



Advancing protection of the Cape Verde turtle *Caretta caretta*

Recommendations - TAOLA Network

**Meeting aboard Yersin – Sal Rei, Boa Vista
Monaco Explorations – 21st September 2017.**

This document prepared by Dr. Christophe Eizaguirre (Queen Mary London University), Ms. Joana Nicolau and M. Euclides Resende (Turtle Foundaton Boa Vista) aims to present some important recommendations regarding Sea Turtle Conservation and Protection in Cabo Verde to be presented and discussed during the meeting organized aboard Yersin in the frame of the Monaco Exploration Programme on 21st September 2017 at Sal Rei, Boa Vista.

The network TAOLA highly suggests that these proposals and recommendations should be taken into account to efficiently achieve the implementation of the different actions benefiting to Sea Turtle population in Cabo Verde.

The persons and entities participating in this meeting are: H.S.H. Prince Albert II of Monaco, M. Robert Calcagno and M. Pierre Gilles (Monaco Explorations and Oceanographic Institute), Ms. Sónia Araujo-Lopes (Coordinator of the conservation programme of Sea Turtles in Cabo Verde), Dr. Christophe Eizaguirre and Ms. Emma Lockley (Queen Mary University of London), M. Euclides (Ukie) Resende and Ms. Joana Nicolau, (Turtle Foundation), Mme Gilda Monteiro, Ms. Silvana Roque (Marine Protected Areas of Cabo Verde and Projecto Vito Santo Antao & Santa Luzia), Ms. Sandra Correia (INDP), M. Nelson Lopes (Ponta do Pom youth association), M. Albert Taxonera (Sal Biodiversity), M. Pedro Lopes and Ms. Carolina Oujo (BIOS), M. Adilson (Leno) Dos Passos and M. Rocio Moreno (FMB Maio), M. Joao Pino Lomba (Caretta Santiago), M. Herculano Diniz (Projecto Vito Fogo), M. Senior Cruz (Varandinia).

Within it exceptional biodiversity, Cape Verde holds the **3rd largest aggregation of loggerhead turtles *Caretta caretta* in the world**. This rookery was relatively recently discovered, together with the intense poaching it faces. Since the alarm bell was rang, several projects have engaged into protecting turtles on all islands of the archipelago. Together, here, we highlight the challenges we face to advance protection and improve the state of the local populations:

1. While poaching has strongly decreased, protecting more beaches around the archipelago is important.

Several parts of islands, such as the northern area of Sal are still unprotected but face intense slaughtering.

2. Protection does not go without

a. community engagement: school talks, beach clean-ups, university training

b. enforcement of regulations and legislations: many regulations exist but are not being enforced. This is mostly because the means to fight against illegal consumption / marketing of turtles are too low. Areas which need regulation enforcement:

- i) punishment of poachers when caught.
- ii) coastal development / sand mining.
- iii) circulation on the beach with vehicles.
- iv) light pollution and recreation activities.

3. Novel problems seem to be linked to mortality in the sea

a. direct poaching in the sea

b. fisheries by-catch. Since there is no enforcement or legislation of the marine protected areas, actions are restricted.

4. There is a wish to develop environmentally aware tourism.

a. should be compatible with turtle protection, for instance by limiting access to beaches by trained guides.

b. should be coordinated and island specific since challenges are specific.

c. should be engaging with communities.

5. There is unfortunately a lack of coordination

a. within governmental organizations at the national level but also between national and local level.

b. between governmental organizations and local NGOs.

What can we do jointly? The sea turtle conservation organizations of Cape Verde have come together and formed the TAOLA (TArtaruga KriOLA – the creole turtle). This group aims to represent the diversity of project and islands with their specific challenges and solutions for turtle conservation. However we need to build capacity and give legal power to its action.