



## **National Aquarium - Fishackathon 2014**

### **Addressing Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing in Costa Rica**

#### **Background:**

Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing has been identified as one of the major threats to current efforts of developing and managing sustainable fisheries. The U.S. Department of State estimates that the global value of IUU catch is approximately \$9-12 billion (USD) annually and that IUU fishing is occurring worldwide. Beyond the economic impact that is felt by legitimate fishermen and nations that rely on fishery income, environmental degradation is of high concern. Most problematic is the prevalence of IUU fishing occurring in protected areas, in areas closed to fishing for a finite period of time (in order to conserve protected species during a vulnerable period) or when targeting a protected species.

The National Aquarium is working with Asociación ANAI and the Latin American Sea Turtle (LAST) Association to support conservation efforts of endangered sea turtles in Costa Rica. Our efforts include developing training programs that teach veterinary care and stranded animal rehabilitation techniques to local staff and volunteers and gathering research data on nesting females. We have also been instrumental in supporting their satellite tagging program and providing veterinary care expertise when needed.

Some of the major threats associated with sea turtle mortality in and around Costa Rica include poaching, habitat degradation, marine debris, poor water quality and IUU fishing and fisheries bycatch.

#### **Problem Statement:**

In order to address the threat of IUU fishing on sea turtle populations in Costa Rica, Fishackathon efforts at the National Aquarium will focus in enhancing current efforts around the Seamounts Marine Management Area surrounding Cocos Island National Park, an area still teeming with sharks and endangered sea turtles. Hackers will focus on developing innovative solutions to implementing and improving early detection of illegal fishing practices in the protected area with a focus on providing timely information to law enforcement officials.