

Mid Season



Unlike what we expected after the record season of 2016, this season again shows incredibly high turtle nesting activities. Past numbers found that loggerhead sea turtles have a roughly 3 years reproductive cycle, and that annual nesting numbers are fluctuating in a periodical manner between the years. As the Turtle Foundation began its work on

Boa Vista only 9 years ago, we still have a relatively small nesting activity database to state any hypothesis about the periodicity of high and low nesting activities. However, general observations widely compare to that of Natura 2000, which began working with turtles on Boa Vista already in 1997. As in 2012 and in 2016 the nesting activities were high but considerably lower before and in between, we were expecting a rather quiet season, but this is not at all happening. For example, at Ponta Pesqueira Beach, where by end of July 2016 we had 195 activities (nests, false crawls and false crawls attempts), in 2017 we already counted 236 activities! All other beaches give a similar picture of much higher nesting activities than were expected upon previous experience. We also have records of turtles that came back already after 2 years and not after 3 years, as most animals did in previous years. It is tempting to speculate that these unexpected high nesting numbers may already reflect the conservation efforts on the eastern Cape Verde islands including Boa Vista that already began 20 years ago. However, this assumption is challenged by the long time loggerhead turtles need to reach maturity after hatching and to come back to beaches where they were born for the first time, which lasts between 17 and 33 years in the global average. In fact, mean generation times vary between the different loggerhead sea turtle population all over the world, the time to maturity is not yet known for the Cape Verde population, and the observation time is not yet sufficient to draw viable conclusions. Further, the so far observed periodicities in nesting activities might either have happened by chance, or might be superimposed by activity rhythms

with even longer period lengths than 3–4 years. Therefore, we have to wait for the nesting results of the next years before we can draw solid conclusions about nesting periodicity and the long-term development of the local loggerhead turtle population. However, we are convinced that in the long run ongoing conservation efforts will pay off by increasing nesting numbers.

Hatchery



First part of hatchery construction

The hatcheries are going very well, but this year some circumstances are a bit different. All other years we had only one hatchery that was located at the beach of Ponta Pesqueira near the Lacacão field station. This year we have one more hatchery near the Boa Esperança camp. Since at the Boa Esperança beach we observed high predation rates of nests and hatchlings by ghost crabs we are testing if hatching and survival rates can be increased by hatcheries that allow for a safe and undisturbed development of the turtle eggs. However, since artificial hatcheries also have their drawbacks, we are currently testing the feasibility of this method only with a small number of 40 nests. For the Ponta Pesqueira/Lacacão hatchery the situation is different. Due to the detrimental impact of the nearby RIU hotel and construction sites on hatching sea turtles, caused by excessive artificial illumination of the beach at night, the hatchery there is the only chance to ensure that an appreciable number of turtle hatchlings emerging from nests laid on Lacacão beach make it to the sea. For this reason we are relocating all nests found on Lacacão beach to the hatchery or to other safe places of Ponta Pesqueira beach already for a couple of years. However, due to the high nesting rates witnessed also on Lacacão beach this year, we had to increase the size of the hatchery. Last year the hatchery hosted 110 nests, but this year we had to enlarge it during the season with spaces for 50 more nests. Incredibly, but it is already full... The first nest, expected for beginning of September, already hatched in the last day of August. We hope that the hatching rates of our hatcheries will be as good as in previous years.



Maya and Alberto in the hatchery



Justo, nest relocation



Maria Joana, hatchling measures



Valdir, nest relocation

Front Team

Domas

Coordinator (Cruz do Morto Camp)



A monster with turtles, clearly a good monster and a full hand artist. Started working with turtle protection since 2007, as an army recruit in the former times were military personnel helped us with beach protection. In 2015 Domas was a sub coordinator and for showing great leadership skills he commanded the Canto camp in the North of Boavista in 2016. This year he put all his skills into practice in the most isolated camp of the Turtle Foundation. A resident of the Fundo de Figueiras community, he has enormous influence over people, always trying to represent

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our organization along with general conservation interests, to educate people and to raise awareness.

Sidney **Camp Coordinator (Canto Camp)**

Born on the Island of São Vicente, resident of the Island of Sal, for 5 years Sidney always came to the Island of Boa Vista to protect the turtles. His first season in 2012 he was participating as an army recruit. With great interest in our work he later joined



Turtle Foundation. He has gained tremendous experience as a ranger in the last 3 years, on which basis this season he was offered the opportunity to coordinate the Canto camp and put into practice all his skills to lead as it should be. He is great at always taking the keys of the apartment, too, hopefully next time he will not forget to give it back.

Davidson **Field Coordinator (Canto Camp)**



Originating from the Island of Santo Antão, the greenest and most beautiful island of Cape Verde. It is his fourth year at the Turtle Foundation and his second in the field lead. He grew quickly to this position thanks to his skills and dexterity working with turtles. Two years in the Lacacão made him the ideal person for the Canto camp. A gentle and at the same time rigid person, demanding from everyone a job well done. Great with scalpels, when he not almost cut his hand off, and with toilets, ask him if you want more information. Ask him to make a "frapé" while he tells you the story.

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Valdir

Camp Coordinator (Lacacão Camp)

He is originating from the Island of São Vicente, which is why he does not speak Criollo very well. He lives on the Island of Boa Vista a few years already. Despite some stumbling in the past, Valdir is a shining example of overcoming to be followed. He was a poacher for about 2 years, but he took advantage from the



opportunity Natura 2000 gave him to work in ecotourism. Afterwards, he worked with turtles and birds on Santa Luzia Island. He has been with Turtle Foundation since 2013 as a ranger at the Boa Esperança and Lacacão camps. Being the coordinator of the Lacacão camp this season, he now has the opportunity to show everything he has learned and to be the example of change, demonstrating that opportunities can create environmental awareness and responsibility. He has many other skills and is very interested in world politics, ask him for coffee and you can spend hours talking with him about that all.

Alberto

Field Coordinator (Lacacão Camp)



He is from Galicia and speaks excellent Portuguese. A biologist, he has worked on Sal Island and Costa Rica. He joined the team of the Turtle Foundation this year to command the field work in the Lacacão camp, not an easy task. Joyful, playful and hardworking, always open to listen and learn and in this way doing the best job

possible. Be careful when looking deep in his eyes, they are almost like sapphires, and you can easily be hypnotized. We think he has a crush on baguettes, but there's no problem with that.

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Rasta

Coordinator (Curral Velho Camp)

Born in Santiago, he works just a short time for Turtle Foundation, but he has a special way with people. He has a big heart. His calm and relaxed way will now be tested in a position with greater responsibility. An extremely correct person with a strong personality. Maybe the woolen cap, when the temperature is 33 degrees Celsius, does not do very well to him, we warned him. We do not yet know how he manages to look through all that hair always hanging in front of his face.



Martinho

Camp Coordinator (Boa Esperança Camp)



Coming from Guinea, he has lived in Cape Verde for some years. Martinho was a ranger already in all the camps of the Turtle Foundation. He has great experience and great ability with turtles and is invaluable for the camp. Extreme politeness and kind are his middle names. A born worker, hardly indisposed or showing a bad face, except one time when he had to go 5 nights in a row up to the end of Curral Velho beach; that was so far the only time when we saw him really tired.

Cristina

Field Coordinator (Boa Esperança Camp)

Coming directly from Valencia (Spain) for her second season for field coordination in the camp of Boa Esperança. She is a veterinarian and has a special passion for animals. She brings in her luggage the experience of a season of turtle conservation work in Costa Rica, but apparently the Island of Boa Vista has its special attraction, making her coming back this year. An extremely calm, patient and gentle person.



Anniversary of the Turtle Foundation



Joaninha grilling, goooooo Joaninha



BE x Norte

The Turtle Foundation celebrated its 10th nesting season on Boavista and the 5th birthday of Fundação Tartaruga with a big party in the Boa Esperança camp. This year we had around 60 guests at the party, staff and their relatives, rangers and volunteers from all 5 camps. It all started with a meeting with the members of the office to discuss the entire logistics and division of tasks. The day before the party, the office was crazy. Everything has to be prepared and everyone runs to every corner so that everything was arranged, without leaving routine



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work outside. On the day of the party, all people were welcomed in the Boa Esperança Camp, where the celebration takes place every year, and which then is always full of smiles, music, and as usual, lots of food. The Turtle Foundation football championship took place as every year, and once again the Boa Esperança team took "the cup", leaving behind the Canto Camp and breaking down Lacacão Camp as usual. We believe that playing at home brings the Boa Esperança team a great advantage. After the football championship and an extended tanning session on the beach, lunchtime approached. Everyone sat together at a huge table; the integration of all people is important and very beautiful. Culture, stories, and values from different places in the world and different places in Cape Verde were exchanged at the same time; that was wealth. After lunch, the traditional dance wheel began, with music and dance typical of Cape Verde, Kizomba and Cotxi pó. Almost everyone dared to dance in the middle of the wheel, those who know, those who do not know, and those who have never danced, and all go crazy. At the end of the party there was the traditional deep and exciting speech of the boss, Ukie, who in fine words thanked everyone for the effort and hard work, for believing in conservation, and for protecting a precious part of this incredible country. Once believed, anything can be done. At the time of the cake, something unusual happened, Ukie handed the knife to Domas, who with all right, cut the first piece of the cake. A person who has spent so many years protecting turtles, with great strength and dedication. There would be no better person to be honored at that moment. The party was beautiful and remarkable once again, and the Turtle Foundation thanks for the dedication and the beautiful smile and joy spread on this important day.



The BOSS speech

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Paulo teaching how to dance



Domas cutting the cake



North Camp



Boa Esperanca Camp



Lacacao Camp



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