**State of the World’s Sea Turtles (SWOT)**

**Ocean Biogeographical Information System – Spatial Ecological Analysis of Megavertebrate Populations (OBIS-SEAMAP)**

SWOT, in conjunction with the IUCN Marine Turtle Specialist Group (MTSG) Burning Issues Working Group (MTSG-BI), has recently updated a nested envelope model of marine turtle Regional Management Units (RMUs), which provide a framework for setting global conservation and research priorities. For more information, see Wallace et al. (2023); the publication can be downloaded [here](https://www.int-res.com/abstracts/esr/v52/p209-223/). To keep the files current and accurate, **we will rely upon user-driven updates and suggested edits** (guidelines below).

Use of files requires that you adhere to the [OBIS-SEAMAP Terms of Use](http://seamap.env.duke.edu/about/termsofuse) as well as the terms specific to this exchange of data deemed necessary by the MTSG-BI and the SWOT Science Advisory Board (SAB). If you agree to both the SWOT and OBIS-SEAMAP Terms of Use, you may download and begin use of the files. **Note that these files are separate from the SWOT nesting database, which require a separate data request and approval**.

Any questions about these files or requests for data can be directed towards Dr. Bryan Wallace (Chair, SWOT SAB; [bryan@ecolibrium-inc.com](mailto:wallace@oceanicsociety.org)) or Ei Fujioka (OBIS-SEAMAP, [efujioka@duke.edu](mailto:efujioka@duke.edu)).

***Data formats:***

All shapefiles come with associated attribute tables containing basic information such as descriptive geographic extents, abundances, known trend data and citations. For more detailed descriptions and information on how layers were generated, please refer to Wallace et al. (2023).

1. Global species distributions for all seven species provided as polygon shapefiles (Projection is WGS84). Note: species distributions are distinct from, and cover more area than combined RMUs for a given species (see all file displays at <http://seamap.env.duke.edu/swot>, and #4 below).
2. mtDNA stocks for all seven marine turtle species: *Caretta caretta*, *Chelonia mydas*, *Dermochelys coriacea*, *Eretmochelys imbricata*, *Lepidochelys olivacea*, and *Natator depressus*. Data are provided as point shapefiles representing sampled nesting beaches (Projection is WGS84), which correspond to nesting beaches in the SWOT database.
3. Regional Management Units for six species (excluding flatbacks, *Natator depressus*) given as polygon shapefiles (Projection is WGS84). Note: counts of RMUs vary between species and in many cases RMUs overlap. Care should be taken when displaying and analyzing overlapping RMUs.

***RMUs User Feedback, Comments, Suggested Edits***

The RMUs are meant to be publicly accessible and utilized widely; thus, the files require updates and suggestions from users to stay current and accurate. If you would like to recommended changes to the files, please use our feedback mechanism via on the SWOT Online Application.

When submitting your feedback form, please include: the **specific changes recommended** to specific files (provide species, RMU, stock and layer information), **citations to support** the suggested changes, and your **contact information** for follow-up clarifications. Comments and suggested edits will be reviewed by the MTSG-BI group, and RMU files will be updated based on all submitted comments on the OBIS-SEAMAP site on an annual basis.

***RMUs Terms of Use***

We are providing the RMU files as a free, public resource to facilitate broad application to conservation and research initiatives. Download and use of RMU files must comply with the following:

1. Users will submit through the online form a brief prospectus 20 words) on the research or conservation initiative (hereafter referred to as the Project) detailing the Project’s objective, methodology and analytical approaches, expected outcomes and products.
2. The spatial extent of any layer **will not BE CHANGED or modified in any way**, except for basic geoprocessing or formatting tasks such as re-projecting, clipping to land, or conversion to raster. If you are unsure whether a given operation is acceptable, please contact Bryan Wallace ([bryan@ecolibrium-inc.com](mailto:wallace@oceanicsociety.org)).
3. In all products of the Project in which RMU data were used explicitly or peripherally, users will include the date that RMU files were downloaded (i.e. “RMU files accessed from SWOT/OBIS-SEAMAP 30 November 2023”), and the RMU paper must be cited. This, along with an OBIS-SEAMAP citation, satisfy # 2 of the OBIS SEAMAP Terms of Use.

Required citation format:

Wallace BP, Posnik ZA, Hurley BJ, DiMatteo AD, Bandimere A, Rodriguez I, Maxwell SM, Meyer L, Brenner H, Jensen MP, LaCasella EL, Shamblin BM, Abreu-Grobois FA, Stewart KR, Dutton PH, Barrios-Garrido H, Dalleau M, Dell’Amico F, Eckert KL, FitzSimmons N, García-Cruz M, Martins S, Mobaraki A, Mortimer JA, Nel R, Phillott AD, Pilcher NJ, Putman N, Rees AF, Rguez-Baron JM, Swaminathan A, Seminoff JA, Turkozan O, Vargas SM, Vernet PD, Vilaça ST, Whiting SD, Hutchinson BJ, Casale P, Mast RB (2023) Marine turtle regional management units 2.0: an updated framework for conservation and research of wide-ranging megafauna species. Endangered Species Research, 52: 209-223. DOI: <https://www.int-res.com/abstracts/esr/v52/p209-223/>.

1. Citations and electronic or hard copies of any final products from the Project will be provided to SWOT/OBIS-SEAMAP.