

PROJETO BIODIVERSIDADE
Final Report 2015

1. Summary of the Project

Project Title	Protection of Loggerhead Turtles in Cape Verde
Location	Sal Island, Cabo Verde (Africa)
Primary species	Loggerhead Turtles (<i>Caretta caretta</i>)
Need for the Project	Loggerhead turtles are endangered species according to the IUCN Red List. Cape Verde is the 3 rd nesting site in the world for Loggerheads; nevertheless, many threats are compromising the survival of the population in Cape Verde. The main threats for adult turtles are hunting of nesting females, by-catch, and marine pollution; the main threats for nests are loss of habitat, lighting, and predation.
Objectives & Activities	Direct protection of nesting females through beach patrols, increased recruitment of hatchlings by protection of endangered nests, sensitisation of the population to stop the consumption of turtle meat throughout creation of job opportunities and outreach activities, and, ultimately, diagnosis of the conservation status of the Loggerhead population in Sal.
Beneficiaries	Besides the turtles, the local population function as direct beneficiaries through: creation of jobs in turtle conservation and educational activities in schools and different kind of associations. Additionally, the tourism sector is able to conduct turtle watching excursions, and tourists may join the excursions. Local and national authorities.

2. Project Goals for 2015

- Protect nesting females turtles against poaching of their meat and eggs.
- Protect threatened nests.
- Protect its natural habitat.
- Increase the recruitment: increase the number of hatchlings that arrive to the sea.
- Reinforce local capacity building on conservation competencies.
- Develop and implement an educational program with the community.
- Contribution on the general scientific knowledge regarding marine turtles.

3. Specific Objectives and Activities for 2015

- Night patrols on the three most important nesting beaches on Sal: Serra Negra, Costa Fragata, Algodoeiro.
- Night patrols on four beaches with major incidences of hunting in Sal: Praia Chano, Calheta Funda, Mont Leão & Madama.
- Permanent Camp at Costa Fragata staffed by local and international Rangers & Supervisors.
- Camp at Praia Chano staffed by local Rangers.
- Integrate the Cabo Verdean staff into the team and increase their performance skills and capacities.
- Increase the recruitment of hatchlings by transferring doomed nest to a controlled hatchery.
- Conduct educational activities with schools, youth groups and other groups.
- Implement the Nha Terra Campaign, with a major focus on Santiago Island.
- Coordinate alongside with the authorities to increase the involvement of those in turtle conservation.

4. Stakeholders

- Main Funders:
 - US Fish & Wildlife Service Marine Turtle Conservation Fund
 - ISSF (International Sustainable Seafood Foundation)
 - The Oceans Foundation
 - ADTMA
 - The Cabo Verde Nature Company
 - Águas de Ponta Preta (APP)
 - National Directorate of Environment
- Main Governmental Partners
 - City Hall of Sal
 - Protected Areas of Sal
 - National Institute of Development of Fisheries
 - Maritime and Ports Agency
 - National Police
 - Army
- Non-Governmental Partners
 - Associação Ambiental Caretta Caretta
 - Projeto Nós Kaza
 - Centro Juvenil Chã de Matias
 - Castelos do Sal
 - ICCA
 - Centro Psicosocial de Santa Maria

- Nakawe Project
- Green Rope
- The Travel Foundation
- Beleza Pura
- Orca Dive Club

5. Summary of Results and Highlights

- The third consecutive season with a decrease of number of nests since 2012.
- Full night patrols on Costa Fragata, Serra Negra, Algodoeiro, Calheta Funda, Monte Leão and Praia Chano.
- Two camps were settled at the beginning of the season: a main camp in Costa Fragata and a small camp in Praia Chano. The camp in Praia Chano was removed after an attack to the Rangers on patrol on the 19th of August due to a serious lack of safety conditions on the beach. The patrols were cancelled starting on the 20th of August.

5.1. Nesting trend

- The nesting season started and finished later than expected. The first turtle activity was recorded on the 24th of June, and the first nest on the 30th of June. The last turtle activity was recorded the 4th of November in Serra Negra.
- 1,206 nests have been recorded on patrolled beaches on Sal.
- The main nesting beaches were, as in previous seasons, Costa Fragata (388 nests, 32.1% of the total) and Serra Negra (370 nests, 30.6%).
- Algodoeiro is the third nesting beach far below the other two, with 154 nests, a 12.7% of the nests recorded.
- Decrease in the number of nests in Monte Leão, Madama and Praia Chano due to a higher pressure from hunters.
- All nests from the south-west coast of Sal and from Santa Maria were relocated to the hatchery due to light pollution from hotels & predation by dogs.
- 168 nests on Costa Fragata were relocated on the same beach. Of those, 105 were relocated due to light pollution from Santa Maria.
- A total of 244 turtle were tagged with Inconel tags and 85 turtle tagged with PIT tag.
- Construction of the breakwater started. The beach zone comprised within the extension of the breakwater is completely destroyed. Projeto Biodiversidade was not allowed to patrol that section of the beach, according to the construction company.

5.2. Patrols Logistics

- Morning surveys started the 4th of June in the main nesting beaches, and keep ongoing until the end of November.
- Night patrols started the 24th of June in Costa Fragata & Serra Negra; the 1st of July in Algodoeiro and Praia Chano; and the 9th of July on the rest of the beaches (Calheta Funda, Monte Leão & Madama).
- Patrols in Praia Chano had to stop after an attack to the Rangers on the 19th of

August. On the rest of the beaches, night patrols finished the 15th of October.

- Transport of the staff to the beaches has been a major problem for the logistics of the project. The Project car broke down three times in during the season due to an excess of usage and load. A pick-up was rented for most of the season to cover the transport and logistics of the patrols.
- The night of the 30th of August Hurricane Fred hit Sal. Although the camp had been cleared of people during the night, the strong wind affected the tents and partially destroyed the kitchen and living area. Patrols were stopped for a two nights as strong winds, rain and big waves were still hitting the island. The camp was re-established after a week of hard work.
- The hatchery was badly affected by the hurricane too. All the area surrounding the hatchery was flooded due to a raise of level because of the big waves. Flooding affected a corner of the hatchery, and was stopped thanks to an improvised wall of sand and sand-beds made to stop the advance of the water. 12 nests were directly affected by the flooding. The average hatch success for those have been of 15,5%.

5.3. Hunting

- The levels of presence of hunters on the beach has increased significantly and gone back to levels of 2011.
- The presence of hunters it was not limited to the more isolated beaches. Hunters have been repeatedly sighted in ALL patrolled beaches, and turtles have been taken or attempted to on all patrolled beaches.
- Hunters showed a much more defiant attitude than in previous seasons and they seemed to feel less reserved with regards to overt attempts at taking turtles from the beach. An extreme example was the case of two hunters taking a turtle in Serra Negra in presence of our patrollers and a tour doing an excursion. The turtle was safely returned to the sea, but the hunters did run away.
- On the 19th of August four Rangers were attempted to murder with a knife by two men that were taken a turtle in Praia Chano. Atlought the Rangers did no have major injuries, the camp as removed from Praia Chano due to a lack of safety conditions. After the camp was removed, soldiers were deployed in the area, but they did not properly patrol the beach as they did not know the beach at night. During the period that Projeto Biodiveridade patrolled Praia Chano (1st July to 19th August) 7 turtles had been killed there. After the removal of the camp, 24 turtles were killed.
- Many other aggressive situations were recorded in other beaches, with serious verbal threats from the hunters to the Ranger, sometimes showing knives to them as a way of intimidation. The Police came in a couple of occasions and arrested the suspected people.
- Soldiers were not present on the beach this season, and the Defense Ministry rejected requests to send them regardless our continuous petitions. Various situations on the beach with hunters make us feel that the safety of our staff was compromised. The 11th of August Projeto Biodiversidade decided to stop patrols in the more isolated beaches because of the lack of security conditions for our staff. After the events occurred in Praia Chano, soldiers were deployed again on beaches, always in a random pattern of beaches and timetables. On the 2nd of

September Projeto Biodiversidade finally got to work out a joint schedule and both parties started to work cooperatively. Before the coordinated deployment of the soldiers on the beach, 28 turtles had been killed on patrolled beaches (not including Praia Chano). After their deployment, only 4 turtles were killed on those beaches.

- Also, the presence of hunters diminished significantly after the deployment of the soldiers on the beaches.
- A total of 53 turtles have been killed on patrolled beaches, including the 24 killed in Praia Chano after stopping patrols there (recorded with evidence, suspected many more).
- A total of 13 turtles have been saved from the hands of hunters on patrolled beaches.
- One of the local Rangers on the team leading the patrols in Monte Leão for the last two years was suspected of cooperating with hunters, allowing them to take turtles on the beaches he was patrolling. Although this Ranger in the past had showed great performance on the beach and concern toward the cause, after the beginning of the investigation we found evidences of dead turtles (8) that increased the suspicions towards this person. After being assigned to different beaches and under the supervision of other experienced Rangers while the investigation was ongoing, he promptly quit the job. Although the investigation could not progress, since he was removed from Monte Leão no more turtles were taken and hunters seemed to leave the area.
- The cooperation of the Police was good, attending most of the emergency calls. Eventual patrols on quad were organised with the Police on many nesting beaches with project staff.

5.4. Staff

- The permanent patrol team was comprised of 4 coordinators (2 local), 5 international Rangers and 13 Local Rangers.
- A total of 24 international volunteers joined the project along the season, and 7 resident volunteers regularly joined the patrols.
- A cook assisted to the logistics at the camp.

5.5. Outreach activities

- Considering the limitation of resources and time on this first year, Projeto Biodiversidade did not have planned any educational program during the nesting season. Nevertheless, we seek to establish a regular agenda for educational activities with five associations of children and youth in Santa Maria and Espargos. Although 3 of the associations dropped the collaborations due to lack of attendance during the summer, the program was successfully established with the other two. In total there were conducted 21 activities, reaching 90 different children and youth from 6 to 16 years old.
- Nha Terra Campaign is still ongoing in Santiago. Beach surveys and trade surveys in markets were conducted 2 to 3 times a week, from July until the end of October. Outreach activities with population are organised every 2 weeks, involving local associations that will be able to continue sensitisation actions in their neighbourhoods.

6. Summary of income

Funders and Donor	Euros
US Fish & Wildlife Service	43,000 €
International Sustainable Seafood Foundations & The Oceans Foundation	5,862 €
ADTMA - SOS Tartarugas	1,350 €
The Cabo Verde Nature Company	3,157 €
Direção Geral do Ambiente	2,227 €
Volunteer Contributions	3,500 €
TOTAL	59,096 €

7. Summary of expenses

Ítem	Expenses (until December 2015)
Equipment	814 €
Camps	2,309 €
Transport	14,000 €
Communication	850 €
Accommodation	3,353 €
Outreach Program	547 €
Nha Terra	4,150 €
Salaries	27,790 €
Taxes & legal	2,700 €
Marketing	310 €
Miscellaneous	129 €
TOTAL	56,952 €