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Monitoring of *Caretta caretta* in the sandy beaches of the Vendicari Nature Reserve (Sicily, Italy)

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Vendicari Nature Reserve is a protected area established by the Government of the Sicilian Region in 1984, named ‘Riserva Naturale Orientata Oasi Faunistica di Vendicari’ and is included among the wetlands of the Ramsar Convention.

Since 1984, systematic monitoring for traces and depositions of *Caretta caretta* along the reserve’s coast and management of some thermal parameters in sandy substrate were conducted by volunteers of the Ente Fauna Siciliana association. Investigations were carried out with the support and collaboration of the management bureau of the reserve and the Department of Biological, Geological and Environmental Sciences of the University of Catania. *Caretta caretta* had been absent for twenty-years from the reserve’s beaches. Egg deposition, hatching and the return of newborns to sea were documented throughout this study and will be presented in this communication.

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