

Final Evaluation Report

Your Details	
Full Name	Jaqueline Lopes Varela
Project Title	Monitoring and environmental education to support conservation of endangered species in an African shark nursery
Application ID	40442-1
Date of this Report	3/2/2025

1. Indicate the level of achievement of the project's original objectives and include any relevant comments on factors affecting this.

Objective	Not achieved	Partially achieved	Fully achieved	Comments
Monitoring of shark populations			X	From January 2024 to January 2025 we monitored the shark nursery weekly and sampled 768 milk sharks, 78 scalloped hammerheads, 31 blacktips and 15 weasels.
Environmental Education Campaign			X	The awareness campaigns were carried out on two islands in the Cabo Verde archipelago, Boa Vista and Santiago, and involved more than 1,000 direct and indirect beneficiaries.
Mark-recapture of sharks		X		The purchase of tags and applicators was made abroad in a very complex process that took a long time.

2. Describe the three most important outcomes of your project.

a). Extension of shark awareness activities to another Cabo Verde island (Santiago) which allowed to cover more fishing communities;

b). Field visits by the President of the Republic of Cabo Verde, the First Lady and children to witness the work of monitoring and releasing juvenile sharks as an experience to change the community's perception of sharks;

c). Master's thesis: Martins, M. (ongoing) Comparison of Baited Remote Underwater Video (BRUV) and gillnets surveys for the assessment of juvenile shark diversity and abundance inside a multispecific nursery area. Master Thesis in Marine Ecology. Faculdade de Ciências da Universidade de Lisboa.

3. Explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled.

We were faced with a shortage of some equipment on the local and national market that had to be purchased outside the country, such as GoPro, waterproof cases and tags. In order not to delay the project, we turned to other partner NGOs to lend us

equipment. We also faced difficulties in finding affordable accommodation since Boa Vista is a tourist island and all the project staff are from outside the island.

4. Describe the involvement of local communities and how they have benefitted from the project.

The project contributed to increasing ocean literacy among a wide and diverse audience. More specifically, we carried out seabed cleaning and 7 awareness-raising sessions with fishing communities involving 57 fishermen and 17 fishmongers in two islands of Cabo Verde, Boa Vista and Santiago. The topics covered were shark diversity, their importance for the oceans and for fishing, threats, legislation aimed at protecting them and the identification of prohibited species. This helps to reduce conflicts between fishermen and enforcement authorities.

A total of 571 students, 291 girls and 280 boys, benefited from the shark awareness campaign. Sessions took place in classrooms during the school term, at holiday camps and on field trips. The talks covered the role of sharks in the balance of marine ecosystems, the main threats, key areas for their conservation and how they can help protect the species. Special attention was paid to demystifying and clarifying issues such as shark attacks and the role of cinemas in creating misperceptions about these marine animals. As well as complementing and reinforcing the content taught on marine biodiversity, the awareness-raising activities in schools, adapted according to level, also contributed to other aspects of ocean literacy, particularly in the context of issues such as climate change, pollution, habitat degradation and overfishing.

We involved 13 participants from companies in the tourism sector on the island of Boa Vista. The awareness-raising sessions aimed to demonstrate the importance of sharks in tourism, exemplifying the Azores where diving with these animals generates a lot of financial resources. It also focussed on the need and role of tourism companies in protecting Sal Rei Bay as a shark nursery and their potential to contribute to this branch of tourism in the future.

During the fieldwork, we talked to more than 300 tourists about issues such as avoiding fishing in the nursery, clarifying myths and increasing knowledge about sharks.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes! The continuation of this work is fundamental for the monitoring and conservation of the shark nursery, given its critical role in the species' life cycle. It generates valuable data and time series for scientific publications, contributes to the definition of effective environmental policies and awareness campaigns aimed at protecting the species and promoting a positive attitude towards sharks. It is also crucial to continue with awareness campaigns to involve more communities, especially on the island of Santiago where there are the highest number of fishermen in the archipelago and the highest shark catch in the country.

6. How do you plan to share the results of your work with others?

- . Scientific publication in an international journal;
- . Presentations at conferences and training for members of other NGOs;
- . Technical report to the Ministry of the Environment;
- . Posting videos and posters on social media.

7. Looking ahead, what do you feel are the important next steps?

The next key steps are to train more local people in shark monitoring and identification techniques. Monitoring adult shark populations around the islands of Boa Vista and Santiago to identify priority areas for conservation.

8. Did you use The Rufford Foundation logo in any materials produced in relation to this project? Did the Foundation receive any publicity during the course of your work?

The Rufford Foundation logo was used on all communication materials since the start of the project in January 2024. It was used in 42 audiovisual publications, powerpoint presentations and social media posts. The Rufford Foundation was publicised to various national authorities, at art events, on national television, at the Ocean Decade Conference and in all public presentations related to the project.

9. Provide a full list of all the members of your team and their role in the project.

Rui Rosa - Scientific Coordinator;
Vasco Pissarra - Scientific advisory
Catarina Santos - Scientific advisory
Deisy de Pina - Communication;
João Pina - Field assistant;
Angelito Gomes Monteiro - Field monitoring assistant with BRUV;
Stephany Lopes - Environmental educator;
Judith Fliehm - Masters student and volunteer field assistant;
Madalena Martins - Masters student and volunteer field assistant;
Sara Ratão - PhD student and field assistant volunteer

10. Any other comments?