



42nd International Sea Turtle Symposium

Workshop Proposal for ISTS42

Title of Proposed Workshop:

Decolonising sea turtle conservation: walking the talk

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Preferred Date for the Workshop: Monday 25th March 2024

Suggested Duration of Workshop: Half Day (4 hours) in AM

Description and Justification of the Workshop:

In recent years, a focus on 'decolonization' has emerged across a range of disciplines, professions, and societal dynamics, reflecting a wave of sentiment that we need to right the wrongs of centuries of the Global North dominating the fate of the Global South. Not surprisingly, sea turtle conservation is no exception. The workshop organizers have authored a pair of articles in recent SWOT Reports describing the dynamics of 'parachute' or 'helicopter' science and identifying the ways in which neocolonialism has influenced sea turtle conservation over time. Building on these articles, in this workshop, we will examine the dynamic of Western scientists and practitioners migrating to developing countries (often former colonies countries) to work in sea turtle conservation and research. We will also address the dynamics and consequences of urban, elite researchers imposing their ideologies on local communities in the places where they work. Through a combination of presentations, group discussions, live polling, and interactive activities, participants will develop a shared understanding of the history and present-day implications of neo-colonial conservation approaches, and will explore what 'decolonizing sea turtle conservation science' could look like. We will discuss what steps might be taken to promote a more fair, equitable, respectful, and diverse sea turtle conservation



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community. As decolonization of conservation is an enormous topic that varies widely across the world, in this first workshop on this topic, we intend to keep the discussions 'geographically agnostic' to apply to the international sea turtle conservation community broadly. We plan to make this a hybrid in-person and virtual event to ensure access to many colleagues who will not attend ISTS in person.

Expected Outcomes of the Workshop:

We expect that by the end of this workshop, participants will collectively:

- Gain a better understanding of several key concepts related to decolonization of sea turtle conservation such as parachute science, neocolonialism, characteristics of western-dominated scientific norms and discourse
- Discuss how those concepts manifest in perpetuating imbalance structures and dynamics of resources, knowledge generation and sharing, conservation philosophy and priorities
- Share and examine our experiences in sea turtle conservation science through the lens of neocolonial, Global North-dominated values and structures
- Imagine what it would take to 'decolonize' sea turtle conservation, and what the potential consequences might be.
- Discuss future steps and activities to continue the momentum generated by this first workshop.