

# Endangered green turtles may feed, reside at Peru's central, northern coast

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Green turtle. Credit: Aldo Pacheco

Peruvian coastal waters may provide suitable habitat that may help the recovery of endangered South Pacific green turtles, according to a study published November 19, 2014 in the open-access journal *PLOS ONE* by Ximena Velez-Zuazo from University of Puerto Rico and colleagues.

Green turtles inhabit tropical and subtropical coastal waters around the

world. The authors of this study worked to identify suitable habitat for the [endangered species](#) by measuring two populations off the Peruvian coast from 2010 to 2013 in potentially important feeding grounds.

The researchers found that the turtle population had fast-growing members and the composition was similar to their expectations for each location, indicating healthy populations at both sites. At the northern warm, less productive ecotone El Niño, the population was composed of mostly sub-adults. At the cold, nutrient rich Paracas off the southern coast, the population was composed primarily of juveniles and no adults. According to the authors, the populations recorded at both sites indicate that nutrient rich conditions found in Peruvian [coastal waters](#) might contribute to the recovery of East Pacific [green turtles](#). However, both populations are still threatened by pollution, bycatch, and illegal catch, and the researchers suggest conservation measures may be necessary to maintain current populations.

Shaleyra Kelez and Javier Quiñones, co-authors in this collaborative study, agreed on the value long-term mark-recapture studies have to better understand the importance of these areas and the need for its adequate protection.

**More information:** Velez-Zuazo X, Quinones J, Pacheco AS, Klinge L, Paredes E, et al. (2014) Fast Growing, Healthy and Resident Green Turtles (*Chelonia mydas*) at Two Neritic Sites in the Central and Northern Coast of Peru: Implications for Conservation. *PLoS ONE* 9(11): e113068. [DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0113068](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0113068)

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