

# Turtle Times



## Newsletter

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### SEASON 2019: DRONES AND CONSERVATION DOGS FOR THE PROTECTION OF SEA TURTLES

The sea turtle spawn season officially took off on June 1<sup>st</sup> of the current year. Five camps were assembled on different nesting beaches. About 55 people, among patrolmen, coordinators and national volunteers, are involved. Not to forget the essential support of international volunteers, coming from different countries: Switzerland, Germany, Czech Republic, United Kingdom, Portugal, Spain, Austria and Brazil. Similar to last year, an unmanned aerial vehicle (drone) with thermal imaging is being used to improve surveillance on nesting beaches. The team is also joined by two conservation dogs: Karetta and Kelo.

The use of technology, especially of drones, has been each applicant as to the matter is the conservation of terrestrial fauna and Flora. (Page 2)

### OUR TEAM

Human resources constitute a valuable asset for any and all organizations, whether public or private, with or without profit. Meet our office team. (Page 4)

### THE INTERVIEW

In this edition, the first volunteer of this season, Kateřina Šimonová, and ranger Paulo Barbosa were with us in an open conversation, where they spoke about their experiences in protecting the sea turtles. (Full article on page 5-6)

### FACTS AND CURIOSITIES

Did you know that sea turtles have an extremely accurate vision, smell and hearing? In the rubric "facts and curiosities" we show you ten amazing curiosities about sea turtles. Read the full article on page 7 and discover spectacular facts about these ancient creatures.

This equipment has been widely been used, among others, in the conservation and protection of forests, monitoring of biodiversity, mapping protected areas and collecting scientific data. This equipment has played a preponderant role in the defense of biodiversity, having the potential for use in extremely high environmental sphere. In some continents, as it is the case for Africa and Asia, it is already recognized as an extremely effective strategy, highlighting the use of drones in the protection of elephants and rhinoceros in Africa. In Cape Verde the use of drones in the environmental sphere is still shy, taking the first steps for such innovation being given by Fundação Tartaruga. The project with the drones started in August 2018, and until the end of the spawn season 70 missions were carried out. A total of 400 flights were made totaling in 1200 kilometers of flying. In May this year the training sessions were continued by the drone operators Dorivaldo Évora and José Luís. The sessions were ministered by Thomas Reischig, scientific director of our German partner, Turtle Foundation.



The drone team joined the Labradors Karetta and Kelo and their dog handlers. The use of conservation dogs is also innovative in the archipelago. The canines arrived on the island of Boa Vista on June 13<sup>th</sup> last, accompanied by the dog trainer and veterinary Marlene Zähler to continue the training and formation that begun in October last year in Switzerland. In the arrivals area of the international airport Aristides Pereira, the rangers Valdir Dos Santos and Ivan Lima eagerly awaited the arrival of Karetta and Kelo. The reunion between the Labradors and their respective dog handlers was very exciting, a friendship that promises to bear many



fruits in the protection of sea turtles and nesting beaches. After two weeks of training, the dog team went out on the ground. And, the result could not have been better: Karetta and Kelo detected remnants of dead turtles from the 2018 season. This season, the dog team and the drone operators, in cooperation with the

local police, are forming a task force that combines the activities of the dogs on the ground with the air support provided by the drone, making the patrol activities even more efficient.



## **Workshop "Social, environmental and economic importance of natural resources on the island of Boa Vista within the context of sustainable development"**

The workshop was held in the context of the festivities of Santa Isabel, by Projeto Tartaruga Boa Vista, in partnership with the project Bio-Tur, City Hall and MAA Boa Vista office. The event took place on July 2<sup>nd</sup> in the city hall and was attended by the mayor of the city, Dr. José Luís Santos, the delegate of the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment, Mr. Xisto Batista, as well as representatives of Non-governmental organizations, private entities, experts of the area as well as members of civil society.

The activity began around 4 p.m, having been opened by the mayor of the city, Dr. José Luís Santos. Next, Councilman Domingos Lobo had the opportunity make the presentation in which he spoke about natural resources, typology and classification of natural resources.

Subsequently, the Ecological Monitoring professional of the delegation of the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment, Marina Pereira Silva, made a presentation under the theme "Governance and management". She spoke about the existing legislation or that are in the process of being published about the natural resources on the island of Boa Vista. According to the same "it is necessary to have greater coordination among actors who work in the management of natural resources, from decision-makers to those who benefit (...)".

The third presentation was made by the



Environmental Education Coordinator of the Projeto Tartaruga Boa Vista, Mrs. Katia D'Assunção who addressed the issue of current problems and challenges regarding the natural resources on the island. She talked about what she considers to be the four greatest current and real threats when it comes to resources: the change in land use, natural overexploitation, environmental pollution and climate change. She also spoke of specific problems, including the uncontrolled deposition of waste, the extraction of aggregates, unsustainable exploitation of species, and lack of regulations for species observation, among others.

The fourth and final presentation was carried out by two members of the Associação Onze Estrelas da Bofareira, Mr. Mário Morais and Mrs. Leididiana Barros, who presented the theme "Community participation in the management of natural resources". They talked about the projects developed by the association, including the sea turtle protection project carried out with the support and supervision of Fundação Tartaruga as well as future projects. After different presentations, the debate was opened to the public where the audience could intervene and ask their questions. The debate was terminated by the delegate of the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment, Mr. Xisto Baptista, around 6.30 pm.





# OUR TEAM

## Office Team

**CARLA CORSINO, COMMUNITY COORDINATOR**



Native of the city of Ponta Sol, island of Santo Antão, Carla has a vast experience in the social area. She is currently in charge of the community development program within the Projeto Tartaruga Boa Vista. She represents the strength of the modern and empowered woman and divides her time successfully between work and family life.

**ISAUINDA ALMEIDA, ASSISTANT OF COMMUNITY COORDINATOR**

Social worker of formation, Isaurinda or just Zau as she is known by all, is the right arm of the Community Coordinator. Coming from the community of João Galego, interior of the island of Boa Vista, she is the owner of an active and assertive personality.



**JULIE FERREUX, VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR**



Her nationality is Swiss and France, but Cape Verde is also her home. With a creative mind and a heart of gold, Julie has volunteered for the last four years and this season she is coordinating the volunteers. Gentle, friendly, that's our blue-eyed girl.

**EVANDRO GONÇALVES, LOGISTIC COORDINATOR AND CARLOS VARELA, ASSISTANT**



Evandro and Carlos are well-known faces in the foundation. They've been with us for a few years and they're running all the logistics of the foundation's groceries and equipment during and off the season.



**ALBERTO MONTEIRO, DRIVER AND YAIA BALDE, GUARD**



When it comes to distributing water and food to the camps, one name comes up among the others: Mr. Alberto. We have not forgotten Mr. Yaia, the security guard of our warehouse. What both have in common besides working at FT: their helpfulness and friendliness.



## OPEN CONVERSATION

*With Kateřina Šimonová and Paulo Barbosa*



*Born in the city of červený Kostelec, located in the north of Czech Republic, Katerina arrived on the island of Boa Vista on June 19<sup>th</sup> to begin her volunteering activities at the Fundação Tartaruga. She was the first volunteer this season and will stay with us until the end of September. The 24-year-old student, currently completing her master's degree in the area of zoology, exchanged the hectic life of the city of Prague where she currently lives for months of calm and quiet in our camp in Boa Esperança.*

**How did you get interested in volunteering in turtle conservation?**

I am interested in animals since a long time. It was a dream which I had for a long time and I didn't have time and money for realizing it earlier... Also, I was little bit afraid of going somewhere, where I don't know anybody. I saw something about that on social media, I started to think about it again; it was perfect because I am finishing university, I have time, probably the last free time for such a long time because then I have to find a job.

**And what's it like to live in the camp?**

I like it so much, that's why I'm staying longer!

I like the basic life in the camp; I like that most of the time I can stay here in peace, everything is calm. It is something that I needed long time ago. I don't need all the things which I have at home and it is really nice to realize this. And, I like the people in camp.

**You were supposed to stay until August, but you decided to extend it until September...**

Yeah, as I said I don't want go early because I realized that two months are not long enough to see the baby turtles, I don't need to come back because of school and I really don't want to come back to my everyday big city rush.

**Do you intend to come back to us?**

I hope so but it depends on many things.

**What was the greatest difficulty that you found when you arrived?**

Language. Interact with the people which I don't know, and I don't understand them. I was really nervous and stressed before I arrived here. When I came, people were all the time talking to me, but I didn't understand anything. The first four days, I was thinking I can't stay here, and I wanted to go home. It was difficult but then I started to learn at least a little bit of Portuguese and Creole. I got to know the people better and everything started to be fine.

**According to your experience, when it comes to turtle conservation what can be improved in terms of protection?**

This is my first experience, that's why I am not sure what could be improved... I can't compare it. It seems to be good - really good. For me



now there is no problem, there is nothing that I think that is not right. Sometimes there are



*Paulo Barbosa was born in São Vicente. He came to the island of Boa Vista in 2011 and after 8 years, he feels at home, doesn't think about going back to his native island. The 23-year-old changed Barman's life in a local discotheque for a life as a Ranger in Lacacão's camp.*

**How many years have you worked to protect the turtles?**

This year I'm already in my third season at the Fundação Tartaruga. In 2016 I applied, but I wasn't selected for the first season. Then Joana got in touch with me, partly thanks to the social work I've been doing. I was part of a group, the alcohol abuse prevention center, of which Zau is also part. At the high school where I studied, I was the president/founder of the Student Association, where we did several activities at the social level within the school. Last year I was the president of the final year committee, the first in the history of the high school of Boa Vista with a social action cabinet. I was assigned to work in the Lacacão camp. At that time, I worked with a bartender in a local disco.

some camp problems, but I don't see problems in working with turtles

**How did you get interested in the Fundação Tartaruga?**

Through the publicity made by my friends who were already working at FT.

**You seem to be very dedicated to what you do. Where does this passion for the protection of the turtles come from?**

I've always said that when you do something in the mood, you end up being recognized for what you do. And, the protection of turtles and their habitats is already part of my life and I love it.

**And how is it going this season?**

This year I'm more in town than in the camp (laughs). I spent a week in the city because of graduation, then had a week of training in environmental patrol as part of the Projecto Tartaruga. And now, because of the summer university, I'll be gone for another week or two. I'll be back in September, but in October I must return to the capital Praia, I will go to the university and study Criminology and Social Reinsertion.

**Although there is a law to protect turtles, there is still a lot of demand for turtle meat.**

**What do you think can be done to improve this situation?**

The law is clear and the offenders of it should be punished, this is the right thing to do and in relation to what they should do, is continue with the awareness campaigns in the communities and especially for children and teenagers.



# FACTS AND CURIOSITIES

## 10 Curiosities on sea turtles



Sea turtles spend almost their entire life within the ocean, except when they need to come ashore to lay their eggs;



Despite being known for the slowness, they manage to exceed 20 km/hour when they are swimming;



A female sea turtle can lay 60 to 120 eggs, which usually take 55 days to hatch;



The World Turtle Day is celebrated on 23<sup>rd</sup> of May;



They return to the beach where they were born in the breeding season to lay their eggs;



They have a good vision, great smell and excellent hearing;



Mating occurs at sea, after the female chooses the male. A single female can lay between 3 and 5 nests per season at average intervals of 10 to 15 days.



Only 0.1 % of the cubs can reach adulthood. Many die before they even reach the sea, victims of birds, lizards and crabs. Those who can do it have to overcome obstacles like fish.



They do not have teeth, instead they have an extremely sharp beak that they use to cut food;



Sea turtles have a great capacity to remain without food. They can stay up to 52 days without eating. When they eat, they must eat in the water to avoid choking.





### **Green Turtle Found in Lacacão**

Cape Verde is currently the third largest spawning ground for loggerhead in the North Atlantic. However, other species of turtles occur in the waters of Cape Verde, Green Sea Turtle, Hawksbill Sea Turtle, Olive Ridley Sea Turtle, Leatherback Sea Turtle, Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle and Flatback Sea Turtle. On the 28<sup>th</sup> of July, our staff at the Lacacão camp found a green turtle during the morning census. This kind of turtle was once common in Cape Verde. It is believed that this species used to spawn in almost all the islands, however the rampant capture of females over the years compromised the survival of this species and today the population of green turtles is almost extinct in Cape Verde. A curiosity about this species is that unlike the common turtle, the Green turtle is Herbivore.

### **Nest in July**

In July there was an increase in activity compared to the previous month. The nesting beach under our protection with the highest number of nests is the beach of Curral Velho with 971 nests, followed by Boa Esperança with 513 nests and Canto with 434 nests registered. The following is Lacacão, Água doce and Ponta Pesqueira with 286, 231 and 205 nests. The beaches with the lowest number of nests were the following: Cruz Morto, 198 nests; Norte, 164 and Gatas, 23.

Compared to the same period of the previous year there was an increase in activity on all the spawn beaches except for the beach of Gatas where there was a decrease of 11.5 %.

### **Arrival of the container to the island of Boa Vista**

After months of expectations and some administrative work, the container with donations and materials coming from Germany finally arrived on the island of Boa Vista on the 10<sup>th</sup> of August. Boxes and more boxes were removed from the container by the logistics staff and a part of the office team to move them to our warehouse.





# PICTURES WITH HISTORY



On the left and on the right : Meeting with the coordinators of the camps on July 6<sup>th</sup>, 2019  
Middle: Dog Team (Pablo, Valdir, Ivan, Adilson and the dogs Karetta and Kelo)



On the left and on the right: Boa Esperança camp team  
Middle: Lacação camp team



Visit to the Boa Esperança Nature Reserve as part of the cleaning and rehabilitation project carried out by the Onze Estrelas Association, which has the technical support of Fundação Tartaruga.



On the Left: Anniversary of the Lacação Camp Coordinator, Délvis  
Medium: Measurement of a nest - volunteers Daniela and Katerina, and the ranger Danilson  
On the right: our people from the Boa Esperança camp





## Life in the camps











*Protecting turtles and their habitats*

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