

# CORREDOR AZUL: MARINE PROTECTED AREAS AND SEA TURTLES IN THE SW ATLANTIC

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Sea turtles are highly migratory animals that use a wide variety of habitats along their life span. Therefore, research and conservation efforts must be conducted coordinately and cooperatively between nations involved, going beyond geographic and politic boundaries.

For this reason, during the V Meeting on Sea Turtle Research and Conservation of the Southwest Atlantic (October 1st 2009, Mar del Plata, Argentina), the first workshop on Green Turtles and Protected Areas was conducted.

Its main goal was to promote the exchange of knowledge and experiences between researchers and conservationist working with green turtles in Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina; in order to assess connections between nesting and feeding populations, recognize common threats and also identify gaps in sea turtle knowledge and unprotected critical habitats along the species distribution.

According to several studies employing genetics, mark-recapture and remote sensing tools, populations of juvenile green turtles are shared by the three countries. These populations are mainly affected by incidental capture, especially on artisanal fisheries, and marine debris ingestion due to anthropogenic pollution. In this region, coastal and marine protected areas cover an important proportion of the species distribution, especially in Brazil.

However, some gaps have been identified. In some protected areas in Brazil, no sea turtle information is available. Moreover, critical feeding habitats like the Río de la Plata estuary, shared by Argentina and Uruguay, are completely unprotected.

We encourage that similar experiences should be conducted in other regions, enhancing communication and coordination between researches from different nations in pursuit of sea turtle conservation.

Thanks for the support

