

Global conservation priorities for marine turtles

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Marine turtles worldwide are vulnerable and endangered, but their long lives and broad distribution make it difficult for scientists to accurately determine the threat level to different populations and devise appropriate conservation strategies. To address this concern, researchers have developed a new method to evaluate spatially and biologically distinct groups of marine turtles, called Regional Management Units, or RMUs, to identify threats and data gaps at different scales.

The results are reported today in the online journal [PLoS ONE](#). In their analysis, the researchers identified 11 out of the 58 worldwide turtle RMUs that are most at risk. Of these 11, five reside in the Indian Ocean, four in the Pacific, and two in the Atlantic. Populations of four of the seven total species of marine turtle are included in this most threatened group.

The researchers suggest that these results should be used to help set conservation priorities. Furthermore, this approach is flexible and can also be used to assess other widely distributed taxa to generate a portfolio of conservation priorities that reflect the diversity of conservation needs associated with variation among different populations of a single species.

More information: Wallace BP, DiMatteo AD, Bolten AB, Chaloupka MY, Hutchinson BJ, et al. (2011) Global Conservation Priorities for Marine Turtles. *PLoS ONE* 6(9):e24510.
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