



Costa Rica government backed proposal would harm critically endangered sea turtles

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Posted on 21 April 2010 | 19 Comments

San José, Costa Rica: The Costa Rican government is supporting a proposed law that will allow construction in Las Baulas National Marine Park and destroy a critical nesting beach for endangered leatherback turtles.

If passed, Proposal 17383 would reduce the 175 km² Baulas National Park by 40 percent which, would leave only 50 meters of beach for leatherback turtles to nest and would allow for the construction of houses, condos, hotels and restaurants on the beach. A vote on the proposal is set for tomorrow, April 22..

The leatherback, the biggest of all sea turtles, is critically endangered due to development on its nesting beaches, rising sea levels caused by climate change and incidental captures in fisheries. Populations are especially depleted in the Pacific, where only 2,000 to 3,000 animals are estimated to survive, down from around 90,000 two decades ago.

"Costa Rica is considered an example in environmental conservation and has an international responsibility to protect this critically endangered species," said Aimee Leslie, Advocacy Director for The Leatherback Trust.

"But the proposed law ignores concrete measures to protect the important Costa Rican resources Las Baulas National Park holds such as leatherback and olive ridley turtles."

Proposal 17383, put forth by the Minister of the Presidency, Rodrigo Arias (the brother of President Oscar Arias) would allow developers to build houses, restaurants and hotels on the beach.

Since 1995 the park has become a centre of locally managed eco-tourism, benefiting local communities to the tune of over US \$2 million a year.

Scientists warn that sea-levels could rise by at least one meter by the end of the century due to climate change. If Proposal 17383 goes ahead and the boundaries of the national park are changed, not only will leatherback turtles lose a critical nesting beach, but Las Baulas



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National Park would also lose beach area and mangroves that act as a buffer from rising seas. Without this buffer, what is left of Las Baulas National Park could disappear underwater in the future.

“In relation to rising sea levels, the proposal to change the boundaries of the national park is shortsighted,” assures Ana Fonseca, WWF Species Coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean. “It would compromise the long-term role of the Park as a leatherback turtle nesting area, which was the very reason the park was created in the first place.”

The future of Las Baulas National Marine Park and the Pacific leatherback sea turtle is in the hands of 57 congressmen and women in Costa Rica and WWF calls on them to make the right decision and vote against the destruction of one of Costa Rica’s most treasured national parks.

For further information:

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GOVERNMENT PROPOSES REFUGE OF MIXED OWNERSHIP FOR LAS BAULAS PARK

from Patricia Duran Kluth and Juanita Hayman: [Tamarindo News](#)

The President of the Republic and the Minister of Environment have submitted an executive bill to alter the area currently occupied by Las Baulas Marine National Park (PNMB) to the Committee on Environment of the Legislative Assembly. This project was published in La Gaceta on Monday, June 29, Case No. 17383.

The government insists on this initiative, which, according to the deputies of the political party Partido Acción Ciudadana (PAC), only seeks to benefit large developers.

Playa Langosta and the area of Cerro El Morro, located north from Las Baulas Park, are the sites that would remain outside the protection zone for real estate development, but this time within the national park area.

According to Congressman Sergio Alfaro, such legal reform proposes the creation of a refuge of mixed ownership to allow the construction of urban systems, hotels, tourism development and recreational areas, as well as public and private infrastructure and even ecotourism, by leaving aside the hydro-geological study of the National Ground Water, Irrigation and Drainage Service (SENARA, for its acronym in Spanish), which qualifies the park as of "extreme vulnerability," meaning that no development of any kind, not even as eco-friendly as it could be, could be developed here.

Alfaro said that the SENARA study concluded that that there is an aquifer under that area that could be seriously affected. "The project is awash with private benefits seeking for the reduction of this area to benefit them even more. The turtles, the water, everything else are taking a second place," he said.

However, the use of refuges of mixed ownership does exist in Costa Rica. For many eco-vulnerable places, the country does not have the funds to protect these areas, and thus utilizes funds from outside parties to pay for protection, otherwise they would be left unprotected. The utilization of mixed ownership is what the Playa Grande owners consider a fair solution, states Jacques Fostroy, land owner and vice-president of the Association for the Protection of the Leatherbacks. "In relation to the project, it was a proposal of the MINAET in which the owners of properties have participated actively, this project guarantees the effective protection of the places where the eggs are laid, strongly regulates the development and has many measures of protection for the environment. It is a perfect solution by the State, who already has recognized that they do not have the funds to expropriate. Without having to disburse a cent, the State assures that the Baulas are protected and that development is of low density."

In view of the insistence by the government, Karen Olsen de Figueres, Alvaro Ugalde and Mario Boza submitted a document outlining the serious consequences this project could have for the future of the leatherback turtles if it becomes a law. According to the document, "The most disappointing aspect of all is realizing that we are sacrificing a national park of immeasurable ecotourism appeal that belongs to Costa Ricans and to a noble species, the leatherback turtle, in order to benefit some lot vendors. The infamous project intends to eliminate the existing park and convert it into a wildlife refuge of mixed ownership that would not protect anything, since the document states that the construction of any type of building will be allowed within 'the park's' boundaries. The impact of massive urban development would eliminate all the marine and land fauna of this national park."

This all-or-nothing stance is what the land owners of Playa Grande are debating against, and as Fostroy explains, "In fact in Playa Grande the area of protection is not reduced but actually

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augmented to the turtle by 100%. The 1995 law created the PNMB with the limits of law clearly described in the 50 meters and the sea, which in my opinion is the only legal definition. Under the scheme of national wildlife refuge of mixed property, a 150 meter strip is added to the egg laying area. And so, the park is actually increased with a strip of 150 meters by 6 km. If you take the limits with the illegal interpretation of the PGR, in fact it adds a strip of only 75 meters by 6 km. The argument that the park is reduced does not make any sense because a park only exists when the private lands are expropriated and in the name of the State, like the Organic Law and the Law of Creation of the PNMB clearly states (referring to article 37 of the Ley Orgánica del Ambiente No. 7554, and article 2 of the Creación del Parque Nacional Marino Las Baulas de Guanacaste Ley Número: 7524 Fecha: 10/07/1995)."

The park is located about 300 kilometers northwest from the capital city. It was created in 1995 to protect one of the five sites in the world where leatherbacks nest. Leatherbacks are the largest sea turtle on the planet, weighting up to 700 pounds.

Out of its 760 hectares, about 50% is in private hands that the State must expropriate to protect the park and to respect the owners' right to be paid for the land declared under protection.

Randall Arauz, from Pretoma, explained once, that the process to pay for the land began in 2004, but legal disputes over the value of the properties delayed the process. Last year, the Constitutional Court ordered the government to carry out the expropriations when approving an appeal from the environmentalists.

However, according to recent statements from the Minister of Environment, Jorge Rodriguez, authorities claim to lack the \$500 million required. Therefore, one option is to modify the park's boundaries.

There are two bills that were submitted by legislators Maureen Ballesterero (PLN) and Jorge Eduardo Sanchez (PUSC) but they do not satisfy the environmentalists' expectations, since the first project excludes some hills located to the North and the second excludes even the beach.

"Turtles do not nest in the mountains but if they are going to be developed, the light and other factors would drive the leatherbacks away," said Arauz. Moreover, he emphasized that "it would be the first time that a national park will be segregated. This would set an unfortunate precedent. There is a lot of pressure on national parks and it is the time for us to defend them."

Legal Quandary

It is clear that the Costa Rican government is in a legal quandary. On one side, you have extreme environmentalists not supporting any kind of legal changes to the park. On the other side, you have property owners who bought this prime property legally and who are either open to finding an eco-sustainable zoning plan (such as special lighting, building heights etc) which have already been presented to the Santa Cruz municipality, or being paid the fair value of their land. The government, as it stands today, does not have the money to expropriate the land, and on top of that, areas such as Playa Langosta that are included as the national park have hotels and homes already built on the beach.

The irony is in the name of the national park itself, Parque Nacional Marino Las Baulas, which states that it is a marine park, a marine park that is largely shared by both Playa Grande Playa Tamarindo, and Playa Langosta. Scientifically, nothing has been proven yet, only the speculation that the lights themselves are the reason for the diminishing numbers of the turtles. Meanwhile, numerous long-line fishing nets are occupying space in the waters in which they swim, and the effects of the slight increase in the water temperature from global warming.

The enormous amounts of money that the environmental groups receive from private donations in the name of the turtles and Costa Rica with no transparency to the Costa Rican government does not make the controversy any lighter. Nor does the fact that they also own property there, and if this quandary is resolved their in-flow of donations could also diminish.

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- * Construction permits halted within Las Baulas park in Guanacaste - [Link](#)
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Costa Rica proposes to downgrade Las Baulas National Park, threatening leatherback sea turtles

[Jeremy Hance](#)

mongabay.com

November 11, 2009

[print](#)



Costa Rica is considered by many to be a shining example of environmental stewardship, preserving both its terrestrial and marine biodiversity while benefiting from being a popular tourist location. However, a new

move by the Costa Rican government has placed their reputation in question.

In May of this year the President of Costa Rica, Oscar Arias, presented a law to the legislature that would downgrade Las Baulas from a National Park to a 'mixed property wildlife refuge'. The downgrading would authorize a number of development projects that conservationists say would threaten the park's starring resident: the leatherback turtle. The world's largest sea turtle, the leatherback, is classified as Critically Endangered by the IUCN Red List, and Las Baulas National Park is considered a vital nesting ground for the Pacific population.

"This new law introduced by President Arias will be the death of the Costa Rican National Park System and the protection it provides to your environmental national treasures. The world has looked-up to Costa Rica as an example of how to shape an ecotouristic economy; yet this action by

the Arias administration will open Pandora's box to the elimination and attacks on all the other national parks," marine biologist Frank Paladino of Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne stated in a letter.

The law if passed would reduce protected area along the beaches where



Leatherback sea turtle laying eggs on a beach in Suriname. Photo by Tiffany Roufs.

leatherbacks nest from 120 meters to 50. It would further allow a wide-variety of development, including condominiums and tourist facilities. Conservationists say that such developments would bring a flood of people, vehicles, and domestic animals that will harm the leatherback habitat.

"[The Leatherback sea turtle] Pacific population is in great trouble due mainly to beach disturbance. They have declined by about 98 percent since the early 1980s. Former large nesting populations in Mexico are a tiny fraction of earlier numbers. In the west Pacific, the leatherback turtle's largest population has apparently gone extinct in the last few years," explains President and co-founder of the Blue Ocean Institute, Carl Safina. "These creatures, and the world, need Costa Rica to do what it can to protect the remaining Pacific leatherbacks and promote their recovery. And so little is required. All that is needed is darkness on the beach at night and protection of nests. The beach at Las Baulas Park that is currently without houses should remain so, and the Park should be reaffirmed by Costa Rica's Congress."

On hatching sea turtles head toward the lightest area on the horizon, which in a natural environment is the ocean. Electric lights often lead turtle hatchlings astray, sometimes causing heavy mortality among baby sea turtles.

The government has stated that its reasoning for downgrading the park is that it is too expensive to purchase the land set aside for the park. Yet conservationists attest that the government estimates for purchasing park

land are grossly inflated and that the Costa Rican government has several means at its disposal to acquire the land.

"I think the important thing here is that it would be very easy to acquire the land within Las Baulas park if the



Leatherback sea turtle returning to the ocean after laying eggs on a beach in Suriname. Photo by Tiffany Roufs.

government had a one dollar a night tax on hotel rooms and one dollar a day tax on rental cars. That would raise at least 10 million a year, a conservative estimate, and a 30-year bond could be done to raise 300 million that could be used to reimburse all landowners in all parks and have an endowment for the parks into the future. What is missing is the political will in the government," offered Jim Spotila, president of Leatherback Trust.

In addition, conservationists say that the President's proposal to downgrade the park violates numerous agreements it has signed including Peace with Nature; the International Sea Turtle Convention; the Convention on Biological Diversity Biological; as well as the Convention for the Protection of Flora, Fauna and Natural Scenic Beauty of the Americas.

[Nature Air's blog](#), together with other sources, was used for information for this article. This blog continues to track the situation.

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[Scientists find world's largest leatherback sea turtle population in](#)

Gabon



(05/17/2009) Scientists have found the world's largest population of nesting leatherback sea turtles. On the beaches of Gabon in West Africa land and air surveys estimated the small country's leatherback population to be between 15,730 and 41,373 individual females. The findings are published in *Biological Conservation*. Leatherback sea turtles are currently considered critically endangered by the IUCN, however these new numbers may cause marine biologists to reconsider that ranking.

Plastic garbage accounts for one-third of leatherback sea turtle mortalities

(03/17/2009) A new study in *Marine Pollution Bulletin* has confirmed that the world's largest sea turtle is succumbing in startling numbers to an environmental issue that receives little attention: plastic trash in the oceans.

Saving leatherback turtles in South America's smallest country, Suriname: An interview with Liz McHuron



(01/27/2009) After a year studying marine biology at Moss Landing Marine Labs, Liz McHuron headed off to the little-known nation of Suriname to monitor leatherback sea turtles. Her responsibilities included implementing a conservation strategy for a particular beach, moving leatherback nests in danger of flooding, and educating volunteer workers on the biology, behavior, and conservation efforts of the world's largest, and most unique, marine turtle. I visited McHuron during her time at the beach of Galibi in Suriname; she proved to be the sort of scientist who refused to be deterred: breathtaking humidity or downpours, fer-de-lances on the beach or jaguars, Liz was always on the move, always working to aid the critically-endangered leatherbacks while studying them with the thoroughness inherent in a born scientist.

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Urgent Press Release to Make Country Aware of Leatherback Bill

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Urgent Press Release to Make Country Aware of Leatherback Bill (exp. 17383)

The bill titled "Law to rectify the Leatherback Marine National Park's Boundaries and Creation of Guanacaste's Leatherback National Wildlife Refuge"(Exp. 17383) signed by Costa Rica's president and environmental minister on May 5, 2009 and presented by the Presidential Ministry to the Legislative Assembly's Secretary Director on May 21, 2009, contains a series of egregious unconstitutionality pertaining to article 50 of Costa Rica's Constitution that guarantees every citizen the right to a healthy and ecologically sound environment. All of these can be resumed in the following points:

- 1.- It reduces the size of Leatherback Marine National Park, created by executive decree in 1991 and later by law in 1995, and excludes all land outside of the public zone without prior technical studies to justify the change in zoning as required by article 38 on the Environmental Organic Law.
- 2.- The proposal is not backed by any type of technical study regarding the environmental conditions present to the area specifically regarding the buffer zone, nor the environmental carrying capacity of the park, but at

the same time it proposes to override previously established technical criteria such as the “Research and Management Techniques for the Conservation of Marine Turtles” study that specifically pertains to the parks management.

3.- It compromises the reason Guanacaste’s Leatherback Marine National Park was established: for the protection of the leatherback sea turtle and the conservation of its habitat and nesting areas, by excluding to adhere to the aforementioned study and by decreasing its size (point 1) (articles 5 y 7), through which the level of protection is diminished to an unsatisfactory degree for the intended purpose of the park.

4.- It compromises the collective interest in favor of personal interests: The bill prioritizes the private interest’s of property owners whose lands are actually inside the parks boundaries over what the Constitutional Court called “interests of a higher value” referring to the public’s general interest pertaining to environmental protection, not only by excluding all privately held lands from the park and preventing that the State acquire them as mandated in the Expropriations Law, but also it allows property owners to unconstitutionally – according to the Constitutional Court’s ruling on December 16, 2008 – develop said lands.

5.- It proposes to create the Guanacaste Leatherback National Wildlife Refuge on lands that the same bill excludes from the Leatherback Marine National Park (article 2), in order to minimize the impacts that these privately held lands have on the park, without any justification or other technical study that explains why it is necessary to remove these lands in the first place – as the originally reason for including them in the park was to lessen these very impacts.

6.- The bill calls for the need to strictly protect these lands, without any technical study, while at the same time excluding them from the current protection they enjoy inside the national park, as is the case with the hillside El Morro situated outside the 100 meter maritime zone (articles 1 y 2).

7.- It does not abide by any precautionary measures with regard to the environment and the Constitutional Court’s ruling on December 16, 2008

8.- It gives administrative powers to individuals, by creating, “an association consisting exclusively of the refuge’s property owners” (article 9), giving them the authority to make decisions normally reserved for public administrators.

9.- It excludes the possibility for future protection of these privately held lands inside the refuge’s boundaries,

10.-It orders a change in the type of land use permitted by law without incorporation of the variable mandated by the Constitutional Court on February 6, 2002, based solely on entertaining the conveniences of property owners and their own interests.

11.-It established only urban development uses inside the refuge, “single family of multifamily housing, in individual houses or condominiums, tourism constructions, recreational constructions, ecotourism, public and private infrastructure” (article 11), contradicting the reasons for the establishment of national wildlife refuges to protect the flora and fauna found therein according to article 82 of the Wildlife Conservation Law No. 7317 of

October 30, 1992.

12.-It modifies the concept of “coverage” in the Urban Planning Law, allowing 100% of the private lands to be constructed upon.

13.-It does not recognize the Tempisque Conservation Area (ACT), under SINAC, as the rightful refuge administrator.

14.-It allows for the unjustified accumulation of coastal property value, since property owners inside the refuge will be exempt from paying real estate taxes.

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[關鍵字行銷](#) - September 17th, 2010 at 1:30 am

An fascinating concept this. I'm 1 of those men and women whom tend to wait for things to mature prior to taking action but in this case I'm mindful that inaction leads to only failures so I will heed your comments and begin to do anything about it.



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Costa Rica Peace With Nature Policy Threatened

Posted by [admin](#) on Tue, Jul 7, 2009

Filed Under | [Biodiversity](#), [Conservation](#), [Eco Blog](#), [EcoTourism](#), [Environment](#), [National Parks](#), [Sustainability](#)

Costa Rica's government is poised to undo the country's exceptional national park system, which is at the heart of their incredibly successful tourism industry, not to mention being the most effective way to preserve hundreds of species that call these pristine sanctuaries home.

"Peace with Nature is an invitation to all the countries of the world to unite in a joint effort to strengthen their actions and political commitment in order to reverse the trends of environmental degradation caused by the impact of human activities on the planet's ecosystems. " Dr. Oscar Arias Sánchez

"If we permit the precedent of reducing and downgrading a national park, we will stand at the threshold of the collapse of the entire system of national parks, allowing our environment to undergo further deterioration." Alvaro Ugalde, Mario Boza, Karen Olsen Beck de Figueres

Las Baulas National Park



On May 14th, Law 17383 was introduced to Costa Rica's Legislative Assembly to essentially dismember Las Baulas National Park. The proposed law will create a mixed refuge that would allow the construction of "one-family residences, multi-family residences, either individually or in condominium; tourist

recreational residences, recreational installations, tourist developments including ecotourism; and public and private infrastructure for offering public services", quoting from the bill.

It would eliminate the concentrated authority necessary for protected areas by turning jurisdiction over to municipalities, ICT, the Ministry of Housing and groups of

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landowners. In addition, it would reduce even more the availability of drinking water for small neighboring communities and it would certainly contaminate underground water sources due to the shallow nature of the aquifers.

The National Marine Park Las Baulas de Guanacoste was established in 1991 and legally consolidated in 1995. It is the most important nesting site for leatherback turtles in the Eastern Pacific. The leatherback sea turtle is the largest in the world, swimming in these waters for well over 100 million years. According to [The Leatherback Trust](#), females have declined in population



to less than 5,000, with under 1,000 in the Eastern Pacific, and most nesting on Playa Grande, Playa Ventanas and Playa Langosta, all within Las Baulas. Development on nearby Playa Tamarindo and Playa Flamingo has eliminated nesting on those beaches. Less than ten years ago, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature ([IUCN](#)) declared the leatherback sea turtle on the Red List of Threatened Species.

The government's justification for the dissolution of Las Baulas is about money, whether the cost of nationalization of the park or on a more sinister level, the money to be made by private interests with its commercial development. Espousing Peace With Nature is free, but living it is not. Needless to say, there is a tremendous disparity between the administration's valuation and those on the side of the park's preservation, which is not the core issue. While it may be about cost, it is the ultimate cost to Costa Ricans if the integrity of the park system is devalued.

Costa Rica recently made headlines by scoring number one in the "[Happy Planet Index](#)", developed by a British research group. Its goal is to build a new economy, "centered on people and the environment." The country's billion-dollar tourist industry is based on the perception that it is totally committed to the preservation of its environment.

It is in the long-term best interest of Costa Rica to preserve its rainforests, beaches and the countless flora and fauna that are at the mercy of public policy. Let me share one more quote from "In Support of the Natural Heritage of The Costa Rican People and All Humanity," authored by the three conservationists cited at the top.

"Our duty and that of all Costa Ricans is to protect the national parks, because they represent the heritage belonging to all of us, but especially to our descendants and their descendants."

Las Baulas National Park must be preserved. A dialogue needs to be created and a solution found. Affordability is a shallow rationale versus the dire consequences of dismembering a national park. This is a pivotal time in Costa Rica's future and we strongly encourage other voices to speak out on behalf of a true Peace With Nature.

Please feel free to contact us at larryf@naturelandings.com.

In addition, you can express your support on behalf of Las Baulas National Park by contacting the following:

Señora Hannia M. Durán, Jefa de Area

Comisión Permanente Especial de Ambiente

Asamblea Legislativa

San José, Costa Rica

Expediente No. 17.383

"Rectificación de Límites del Parque Nacional Marino Las Baulas y Creación del Refugio de Vida Silvestre Las Baulas de Propiedad Mixta"

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Posted by: [askelena](#) | June 30, 2009



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The Leatherback Trust

161 Merion Ave

Haddonfield, NJ 08033

June 27, 2009

NEWS RELEASE

President of Costa Rica Proposes First Elimination of a National Park, Parque Nacional Marino las Baulas

In a bold and unprecedented move President Oscar Arias of Costa Rica has proposed the elimination of the park that protects the last major nesting area for leatherback turtles in the Eastern Pacific Ocean.

If approved, his proposed law will guarantee elimination of this leatherback population. The leatherback turtle is the largest sea turtle and has been swimming in the oceans for 110 million years. Over the last 20 years it has declined in the Pacific Ocean by over 90% from 90,000 adult females to less than 5,000. Less than 1,000 remain in the Eastern Pacific and most of them nest on Playa Grande, Playa Ventanas and Playa Langosta in Parque Nacional Las Baulas (Las Baulas Park). Development on nearby Playa Tamarindo and Playa Flamingo has eliminated leatherback turtle nesting on those beaches.

Under pressure from developers the President has decided to stop acquisition of lands for the Park. The proposed law will replace Parque Nacional Marino Las Baulas with a mixed refuge that will allow construction of houses and hotels three stories high within 3 meters of the beach and will establish a new system whereby developers and

Follow

homeowners can veto any regulations proposed by the Ministry of the Environment with which they do not agree. This action will guarantee the elimination of the leatherback turtle population that now nests inside the park.

This is the first instance in which Costa Rica, with a world wide reputation for conservation, has moved to eliminate a park that was established in law. It may not be the last. If this proposed law is approved it will establish a precedent such that other parks that occupy land of interest to developers can also be eliminated and replaced with mixed wildlife refuges that allow extensive development. Parks such as Manual Antonio, Santa Rosa and Refugio Cabo Blanco all have beautiful beaches and views like Las Baulas Park. If Baulas can be eliminated then other parks can be as well.

Elimination of Las Baulas Park-2

President Arias claims that he must eliminate the park because Costa Rica does not have funds to expropriate lands within the park. However, most funds used to date have been provided by donations to The Leatherback Trust and the Trust has a fund of \$2,000,000 available for completion of acquisition of the open land on the principal nesting beach Playa Grande. The President does not want to use those funds.

Developers claim prices for their land of \$1000 per sq meter or \$100 per sq ft, prices higher than for land along the New Jersey coast of the US. Official government appraisals for the land have ranged from \$8 to \$50/sq meter (the latter for lands with some improvements) based on land that has no development value since it is inside a park. President Arias has stated that owners should receive the \$1000 per sq meter price, thus making the price of land acquisition too high and making the elimination of the Park necessary. Since his statements new government appraisals reflect the high prices.

The Leatherback Trust has proposed a funding plan for land acquisition in Las Baulas and other Parks that would add a charge of \$1 to each hotel room and rental car rented per day in Costa Rica. This would raise at least \$10,000,000/year. With a secure funding stream Costa Rica could issue bonds and rapidly pay for all land acquisition in Las Baulas Park. Remaining funds could be used to pay land owners in other parks. This financial model is similar to plans used for new stadium construction in the US.

The bottom line is that elimination of Las Baulas Park will eliminate the leatherback turtle population that nests there and will start the process of elimination of the National Park system of Costa Rica. Completion of the land acquisition process at Las Baulas is feasible and affordable. The Leatherback Trust renews its standing offer to help in this process.

-30-

For more information

Contact- in US 609-440-5158, James R. Spotila, President

Costa Rica -011-506-2-253-7680, Clara Padilla, Executive Director



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RESPONSES

Well, if you are in anyway interested in starting a blog, or having your own column on the official ICCCR website....I would love to talk about it more in depth. You can email me directly at kellypatterson@icccr.info



By: **Kelly N Patterson**
on August 11, 2009
at 10:11 pm

[Reply](#)

Kelly ,
No I dont have a website or blog but I am flattered by your kind words. I think the international fishing fleets are just the worst offenders of ocean wildlife's right to exist. A Duke University report estimates that in 2004 these fishing fleets killed 60,000 leatherbacks, mostly in the eastern Pacific. The only reason that happened is because countries like Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Ecuador (Galapogos Islands) and all other countries that boarder the eastern Pacific waters have little or no money to enforce the enviromental laws already on the books. Costa Rica only has two patrol boats and they rarely work...imagine what is going on in those waters.. In order to save the animals you have to fight for them by stopping the long line fishing vessels from killing the ADULT populations that are of breeding age. Without the adults there will be no eggs or juveniles.. Lets put the money to work where it counts and get the bad guys that are killing turtles,



By: **Glen Raymond** on
August 11, 2009
at 2:56 am

[Reply](#)

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RECENT COMMENTS

dolphins, whales and seabirds with little regard... so little in fact that they refer to these animals as "bycatch"...imagine that, they even have a word for the carnage they create.
Regards
Glen

Glen, I think you should be writing for our main website!! Thank you for this valuable insight...do you have a website or blog?



By: **kellyofthepatterns**
on August 11, 2009
at 12:56 am

[Reply](#)

The leatherback turtles have been disappearing and nothing has EVER been built on these lands in question. So, if the turtle population is decreasing it MUST be caused by something else and that something else is the international flotillas of the long line fishing industry. The long line fishing boats have been the cause for the decline not this undeveloped beach area. Nothing has been built on the beach YET the turtles are decreasing...think about that for a second.



By: **Glen Raymond** on
August 10, 2009
at 9:25 pm

[Reply](#)

If you think that the turtles are the only creatures being decimated by the long liners think again..The turtles are easy to count since they walk up on the beach to lay eggs... IMAGINE whats happening to the species that are under the surface....Money would be best spent supporting international legislation banning all long lining activities and also purchasing patrol boats for countries that cant afford the small flotilla required to enforce wildlife and fishery laws and Also.. your WRONG about how close to the beach you will be allowed to build anything there is a 50 meter set back on all beaches construction in Costa Rica

Costa Rica is known as much for the variety of marine turtles and nesting sites as the volcano/rainforest areas. Can't believe a country which touts it's eco-friendliness would allow this to happen! Shame on you, Mr. President. We recently came back from our first trip to your beautiful country and what we liked was not the over developed touristy areas-that's not the real Costa Rica. You have an amazing country. Step up to the plate and protect the very things that made Costa Rica such a hot spot to visit.



By: **Christine Filipski**
on July 11, 2009
at 4:46 pm

[Reply](#)

I have been in Playa Grande in March 2008 and I was shocked by the real estate under development there!



By: **Sylvain** on July 10, 2009
at 6:49 am

Back in 1999, when I first went there, it was a remote fishing village, now it is becoming a second Tamarindo!

[Reply](#)

It looks like the leatherback do not have much to live!

- K.Cap on Volunteer: Small Farm – Room & Board Provided (Providencia de Dota, Costa Rica)
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- David on Volunteer: Small Farm – Room & Board Provided (Providencia de Dota, Costa Rica)
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8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
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Hi Sylvain,

Are you sure that you was in Playa Grande/Matapalo, because I know the area since 1981 and there was no fisherman or fisher village. And I don't understand your statement, in 1988 there was 2.000 turtles coming in a nesting season and last year only 27 without any development in the center of the beach. Please look at the disaster of the longline fleet before culping the locals.



By: **baulas** on August 22, 2009 at 9:16 pm

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