Blue Corridors for Turtles: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. What is the purpose of the Blue Corridors for Turtles Project?

Q: What is the main goal of the Blue Corridors for Turtles Project?

A: The primary goal of **Blue Corridors for Turtles** is to protect and enhance marine turtle populations by mapping important corridors, understanding genetic connectivity, and facilitating collaborative conservation efforts. This Project combines global data from different stakeholders to provide critical insights into turtle movements, nesting sites, and genetic diversity and to map important marine turtle areas (https://www.iucn-mtsg.org/imtas), building on recent updates to marine turtle Regional Management Units, and bringing marine turtles to parity with other marine megafauna taxa such as birds, marine mammals, and sharks and rays.

2. How is the Blue Corridors for Turtles Project different from other turtle connectivity studies?

Q: How does the Blue Corridors for Turtles Project differ from other turtle connectivity programs or published papers?

A: Blue Corridors for Turtles (BC4T) is an extension of the RMU process and will incorporate information from many sources including SWOT, ShellBank and MiCO. It seeks to develop the spatial products that can inform and identify Important Marine Turtle Areas (IMTAs) in support of, and under the auspices of, the IUCN Marine Turtle Specialist Group (MTSG). To date, no IMTAs have been formally proposed globally. Blue Corridors for Turtles seeks to jump start the IMTA process by identifying blue corridors (genetically distinct nesting, migration and feeding areas) and the connectivity between them. This process involves analysing tracking data globally and, for the first time, characterising them by genetic stock. The collated data will feed into population-level risk assessments to identify those populations most at-risk. These products will be made available on existing databases (e.g. SWOT and MICO) and as otherwise desired by the MTSG. As with Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas, Important Marine Mammal Areas, and Important Shark and Ray Areas, the products will be used to drive action and/or support delivery of multilateral global conservation measures and initiatives, giving marine turtles and our wider turtle community, a seat at the table.

Other programs have sought to assess turtle space use and connectivity, but differ from the outputs and uses of Blue Corridors for Turtles. MiCO has largely focused on deriving information on cross-taxa connectivity from literature, and in the development of network models to describe migratory connectivity. The MiCO approach has informed BC4T but operates at a different spatial and taxonomic scale. Outputs from MiCO, including Kot et al., 2022 and Bentley et al. 2025 provide extensive information on broad-scale connectivity demonstrating how marine turtles link countries and regions. While useful, finer-scale information is necessary to drive specific management actions. Likewise, MegaMove is a cross-taxa program that seeks to deliver high-profile syntheses of movement data. The

products from MegaMove are not yet freely available and, like MiCO, the global scale of the analyses make them less useful for the development of area-based management measures.

As such, a specific gap in usable knowledge describing Important Areas for Marine Turtles remains to inform and drive management and policy actions. Turtles (like seabirds, marine mammals, and sharks and rays) deserve a taxa-specific approach to the identification of important areas that can be owned by the sea turtle community. BC4T will develop the spatial products and connectivity information required to support the identification of IMTAs through regional expert workshops conducted by the MTSG.

3. Who can contribute data to the Blue Corridors for Turtles Project?

Q: Can anyone contribute data to the Project?

A: Data contributions are open to any individual and organization working on marine turtle research or conservation. This includes data related to turtle nesting sites, telemetry data, and genetics. However, all contributors must agree to the terms of reference regarding data use and sharing. Initial data collection will focus on telemetry data, with additional data collection forthcoming as the Project progresses.

Q: Who am I sharing my data with?

A: Blue Corridors for Turtles Project partnership: WWF (led by Dr Christine Madden), The State of the World Sea Turtles (SWOT), University of Queensland, CLS, the dedicated Project research team, and trusted team officers who have held, led and managed large turtle datasets, collectively referred to as the ‘Core Team’

Q: On which server will my data be housed and what means will be undertaken to ensure their safety and confidentiality?

A: Data will be housed in several online systems to enable housing and processing of raw data and the distribution of Blue Corridors for Turtles products. Internally, raw data and metadata provided by data providers will be housed in a Google drive folder prior to quality control and processing with access restricted to Blue Corridors team members, as well as the CLS databases housing raw Argos data. After processing, data and products will be stored in ArcGIS Online geodatabases hosted by George Washington University and the University of Queensland. These databases will have differential access, with raw data only accessible to the Blue Corridors for Turtles core team and relevant data providers. Synthesized products will be available to the public and will eventually be moved to public data repositories such as SWOT and/or MiCO.

4. How will the data be used in the Project?

Q: What happens to the data I provide to the Blue Corridors for Turtles Project?

A: The data you provide will be used to develop aggregated datasets that help map key marine turtle corridors, detect populations most at-risk and those that require greater protection, and to define important marine turtle areas. It will contribute to scientific models, publications, and conservation efforts aimed at connecting turtle communities, protecting turtle habitats, improving turtle conservation status, and supporting threat reduction and management policies. For more, refer to the Blue Corridors for Turtles Project brochure.

5. What kind of data can be contributed?

Q: What types of data are accepted for contribution?

A: The Project accepts data on marine turtles from a variety of sources, including:

Telemetry data (tracking turtle movements, initial focus)

Nesting data (location and frequency of nesting events)

Genetic data (genetic stock analysis)

6. Will my data be shared with third parties?

Q: Can my data be shared with other researchers or organizations?

A: Data will be shared with third parties in accordance with the permissions you specify. You can indicate whether your data is **protected** (which requires explicit permission for any use) or **standard** (which can be shared with third parties following a review process). You will make this selection when you contribute data to the Project and can change permissions by contacting the Blue Corridors for Turtles team (bluecorridorsforturtles@gmail.com). However, any data shared will always be properly attributed to you. The *Blue Corridors for Turtles Data Terms of Reference and Use* for both data providers and individuals or organizations seeking to use the data can be found here.

7. How will my data be credited?

Q: How is credit given for the data I contribute?

A: Your data will always be explicitly credited in any publication, map, or report produced as part of the Blue Corridors for Turtles Project. You and any other data owners and affiliations listed when data are submitted will be listed as the data provider(s), ensuring proper acknowledgment for your contribution. This acknowledgement will be made as a consortium of co-authors in any publication. More details are provided in the Terms of Reference.

8. Can I update or withdraw my data later?

Q: Can I make changes to my data once it's submitted or withdraw it from the Project?

A: Yes, you can update or withdraw your data by contacting the Blue Corridors for Turtles team (bluecorridorsforturtles@gmail.com) at any time. It is important to keep your contact information up to date for this reason.

9. Are there any guidelines for how my data will be used?

Q: Are there any restrictions on how my data can be used?

A: Yes, data will only be used for scientific purposes related to the goals of the Blue Corridors for Turtles Project, such as mapping turtle corridors, developing important marine turtle areas, and informing policy and conservation efforts. The data will not be used for commercial purposes or distributed to third parties without prior agreement. See the Blue Corridors for Turtles Terms of Use and reference here.

10. How will data accuracy and integrity be handled?

Q: How do you ensure the accuracy of the data provided?

A: While we strive for data accuracy, we cannot guarantee the completeness or precision of any dataset. Contributors are encouraged to ensure the accuracy of their own data, and we will rely on your data to contribute to our scientific models. If data discrepancies arise, we will work closely with contributors to resolve any issues.

11. Can I use the data from this Project in my own research or publications?

Q: Can I use data from Blue Corridors for Turtles in my own work?

A: Yes, you can use the Blue Corridor for Turtles aggregated data products in your research, provided that you follow the citation guidelines. Any publication, report, or product that uses Blue Corridors for Turtles data products must properly credit the source of the data, including the original data providers and the Project itself. To use the raw data provided to Blue Corridors for Turtles, you may make a request which will be reviewed by the Blue Corridors for Turtles team for scientific merit and to ensure it aligns with Blue Corridors for Turtles goals. Upon approval, data that was provided without limitations on data sharing will be released. Data that requires additional permission will not be released and you will be required to contact individual data owners for permission prior to release. You can email bluecorridorsforturtles@gmail.com to make a data request.

12. What happens to my data after I contribute it?

Q: What is the process once I submit my data to the Project?

A: Once submitted, your data will be integrated into the Project's larger dataset, which will be used for analysis, publications, and conservation efforts such as developing Important Marine Turtle Areas (IMTAs). Data will be anonymized and aggregated, but your contribution will always be credited.

13. How are the data products from Blue Corridors for Turtles shared with the public?

Q: How can the public access the Project's data and findings?

A: The aggregated data and final products, such as maps, reports, and publications, will be available in the future on the **Blue Corridors for Turtles** website and as ArcGIS Online web stories. The aggregated product will also be made available to the partnership platforms (e.g., SWOT, MiCO). Stay tuned for the launch of these products.

14. What will be the outputs/products from the Blue Corridors for Turtles Project?

Q: What will be the outputs/products from the Blue Corridors for Turtles Project?

A: Intended data products include but are not limited to: migratory corridors for marine turtles, assessments of at-risk populations, and Important Marine Turtle Areas. These can then be used to inform other processes including proposing superhighways for protection under frameworks such as 30x30, OECM, BBNJ and other protection mechanisms delivering on the Global Biodiversity Framework and other conventions. We will also re-connect Blue Corridors for Turtles communities and partners to further enhance regional conservation efforts and action.

15. What if there's an issue with the data I provided?

Q: What happens if there is an issue with the data I submitted?

A: If any issues arise with the data you submitted, we will work closely with you to resolve the matter. You will be notified, and we may ask for clarification or additional data to ensure accuracy and integrity in the Project's final products.

16. How is Blue Corridors for Turtles helping to protect marine turtles?

Q: How does this Project contribute to the conservation of marine turtles?

A: By mapping turtle corridors and identifying Important Marine Turtle Areas, Blue Corridors for Turtles informs conservation strategies, helping stakeholders and policymakers make data-driven decisions. The Project also advocates for stronger protections for turtle habitats and supports global conservation efforts. Synthesized products, such as Important Marine Turtle Areas, are crucial to bring marine turtles to global data parity with other marine taxa such as birds, marine mammals, and sharks and rays.

17. How can I get involved with Blue Corridors for Turtles?

Q: How can I contribute or participate in the Project?

A: You can get involved by contributing data, collaborating on research, or simply promoting the Project's goals. To learn more about how to participate, please contact the Blue Corridors for Turtles team (bluecorridorsforturtles@gmail.com). We will also be setting up working groups and/or workshops to help define Important Marine Turtle Areas. Stay tuned for future communications.

Contact Information:

If you have further questions or need clarification on any part of the Terms of Reference, feel free to contact the **Blue Corridors for Turtles** team at:

Email: bluecorridorsforturtles@gmail.com

Website: https://wwf.panda.org/discover/oceans/ocean_species/marine_turtles/

Brochure:
https://wwfint.awsassets.panda.org/downloads/blue-corridors-for-turtles_brochure.pdf