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## Volume 5, Numbers 2 and 3 ESR THEME SECTION

Published in print December, 2008

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# Fisheries bycatch: problems and solutions

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Graveyard of bycaught loggerhead turtle carcasses washed ashore at Playa San Lazaro, Baja California.

Photo: Terry Garland

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*THEME SECTIONS of Endangered Species Research (ESR) present integrated multi-author syntheses initiated and coordinated by acknowledged experts. They highlight cutting-edge research areas or problems and/or bring together cogent bodies of literature on key taxa. Typically, they are led by one or more of ESR Editorial Staff, sometimes including Guest Editors.*

*This ESR THEME SECTION explores the burgeoning field of bycatch research, focusing primarily on bycatch of sea turtles, sea birds and marine mammals. Bycatch of marine megafauna is not a new problem in fisheries management, yet it remains a pervasive and pressing conservation concern. Bycatch research works to reduce incidental mortality by improving our understanding of bycatch vulnerability or susceptibility and the efficacy of direct or indirect means of bycatch reduction and identifies relevant behavior, distribution or demography of bycatch-impacted species. While research alone cannot 'solve' the problem of fisheries bycatch, this THEME SECTION focuses on those areas where research can make an important*

*contribution to the goal of minimizing bycatch of vulnerable populations and promoting sustainable fishing practices.*

*The challenges to studying bycatch are many: lack of direct bycatch observations, limited information on fishing effort, incomplete knowledge of species distributions. The research presented in this THEME SECTION, spanning 2 issues of ESR (Vol. 5, Nos. 2 and 3) highlights some of the innovative approaches scientists around the world are employing to tackle fisheries bycatch. The current THEME SECTION was catalyzed by the ongoing work of [Project GloBAL](http://bycatch.env.duke.edu) (Global Bycatch Assessment of Long Lived Species, <http://bycatch.env.duke.edu>) that seeks to address this pressing conservation problem through innovative research approaches and collaborative efforts.*

*As for all current ESR articles, we are pleased to make the online version of this ESR THEME SECTION available with Open Access.*

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