

Project Update: April 2017

- After the meeting with the stakeholders in December 2017, the team completed a reconnaissance survey along the coast of Cameroon and patrolled about 150 km to identify the part of the coast where nesting activities likely occur. At the end of this reconnaissance survey, five sites were retained for monitoring and include Limbe, Batoke, Bankinguili, Idenau and Bamuso (please check the map in the excel sheet attached by for geographical localization of these sites).

- The team also administered questionnaires to the local community. A total of 127 fishermen were interviewed and we are analysing the data. The data will give us some information on the local perception of the community about sea turtle abundance and threats. Also, we will use this data to tailor an efficient sensitisation strategy.

-Two AMMCO's staff received four days hands-on training on marine turtles nesting beaches monitoring from Alexis Guilleux (Central African Marines Turtles Conservation Network- RASTOMA). The training modules included: sea turtle identification, biometry, and data collection, tagging, nest and bycatch monitoring, education and sensitisation techniques and release of by-caught alive or stranded individuals. The trained staff, in turn, trained and equipped 10 local fishers selected from communities around nesting beaches and together they are conducting thrice a week beach and by-catch monitoring in Batoke, Limbe, Idenau, Bakinguili, and Bamusso.

- Our developers are building a mobile app that will facilitate sea turtle monitoring in Central and West Africa. My abstract was accepted for an oral presentation at the Sea Turtle Symposium in Las Vegas and will hold next week. Please see attached a copy of the accepted abstract.

- Our observations at this point indicate that there are few nesting activities on the north coast of Cameroon as we have identified so far only 12 old sea turtle nests in 3 months of monitoring activities and no track has been identified (see excel file). It is important to note that our monitoring activity started only in December 2017, so it is possible that we missed nesting that might have occurred from September to December. The team was surveying each beach thrice a week; however, given the low nesting activities, we are going to reduce the frequency of monitoring to once every 15 days as recommended by the SWOT Sea Turtle Monitoring Guideline. We hope to pursue the beach monitoring till we complete a full circle year of monitoring in order to have a clear idea on the nesting activities on that part of the coast that has been understudied. Also, it appears that the north coast of Cameroon is a feeding site for some species of sea turtles as fishermen frequently report them in the sea (see interview sheet in the Excel file).

- This month, we are starting with the sensitisation activities. The team is currently designing brochures for the purpose. We will keep you in touch with the activities.

