

Project Update: June 2006

During the month of June we completed the preliminary mortality census as we visited the North Gulf coast of Baja California Sur. This included sites like Santa Rosalia, Mulegé and Loreto.

Few carapaces have been observed in this area although the consumption rate is known to be very high. Santa Rosalia in particular is known to be the start point of an intense black market of sea turtle meat that is usually transported to Tijuana and San Diego. In Santa Rosalia we met a group of fishermen who are interested in collaborating with us. During our next visit which probably will be on July, they will take us to hidden beaches where a small group of guateros (sea turtle catchers) is still operating. We had extensive talk with these fishermen and they helped us define the fishing area of Santa Rosalia and the feeding are used by sea turtles (black turtles in particular) (see figure attached).

In Mulegé there is a small NGO working for sea turtle protection called “Los Eco-amigos de Mulegé”. They have very small funds but are working hard to protect sea turtles. At the moment they have established solid relationship with three fishermen that are helping those identifying sea turtle camps. We decided that we will work jointly with them. The deal is that we will go every two months in Mulegé and will organize short talks and presentations for both children and adults. In exchange they will lead mortality census once per month following our protocol.

Loreto is hosting a Marine National Park. We went monitoring some beaches with the park authority. We didn't find any carapaces on the beaches but a few have been discovered at the dump-site and in an abandoned fishing camp.

	CC	CM	FI	LO	IN	% consumption	% boat collision	% unknown cause
SJU	1	2				66.67%	0.00%	33.33%
LSI		53	1		1	10.91%	1.82%	87.27%
LAB	1	9				100.00%	0.00%	0.00%
PAB	2	5		1		100.00%	0.00%	0.00%
GNE		3			1	50.00%	0.00%	50.00%
Total	4	72	1	1	2	35.00%	1.25%	63.75%

Fishing areas and sea turtle feeding sites at Santa Rosalia, BCS

