

Under US pressure, Mexico probes loggerhead sea turtle deaths

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A Mexican Navy oceanographic research vessel taking part in the expedition.

Scientists in Mexico are investigating the deaths of hundreds of loggerhead sea turtles in recent years, a species considered at risk of extinction in the wild, according to officials.

The Latin American nation has been criticized by US authorities for failing to do enough to protect the turtles, which have been affected by [illegal fishing](#).

As part of ongoing efforts to ease US concerns, the Mexican Navy carried out an [expedition](#) in August to study the habitat of the turtles in the Gulf of Ulloa off the Baja California peninsula.

The possible impact of rising sea temperatures and a decrease in food sources will also be considered, Diego Lopez, an oceanographic researcher with the Navy, told AFP.

According to the conservation group Sea Shepherd, loggerhead sea turtles perform one of the longest trans-oceanic migrations of any marine vertebrate, migrating from nesting areas in Japan to waters off Mexico.

From 2018 to 2020, between 500 and 1,000 of the turtles were reported to have died each year in Mexico, according to the organization, which blamed the illegal use of bottom gillnets.

The [loggerhead turtle](#) (*Caretta caretta*) is listed as vulnerable by the International Union for Conservation of Nature, meaning it is considered at high risk of extinction in the wild.



Researchers use a net to collect food organisms for sea turtles off the coast of Mexico.

The US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has given Mexico a negative certification for failing to do enough to reduce the bycatch of sea turtles.

The move means [restrictions](#) for Mexican-flagged vessels accessing US ports, and possible curbs on fishing trade between the two countries.

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