

# Turtle Times



## Newletter

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### BACK TO THE SEA

On September 27<sup>th</sup>, Fundação Tartaruga released a female turtle (*Caretta Caretta*) into the sea. She was found in the Bay of Sal Rei area, near the Casa do Pescador by a local diver, Eurico Estrela, who immediately contacted the FT.

She was referred to the Nerina Association, where she was treated: they removed all the parasites, cleaned up some old wounds and gave her a ten-day antibiotic injection. They also injected a chip in her flipper.

After two days of treatment, and already completely rehabilitated, she returned to sea and was swimming and diving perfectly. A big thank you to everyone who contributed to her rehabilitation!

### OUR TEAM

During the season dozens of young people lived in camps installed on turtle nesting beaches to make patrols and collect scientific data.

Meet the faces of the people who made their contribution this season. (Page 4)

### THE INTERVIEW

In this edition, we interviewed the Logistics Coordinator, Evanildo Gonçalves. He told us about his experience at Fundação Tartaruga. Check out the full interview on page 3.

### FACTS AND CURIOSITIES

Sea turtles have a very complex life cycle, since they use both the terrestrial environment and the sea. In the topic "facts and curiosities" we explain how the life cycle of sea turtles works. Read the full article on page 5.

## MORE THAN A HUNDRED MELON-HEADED DOLPHINS STRAND ON THE ALTAR BEACH.

The day had barely begun when the Fundação Tartaruga received a distress call. Several dolphins had been stranded on the beach of Altar, in the northeast of the island of Boa Vista. This is not an unusual request, since a similar situation occurred last year, when several pilot whales stranded on the beach of Varandinha and, despite the efforts of NGOs, institutions, tourists and locals, seven of them eventually died.

While patrolling the nesting beach of Altar on Sept. 24<sup>th</sup>, the rangers at the service of the Onze Estrelas Association, which is a local association that began turtle protection activities in 2017, under the funding and supervision of the Fundação Tartaruga, declared the alert. An immediate campaign to mobilize volunteers to rescue those animals began.



The second team of Fundação Tartaruga arrived shortly after 11 o'clock. The image was horrible. Several dolphins were laying in the sand and in a tireless effort, various people tried to return them to the sea. Immediately they began to help in this rescue mission. A collective effort that involved environmental NGOs (MarAlliance, Bios CV, Natura2000 and Fundação Tartaruga), the associations Onze Estrelas da Bofareira and Varandinha da Povoação Velha, Civil Protection, Surfers, local people and tourists. At the end of the day most of the dolphins returned into the sea, some unfortunately did not survive.

The next day, we received the unfortunate news that the dolphins had stranded again. According to official data, 136 of them eventually died, and after ONG's Bios took some samples to investigate the cause of death, they were buried by a delegation from the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment.



# THE INTERVIEW

## With *Evandro Gonçalves*

*Born in Picos, countryside of Santiago, Evanildo Gonçalves, or as he is known by all "Evandro", has lived in Boa Vista for over fifteen years. With professional training in Mechanics, and a vast experience, he leads the logistics team, during and out of season.*

### **How many years have you been working at Fundação Tartaruga ?**

It will be four years now. I started in 2015.

### **What was your role in 2015?**

I did a little bit of everything, the mechanical part, logistics, driver ...until today, actually.

### **How did it go in the beginning?**

In the beginning it was a bit... there was a lot, a lot of work. However, I was able to adapt well to the work and the new colleagues. And I started to like it a lot, and since then it's going well. So far, I have no reason to complain or any complaint about the Foundation.

The project itself has changed a lot over time, things have improved even at the warehouse level. Initially we had the warehouse in Rabil (...) from that time on, things changed a lot, as well as the work changed...

### **What is your experience of working at the Fundação Tartaruga like?**

It's a good experience. Before here, I worked in Quad Land, where I was employed for eleven years. Then I chose to come to the Fundação Tartaruga and thanks to this work I have acquired a lot of experience in logistics. A new job, new knowledge. However, it was not easy at first, but I ended up adapting to it easily and got to know more and more about the day-to-day work, through which I gained a lot of work experience.

### **What are the biggest challenges of your job?**

The biggest challenge of my job is to get up every morning, face my work, challenge myself and at the end of the day see the achievements I have made. Achieving good results and going home with the feeling of long duty, is my goal.

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

We are almost at the end, but the season went well. Sometimes there are some complaints in



the camps because everyone wants to have it the way they want to. We're already in the last stretch and I hope everything continues to be well.

### **People say that things are better for turtles now than they were in the past, what do you think about that?**

Last year there was a lot of turtle spawning, I think every year is different. In 2017 and 2018 there were a lot of nesting turtles. I went on an excursion with my father to João Barrosa and I saw lots of turtles; they said that 300 turtles went out at night to lay eggs. This year there were not as many turtles.

### **In terms of poaching, do you think people are more sensitized now or are they afraid of new technologies?**

This year there have been fewer poaching incidents than in previous years, which may be due to the new law protecting sea turtles, that came into force in 2018. People are afraid to go to prison. This year there have not been many catches on the beaches under our protection. I think people are more aware now. Even inside the houses, the children end up sensitizing their parents because they learn at school that it is forbidden to eat the turtle's meat. And that's great! There is more awareness nowadays.

### **What do you think could be done more to protect the turtles?**

I think the law could be a little harsher. People would be even more afraid of poaching turtles, if they go to court and have to pay tougher fines. They will be afraid to do it again, and thus being discouraged to commit this crime again. I think it would be good, if they were stricter.






# OUR TEAM


## *Camp team and volunteers*





# FACTS AND CURIOSITIES

## Life cycle of sea turtles


 Sea turtles mate in the sea. The male and female meet and mate. The copulation can last several hours.

 Then female sea turtles choose the nesting beach. Although they lay both day and night, they usually wait until dusk to avoid several threats.

 They then construct a “body pit” by moving the sand with her flippers and rotating her body. After the body pit is complete, they dig a hole about 50 cm deep. When the turtle has finished digging the egg chamber, she begins to lay eggs. Depending on the species, the same female can lay between 3 and 12 times in the same season. On average each nest has 120 eggs.

 The female returns to the sea. The eggs are incubated for about 60 days. After this period, the hatchlings hatch and emerge together until they reach the surface of the nest. They almost always leave the nest at night and use the moon light to get to the sea.



 Turtles are born independent, so they have to face the most diverse predators alone. It is estimated that only one or two of every thousand hatchlings reach the adult age.



Fonte: Projeto Tamar. Disponível em: <https://www.tamar.org.br/interna.php?cod=90>



### **Women in conservation**

Women play a very important role in environmental conservation. However, in the conservation sector, as in other areas of work, men still predominate. At Fundação Tartaruga, between 2017 and 2018 the number of employed local women doubled. From 5 women involved in 2017 (8.6 %), the number of women rose to 11 in 2018 (13.9 %). In 2019 the quota of women rose slightly to 14.8 %. Adding the percent of international volunteers to it, a female quota of 36.5 % is reached in 2019. This is due to the main application of female volunteers. Fundação Tartaruga is on the right track to balance gender inequality, but still has a long way to go.

### **Season 2019**

The countdown to the end of the nesting season has begun.

Generally speaking, it was a very smooth season at the Fundação Tartaruga, with the exception of three poaching incidents on the beaches protected by Fundação Tartaruga. In relation to the number of nests, there was a decrease compared to last year. (Official data will be released later).

We would like to thank our rangers, coordinators, volunteers, logistics and office staff, and all the people who were involved and made their contribution throughout this season.

**MUITO OBRIGADA!**

### **Liga Tartaruga 2019**

The fifth edition of the Liga Tartaruga began on October 5<sup>th</sup>. The event is a joint activity of the three NGOs that work on the conservation of sea turtles: FT, Bios CV and Natura 2000. It is a sensitization activity that involves the institutions and communities of the island. The organization of the event is rotative and this year the Fundação Tartaruga was in charge of it. The games took place in the communities of João Galego, Fundo das Figueiras and Cabeça dos Tarrafes. The final game was on October 27<sup>th</sup> in the community of Fundo das Figueiras between the Onze Estrelas da Bofareira Association and Fundo das Figueiras, with the latter becoming champion. At the same time, the game between the National Police and the Fundação Tartaruga took place, which were competing for third place. After a tie of 1x1, the game was decided in the penalty shootout, with Fundação Tartaruga winning third place! Congratulations!











*Proteger as tartarugas e os seus habitats*

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