



PRESS RELEASE 2025

JUIN 16, 7H30UTC+1

CLS joins global effort to map and protect critical Blue Corridors for marine turtles

A new WWF-coordinated initiative called Blue Corridors for Turtles aims to close critical gaps in marine turtle and ocean conservation. Launched on World Sea Turtle Day, this multi-partner initiative aims for Important Marine Turtle Areas (IMTAs) to be established and prioritised in support of effective, transboundary conservation measures to reverse the decline of marine turtle populations.

Promising to deal with a formidable challenge, the initiative will connect movement data with genetics data for the first time, and bridge significant knowledge gaps about marine turtle connectivity in every ocean basin, across more than 50 countries worldwide. Collaborators have already begun compiling the world's largest dataset of marine turtle nesting sites, satellite tracking and genetic information, which so far shows:

- 166 genetically distinct marine turtle populations identified globally, thanks to data provided by several sources including ShellBank – the world's first traceability toolkit and global marine turtle DNA database
- More than 4,000 nesting sites across 147 countries thanks to data provided by the State of the World's Turtles (SWOT)
- Over 1,000 satellite tracks for all 7 species thanks to contributions from the turtle community

Dr. Christine Madden, Lead for Global Marine Turtles, WWF



"We stand at a pivotal moment to elevate marine turtles in global conservation frameworks before it's too late.

Marine turtle connectivity is the missing piece of the puzzle – we call on governments, communities, and funders to engage in Blue Corridors for Turtles and aid recovery where their numbers are dwindling,

This is a groundbreaking first in many ways. Using ShellBank, we will be able to synthesise marine turtles' genetic data with movement data at a global scale, which has never been done before,"



Highly migratory, marine turtles often swim across the borders of several countries and through international waters, while facing multiple threats such as bycatch, poaching and climate change throughout their life cycles. As a keystone species, they are crucial in maintaining healthy marine ecosystems, and play an important role in human cultures.



Pepe Clarke, Leader of WWF's Ocean Practice

"This initiative comes at a critical moment when sea turtle populations face unprecedented threats. By establishing protected blue corridors, we can safeguard the critical feeding grounds, nesting beaches, and migration routes that turtles depend on for survival, while simultaneously advancing international commitments under the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), Convention on Biological Diversity, and the new High Seas Treaty,"



Marine turtle conservation efforts have delivered major benefits for the protection of marine ecosystems, supporting community livelihoods and sustainable fisheries, while fighting marine pollution and strengthening climate resilience.

However, without formally defined "Important Areas" that exist for other migratory marine megafauna such as birds, mammals, sharks and rays, transboundary conservation planning and protection of marine turtles has been hindered.

Amy Raenkel, Executive Secretary of the CMS



"Blue Corridors for Turtles comes at a key moment for the conservation of these iconic, migratory species. By improving our knowledge of their migration routes and identifying Important Marine Turtle Areas (IMTAs), this initiative will generate essential knowledge to guide policy and action across national borders,"

Associate Professor Daniel Dunn, Director of the Centre for Biodiversity and conservation Science, University of Queensland

"IMTAs are the best mechanism the world has to ensure the inclusion of these foundational species into global conservation frameworks. We urge governments to commit to the development and implementation of IMTAs as a concrete mechanism to meet their global conservation commitments."



Roderic Mast, Co-Chair of IUCN's Marine Turtle Specialist Group & Co-Founder of the SWOT program



"By mapping connectivity and spatial threats, we can connect bottom-up science with top-down policy, ensuring IMTAs are grounded in scientific evidence. We thank all knowledge and data holders who are contributing to Blue Corridors for Turtles, and look forward to engaging with researchers worldwide to safeguard marine turtles' full life cycle and the diverse marine habitats that we all rely on"

Christel Delmas, Director of Environmental Services, CLS

"CLS, as provider of Argos Services, is proud to support this initiative, which reflects our mission to harness satellite technology for biodiversity protection.

By helping close key knowledge gaps in turtle connectivity, we improve our collective understanding of their life cycles and enable science-based policies to reverse population declines.

Blue Corridors for Turtles shows the power of global collaboration and innovation to secure a future for marine turtles"



The partners working alongside CLS on the Blue Corridors project:



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More information about CLS

CLS is a global company, mission-driven, and pioneer provider of monitoring and surveillance solutions for the Earth, created in 1986. We are subsidiary of the French Space Agency (CNES) and CNP, an investment firm. Our mission is to create innovative space-based solutions to understand and protect our planet and to manage its resources sustainably. CLS employs almost 1000 people at our headquarters in Toulouse (France) and in 30 other sites around the world. The company works in five strategic markets: sustainable fisheries management, environmental monitoring, maritime surveillance, mobility, and energies & infrastructures. CLS processes data from 100,000 beacons per month (such as drifting buoys, animal tags, VMS beacons, & LRIT tracking) and observes the oceans and inland waters (every day more than 20 instruments onboard satellites deliver information to CLS on the world's seas and oceans). In addition, we monitor land and sea activities by satellite (nearly 20,000 radar and optical images and several hundred drone flights are processed each year). The CLS Group had a revenue of nearly 193 million Euros in 2024. Committed to a sustainable planet, every day the company works for Earth, from Space.

More information about CNES

CNES (Centre National d'Études Spatiales) is the government agency responsible for shaping and implementing French space policy in Europe. It designs and puts satellites into orbit and invents the space systems of tomorrow; it promotes the emergence of new services useful in everyday life. Founded in 1961, CNES has developed major space projects, launchers, and satellites and is the industry's natural partner for promoting innovation. The agency has nearly 2,500 employees passionate about space and its infinite, innovative fields of application. They work in five areas: the Ariane project, science, observation, telecommunications, and defense. CNES is a major player in technological innovation, economic development, and France's industrial policy. It also forges scientific partnerships and is involved in many international cooperative endeavors. France, represented by CNES, is one of the main contributors to the European Space Agency (ESA). www.cnes.fr

More information about CNP

CNP is an investment firm founded by Mr. Albert Frère and exclusively managed by the Frère family. CNP invests its permanent capital for control or joint control of European industry leaders and acts as an active partner to drive sustainable value creation alongside the founders, management and families it associates with. Together with GBL, CNP is one of the 2 pillars of Groupe Frère that manages net assets of approximately € 5.5Bn. www.cnp.be