

## **Project Update: October 2007**

In September Proyecto Carapacho started a new phase; we are now conducting interviews among known sea turtles illegal hunters (guateros). We present here a short story comparing attitudes and thoughts of two guateros: the repentant hunter and the young pirate.

F. is probably 60 years old, he is living in a small house in San Ignacio, he used to be the most terrible sea turtle hunter until he got caught and had to spend 6 months into jail. With his brother, during the 90s, they were the ones who controlled all the sea turtle black market going to the north up to Tijuana and the States. They could catch up to one ton of sea turtles (20 animals) a day. Since he came out of prison, F. decided to stop hunting sea turtles. Now he works as mechanic in the village and, thanks to the Grupo Tortuguero, he takes part into talks in favour of sea turtle conservation.

While we are talking about the time he was a pirate, his eyes shine, in a mixture of nostalgia and shame. A. is young, he is 28 years old, he lives in Bahia Magdalena. A. is a pirate, he catches whatever he can find and whatever he is asked for: abalone, lobster, shrimp and sea turtle as well. He works mainly at night, with his brothers and a cousin. He says that the permission system is unfair, that all that comes from the sea should not belong to specific groups but everybody should be free to fish. A's life is risky, fishing at night is full of dangers and he has to face not only the police but also fishermen from the cooperatives that want to protect their own resource.

A. told me that working 4 nights per week he can easily earn more than what a normal fisherman can earn in a month, he is doing that for his family. He said. Then he smiles sadly, he knows that most of the money he earns goes for cars, beers and unnecessary staff.