



# 42nd International Sea Turtle Symposium

## Workshop Proposal for ISTS42

**Title of Proposed Workshop:**

ShellBank 2.0: Advancing Marine Turtle Genetic Traceability - Learning and Working exchanges

**Name of Corresponding Organiser:** Michael Paul Jensen and Christine Madden Hof

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**Names of All Organisers:**

Christine Madden Hof, Michael Paul Jensen, Erin LaCasella, Kelly Morgan, Greta Frankham

**Preferred Date for the Workshop:** Monday 25th March 2024

**Suggested Duration of Workshop:** Full Day (8 hours)

**Description and Justification of the Workshop:**

Marine turtles, especially the hawksbill turtle, have faced enormous pressure due to illicit trading activities over the last 150 years. Notwithstanding their protected status under CITES Appendix I and CMS Appendix I and II, certain marine turtle species are still vulnerable to illegal activities that endanger their survival.

We provide an overview of the next phase of ShellBank - a pioneering marine turtle DNA traceability toolkit. Spearheaded by the World Wide Fund for Nature and in partnership with the Australian Museum, TRACE and NOAA, this tool aims to equip researchers, conservationists, law enforcers and policymakers with the means to track marine turtle population globally for conservation management purposes, and to trace the illicit marine turtle trade journey, from “sale to source”. This enables the identification of high-risk populations, whilst also bolstering our conservation and research knowledge pool.

Since its inception in 2018, ShellBank has undergone significant enhancements.



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After demonstrating DNA shell extraction capabilities in 2019 and piloting its practical application in 2022, ShellBank's toolkit now includes comprehensive and constantly growing DNA databases, hands-on training sessions, and other vital resources, such as guidelines for standardised collection and processing of samples and genetic kits. These accomplishments stem from collaborations with multiple international partners.

## **Expected Outcomes of the Workshop:**

In our forthcoming workshop, participants will gain an understanding of ShellBank's structure and functionalities. Through case studies, we'll highlight the platform's real-world impact and its contribution to the conservation field and marine turtle trade intelligence.

This workshop is more than a learning experience—it's a call to collaboration. We're reaching out to a broad spectrum of experts, from conservationists and scientists, to government representatives. The aim is to cultivate a community driven by the shared ambition of using genetics for marine turtle conservation, management and protection.

Together, we'll brainstorm ways to refine and expand ShellBank, drawing from collective knowledge and insights, and map where targeted action is needed.