



Turtle Foundation

Foundation for the Protection of Sea Turtles and their habitats

Newsletter December 2018

Dear friends and supporters of Turtle Foundation,

Effective protection of endangered animals such as sea turtles always needs a minimum amount of information. This includes, of course, knowing how many animals there are actually left. Recently, scientists have discovered that the methods used to assess the numbers of existing sea turtles have led to mistakes that could result in overestimations of current population sizes by up to two fold; see our website blog of 13 September 2018. Despite the unusually high numbers of loggerhead sea turtles nesting on Cape Verde last season, this should remind us that our beloved „wanderers of the oceans“ are still in great danger. As always at this time, however, we would now like to look back with you on what we have achieved this year.

CAPE VERDE

After two record years, we were practically overwhelmed this year by an even three times higher number of nesting loggerhead turtles! Our rangers and volunteers had their hands full protecting these many turtles from poachers, while simultaneously collecting data and tagging animals. And despite of these immense challenges we could reduce the poaching rate even further!

Besides our regular and tireless beach night patrols, this can also be attributed to our new drone based anti-poaching project. We have set up and trained a **“Drone Task Force”** which, accompanied by two local police officers, regularly monitored the most endangered nesting beaches on Boavista during the nesting season with a night vision drone. Word of this activity spread very quickly on the island, which is why we did not catch any poachers in the act, but were able to keep them away from the beaches quite effectively. In the next nesting season, this team will also receive support from our new conservation dog unit, which is still in training.

Also in our community projects there happened a lot. Our new community coordinator Carla Corsino



Training of the „Drone Task Force“ on Boavista

is working closely with the local population to create a sustainable future for people and sea turtles. As always, **education is a big issue** – just to mention here the purchase of bicycles for children in the village of Cabeça dos Tarafes in order to help them to get to school quickly and safely and thus, to attend school regularly.

INDONESIA

In our conservation project on the Derawan Islands in the Berau district off East Borneo, Indonesia, however, not everything went so smoothly. As already reported, we had to end our cooperation with our previous local partner organisation a year ago due to recurrent organisational and financial irregularities on its part. The soon hoped-for new start together with the well-known Indonesian wildlife conservation organisation *Profauna* has so far been delayed mainly for official reasons. However, we are still working hard to

Nesting loggerhead sea turtle on Boavista



be soon able to continue protecting the world's eighth largest nesting population of green sea turtles from illegal egg theft and poaching.

In view of the experience gained in this project, we have finally established our own organisation in Indonesia this year under local law. This enables us to work much better with project partners, authorities, and other stakeholders on an equal footing. The official name of our new organisation is **"Yayasan Penyu Indonesia"** (YPI), which means nothing else than "Turtle Foundation Indonesia".

In addition to the Berau Project, the YPI has been given another new major task: On the remote island of Sipora in the Mentawai archipelago off West Sumatra, last year **we discovered a nesting beach of the leatherback turtle that had been unknown to the outside world** until then. Little is known about the local population of this largest species of sea turtle, but the leatherbacks are rare in the north-eastern Indian Ocean and very probably threatened with extinction there. All the more we were shocked to discover that eggs as well as nesting animals on Sipora are considered a culinary delicacy by local people. In cooperation with the nature conservation authority of West Sumatra we initiated a project to protect this extraordinary nesting beach. In the past nesting season we saved more than 35 nests, which doesn't seem like much, but every single egg of these rare animals is of special value.



School bicycle project in Cabeça dos Tarafes, Boavista

The new nesting season has just begun, and we cordially invite adventurous conservationists to volunteer directly on site! More about this on our website.

TF RAFFLE AND CHARITY SHOPPING

In addition to a donation, for which we are kindly asking you, we would like to point out two further possibilities to help us:

The 10th time we are now holding our big annual **Turtle Foundation Raffle**, which in the meantime became almost cult especially in the scuba diver community! Our anniversary raffle will take place on 3 February 2019 at the Zurich travel fair FESPO. There are 34 great prizes to win in form of diving trips and equipment, with a total value of around 31,000 € or 35,000 CHF/US\$! The prizes were donated by renowned diving tour operators and equipment suppliers, to whom we are extremely grateful. **The entire proceeds of the raffle will be benefit our conservation projects.** You will find more information and the order form for raffle tickets on our website here: www.turtle-foundation.org/en/tf-raffle-2019/

In Germany and central Europe you now have the possibility to shop via the charity shopping initiative **Gooding.de** and thereby to support our friends association Turtle Foundation Friends e. V. Over 1,800 online shops and service companies are partner of Gooding.de, who donate a considerable percentage of their revenue to Turtle Foundation Friends if you select them as recipient! It costs you nothing extra and is so easy – please find out how it works: www.gooding.de/gutetat (in German).



New hatchery and freshly released leatherback hatchlings on Sipora

We would like to thank all our friends, donors, and partners, and would be very pleased and extremely grateful if you would continue to support our work with your kind donation!

Your Turtle Foundation

Turtle Foundation

Registered Charity in Cape Verde, Germany, Indonesia, Liechtenstein, Switzerland, and USA

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