



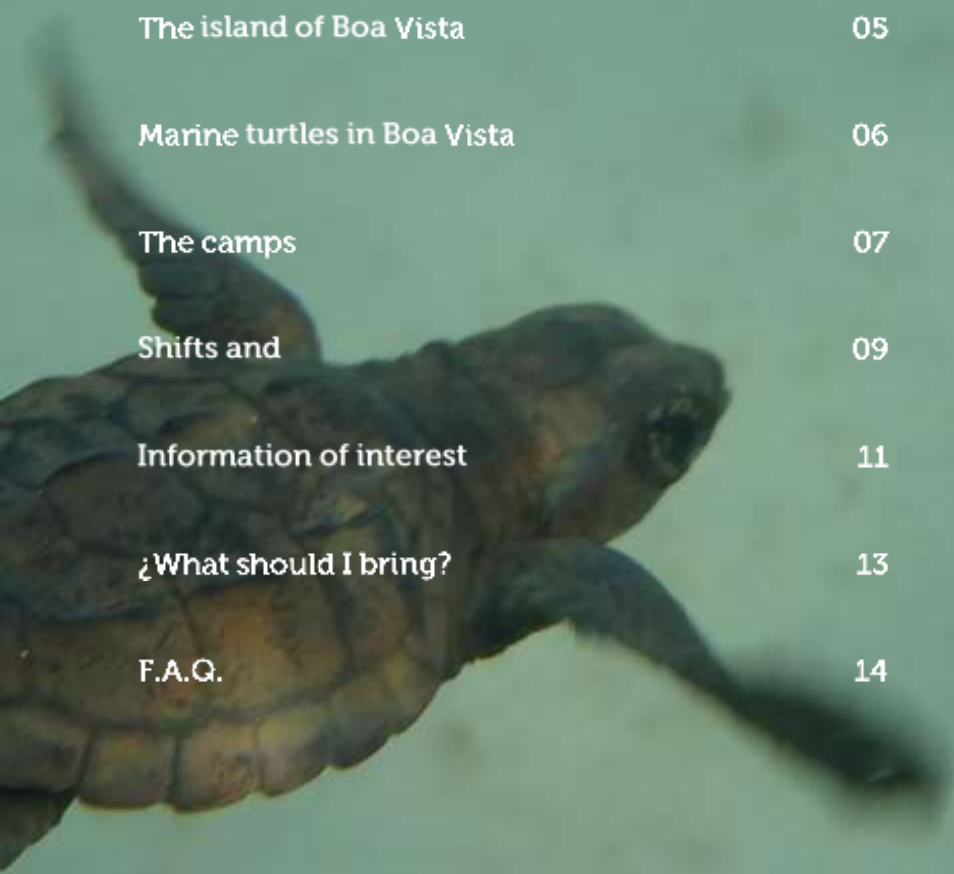
Cabo Verde Natura 2000

MARINE TURTLE CONSERVATION AND RESEARCH
CAMPS IN THE ISLAND OF BOA VISTA, CAPE
VERDE



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About us

Cabo Verde Natura 2000 is a non-governmental, non-profit organization (NGO), legally constituted in June 2003. It works in conservation and research of the biodiversity of Cape Verde since 1998, focusing its main activity on the island of Boa Vista.

This organization was founded by Dr. Luis Felipe López Jurado, Phd in Biology and Professor of the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (ULPGC), who conducted the first detailed scientific study of the biodiversity of the archipelago (mainly from the eastern islands: Boa Vista, Maio and Sal) within a EU project [CABO VERDE NATURA 2000]. Planification and sustainable organization of the territory and the natural resources of the coast of Cape Verde and the islands of Sal, Boa Vista and Maio (B7/62000/98-10/ENV/V111). (1998-2002)]. The results of this project revealed the large existing biological richness of the islands, with a wide number of endemic and globally threatened species, therefore the great importance of conservation and protection.

Today, the NGO is run by local and international staff, trained in both the environmental (marine biologists and graduates in Marine Sciences) and social levels (graduates in Social Sciences).



We preserve the natural resources of the Archipelago.

We educate towards environmental awareness and training nationally and internationally.

We promote social development, investing effort and will on actions designed towards sustainable social development.



Main goals

- Conservation and sustainable management of natural resources in Cape Verde.
- Research, conservation and protection of endangered species both globally and regionally.
- Education and technical training of local, national and international staff in environmental and nature conservation work.
- Development of international cooperation projects to support the sustainable development of Cape Verde.
- Improvement of basic infrastructures for the social development of the Cape Verdean people (education, sanitation, water supply, etc.).
- Development of educational and environmental awareness activities.

Your help is crucial.

Volunteer's help is essential in order to achieve these goals.

Every year hundreds of volunteers contribute by helping us in the protection, conservation and research works of the natural resources of the island of Boa Vista.





The Cape Verde Archipelago

Location

The Republic of Cape Verde is a West African archipelagic state, located in the Atlantic Ocean, approximately 1.000 km Southwest of the Canary Islands and 460 km West from the coast of Senegal. It spans through an oceanic area of 370 km from East to West, South from the Tropic of Cancer, between 14°50' y 17°20' North and 22°40' y 25°30' West.

With a surface of 4.033 km², it comprehends ten islands and five islets. The northern islands, called islands of Barlovento, are Santo Antão, São Vicente, Santa Lucia, São Nicolau, Sal and Boa Vista; and the southern, islands of Sotavento, are Maio, Santiago, Fogo and Brava. The biggest and most populated island is Santiago (990 km²), and the only uninhabited and smallest is Santa Lucia (35 km²).

It is the southernmost archipelago in the Macaronesia (the group of atlantic volcanic islands which also includes Azores, Madeira and the Canaries).

The country's population is 524.833 inhabitants (2015). The capital city is Praia, in the island of Santiago, with 151.436 inhabitants (2015). Other important cities are Mindelo (São Vicente) with 71.468 (2015), Assomada (Santiago) with 13.295 (2015) and São Filipe (Fogo) with 22.227 inhabitants (2015).

Language

Cape Verde's official language is Portuguese, but Capeverdeans usually speak in creole ("Kriol"), which is every Capeverdean's native tongue, used in the everyday interpersonal relationships.

Currency

The official currency in Cape Verde is the Capeverdean Escudo, which keeps a fixed value with the Euro (1 € = 110,265 ECV). Nowadays payment with Euro is accepted in many places, but the exchange is a bit unfavorable for the consumer (approximately 1 € = 100 ECV).

It is recommended to exchange euros for escudos in a bank (there is a wide range in Cape Verde), where they apply the established fixed value and charge a commission between 350 and 500 escudos (3 - 4,5 euros) per operation, with independence of the amount. After bank operating hours (generally from 8 to 15 h nonstop), there are exchange offices which apply a more expensive type of exchange.

It is also possible to withdraw money using international credit cards on the Vinti4 ATMs, but the commission is high. Payment with credit card (Visa, American Express, Mastercard) is ONLY accepted in the higher end restaurants and hotels in the island of Santiago and some tourist establishments on the islands of Sal and Boa Vista.

Climate

The archipelago of Cape Verde has a dry-tropical climate, with moderate temperatures (between 20-25 °C). The island of Boa Vista is very flat (Monte Estância is the highest peak with 387 m), so the clouds pass along unstopped; highly arid, with scant vegetation based mainly on bushes or halophilous crawling plants, thus almost lacking natural shaded areas; it has vast areas of stony deserts, dune fields and large white sand beaches.



The island of Boa Vista

The island of Boa Vista is the easternmost of the archipelago, roughly standing 500 km from Africa and 2.000 km from the Canary Islands. It has a surface of 620 km² which makes it the third largest of the archipelago of Cape Verde. The island is scarcely populated, with a total of 9.000 inhabitants (INIE, 2010). The capital or main centre of population is Sal Rei, and there are other 6 centres of population dispersed through the central and northern part of the island.

Halfway through the tropic of Cancer and the Ecuator, it has a hot and dry climate during the majority of the year, with temperatures oscillating between 22 °C and 28 °C. The eastern trade winds blow from November to June changing the climatic conditions, reaching forces from 15 to 30 knots. The rainy season occurs in the months of August through October.

Monte Estância, 387 m high, is the highest part of the island, which indicates its flat and eroded morphology. Better known as the Island of dunes, Boa Vista has 55 km of beautiful white sand beaches with emerald greenwaters.

Regarding biodiversity, it is a worldwide important enclave for numerous sea turtle, bird and marine mammal species.

The biodiversity is broad and possesses a high number of flora and fauna endemisms. The Project for the Consolidation of the System of Protected Areas of the island of Boa Vista started in 2011, with 14 protected areas being implemented on the island, which constitute 30% of all the protected areas in Cape Verde.

The first protected area was the Reserva Natural da Tartaruga (RNT) - Turtle's Natural Reserve, because of the importance of the area for the nidification of the Loggerhead turtle.





Marine turtles in Boa Vista

In 1997, ULPGC professor and NGO CV Natura 2000 founder organized an expedition to Cape Verde to discover its fantastic biodiversity. One of the most important findings was the Loggerhead turtle "*Caretta caretta*" breeding colony, which nests in the archipelago, unknown to the scientific community until then. After the first years of study it was discovered to be the only nesting colony in the eastern Atlantic basin, the 2nd largest colony in the Atlantic and the 3rd most important population worldwide, after Oman and Florida.

To this date, 5 of the 7 species of marine turtles in the world have been spotted in the Cape Verde archipelago:

- The Loggerhead turtle "*Caretta caretta*": nests in the archipelago.
- The Carey turtle "*Eretmochelys imbricata*": in juvenile phase.
- The Green turtle "*Chelonia mydas*": in juvenile phase, although 20 nests have been recorded on the beaches of Sal, Boa Vista and Maio in the last 10 years.
- The Leatherback turtle "*Dermochelys coriacea*": sporadic sightings.



The Olive Ridley "*Lepidochelys olivacea*": with registered dead or sick individuals in the islands of Boa Vista and Sal. En los últimos 10 años se han registrado 30 nidos en las islas de Boa Vista, Sal y Maio.

Nowadays all marine turtle species are in danger of extinction, although there is international legislation for their protection. The Loggerhead population in Cape Verde is amongst the 11 most endangered marine turtle populations in the world according to IUCN 2011 (International Union for the Conservation of Nature).

The main hazards for marine turtles in Cape Verde are poaching and habitat loss because of touristic (luminic pollution, beach degradation, etc.) and urban activities (sand mining). Natural causes such as the low incline of some beaches, the presence of floodable areas and the high predation rates (mainly by the phantom crab "*Ocypode cursor*") make their conservation even harder.

Boa Vista's beaches host more than the 80% of the nesting in the whole archipelago. This nesting activity is concentrated on the eastern and southeastern beaches, located in the Reserva Natural das Tartarugas (RNT) and Parque Natural do Norte (PNN), however it can be spotted in almost every beach on the island. There are an estimated 5.000-10.000 females in this population, however, different factors such as the fidelity towards the nesting beaches, the re-migration period (2 or 3 years) and the impossibility of observing every turtle that comes out to nest on the beaches makes knowing the exact size of the population very difficult.



The camps

NGO Cabo Verde Natura 2000 has been conducting marine turtle conservation and protection camps in Boa Vista since 1998.

In collaboration with Canarian NGO Asociación para el Desarrollo Sostenible y Conservación de la Biodiversidad (ADS Biodiversidad), it organizes an international volunteering program where environmentally aware people, interested in deepening their knowledge of the nesting marine turtle population in the island or those who just want to help in the improvement of the planet, can participate.

These camps have allowed year after year for many turtles to find a quiet and stable place to nest, becoming international reference centres on education and research in marine turtle manipulation.

CV Natura 2000 started by protecting the 3 most important kilometres of Loggerhead nesting beaches in Cape Verde, but through the years the area of study and conservation has grown to currently 15 km, now controlled by two camps.



Ervatão Camp
(active since 1998)

- Located on the southeast of the island, in the Reserva Natural das Tartarugas (RNT).
- Covers the 7 most important kilometres for the nesting of Loggerhead turtles in all Cape Verde.
- Holds capacity for 30-35 people.



Porto Ferreira Camp
(active since 2009)

- Located on the east of Boa Vista, in the Parque Natural do Norte (PNN).
- Covers 8 km of Loggerhead turtle nesting beaches.
- Holds capacity for 30-55 people.

Main activities

- Daily turtle track and nest census in nesting beaches.
- Control and surveillance of the nesting beaches.
- Rescue of disoriented females.
- Protection of breeding females and their nests.
- Tagging and data collection on breeding females.
- Control and monitoring of beach productivity:
 - Tagging and monitoring natural nests.
 - Exhumation of natural nests.
 - Analysis of egg and hatchling predation and mortality rates.
- Improvement of the natural beach productivity through hatchery incubation programs.

Work groups

The work groups are always made of 1 instructor and 2-4 volunteers. The instructor guides and supervises the volunteers on performing the different activities, indicating how to act on each moment.

Because the breeding female and hatchling's activity occurs during the night, the work shifts are conducted during the night or at dawn.

Direct work with breeding females, nests and hatchlings is performed at night. The shift duration is 6 hours.

Daily track and nest census, natural nest monitoring and exhumation and rescue of disoriented females is performed at dawn. This shift's duration depends both on the distance to and length of the assigned beaches and the quantity of nests, tracks and encountered females.



Isolation conditions

The camps are located on isolated areas, quite far from the capital and/or populated areas. Because of this, the volunteers remain during almost all their stay in the camp and its surroundings.

The NGO organizes 3 trips around the island to allow volunteers to get to know Boa Vista. Local drivers are hired for the trips, the cost being 10-12€ per person and trip approximately, depending on the number of people.

People attending this volunteering program must come to terms with the fact that they will share their lives during 4 weeks, 7 days a week and 24 hours a day with people of different customs, culture and personality.

The daily showers are performed in the sea. Water is a very scant resource in the island and its transportation to the camps is difficult, so the disposal of potable water is only for drinking, cooking and in particular cases, for hygiene (applying contact lenses, cleaning infected wounds, etc.).

Ervatão camp has latrines since 2013, which Porto Ferreira still doesn't. Their use is mandatory: it is forbidden to do business anywhere else and they are to be kept clean and ready for use (there is a specific daily shift in order to keep them clean).

*The camps are run by mostly Kriol, Portuguese, Spanish and English speakers. Volunteers should feel comfortable communicating in any of these languages.



SHIFTS AND DURATION

The shifts have been created according to the start and end of the marine turtle's nesting season in Cape Verde and adapting as much as possible to the flight dates from Europe.

Participants with a minimum stay of 3 weeks will have preference.

PREF. (1 to 4)	SHIFT	START DATE	2 WEEKS	3 WEEKS	4 WEEKS
	1	22 th June	6 th July	13 th July	20 th July
	2	6 th July	20 th July	27 th July	3 th August
	3	20 th July	3 th August	10 th August	17 th August
	4	3 th August	17 th August	24 th August	31 th August
	5	17 th August	31 th August	7 th September	14 th September
	6	31 th August	14 th September	21 th September	28 th September
	7	14 th September	28 th September	5 th October	12 th October
	8	5 th October	12 th October	19 th October	-----

