



Comparison of body temperature and heart rate in sea turtles from Baja California Sur, Mexico

Comparación de temperatura corporal y frecuencia cardíaca en tortugas marinas de Baja California Sur, México

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ABSTRACT. Sea turtles depend on ambient temperature to carry out their main activities, so changes in water temperature can affect the function of their immune system and represent different threats. To assess vital signs in black sea turtles (*Chelonia mydas*) in the Ojo de Liebre lagoon complex, Mexico, 600 turtles were examined. Carapace, plastron, and left inguinal area temperatures were measured with a digital infrared thermometer gun. Cloacal temperature was measured with an electronic thermometer. Heart rate was recorded using a stethoscope. Statistical analyses found no significant variation between inguinal area and cloacal temperatures. Vital sign measurements were compared with previous reports in the region, and there were differences in body temperatures, which were attributed to the characteristics of the water masses inhabited by the turtles. There was no significant difference between heart rate data for black sea turtles in this study and previously reported data for healthy sea turtles in the region, indicating that these data are likely an accurate representation for the species. All values fell within the reference intervals for healthy sea turtles. This minimally invasive diagnostic approach using vital signs allowed us to evaluate and infer core organ functions and to rule out health threats such as cold-stunning, resulting in a useful preliminary systemic assessment of free-ranging sea turtles.

Key words: vital signs, black turtles, loggerhead turtles, health assessment, conservation.

RESUMEN. Las tortugas marinas dependen de la temperatura ambiental para llevar a cabo sus actividades principales, por lo que los cambios en la temperatura del agua pueden afectar la función de su sistema inmunológico y representar diferentes amenazas. Para evaluar los signos vitales de las tortugas negras (*Chelonia mydas*) del complejo lagunar Ojo de Liebre, México, se examinaron 600 tortugas. Las temperaturas de caparazón, plastrón y área inguinal izquierda se midieron con un termómetro digital infrarrojo. La temperatura cloacal se midió con un termómetro electrónico. La frecuencia cardíaca se registró con un estetoscopio. No se encontraron diferencias significativas entre las temperaturas del área inguinal izquierda y cloacales. Los valores de los signos vitales se compararon con reportes previos en la región, y hubo diferencias en las temperaturas corporales, las cuales fueron atribuidas a las características de las masas de agua en las que habitan las tortugas. No hubo diferencias significativas entre datos de frecuencia cardíaca de las tortugas negras de este estudio y los datos reportados previamente para tortugas marinas sanas en la región, lo cual sugiere que estos datos son una representación precisa de las especies. Todos los valores estuvieron dentro de los intervalos de referencia para tortugas marinas sanas. Este enfoque diagnóstico mínimamente invasivo por medio de signos vitales nos permitió evaluar e inferir funciones fisiológicas centrales básicas y descartar amenazas como frío paralizante, lo cual resulta útil como evaluación sistemática inicial de tortugas marinas en vida libre.

Palabras clave: signos vitales, tortugas negras, tortugas amarillas, evaluación de salud, conservación.

INTRODUCTION

Sea turtles are exposed to a wide range of environmental changes in each of their life stages, so assessing their health is of paramount importance (Aguirre and Lutz 2004). These ectothermic organisms depend on ambient temperature to carry out their main activities, so changes in water temperature can affect the function of their immune system and represent different threats (Foley et al. 2007, Hunt et al. 2019). Although sea turtles have thermoregulatory adaptations that allow them to save energy and maintain

INTRODUCCIÓN

Las tortugas marinas están expuestas a una amplia gama de cambios ambientales en cada una de sus etapas de vida y, por lo tanto, evaluar su salud es de suma importancia (Aguirre y Lutz 2004). Estos organismos ectotérmicos dependen de la temperatura ambiental para realizar sus principales actividades, por lo que los cambios en la temperatura del agua pueden afectar el funcionamiento de su sistema inmunológico y representar diferentes amenazas (Foley et al. 2007, Hunt et al. 2019). A pesar de que las tortugas marinas tienen

stable body temperatures, such as torpor (Southwood et al. 2003), when temperatures drop below 10 °C, they become lethargic and are unable to swim or dive, entering a status of hypothermia (Schwartz 1978, Innis et al. 2007) that disrupts metabolic pathways leading to imbalances in their different systems (Innis et al. 2007). Changes in temperature may also increase the risk of infectious diseases such as fibropapillomatosis (Arthur et al. 2008, Van Houtan et al. 2014). Monitoring vital signs is therefore important for physiological and medical assessments and it becomes a basic tool for the conservation of these species. In laboratory studies with captive turtles, physical factors such as temperature can be controlled and metabolic and physiological responses can be closely monitored (Southwood et al. 2003); however, in free-ranging populations handling sea turtles is often more complicated, so improving some methods and techniques used in their health assessment can facilitate vital-sign monitoring and even sample collection (Reséndiz et al. 2019). The aims of this study were to (1) assess body temperature and heart rate in black turtles (*Chelonia mydas*) in the Ojo de Liebre lagoon complex, Baja California Sur, Mexico; (2) validate a novel, non-invasive temperature measurement technique; and (3) compare the body temperature and heart rate data obtained in this study with previous reports.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Ojo de Liebre Lagoon (OLL) and Guerrero Negro Lagoon (GNL) in the Ojo de Liebre lagoon complex are part of El Vizcaíno Biosphere Reserve, on the northern Pacific coast of Baja California Sur (Mexico). These coastal lagoons are located between latitude 27.5833 and 28.25° N and longitude 113.8333 and 114.3333° W, and they are characterized by having extensive shallow, hypersaline areas, no contributions of fresh water, high evaporation, and mean sea surface temperatures of 21.29 °C (OLL) and 20.53 °C (GNL) (ESSA 2018). Both lagoons are inhabited by black turtles (Reséndiz et al. 2018), which were considered a single group of organisms because of the geographical proximity of both lagoons and the similarity in habitat characteristics.

A total of 20 field trips were carried out from May 2017 to December 2019 to capture black turtles in OLL and GNL. All captures were made using monofilament nets (100 m long by 5 m deep, 60-cm mesh width) during daylight hours. Nets were periodically checked every hour to avoid excess stress on the turtles and to minimize lesion risk.

To assess vital signs, the turtles were systematically examined in detail in prone and supine positions on the boat (Reséndiz et al. 2018). The carapace, plastron, and left inguinal area skin temperatures were taken with a digital infrared thermometer gun (Steren HER-425); the gun was held at a distance of 10 cm from the surface of each area, and temperatures were taken immediately (1–30 seconds) after the turtles were captured. For each anatomical region,

adaptaciones termorreguladoras que les permiten ahorrar energía y mantener estable su temperatura corporal, como el estado de sopor (Southwood et al. 2003), cuando las temperaturas descienden por debajo de los 10 °C, se vuelven letárgicas y no pueden nadar o bucear, lo que las hace entrar en un proceso de hipotermia (Schwartz 1978, Innis et al. 2007) que interrumpe las vías metabólicas y puede conducir a desequilibrios en sus diferentes sistemas (Innis et al. 2007). Los cambios de temperatura también pueden aumentar el riesgo de enfermedades infecciosas como la fibropapilomatosis (Arthur et al. 2008, Van Houtan et al. 2014). Por lo tanto, el monitoreo de los signos vitales es importante para la evaluación fisiológica y médica, y se convierte en una herramienta básica para la conservación de estas especies. En estudios de laboratorio con tortugas en cautiverio es posible controlar factores físicos como la temperatura y se pueden monitorear de cerca las respuestas metabólicas y fisiológicas (Southwood et al. 2003); sin embargo, en poblaciones en libertad, el manejo de las tortugas marinas suele ser más complejo. Es por ello que mejorar algunos métodos y técnicas utilizadas en su evaluación de salud puede facilitar el monitoreo de los signos vitales e incluso la recolección de muestras (Reséndiz et al. 2019). Los objetivos de este estudio fueron: (1) evaluar la temperatura corporal y la frecuencia cardíaca de las tortugas negras (*Chelonia mydas*) en el complejo lagunar Ojo de Liebre, Baja California Sur, México; (2) validar una nueva técnica no invasiva para el registro de la temperatura corporal; y (3) comparar los datos de temperatura corporal y frecuencia cardíaca obtenidos en este estudio con reportes anteriores.

MATERIALES Y MÉTODOS

La laguna Ojo de Liebre (LOL) y la laguna Guerrero Negro (LGN) del complejo lagunar Ojo de Liebre forman parte de la Reserva de la Biosfera El Vizcaíno, ubicada en la costa del Pacífico del norte de Baja California Sur (Méjico). Estas lagunas costeras se ubican entre la latitud 27.5833 y 28.25° N y la longitud 113.8333 y 114.3333° W, y se caracterizan por sus aguas someras hipersalinas, aportes nulos de agua dulce, alta evaporación y temperaturas superficiales del mar medias de 21.29 °C (LOL) y 20.53 °C (LGN) (ESSA 2018). Ambas lagunas están habitadas por tortugas negras (Reséndiz et al. 2018), las cuales fueron consideradas un solo grupo de organismos por la proximidad geográfica entre LOL y LGN, y la similitud en las características de sus hábitats.

Se realizaron un total de 20 salidas de campo desde mayo de 2017 hasta diciembre de 2019 para capturar tortugas negras en LOL y LGN. Todas las capturas se realizaron con redes de monofilamento (100 m de largo por 5 m de profundidad, luz de malla de 60 cm) durante períodos diurnos. Las redes fueron revisadas cada hora para evitar el estrés excesivo de las tortugas y minimizar el riesgo de lesiones.

Para evaluar los signos vitales, las tortugas fueron examinadas en decúbito prono y supino con una inspección

temperature was measured 3 times and the mean was calculated (Reséndiz et al. 2018). Cloacal temperature was measured with an electronic thermometer (Suretemp Plus 690, Welch Allyn). During the physical examination and after resting for 10 min alone in a free space, the turtles were auscultated with a stethoscope (IUMED model 400), which was placed on the skin between the neck and the proximal front flipper. The curved carapace length (CCL, centimeters) and turtle weight (kilograms) were then recorded (Bolten 1999); immediately after, the turtles were aseptically tagged with metallic Inconel 681 tags (National Band & Tag) in the skin of the distal hind limbs (Balazs 1999) and released. Black turtles under 77.5 cm CCL were considered juveniles and those 77.5 cm CCL or over were classified as adults according to Márquez (1990).

For this study, juvenile and adult turtles were considered a single group of organisms since there were no significant differences in temperature and heart rate between age classes ($P < 0.05$). The Kolmogorov–Smirnov statistic, skewness, and kurtosis were used to test data for normality. The mean and standard deviation were determined for each variable. Student's *t*-tests between cloacal (control) temperature and carapace, plastron, and inguinal area temperatures were performed to assess the effectiveness of the temperature measurements. A linear regression between cloacal and inguinal area temperatures was made for black turtles examined in the present study. Comparisons of cloacal temperature and heart rate between black turtles examined in the present study, black turtles in OLL and San Ignacio Lagoon (SIL) (Reséndiz et al. 2018), and loggerhead turtles (*Caretta caretta*) in the Gulf of Ulloa (GU, Reséndiz et al. 2019) were made using a one-way analysis of variance, and specific between-group differences were evaluated using a Tukey's test. Values of $P < 0.05$ were considered statistically significant. Statistical analyses were performed using R v.3.6.2 (Integrated Development for R, RStudio; Boston, MA).

RESULTS

A total of 600 black turtles measuring 72.38 ± 7.54 cm CCL and weighing 42.24 ± 20.80 kg were captured. OLL and GNL turtles were classified as juveniles and adults and determined clinically healthy according to physical examination. Data on morphometrics and vital signs (body temperatures and heart rate) are shown in Table 1. There was no significant difference between cloacal temperature and inguinal area temperature for black turtles from the present study ($P = 0.13$), and both variables showed a positive linear relationship ($R^2 = 0.44$, Fig. 1). There was significant variation in cloacal temperatures between the 4 groups of marine turtles ($F = 4.33$, d.f. = 3, $P < 0.05$) (Fig. 2a). A Tukey's *post hoc* test indicated that cloacal temperatures for black turtles in the present study (20.74 ± 2.82 °C) and those for black turtles in OLL (19.85 ± 2.25 °C) (Reséndiz et al. 2018)

detailed and systematic on the boat (Reséndiz et al. 2018). The temperatures of the carapace, the plastron and the left inguinal area were registered with a digital infrared pistol type thermometer (Steren HER-425), which was placed at a distance of 10 cm from the surface of each area. The temperatures were registered immediately (1–30 seconds) after capturing the turtles. For each anatomical region, the temperature was registered 3 times and the mean was calculated (Reséndiz et al. 2018). The cloacal temperature was measured with an electronic thermometer (Suretemp Plus 690, Welch Allyn). During the physical examination and after resting for 10 min alone in a free space, the turtles were auscultated with a stethoscope (IUMED model 400), which was placed on the skin between the neck and the proximal front flipper. The curved carapace length (CCL, centimeters) and turtle weight (kilograms) were then recorded (Bolten 1999); immediately after, the turtles were aseptically tagged with metallic Inconel 681 tags (National Band & Tag) in the skin of the distal hind limbs (Balazs 1999) and released. Black turtles under 77.5 cm CCL were considered juveniles, and those 77.5 cm CCL or over were classified as adults according to Márquez (1990).

Statistically, the juvenile and adult turtles were considered a single group of organisms, as there were no differences in temperature and heart rate between age classes ($P < 0.05$). To evaluate the normality of the data, the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test, skewness and kurtosis were used. The mean and standard deviation were determined for each variable. To evaluate the effectiveness of the temperature measurements, Student's *t*-tests between cloacal (control) temperature and carapace, plastron, and inguinal area temperatures were performed. A linear regression between cloacal and inguinal area temperatures was made for black turtles examined in the present study. Comparisons of cloacal temperature and heart rate between black turtles examined in the present study, black turtles in OLL and San Ignacio Lagoon (SIL) (Reséndiz et al. 2018), and loggerhead turtles (*Caretta caretta*) in the Gulf of Ulloa (GU) (Reséndiz et al. 2019) were made using a one-way analysis of variance, and specific between-group differences were evaluated using a Tukey's test. Values of $P < 0.05$ were considered statistically significant. Statistical analyses were performed using R v.3.6.2 (Integrated Development for R, RStudio; Boston, MA).

RESULTADOS

Se capturaron un total de 600 tortugas negras con LCC de 72.38 ± 7.54 cm y peso de 42.24 ± 20.80 kg. Las tortugas de LOL y LGN se clasificaron como juveniles y adultas, y se consideraron clínicamente sanas con base en el examen físico. Los datos morfométricos y de signos vitales (temperatura corporal y frecuencia cardíaca) se muestran en la Tabla 1.

Table 1. Morphometrics, body temperature, and heart rate of sea turtles from Baja California Sur (Mexico). OLL: Ojo de Liebre Lagoon; GNL: Guerrero Negro Lagoon; SIL: San Ignacio Lagoon; GU: Gulf of Ulloa; SD: standard deviation; CCL: curved carapace length; T: temperature. Values are given as the mean \pm standard deviation.

Tabla 1. Morfometría, temperatura corporal y frecuencia cardíaca de tortugas marinas de Baja California Sur (Méjico). OLL: laguna Ojo de Liebre; GNL: laguna Guerrero Negro; SIL: laguna San Ignacio; GU: golfo de Ulloa; SD: desviación estándar; CCL: largo curvo de caparazón; T: temperatura. Los valores se expresan como la media \pm desviación estándar.

	Black turtles Present research (n = 600)	Black turtles (OLL) Reséndiz et al. (2018) (n = 59)	Black turtles (SIL) Reséndiz et al. (2018) (n = 20)	Loggerheads (GU) Reséndiz et al. (2019) (n = 56)
CCL (cm)	72.38 \pm 7.54	75.61 \pm 4.48	51.37 \pm 3.71	63.49 \pm 8.06
Weight (kg)	42.24 \pm 20.80	40.94 \pm 18.92	18.39 \pm 1.50	36.14 \pm 22.51
Carapace T (°C)	22.34 \pm 4.28	23.33 \pm 3.97	22.76 \pm 3.91	27.27 \pm 3.01
Plastron T (°C)	21.84 \pm 4.61	22.61 \pm 3.40	23.27 \pm 4.10	24.50 \pm 2.70
Inguinal area T (°C)	21.07 \pm 3.11	21.22 \pm 3.43	22.20 \pm 2.95	21.01 \pm 3.20
Cloacal T (°C)	20.74 \pm 2.82	19.85 \pm 2.25	22.42 \pm 3.13	20.97 \pm 3.60
Heart rate (beats/min)	37.43 \pm 3.47	37.41 \pm 2.95	38.27 \pm 4.09	41.38 \pm 6.04

were significantly lower than cloacal temperatures for black turtles in SIL (22.42 ± 3.13 °C) (Reséndiz et al. 2018). There was no significant variation in mean heart rates between the 4 groups ($F = 0.53$, d.f. = 3, $P = 0.66$) (Fig. 2b).

DISCUSSION

In sea turtles cloacal temperature can be representative of ambient temperature (Southwood et al. 2003, Foley et al. 2007). By using data from healthy organisms as reference intervals, wildlife rehabilitators can more rapidly respond to events of cold-stunned turtles, increasing their chances of recovery (Wyneken et al. 2006). However, the technique for taking cloacal temperature is moderately invasive and may be painful for organisms (Manire et al. 2017). The left inguinal area temperature values reported in the present study coincided with the body temperature value previously reported for healthy turtles (Southwood et al. 2003, Hunt et al. 2019), and the present study confirmed that the use of the digital infrared thermometer in the left inguinal area is an easier, effective, and less invasive measurement technique. Although both areas showed a positive statistical relationship, the value of R^2 is medium-low and must be interpreted carefully. We recommend using this type of thermometer (properly calibrated) and recording body temperature when the turtle has just been captured in order to obtain the most representative values and avoid bias due to stress or external factors such as ambient temperature. The comparison of temperature between groups showed that cloacal temperatures were significantly higher in SIL turtles than in OLL and GNL turtles, which can be attributed to the conditions of the water masses they inhabit. OLL and GNL are interconnected and together occupy an area of 381 km² (Contreras

No hubo diferencia significativa entre la temperatura cloacal y la temperatura del área inguinal izquierda de las tortugas de este estudio ($P = 0.13$), y ambas variables mostraron una relación lineal positiva ($R^2 = 0.44$, Fig. 1). Por otro lado, las temperaturas cloacales presentaron diferencias significativas entre los 4 grupos de tortugas marinas ($F = 4.33$, g.l. = 3, $P < 0.05$) (Fig. 2a). Mediante la prueba *post hoc* de Tukey, se identificó que las temperaturas cloacales de las tortugas negras del presente estudio (20.74 ± 2.82 °C) y las de las tortugas negras de LOL (19.85 ± 2.25 °C) (Reséndiz et al. 2018) fueron significativamente más bajas que las temperaturas cloacales de las tortugas negras de LSI (22.42 ± 3.13 °C) (Reséndiz et al. 2018). Finalmente, no hubo diferencias significativas en la frecuencia cardíaca de las tortugas entre los 4 grupos ($F = 0.53$, g.l.= 3, $P = 0.66$) (Fig. 2b).

DISCUSIÓN

En tortugas marinas, la temperatura cloacal puede ser representativa de la temperatura ambiental (Southwood et al. 2003, Foley et al. 2007). Utilizando los intervalos de referencia de organismos sanos, los rehabilitadores de animales silvestres pueden responder rápidamente a eventos de tortugas aturdidas por frío, lo cual aumenta sus posibilidades de recuperación (Wyneken et al. 2006). No obstante, la técnica para el registro de la temperatura cloacal es moderadamente invasiva y puede resultar dolorosa para los organismos (Manire et al. 2017). Los valores de la temperatura del área inguinal izquierda registrados en la presente investigación coincidieron con la temperatura corporal reportada previamente para tortugas sanas (Southwood et al. 2003, Hunt et al. 2019), y el presente estudio confirmó que el uso del termómetro infrarrojo digital en el área inguinal

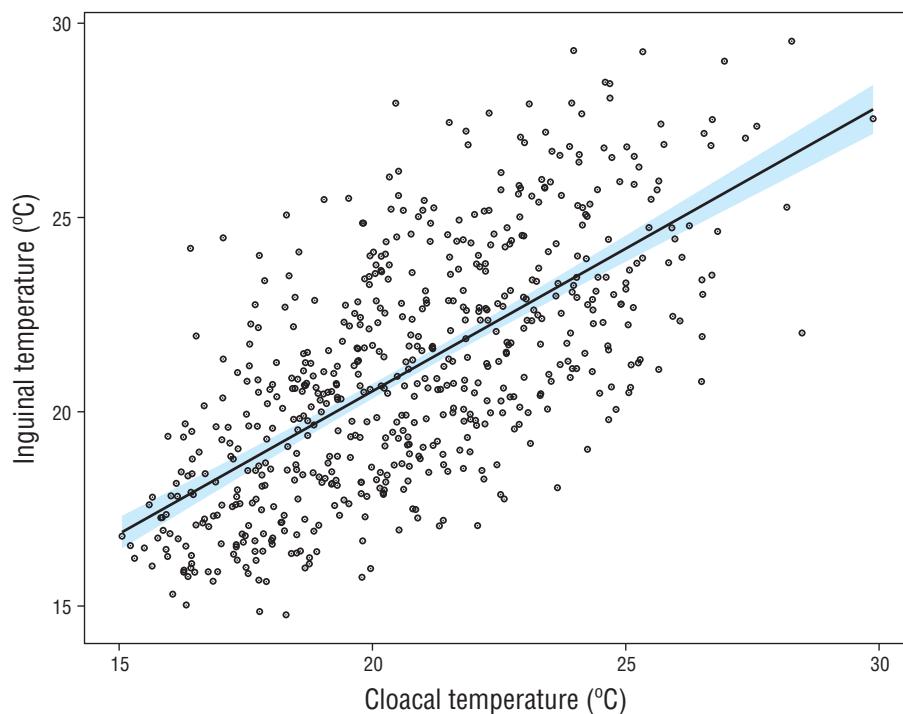


Figure 1. Linear regression between cloacal and inguinal area temperatures for black turtles (*Chelonia mydas*) in the present study.

Figura 1. Regresión lineal entre las temperaturas de la zona cloacal y la zona inguinal izquierda de las tortugas negras (*Chelonia mydas*) del presente estudio.

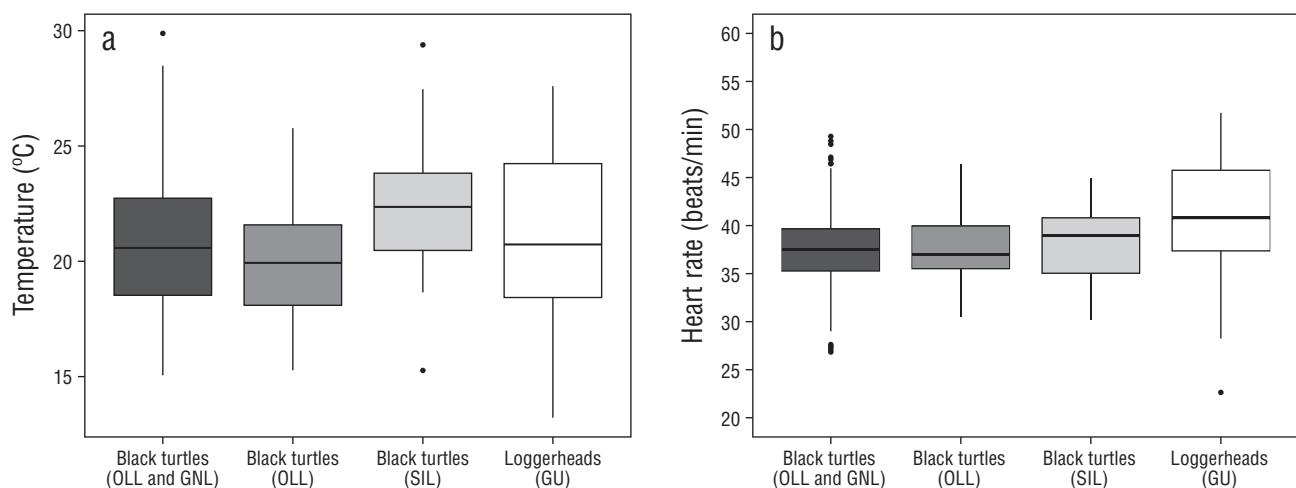


Figure 2. Cloacal temperature (a) and heart rate (b) for black turtles (*Chelonia mydas*) in Ojo de Liebre Lagoon (OLL) and Guerrero Negro Lagoon (GNL) (present study), black turtles in OLL and San Ignacio Lagoon (SIL) (Reséndiz et al. 2018), and loggerhead turtles (*Caretta caretta*) in the Gulf of Ulloa (GU) (Reséndiz et al. 2019).

Figura 2. Temperaturas cloacal (a) y frecuencia cardíaca (b) de tortugas negras (*Chelonia mydas*) de laguna Ojo de Liebre (OLL) y laguna Guerrero Negro (GNL) (presente estudio), tortugas negras de OLL y laguna San Ignacio (SIL) (Reséndiz et al. 2018) y tortugas amarillas (*Caretta caretta*) del golfo de Ulloa (GU) (Reséndiz et al. 2019).

1985). Both lagoons flow into the Sebastián Vizcaíno Bay, a biological active center that is located within the California Current region, where northwesterly winds create one of the main coastal upwelling regions (Lluch-Belda 2000). SIL is located further south and occupies an area of 175 km² (Contreras 1985). This lagoon flows into the GU, which is also considered a biological active center with coastal upwelling (Lluch-Belda 2000). The surface, geographic location, and oceanographic conditions of the different sites can explain the differences in water temperature and hence the organisms.

Cardiac auscultation in sea turtles allows us to identify basic physiological alterations or certain pathological processes (Butler et al. 1984, Hunt et al. 2019), which are often initially described as tachycardia and bradycardia. Under controlled conditions (sea turtle hospitals and rehabilitation centers) heart rate is recorded with a Doppler probe or ultrasound, and the use of a stethoscope is unconventional (Norton 2005). However, our results showed that the use of the stethoscope is a novel and effective technique for assessing heart rate in free-ranging sea turtle populations. The heart rates for black turtles in the present study were similar to those reported by Southwood et al. (1999), Norton (2005), and Reséndiz et al. (2018, 2019) for healthy sea turtles at a temperature of 24 °C, which ranged from 30 to 60 beats per minute. There were no significant differences between black turtle heart rates in this study and previously reported data for black turtles in OLL and SIL, and loggerheads in GU, indicating that these data are an accurate representation for the species. This basic diagnostic orientation tool allows us to rule out health abnormalities such as cold-stunning, signs of respiratory problems, lung lesions, and other pathological changes related to the respiratory system (Reséndiz et al. 2019).

In summary, body temperature and heart rate data for OLL and GNL black turtles were generated and compared with previous reports. This information provides further insight into the variation of vital signs between different species of sea turtles in nearby areas. The use of the digital infrared thermometer in the left inguinal area proved to be an easier, effective, and less invasive measurement technique than taking the cloacal temperature. The minimally invasive diagnostic approach using vital signs described here allows us to evaluate and infer core physiological functions, including general cardiopulmonary status, and rule out health threats such as cold-stunning, resulting in a useful preliminary systemic assessment of free-ranging sea turtles.

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izquierda representa una técnica de medición eficaz, más fácil y menos invasiva. Aunque ambas áreas presentaron una relación estadísticamente positiva, el valor de R^2 es medio-bajo y debe interpretarse con cuidado. Recomendamos utilizar este tipo de termómetro (debidamente calibrado) y registrar la temperatura corporal cuando la tortuga acaba de ser capturada para registrar los valores más representativos y evitar sesgos por estrés o factores externos como la temperatura ambiental. La comparación de la temperatura entre grupos mostró que las tortugas de LSI presentaron temperaturas cloacales significativamente más altas que las de LOL y LGN, lo que se puede atribuir a las condiciones de las masas de agua en las que habitan. LOL y LGN están interconectadas y juntas ocupan un área de 381 km² (Contreras 1985). Ambas lagunas desembocan en la bahía Sebastián Vizcaíno, un centro de actividad biológica que se ubica dentro de la región de la corriente de California, donde los vientos del noroeste producen una de las principales regiones de afloramiento costero (Lluch-Belda 2000). LSI se encuentra más al sur y ocupa un área de 175 km² (Contreras 1985). Esta laguna desemboca en el GU, que también se considera un centro de actividad biológica con afloramiento costero (Lluch-Belda 2000). La superficie, la ubicación geográfica y las condiciones oceanográficas de los diferentes sitios pueden explicar las diferencias en la temperatura del agua y, por tanto, en los organismos.

La auscultación cardíaca en tortugas marinas permite identificar alteraciones fisiológicas básicas o ciertos procesos patológicos (Butler et al. 1984, Hunt et al. 2019), que a menudo se describen inicialmente como taquicardia y bradicardia. En condiciones controladas (hospitales de tortugas marinas y centros de rehabilitación), la frecuencia cardíaca se registra con una sonda Doppler o con un ultrasonido, y el uso de un estetoscopio no es convencional (Norton 2005). Sin embargo, nuestros resultados mostraron que el uso del estetoscopio es una técnica novedosa y eficaz para evaluar la frecuencia cardíaca en poblaciones de tortugas marinas en vida libre. Las frecuencias cardíacas de las tortugas negras del presente estudio fueron similares a las reportadas por Southwood et al. (1999), Norton (2005) y Reséndiz et al. (2018, 2019) para tortugas marinas saludables a una temperatura de 24 °C (de 30 a 60 latidos por minuto). No hubo diferencias significativas entre la frecuencia cardíaca de las tortugas negras de este estudio y los datos reportados previamente para las tortugas negras en LOL y LSI, y las tortugas amarillas de GU, lo que sugiere que estos datos son una representación precisa de estas especies. Esta herramienta básica de orientación diagnóstica permite descartar anomalías de salud como el frío paralizante, indicios de problemas respiratorios, lesiones pulmonares y otros cambios patológicos relacionados con el sistema cardiorrespiratorio (Reséndiz et al. 2019).

En conclusión, se generaron los valores de temperatura corporal y frecuencia cardíaca de las tortugas negras de LOL y LGN y se compararon con reportes previos. Esta

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- información muestra cómo varían los signos vitales entre las diferentes especies de tortugas marinas en áreas cercanas. Se confirmó que el uso del termómetro digital infrarrojo en el área inguinal izquierda representa un método de medición eficaz, más fácil y menos invasivo que la técnica tradicional de medición de la temperatura cloacal. Este enfoque diagnóstico mínimamente invasivo por medio de signos vitales permite evaluar e inferir funciones fisiológicas centrales, incluso el estado cardiopulmonar general, y descartar amenazas de salud como el frío paralizante, lo cual resulta útil como evaluación sistémica inicial en tortugas marinas en vida libre.
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