



TURTLE TIMES



We already know the effects of light pollution on nesting beaches but our Team at Lacacão Camp has reported a disturbing reality on their beaches. Quite often during their morning census (a patrol done in the morning with the purpose of checking the activity from the previous night) they find turtle "lost" in the dunes and mud behind the beach on a section our night patrols cannot reach. This poor turtles come out to nest and then they cannot find their way back to the ocean. They follow artificial light away from the sea for kilometres until exhaustion takes over and then have no other option but to stop to recover. However, the sun is out by then and this turtles are now in risk of dying from overheating (as reptiles they cannot regulate their body temperature by themselves and need to move to a cooler area (shade or water) to lower their temperature. Luckily, for most of them Turtle Foundation team finds them on time and do what they can to help. To start, they gather water from the sea throw it on the turtle, to lower the temperature and try to give it some life so it return to sea. If the turtle reacts, our team just makes sure she goes on the right direction and follows her back to the sea. In some cases however, the turtle is too weak and too hot, and after some carefully evaluation our rangers and volunteers make the decision to take it to the shoreline, either dragging or carrying her. They then stay with the turtle while the ocean water brings her "back to life" and watch her leave safely. While working the beaches one is often confronted with hard decisions and needs to choose the "lesser evil" while doing the best for these amazing animals



Some items are very hard to get in Boavista, or expensive, and that is the reason why we ask our volunteers for donations of such items. We focus mainly on school supplies: books, backpacks, crayons, markers, pencils/pens, etc. However, we also make very good use of educational DVDs that we can use on activities with the local children. Our volunteers Wiebke, from Germany, and Rita, from Portugal, kindly donated some of this material and Fundação Tartaruga is very thankful.





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The waters of Boavista are extremely rich in biodiversity and relating to turtles, 5 of the 7 species existent are found here. The main species is the loggerhead turtle that makes the beaches of Boavista the 3rd largest nesting site worldwide. In addition, green turtle, hawksbill, olive ridley and the massive leatherback were recorded in the area. The nest in Boavista are almost 100% loggerhead but sometimes there is a few exceptions. Our team in Norte from Canto Camp noticed a strange track during the morning censo. Upon further investigation our coordinators Sidney and Kátia concluded a green turtle was the “culprit” and that she nested as well. Green turtles leaving a track very different from her loggerhead cousins. The loggerhead crawls on an alternating gait, with the front-right and rear-left flippers moving at the same time pushing the turtle forward and then, this step is mirrored, as the turtle keeps moving. On the other hand, green turtles move all four flippers at the same time in a simultaneous movement digging the flippers in the sand and pushing the turtle forward (*Witherington, 2015*). For experienced eyes, the tracks are very easy to tell apart and it’s always exciting when we recorded a different species nesting in our beaches. Our team will keep monitoring the nest and crossing fingers for success! .



It is always time to learn new things! In Boa Esperança Camp our volunteers got together for some English lessons. Knowledge of the English language is a valuable skill and what better way to “kill” time during the day in camp than learning with our international volunteers. It is a give and receive process: while our local rangers teach the volunteers about turtles and Cape Verdean culture, the volunteers teach English. As seen on the photos our rangers are very interested and paying attention to do the lessons of their “teachers”. It will not only improve communication in camp but also for their future life.

Photo contributions: Camilo Carrasco, Gabriela Fernandes, Airton Jesus and Sidney Leonor