

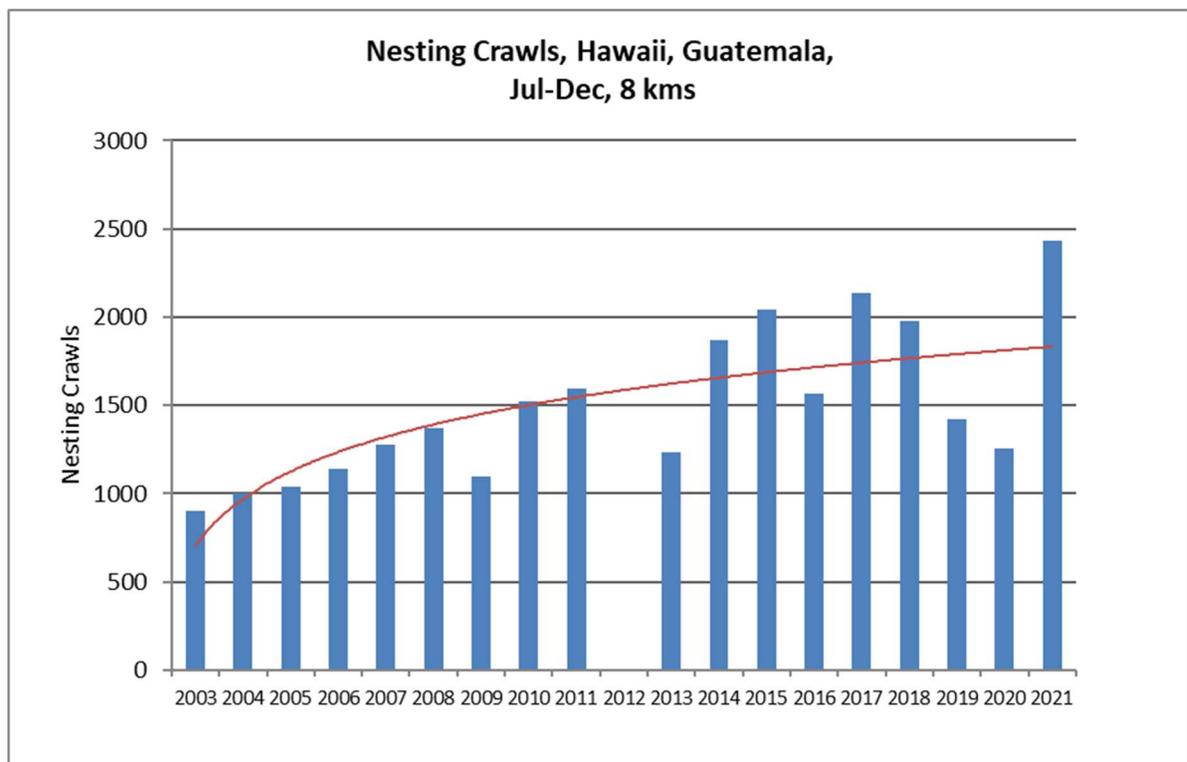


# SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS OF THE CONSERVATION OF SEA TURTLES IN GUATEMALA

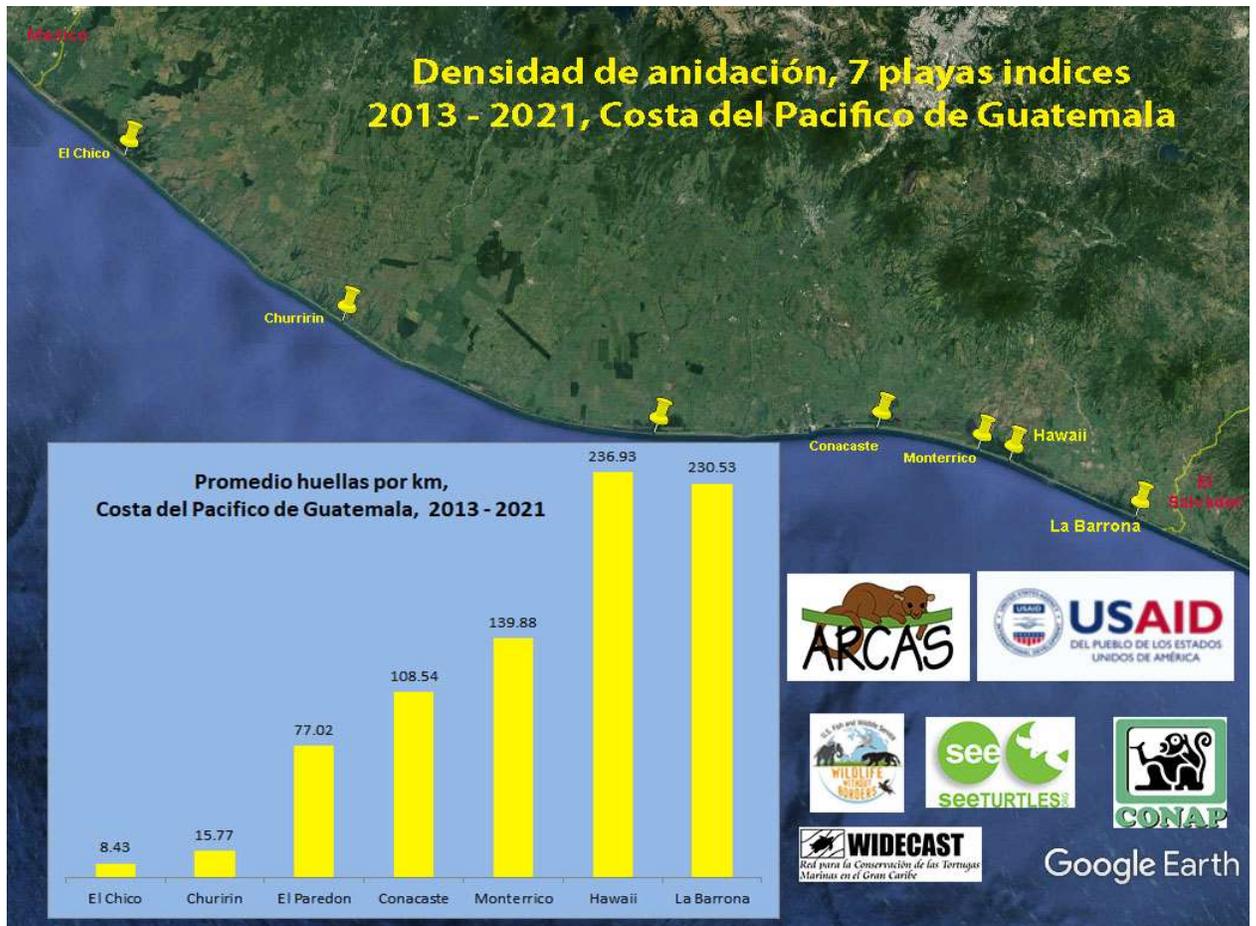
## ENGLISH EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since 2003, ARCAS has been carrying out crawl count population monitoring and other population research on the sea turtles of the Pacific coast of Guatemala. This is the 2022 version of the Analysis, incorporating crawl count, stranding and hatchery data collected in 2020 and 2021. The objective of this Situational Analysis is to evaluate the efforts for the conservation of the sea turtle in Guatemala, within the framework of the National Sea Turtle Strategy, with a special emphasis on the 20% conservation quota system, and the short- and long-term sustainability of this system. Among its main results are the following:

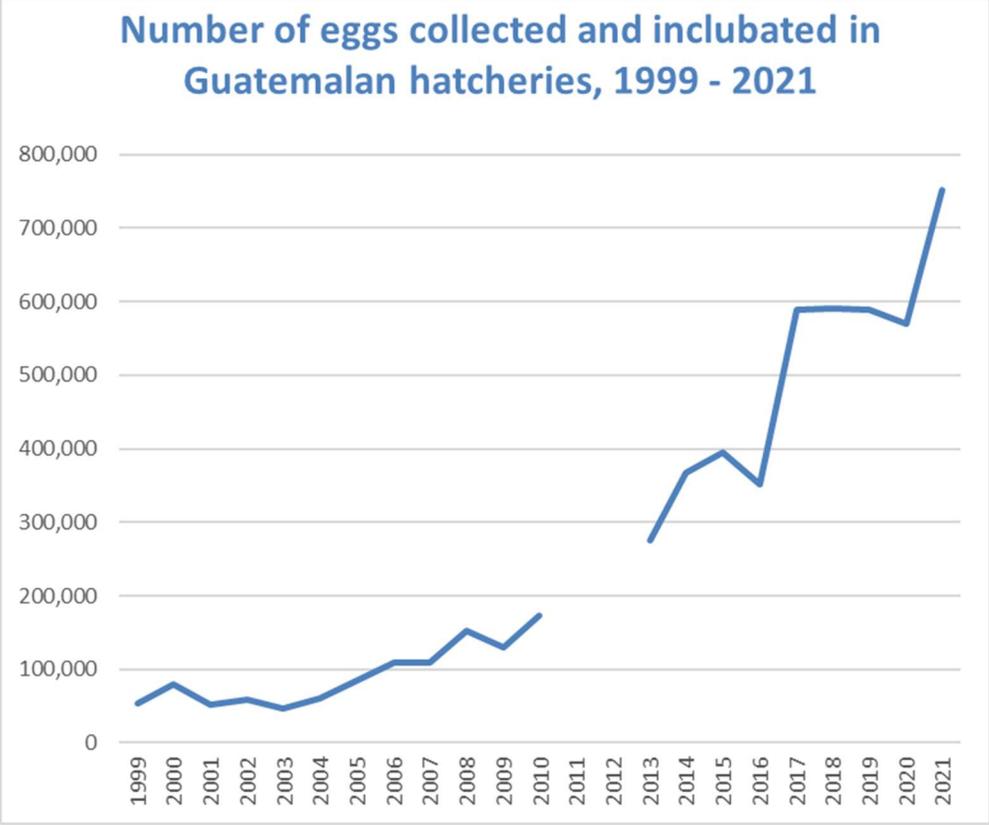
- Over 99% of the nesting on the Pacific coast of Guatemala is of the olive ridley sea turtle (*Lepidochelys olivácea*), and the overall population trend of this species is increasing. ARCAS's nesting crawl count program has documented that the total number of crawls counted in the 7.47kms at the Hawaii site has increased from 906 crawls in 2003 to 2,431 in 2021, nesting density increase of 168%. This trend has been confirmed in crawl counts carried out on the 7 index beaches of El Chico, Churirin, El Paredón, Conacaste, Monterrico, Hawaii and La Barrona since 2013.



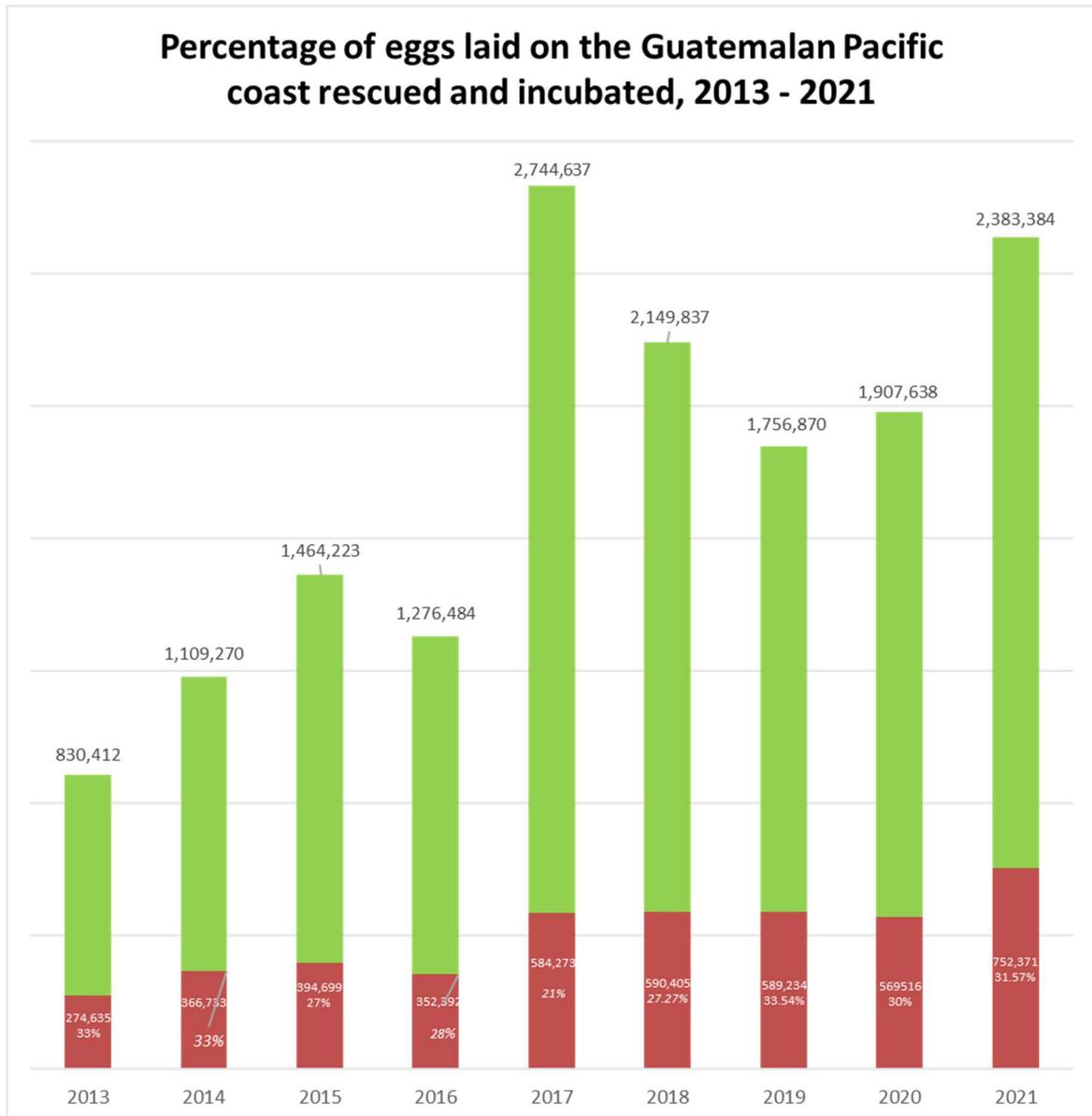
- Crawl counts show that olive ridley nesting density on the Pacific coast of Guatemala is much higher in the southeast (closer to El Salvador) than in the southwest (closer to Mexico) being the peak index beaches in Hawaii and La Barrona



- At the national level, the numbers of eggs rescued and incubated per year have increased from 46,000 in 2003 to 752,371 in 2021. This increase is largely due to the purchase of eggs by the private sector (hotels, ecotourists, vacation home owners...). In 2021, 51% of all rescued eggs were bought or exchanged for food aid while only 37% were delivered to 31 hatcheries as part of the 20% conservation quota, and 11% were nests found on the beach by tourists or collected in enforcement patrols.



- In 2021, based on crawl count data at the six index beaches, extrapolating along the 254 km of Guatemala's Pacific coast, it is estimated that, 25,722 successful nests were laid (minus 9.67% false crawls) for a total of 2,383,384 eggs. Of these, 752,371 eggs or 31.57% were rescued and incubated at 29 hatcheries.



- The nesting of the leatherback turtle remains scarce, with 0 - 4 nests per year reported on the Pacific coast and of the few nests rescued, hatching success has been very low.
- In 2021, the economic value on the beach (wholesale price) of the sea turtle egg market on the Pacific coast of Guatemala was Q 1,977,110 or US\$263,614. The economic resale value, that is, the cost to the final consumer, was Q7,515,656 or US\$1,000,087.

This latest update of ARCAS sea turtle crawl count survey and the Situational Analysis was prepared by Colum Muccio of ARCAS with the support of the Anderson Cabot Center for Ocean Life of the New England Aquarium, WIDECAST and See Turtle. Prior versions were supported by the USAID Biodiversity Project, the Marine Turtle Conservation Fund of the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USF&WS-MTCF), and the Columbus Zoo.

If you have any questions, or if you want the full Spanish report or the original data, please contact us at [cmuccio@arcasguatemala.org](mailto:cmuccio@arcasguatemala.org) or +502 5704-2563 or download it from our website at <https://arcasguatemala.org/who-we-are/arcas-publications/>

