



40th International Sea Turtle Symposium

Workshop Proposal for ISTS40

Title of Proposed Workshop:

Combatting the Global Marine Tortoiseshell Trade

Name of Main Organiser: Brad Nahill, Christine Hof, Michael Jensen, Alex Robillard

Email Address: brad@seeturtles.org

Suggested Duration of Workshop: Half Day (4 hours)

Description and Justification of the Workshop:

Despite the international tortoiseshell trade closure in the 1990s, the illegal marine turtle trade continues in many countries worldwide, threatening the species' nascent recovery. With a marine turtle supply chain now more fragmented and opaque – making policy making and enforcement increasingly difficult - this workshop will bring together advocates and organizations working in this space to learn of recent research and new tools to combat the marine turtle trade, and be given the opportunity to share perspectives on what is working and what is not to reduce the illegal trade.

In this workshop, we offer training sessions on a newly developed app that can recognize fake vs real tortoiseshell from photos and on ShellBank – a program that is using DNA samples to determine where illegally traded shells are originating. Following, groups and individuals working on marine turtle trade will be provided with the opportunity to share their latest work and project outcomes, with a forum discussion on the efforts required to collectively reduce the illegal trade. Breakout sessions provide all participants an opportunity to further network with colleagues from around the world on tackling this important issue.

Expected Outcomes of the Workshop:

Workshop participants will gain a better understanding of the global marine

tortoiseshell trade, be given the opportunity to share ideas and seek feedback on ways in which to address the trade, and be provided with knowledge of new tools to use to combat the illegal trade. Specifically, participants will be trained on using the new SEE Shell app created by SEE Turtles that uses artificial intelligence to determine whether a product is real tortoiseshell or fake (or similar) product. In addition, WWF will present and provide virtual training on its ShellBank program, which aims to determine the population origination of tortoiseshell products from across Asia-Pacific (as a starting point), offering how other organizations can contribute to this first of its kind research, be practiced in laboratories, and taken up into governmental policy and practice. Workshop organizers will complete a workshop summary sharing discussed collective effort and actions that will also be distributed to the larger sea turtle community.