

Beat: News

Sea Turtle Conservation and Shrimp Imports into the United States

Reduce incidental taking of sea turtles

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USPA NEWS - The U.S. Department of State works to protect sea turtles around the world through its certification program, which allows for the importation of wild-caught shrimp into the United States, pursuant to Section 609 of Public Law 101-162.

Each year, the Secretary of State (or his delegate) certifies to Congress those governments and authorities of shrimp-harvesting nations and economies that have programs to reduce the incidental taking of sea turtles in shrimp trawl fisheries that are comparable to the United States, or that their particular fishing environments do not pose a threat of the incidental taking of sea turtles.

This year, the Department certified 37 nations and one economy, and granted determinations for thirteen fisheries as having adequate measures in place to protect sea turtles while harvesting wild-caught shrimp. Annual certifications and determinations are based in part on overseas verification visits by a team composed of Department of State and NOAA Fisheries representatives.

Six of the world's seven species of marine turtles are listed as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act. The U.S. government is currently providing technology and capacity-building assistance to other nations to help them meet the standard for certification under Section 609 and to contribute to the recovery of sea turtle species. The U.S. government also encourages legislation like Section 609 in other nations to prevent the importation of shrimp harvested in a manner harmful to protected sea turtles.

For more information on the Certification to Congress, please see the Federal Register Notice published on May 13, 2022, 87 FR 29425. For more information on U.S. government sea turtle conservation efforts, please visit the websites of the State Department's Office of Marine Conservation, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the Fish and Wildlife Service.

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