 2021.

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

September - October 2021:

Sharing of communication materials with the stakeholders and public

October 2021:

Finalization of the Threat survey

October 2021:

Start development of the Regional Northwest Atlantic Leatherback action plan

Starting October 2021:

Studies to analyze priorities at national level in Suriname, Guyana, and Trinidad & Tobago

First week of November 2021:

The virtual regional stakeholder meeting

If you have questions or suggestions, please reach out to one of our country representatives

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