Improving Loggerhead turtle's protection through civil society involvement in Santa Luzia and São Vicente islands

Pays	Cape Verde
Bénéficiaire	BIOSFERA
Montant total du projet	39 988€
Montant de la subvention	29 985€
Partenaires financiers	BIOSFERA
Durée du projet	15 mois
Signature de la convention	13/02/2020

CONTEXT

At 8.5 Km to the neighbour main island of São Vicente, the desert and arid islands of Santa Luzia, Branco and Raso located in the Republic of Cape Verde represent the largest marine reserve of the country with a total area of 536 Km^2. Due to their conservation importance and vulnerability, these protected islands are considered as Priority Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) and categorized as highly-threatened. The islands complex hold the entire world population of the Critically Endangered (CT) Razo Lark (*Alauda razae*), the most important breeding colony of Cape Verde Shearwater (*Calonectris edwardsii*, NT) with more than 10,000 pairs. They hold more than 700 nesting females of Loggerhead Turtle (*Caretta*, locally EN) and are also the only refuge for four endemic species and sub-species of terrestrial reptiles with unfavourable threat status (*Tarentola raziana*, NT to *Hemidactylus bouvieri razoensis*, CR).

Cape Verde is the third recognized worldwide most important nesting site for Loggerhead turtles, and Santa Luzia by being deserted, is the only (island) refuge in the country where this species can nest away from anthropogenic threats like frequent human disturbance, light pollution, coastal urban development, nest destruction or turtle attacks by stray animals (i.e. dogs). In 2003 the Cape Verdean government created a Marine Protected Area (MPA) comprising the Deserted islands and the surrounding Atlantic Ocean to a depth of 200 meters. Despite this, the MPA still lacks some basic infrastructures and sea patrols are infrequent due to lack of funds, resources or governmental will, and in Santa Luzia the illegal practices continue to exist out-of-sight, as well as in the main island of São Vicente (outside the MPA).

The MPA still faces other threats like uncontrolled fisheries, coastal waste pollution and uncontrolled visiting by tourists, disturbances that are unregulated and highly damaging to nesting Loggerhead turtles. The waste pollution that reaches the shores of Santa Luzia each year have a direct and deadly effect on turtles and their breeding success since their survival is affected by beach littering, entangling adults as well as new born turtles.

GOALS

With this project, Biosfera wants to secure, enhance the protection and increase the surveillance and reporting rates of crimes against protected species of turtles in Santa Luzia and in São Vicente. To achieve this objective, civil society (general public and fishermen communities) as well as local authorities will be strongly engaged on this project for an immediate and effective protection measures against poaching, and to mitigate the plastic pollution impacts over the survival of nesting Loggerhead turtles in Santa Luzia island.
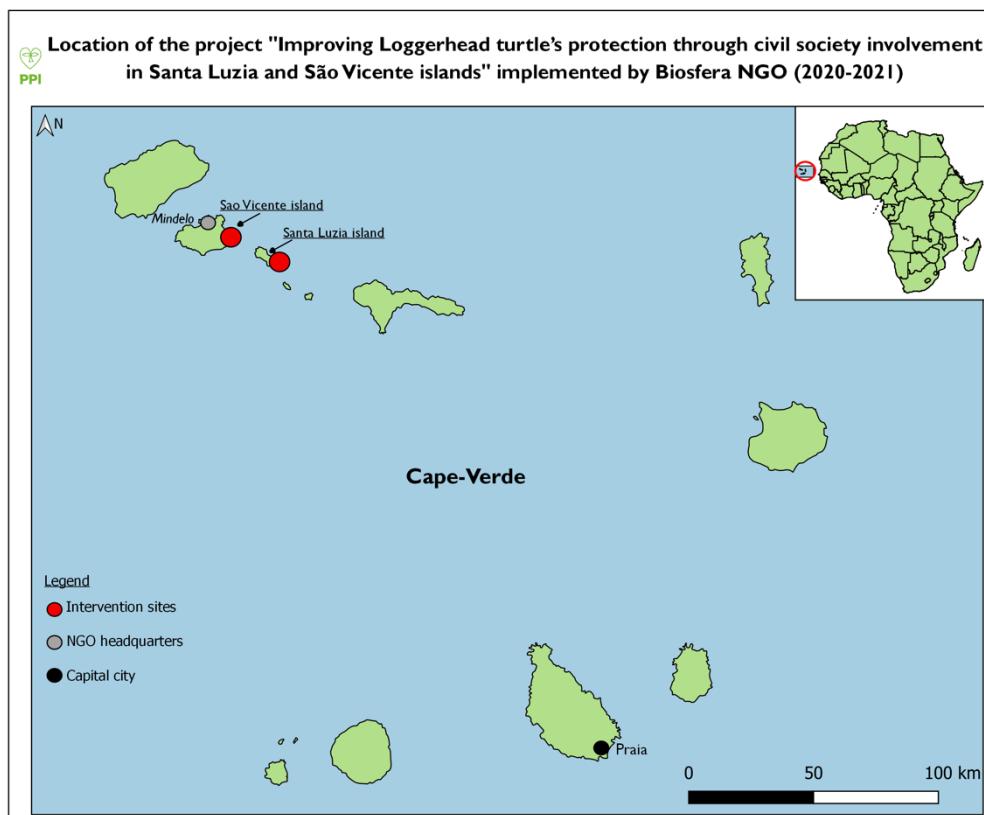
MAIN ACTIVITIES

- One phone number is open to exclusively report crimes against turtles. Offences are identified, numbered and made public by Biosfera;
- At least 30 volunteers from Ponta d´Pom are aware of the SOS Turtle number and will report any suspicious activities;
- At least 80 volunteers are involved on turtle monitoring and cleaning beach campaigns;
- 2 km^2 of the beach of Achados is more accessible to nesting turtles due to the plastic removal;
- 8 km of beach monitored and protected for Loggerheads;
- 2 television reports, 6 radio broadcasts and 2 newspaper news mentioning the SOS Turtle number;
- At least 2 meetings are organized by Biosfera with governmental entities and local authorities (DNA, Ministry of Marine Economy- MEM, Coastal Guard, National Police Corps).

Location of the project "Improving Loggerhead turtle's protection through civil society involvement in Santa Luzia and São Vicente islands" implemented by Biosfera NGO (2020-2021)

N

Sao Vicente island
Mindelo
Santa Luzia island

Cape-Verde

Legend
● Intervention sites
● NGO headquarters
● Capital city

Praia

0   50   100 km

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