



BLUE CORRIDORS FOR TURTLES

44%

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



5/7

marine turtle
species threatened
with extinction.

Marine turtles are iconic ocean species, as they play an important role in ocean health, cultures and economies. Despite significant conservation efforts, most of the world's remaining marine turtle species are still at risk of extinction, driven by unsustainable harvesting, illegal trade, bycatch and climate change. Their wide-ranging migrations expose them to disconnected 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 populations are 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 focused on all seven species of marine turtles.

This project will bring together research institutions, NGOs, for-profit organisations, government bodies and local communities in

a shared mission to conserve marine turtles. Specifically,

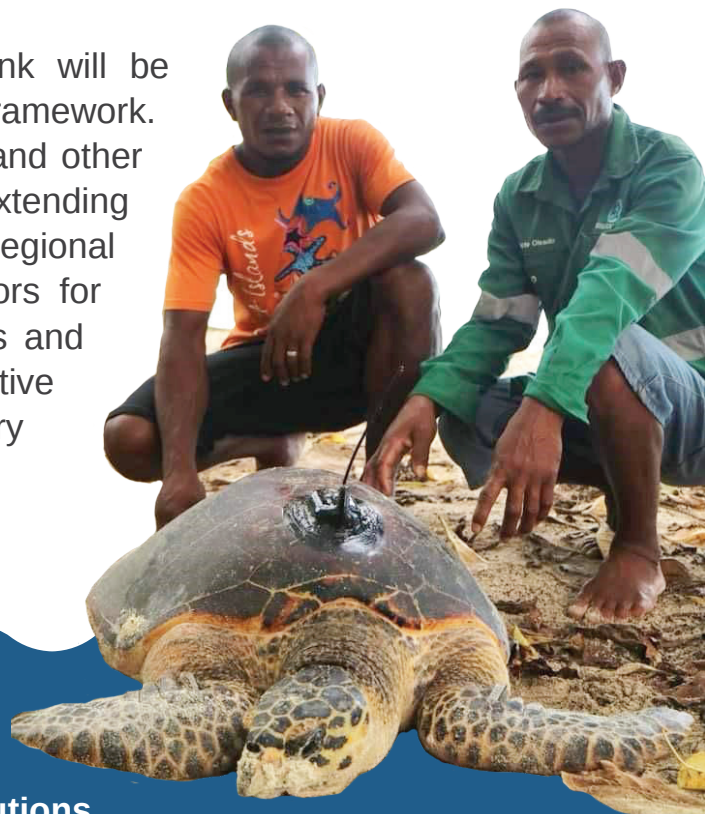
Blue Corridors for Turtles leverages traceability technologies, including ShellBank and satellite tracking, to map turtle migration and transboundary movements. By identifying critical habitats (as important marine turtle areas (IMTAs) using approved guidelines)

and spatially assessing threats, this initiative will identify at-risk turtle populations 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, 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 assessment of area-based protections and threats 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 data to establish a connectivity baseline and identify gaps

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

B. Assess threats and identify populations most at-risk

In 2026, we will launch on-the-ground projects needed to address traceability gaps, and by end of 2026, conduct connectivity analyses and spatial assessments of impacts from use, trade, fisheries & climate, to identify populations at-risk and those requiring greatest protection.

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

By end of 2027, together with the turtle community, coordinate the delineation of critical habitats (as Important Marine Turtle Areas), and with connectivity data, propose "superhighways" for protection under key global policy frameworks such as the High Seas Treaty, the 30x30 global ambitions (inclusive of OECMs), Convention on Migratory Species (CMS). We will also re-connect Blue Corridor for Turtles 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 project is being led by the World Wide Fund for Nature, in partnership with the Convention of Migratory Species Secretariat, the University of Queensland, ShellBank, The State of the World's Sea Turtles program, and the Collecte Localisation Satellites group (CLS-Argos), and contributes to the mission of the IUCN Marine Turtle Specialist Group.



For more information contact
Blue Corridors for Turtles Team at
✉ bluecorridorsforturtles@gmail.com

