

Project Update: August 2019

This project aims to reduce bycatch of marine turtles in north-western Mexico using illuminated fishing nets by working hand in hand with local fishermen.

We started our work in September 2018 with two series of workshops where we invited fishermen from different coastal communities, students from the local university (Fishery Engineering department), as well as our partners at the Arizona State University (ASU) who are actually designing and building prototypes of the modified fishing gears. This first series of two workshops was very productive and we were able to identify a simple way to integrate the lights into the net, instead of having the lights clipped externally as it is normally done with LED lights. Fishermen were instrumental in identifying quick and easy solutions to create a modified fishing gear that is currently usable during daily activities. Based on the design suggested by fishermen, our partners at ASU were able to produce some prototype of solar-powered, illuminated buoys. The buoys are currently being tested in nets to see the effect on marine turtles with some preliminary, very positive results. Another round of workshops were run at specific sites to identify any possible modification needed to the original design of the buoys so that they can be used on a wider variety of fisheries. More tests will be run in the following months.



Figure 1. First round of workshops run at the local university where fishermen, students and engineers from ASU were able to exchange project ideas



Figure 2. Fishermen checking how the lights work (picture: Anibal Murillo Lopez)