



TURTLE TIMES



It's the kick-start of the 2018 season for Turtle Foundation in Boa Vista and it's going to be a great year for us here in Cape Verde! We started with the addition of two new vehicles to our fleet, a new Toyota Hilux and a FUSO truck, much needed to improve our capacity to reach the camps with supplies. Getting things from Germany to Boa Vista it's quite an operation that starts with getting all the documentation needed to off load and open the container, then getting all the manpower and vehicles needed to transport everything, and on top of that quite a bit of the process doesn't depend on us with local authorities not always being the best help! With hard work we managed to get everything sorted and packed in our new warehouse where it can be processed and ready for the season. Boa Vista is a remote place and it's not easy, or cheap, to find all the materials and supplies we need so every year during the off season we get together with our partners from Turtle



Foundation Germany and we go shopping! It's a massive operation, logistically and financially, but essential and what allow us to do our job during the nesting season of the loggerhead turtle in Boa Vista. The next step is getting the teams ready to start building the camps. This year we kept the same 5 camps as before: Canto, Cruz do Morto, Boa Esperança, Lacacão e Curral Velho. The materials were prepared and packed and on the morning of the 21st, a large team of rangers and office team members departed Sal Rei on the way to Norte, with (literally) a truckload of stuff! The first camp was Canto and after a few setbacks, a "rusty" team managed to get everything ready! Over the week we built Cruz do Morto, a smaller camp but on a key beach which allow us for a more effective protection of that area, and Boa Esperança, including the hatchery! The following week it was time to work on Lacacão and Curral Velho camps, all across the island! It's a lot of work, with some blood, sweat and tears in the mix. Then some screaming and shouting, and laughing and cheering. Slowly but surely, we successfully put all the camps operational and ready for the season. Let's go!





TURTLE TIMES



Trash! It represents a major problem all over the globe and here at Fundação Tartaruga we take it quite seriously, specially on the beaches. On the shores of Boa Vista plastic cans, bottles, rope, fishing nets, wooden pallets you name it: everything is around. There are two main sources for this problem. First the inland produced litter combined with the lack of recycling/processing plants on the island. All the trash is burned down or buried and the local services lack means to properly tackle the problem. The strong winds make any rubbish fly for kilometres into the sea or stuck in the sand. Despite several attempts through environmental education, litter on the islands remains a problem. And second, what comes from the ocean. Part of it, fishing nets, rope and, to some extent, plastic, we can guess it comes from fishing vessels using Cape Verdean waters (although we know trash travels thousands of kilometres in the oceans). The other part, plastic containers and boxes, we can take the island's geographical position in consideration. Boa Vista is the most eastern island of the Cape Verde archipelago, in direct line to the west coast of Africa. The fact the eastern and northern shores (Boa Esperança and Norte as pictured bellow) have the highest concentration of trash can be used to sustain the theory that the most of it is thrown in West African waters and travels through oceanic currents to the first lands it finds: us.



Unfortunately, the problem is bigger than it looks. Rubbish can be found buried in the loose sand where turtles nest up to 30 cm deep, maybe more. Plastic and rope disintegrate under the elements such as sun and wind, creating tiny fibbers and micro plastic debris that will pose even more danger to wildlife (besides what we already know). Turtle Foundation will not give up and we're going to keep the efforts of cleaning our beaches involving the local communities, environmental education, and international awareness campaigns. It starts with each and everyone of us to do what we can to prevent this. We reiterate the need of taking back home things like old batteries and such, where it can be recycled. To reuse what we can, specially plastic bags. Scenarios like this cannot happen if we wish to live on a better planet, so it's up to us to make a change. Photos by: Camilo Carrasco.

