



BLUE CORRIDORS FOR TURTLES

44%

of all migratory species
are in decline, including
marine turtles.



6/7

species
threatened
with extinction.

Marine turtles are iconic ocean species, as they play an important role in ocean health and in human cultures and tourism. Despite significant conservation efforts, many marine turtle populations remain at serious risk, driven toward extinction by unsustainable human activities and climate change. Their wide-ranging migrations expose them to many different national and international regulations, complicating protection efforts.

Yet many conservation efforts are undertaken in isolation and have focused on local nesting beaches, often overlooking the oceanic habitats where turtles spend the majority of their lives. This has created critical knowledge gaps, as data are often incomplete, regionally biased, skewed towards nesting females, and not publicly available. Conservation of turtle populations is further hindered by limited information on which genetically distinct populations exist and where, and uncertainties about which population is being impacted the most.



To bridge this gap and unite our turtle communities across nations and regions, we need to better understand how turtles are connected locally and across ocean basins, in order to act at scale and with greater impact. This is particularly relevant to coastal communities that rely on marine turtles for food security, livelihoods and customary practices. Although the need for improved transboundary conservation is recognised, many communities, practitioners, and policymakers lack practical guidance on where to start. Fortunately, there is a growing movement and urgency to improve transboundary ecological connectivity for migratory species, like marine turtles. **The time to act is now.**



THE PROJECT

Blue Corridors for Turtles is a global initiative focussed on all seven species of marine turtles.

This project will bring together research institutions, NGOs, for profit organizations, government bodies and local communities in a shared mission to conserve marine turtles. Specifically, Blue Corridors for Turtles leverages traceability technologies, including ShellBank and satellite tracking, to map turtle migration and transboundary movements. By identifying critical habitats (as important marine turtle areas (IMTAs) using approved guidelines)

and spatially assessing threats, this initiative aims to identify at-risk turtle populations and those that need greater protection.

For the first time, genetic data from ShellBank will be combined with tracking data in a global mapping framework. This project will also map coastal communities and other stakeholders working on turtle conservation. Extending the IUCN Marine Turtle Specialist Group's regional management unit (RMU) process, the Blue Corridors for Turtles aims to advance conservation strategies and enforcement measures for targeted and effective interventions that support marine turtle recovery worldwide.

OUR GOAL

is to pinpoint populations most at risk, their spatial hotspots, and the required management interventions and policy solutions to support global recovery of marine turtles.



By 2027, Blue Corridors for Turtles are defined by tracking and tracing all seven marine turtle species from nesting beaches to foraging grounds through genetic data (ShellBank) and satellite tracking, whereby area-based protection and threat assessment highlights populations at-risk and in greatest need of protection from bycatch, over-exploitation, and climate impacts, to inform where important marine turtle areas are required. Governments can use these insights and data-driven science to deliver on their commitments under the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), including, the 30x30 agenda, the High Seas Treaty, and to target conservation efforts for the species, populations and habitats most vulnerable for long-term recovery.

WE WILL

A. Aggregate tracking data to establish a connectivity baseline and identify gaps

By June 2025, collate nesting, genetic & satellite transmitter information to identify key data gaps for future on-ground effort, and create a directory of active turtle conservation communities.

B. Assess threats and identify populations most at-risk

By June 2026, we will launch on-the-ground projects to address traceability gaps, and conduct spatial assessments of genetic and ecological turtle connectivity and impacts from use, trade, fisheries & climate to identify at-risk and those requiring greatest protection.

C. Define Important Marine Turtle Areas and Superhighways for greater protection

By June 2027, together with the turtle community, we will define critical habitat (as important marine turtle areas) and propose superhighways for protection under frameworks such as 30x30, OECM, BBNJ and other protection mechanisms delivering on the GBF and other strategies. We will also re-connect blue corridor for turtle communities and partners to further enhance regional conservation efforts and action.



Blue Corridors for Turtles will underpin efforts to:

1

Gain insights into transboundary migrations and regional connectivity to identify critical threats and understand cumulative impacts across life history cycles.

2

Apply science-based evidence to protect marine turtles from key threats and support effective implementation of conservation measures.

3

Empower local communities with the knowledge needed to maintain sustainable turtle populations.

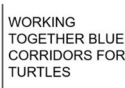
4

Advocate for the integration of project findings into national, regional and global conservation policies to secure the long-term survival of marine turtles.

KEY PARTNERS

Blue Corridors for Turtles aspires to be a transformative force, built on the expertise and collaboration of international commissions, research institutions, NGOs, universities and local communities. Together, we form a global network dedicated to more effective marine turtle conservation actions across government and community scales.

The Blue Corridor for Turtles is being led by the World Wide Fund for Nature, in partnership with The State of the World's Sea Turtles program, the University of Queensland, and the Collecte Localisation Satellites group (CLS-Argos), and contributes to the mission of the IUCN Marine Turtle Specialist Group.



For more information contact

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