

Final Report

The results of the execution of this project were slightly different than those originally proposed, but the differences in the outputs must not be considered negatives. In place of a technical training activity (the XIIth course) and three awareness activities, we have organized two technical training activities (I Workshop on Standardization Methods and the XIIth course) and one awareness activity (the Workshop for Fishermen). A total of 56 persons, 37 between students or professionals and, 19, mainly teachers and fishermen and personnel from local and civil government benefited from these activities, beside the persons contracted for co-organization activities, preparations of meals, transportation (between Rio Caribe, Puy Puy and Querepare Beaches), etc. The persons benefited were mainly Venezuelans, but several of them were Latin Americans and even two persons from Europe (Spain and Switzerland).

Lessons learnt from the project execution were of different kinds. One was related with the high level of fellowships for applicants provided in the I Workshop on Standardization Methods and this affected the budget available for the XIIth course, as well as the discounts given to some course participants. If an activity is not completely funded a high number of free positions must not be offered. In a general way, the involvement of some of the I Workshop and the XIIth Course participants shows that these activities are a powerful tool to provide technical training and create awareness toward endangered species as the sea turtles and, their coastal and marine habitats.

With respect to the XIIth Course, the execution showed us that we need an independent source of power supply for the course. A recent donation of small power supply equipment will benefit the 2004 edition of the course as we hope.

Regarding to the Workshop addressed to fishermen and finally converted mainly into a workshop for teachers: It must be said that the results expected in terms of the number of participants and liaison created with fishermen were not accomplished. It appeared that some fishermen could feel some kind of "political influence" in the Workshop, because of the support and involvement of the Municipality. Moreover, some kind of fear about the presence of military personnel could be a factor affecting the level of attendance. Most of the invited people, mainly fishermen, did not attend. As the teachers which attended the Workshop were interested in having training workshop for them, we have planned to have two or three of these activities for 2004 and, conversations with the Educative Chief of the Arismendi Municipality have been maintained about this subject.

Another important result it has been the collaboration established with other in-country GOs and NGOs to make possible the organization of the three activities described in this report. EDIMAR-FLASA, Fundación Thomas Merle, Corpomedina are old allied and contributors; NMFS provided previous funding to conservation activities in Venezuela in 1997. During 2002 PROVITA joined in with our efforts at the Workshop in Isla de Margarita.

Summarizing, our results may be considered important and successful for their impact in the sea turtle research and conservation efforts in Venezuela. In addition, the organization of the 2002 Workshop was very important as the beginning of this series of specialized training: by end of 2003, EDIMAR-FLASA and CICTMAR-WIDECAS organized another Workshop mainly focused in the management of data.