



Impact Report 2024

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Executive Director
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2024 Organisation Summary

While 2023 was a key year for the consolidation of the new structure and strategy of our organization, 2024 has been a year of implementation and strengthening for Project Biodiversity, defined by steadfast dedication and collaborative progress. Our programs have embraced both challenges and opportunities, pushing the boundaries of conservation, community engagement, and organizational growth. Noteworthy is our participation to the International Sea Turtle Symposium for the first time after 16 years of sea turtle conservation in Sal Island, presenting this long-term conservation effort. This report narrates the year's journey, offering insights into the spirit and resilience that guided our achievements.

New General Office

At the beginning of March, we moved the old Field Base and the Management Office to a new unified large office, where all the team and main equipment is based. The new space has 4 rooms: Direction and Management, Meetings and Trainings room, Technical and equipment room, and Coordination room. The space has a kitchen, a toilet, and a small changing room. During the 2024, the new office has served to different events and meetings, such as the regional meeting on seabird conservation, a workshop to develop the Strategic Plan of TAOLA+ national network, and some capacity building initiatives.



Figure 1 -Meeting room (left) and administration office (right) of the new office in the city of Santa Maria.

Organizational Development

In 2024 the team had 27 permanent staff, one more than 2023. From those, 22 are nationals and 5 internationals, with 11 women (41%) and 16 men (59%). Two new members joined the team, our new Coordinator for Education and Community Development, and a technician for the Outreach activities. 2024 was the first year for the implementation of our new Strategic Plan 2024-2028. Several key actions from our Ambition 4 “Reinforcing our Organization” were initiated and/or concluded, the main ones being:

- **Improve the organization's governance** with the arrival of new members and the renewal of governing bodies. We organized the annual General Assembly of the organization. Following one of the strategic actions identified in the Strategic Plan, we welcomed five new members to the organization, bringing the total number to 10. This is an important step in the development of our organization, as more members means better governance and control, and will force the organization and its direction to improve aspects such as transparency and financial planning. At the same time, we renewed all the members of the Direction and the Assembly board. We have also initiated the process to renew key governing tools such as the Statutes, the Internal

Regulation, integrating international standards and the Operational Manual, another of the key actions identified on the strategic plan.



Figure 2 - Picture of the new and old members of the assembly of the NGO after the 2024 General Assembly.

- Improvement on internal **financial management**, with the creation of a budget control system for each program, and a more practical financial control system. This have improved our capacity to prepare financial reports and better plan the use of funds.
- **Reinforcement of the mobility capacity** of the organization to meet current needs, with the purchase and operability of a new boat and two new vehicles, one of them second-hand. This have allowed us to implement more activities and more efficiently, keeping a good track of vehicle maintenance.
- Finally, **we improved our international volunteering program** with new visuals, better digital marketing strategy in place and renewed website. During the first half of 2025 we will continue to renew the website to make it more attractive to volunteers and donors.

Partnerships and projects

During 2024, two partnerships started. In one side, the Marine Programme started to implement the new project “A Network of Effective Marine Protected Areas of Cabo Verde”, funded by [Blue Action Fund](#) and Oceans 5, and coordinated by [Fauna & Flora](#). This project will finish in 2028 with the creation and/or expansion of Marine Protected Areas. [Foundation Hans Wilsdorf](#) started their organizational development support (2024 – 2026) which will be help us achieve key parts of our new Strategic Plan. During this year we also received support for our plant conservation and ecosystem restoration programmes from the [Foundation Franklinia](#), through a national initiative to conserve the endemic trees of Cabo Verde. Our strategic partner [McPike-Zima Foundation](#), continued supporting our organization, providing critical funds that allowed us to sustain most of our Terrestrial Conservation initiatives.

Other on-going projects continued during 2024. This is the case of the partnership with the [Turtle Aid](#) of TUI Care Foundation, the “Cabo Verde’s Seabird Conservation project” funded by BirdLife Africa, the project to support artisanal fisheries promoting responsible practices funded by the Darwin Initiative and the [Survival of Sea Turtles](#) (STM, from the French “Survie des Tortues Marines”), all of them finishing in 2025 with the exception of the last one.

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New funds from “Fundación LoroParque” were also confirmed to support shark conservation on Sal during 2025, with the third phase of this initiative, this time to use acoustic tags to monitor the lemon sharks of Parda Reef.

On the other side, by the end of the year, we started a new project to restore coastal sand dunes in Sal and Boa Vista, funded by the US Embassy of Cabo Verde. Sadly, in January 2025 we were communicated that the funds were frozen and to continue with the project we should accept the new anti-DEI (Diversity, Equity, Integration) policies from the new US government. Our organization decided to reject this imposition, finally losing those funds.

Year	Total Budget (CVE)	Total Budget (EUR)	% of increase	Nº of Staff at EoY
2020	CVE 24 966 000	€ 226 418		13
2021	CVE 35 496 700	€ 321 921	30%	15
2022	CVE 56 745 359	€ 514 627	37%	21
2023	CVE 60 209 069	€ 546 040	6%	26
2024	CVE 77 836 523	€ 705 904	29%	27

Figure 6 - Total budget per year since 2020 with the percentage of increase from the previous year and the number of permanent staff.

Capacity Building Initiatives

Our commitment to continuous learning and skill enhancement as a driver of progress and success continued. This year’s capacity-building efforts spanned from technical certifications in diving safety for our marine team to gender equality workshops fostering inclusivity across our staff. A highlight our participation on the International Sea Turtle Symposium, as well as the exchange visit to the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, where our team absorbed effective methods in dune restoration. Some of the key training sessions and workshops included:

- **Gender Equality Workshop:** For the first time in our organization, we conducted a training session fostering gender awareness and inclusivity within our organization, particularly in the environment of conservation and tourism.



Figure 3 - Gender equality workshop with most of the team from Project Biodiversity.

- **Exchange Visit to the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (ULPGC):** From January 27th to February 3rd, two technicians from the Terrestrial Program, the Project Manager, and the Director visited the dune restoration and management program in the Protected Area of Dunas de Maspalomas, in Gran Canaria. The visit allowed our team to learn firsthand from the park's director, technicians, and researchers from ULPGC about the strategies used to recover a large dune ecosystem that faces similar challenges to Costa Fragata in Sal. The knowledge gained is now being implemented in our dune recovery projects. Additionally, the Director held meetings with researchers from ULPGC and Universidad de La Laguna (ULL) to establish collaborations, particularly focusing on research support and student exchanges for our dune restoration initiatives. As a result, in 2025 we will host a MSc student who will conduct research in Sal.



Figure 4 - Visit to the Protected Area of Dunas de Maspalomas, in the island of Gran Canaria. The terrestrial team learned dune restoration technics together with the park management and field teams.

- **Participation on the International Sea Turtle Symposium (ISTS) 2024:** During the last week of March, Kirsten Fairweather and Artur Lopes, Coordinators for the Sea Turtle Conservation Program, represented Project Biodiversity at ISTS in Thailand. Prior to the event, they spent two weeks at Queen Mary University of London, working alongside PhD students who conduct research in Sal. They received training on statistical programs used for data analysis and collaborated on past research findings. At the symposium, Kirsten presented a comprehensive analysis of 12 years of turtle conservation efforts in Sal, marking the first time our work was showcased at this prestigious event. Artur Lopes contributed with a poster presentation titled “Reducing Poaching in Sal Island: A Wide Approach Beyond Traditional Beach Patrols.”
- **Human resources and wellbeing at work:** Janice Pinheiro, Director of Finances and Human Resources participated on a three-days’ capacity-building workshop to strengthen her skills for the management of the team.

- **Other capacity-building actions:** Within specific project, some team members also participated in other capacity-building actions such as **diving safety and rescue certification** and a **free diving course**, an exchange visit to Oxford University to learn more on how to analyze **social behaviour and market dynamics surveys**, a comprehensive training on **invasive species monitoring and control workshop** with experts from New Zealand, capacity-building on project-based **environmental and social monitoring and evaluation**, and a training for one of our technicians on **operating heavy machinery** who obtain a new license.



Figure 5 - Participation of our Sea Turtle coordinators in the International Sea Turtle Symposium in Thailand with a poster (left) and an oral presentation (right).

Report on the different Organization Programs:

1. Terrestrial Conservation Program

In 2024 we continue our efforts in protecting and restoring Sal's delicate ecosystems. The program was divided in three projects:

- **Endemic palm tree conservation and habitat restoration:**

The recovery of *Phoenix atlantica*, Cabo Verde's endemic palm tree, was particularly noteworthy. Our team planted 117 new trees produced in our plant nursery. Before planting them, a genetic analysis was conducted in collaboration with Queen Mary University of London to verify those came from, in fact, endemic adult trees. It is important to note that the endemic *Phoenix atlantica* is very closely related to the regional-spread *Phoenix dactilifera*, being very difficult to identify the difference morphologically. With the new palms, we increased the population to 330 individuals—a remarkable 192% growth since the program's inception.



Figure 7 – “Tamareiras” (*Phoenix atlantica*) being prepared from transplantation in our plant nursery. Later on the endemic palm trees were planted in Beirona, one of the oases cleared from invasive acacia trees.

However, the lack of rainfall and rising temperatures presented significant challenges. To address this, we developed a regular watering system, providing regular irrigation to sustain the newly planted palms and mature individuals under stress. Two abandoned old wells completely clogged with detritus were cleared. From those, only one had water, which after lab analyses it showed to be too salty for watering the palm trees. Experimental measures, such as the construction of small dams, were introduced to improve water retention and soil moisture.



Figure 8 – Thanks to the collaboration with a construction company, a bulldozer was offered to unroot acacia trees (left) and to build a dam to retain or slow down rainwater and, therefore, decrease erosion and favour water absorption.

Meanwhile, invasive species removal from their natural habitats continued. With the wood obtained from the clearing of the invasive acacia trees (*Prosopis juliflora*) the team created several hundreds of fencing poles that were later used to fence off coastal dune areas, target of our dune restoration initiative.

As a positive unexpected result of the year was the late production of *tamara* seeds from two of the endemic adult palm trees. After an uneventful flowering season (September-October) on 2023, this year we could not find new seeds neither. However, in December the same palm trees that produced

seeds in 2022 provided us with a bunch of new seeds (over 250) that were collected and are currently being planted in our nursery.



Figure 9 – From the wood obtain from pruning and felling of acacia trees (left) hundred of poles were produced and used for fencing of critical coastal dunes areas (right).

○ **Restoration of dune ecosystems:**

Thanks to an early exchange visit to the project Masdunas in the Nature Reserve of Dunas de Maspalomas in the south of Gran Canarias, with the collaboration of a research group from the Geography Department of the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canarias, our team could start implementing more efficient technics for dune restoration. Over 35 sand retaining structures were build using an invasive species (*Arundo donax*) brought from another island. Those were placed together with new tamarisks (*Tamarix senegalensis*), in degraded areas where light pollution coming from the nearby city of Santa Maria threatens new-born loggerhead turtles.

The tamarisk had been largely produced in our nursery and planted in the coastal dunes of the Nature Reserve of Costa Fragata, where reports say it was predominant in the past. Their population have since grown from less than **30 in 2022 to 433 today, 123 planted in the last year** in Costa Fragata, and 23 others elsewhere. During this time, the team have improved the transplanting protocol, reaching almost 100% of survival rate in the last months and reducing the watering needs. Since our organization started to recover the tamarisks, a total of 505 tamarisks have been planted in natural conditions



Figure 10 – So far, more than 500 native tamarisks (*Tamarix senegalensis*) have been produced in our plant nursery (top) together with other plants. In December, and after an expert evaluation, tamarisks were planted in well-established foredunes in Costa Fragata Nature Reserve.

In addition to the tamarisk, the team increased the diversity of plants grown in the nursery, including up to 8 endemic plants species, mostly for educational purposes. By the end of the year, we started preparing the plant nursery for the new dune restoration project funded by the US Embassy in Cabo Verde. Part of the plant nursery was covered with shade to increase the survival of the new seedlings, and new species were planted. We expect that during 2025 we will plant hundreds of these species in the Nature Reserve of Costa Fragata. The objective is to use different plant species that adapt better to the different states of dune formation, using a nature-based process known as ecosystem transition.

The new dune restoration project was launched in December, with the visit to the islands of Sal and Boa Vista of a team of experts of the ULPGC, who conducted an ecosystem pre-analysis to gain better understanding of the needs. During the visit, we set the first experimental area for dune restoration of 1.250 m² in one area completely degraded. There, we are testing the use of a new plant, the *Arthrocaulom franzii*, which is highly adapted to salty habitats, as a natural retainer of sand and the first of a series of plants that will transition to established dunes.



Figure 11 – Two experimental areas have been fenced off during: top picture) a completely degraded area using *Arthrocaulom franzii*, more halophile; bottom picture) an area with already accumulated sand, using tamarisks. On both areas sand retaining systems are being used to boost dune formation.

○ **Improved participative management of Protected Areas:**

During 2024 the organization made significant progress towards improving the managing and enhancing the Protected Areas of Sal. A total of **17 new signs to inform about Protected Areas and nesting beaches** and their regulations were installed, although several were vandalized after the first months (or even days!). With the placement of some signs, several beaches were fenced off to minimize the motorized access and their degradation.



Figure 12 – Some of the signs placed in the different Protected Areas informing about the area and its regulations. In some places, posts were used to stop driving on important sea turtle nesting beaches (top left). The signs were done with the collaboration of the local environmental authorities (top right).

A milestone was the **fencing of 1,25 km of path using the pruned acacia wood** from the palm trees oases. A total of 8,2 ha of coastal dunes are now fenced off from vehicles, boosting its chances to regenerate. The fence, that was finalized in December, allowed us to plant over 25 new tamarisks in the foredunes now protected. However, other damaging activities such as horse excursions are still risking the restoration efforts, with horses roaming all over the dunes with no control. Pressure has been done to the national authority to act against this.

Another initiative to reduce the impact of tourism in the Protected Area focused on the quadbikes and buggy excursions. After consultation with the local park authority and the private businesses it was agreed to establish a single trail for their use. Although more than 130 poles were placed to

signal the path, some excursions are still going off-road. The almost inexistent presence of the environment authority in the island is challenging all conservation efforts made in the Protected Areas, as tourism industry are aware of this and take advantage. For this reason, we have engaged with the new Municipal Police with a series of training and visits to the different Protected Areas of the island.



Figure 13 – Over 1,25 km of Protected Area path was fenced to stop vehicles driving on important foredunes (top). This was done using the acacia wood obtained during their pruning and felling from the palm trees oases. Some paths that used to be used regularly by pick-up drivers and quadbike excursions are being restored after fencing them off and planting new tamarisks (bottom).

Two new large funds were secured to improve the management of two Nature Reserves. The funds sourced by the Riu Hotels and the Spanish Cooperation Agency will not be managed by our organization. However, we expect to have an important role on their implementations. So far, by the end of 2025 the detailed projects were developed with our collaboration and were finally approved by the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment. They are planned to start at the beginning of 2025, but we expect already some delays.

2. Sea Turtle Conservation Campaign

In 2024, we registered the **second highest number of nests in Sal Island since 2008**. The total nest number was 36.745, representing an estimated 7.349 nesting Loggerhead turtles. **A total of 159 people participated in the monitoring** of over 25km of nesting beaches, from which 51 were directly employed by the organization and 24 were community members, mostly fishers from fishing associations. A total of 66 international volunteers joined us at some point from July until December, and 10 students from the University of Cabo Verde were supported to participate in the campaign.

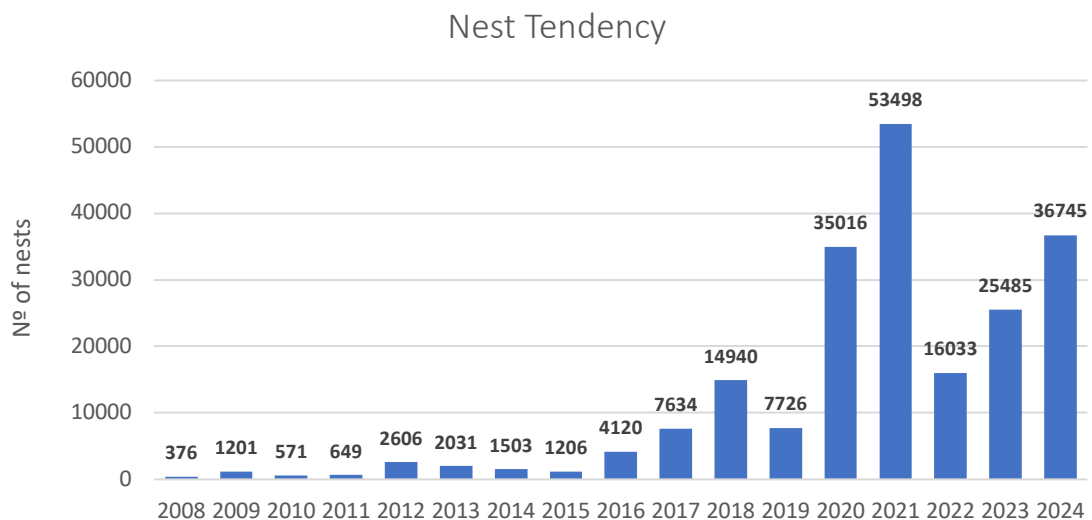


Figure 14 – Graphic showing the nesting trend in the island of Sal since 2008, when consistent data started to be recorded. 2024 was the second with a greater number of nests on record.

Patrols started on the 11th of June and finished on the 7th of November, being this the longest nesting season on record. Two drone pilots covered an extension of more than 26km, performing over 519 flights. Drones continued to show its efficiency deterring poachers, both working independently and with joint missions with the military. Mortality rate of nesting turtles on monitored beaches was below 0,05%, while on the entire island was 1,5%. This is the **lowest mortality rate recorded to date**. However, 110 turtles were registered poached, from which “only” 2 were taken in monitored beaches. On the other side, 151 turtles were rescued during the nesting season, seven directly from the hands of poachers. Due to our monitoring, 8 poachers were apprehended *in flagrante* and brought to court by the police. Another 11 suspected poachers were either removed by the authorities or ran away from our patrols.

Four hatcheries were built this year, with a total of 2.225 nests relocated there, representing only 6% of all the nests of the island. The hatcheries had a combined median of 82.3% of success and a total of **115.963 new-born loggerhead hatchlings were released to the sea**.

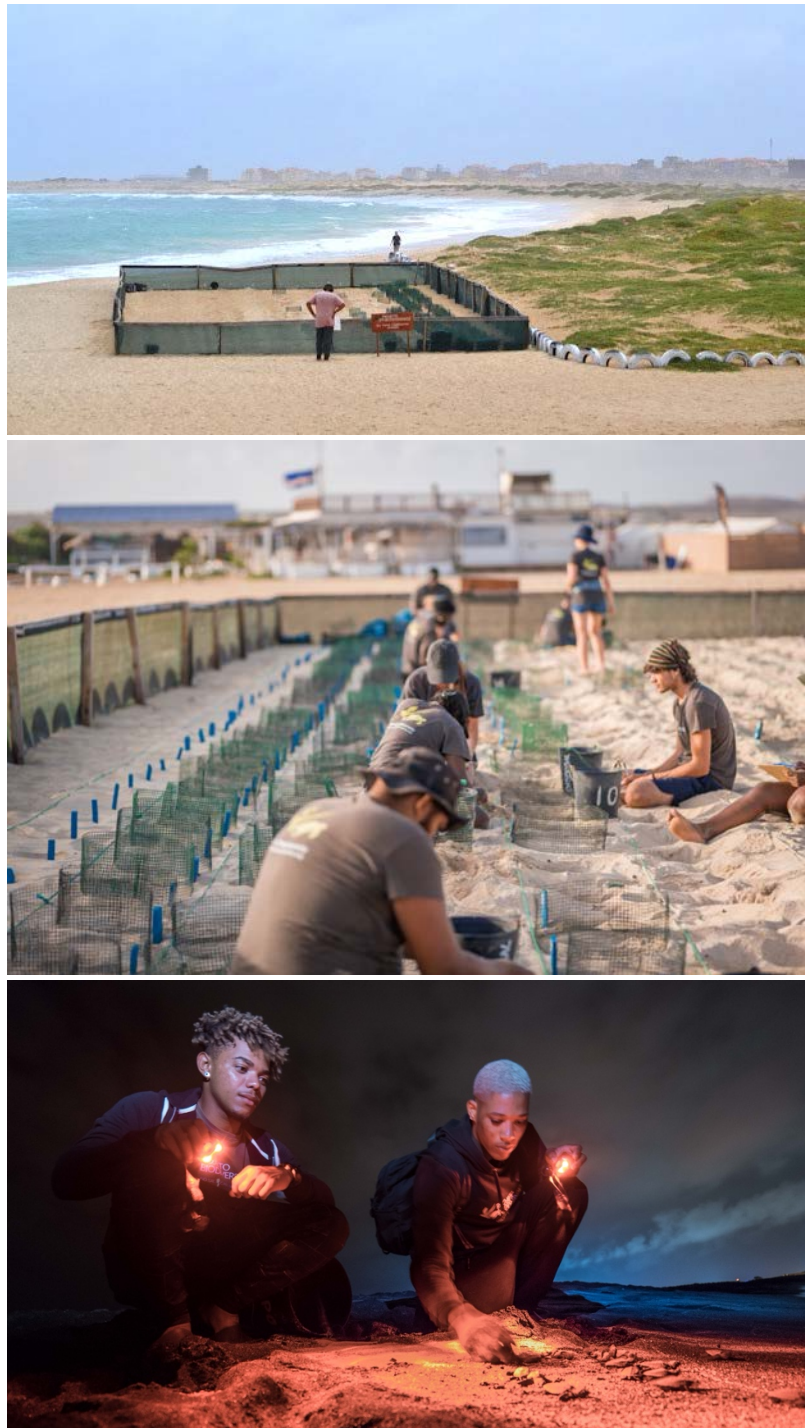


Figure 15 – Doomed nests were relocated to 1 of the 4 hatcheries, like the one located in Costa Fragata (top and middle photos). During hatching season, from August to December, the field team and international volunteers monitored the nests (middle) and released the new-born turtles in the beaches (bottom).

At the end of October, track direction was recorded for naturally hatching nests on Costa Fragata, one of the main nesting beaches heavily affected by light pollution. The results show that, especially on the sections closer to the city, the impact of light pollution was much greater than anticipated, with an average of 50% of hatchlings orientating to the city instead of the ocean, even on nests that would have been considered “safe” from light pollution. These results showed the gravity of the situation for hatchling survival and the need to implement alternative solutions in place of unrealistic relocation strategies.

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Another of the highlights of the season was the participation in the **first Workshop on Environmental Issues organized by the General Prosecutors Office**. The event was the result of the lobby that we led the prosecutors office, and started to be planned during the TAOLA+ meeting of last May. During the two-day workshop, prosecutors from all the islands, as well as the General Prosecutor of the Republic, Criminal Police and National Police General Commanders and other high-rank officers and lawmakers participated, together with the representants of the main conservation NGOs of the country. Our Director and the Social Behavior Coordinator presented the shocking results of the recently finished research on market dynamics and the socioeconomic and demographic aspect of the illegal trade of sea turtle products.



Figure 16 – We presented the main results of our research project about illegal trade of sea turtle products during a workshop organized by the General Prosecutors Office.

More information of the sea turtle conservation campaign of 2024 can be found on the [full season report](#) together with figures and more statistics.

3. Seabird and Osprey Conservation Project

The osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) breeding season finished with the register of 10 active nests in the island, including two new nests, one of them in a phone antenna in Santa Maria. Although we could not verify, and 11th nests was reported in a light post inside the port. By the end of 2024 and since we started monitoring its local population, we have registered 40 nests. From the 10 active nests, only 8 produced chicks, from which three lost the offspring. **From the remaining 5 nests our team ringed 9 chicks.** During 2024 several sightings of Ospreys ringed in Sal by us were reported in the island of Sal and Boa Vista. This is possible thanks to the cooperation between the different conservation groups monitoring the Osprey, with a shared national Data Base. Perhaps the most relevant sighting were the pair of Ospreys that built the nest in Santa Maria phone antenna. Those ospreys have the rings H7 and 84, which are offspring from the same parents, but from two different consecutive years. In preparations for the 2025 breeding season, our team installed an artificial platform in the *Tamareira* oases of Beirona, where a pair of ospreys had built nests in dead palm trees that ended falling in the last two years. The platform will give a much better suitable location for their nest. This initiative was possible thanks to do donation of the platform from Bios CV, organization that have been using this type of platforms for many years.



Figure 17 – Ringing osprey chicks is a widespread methodology to monitor populations (top pictures). In Sal, 9 chicks were ringed in 2024. To increase the breeding success, an artificial nesting platform was installed in Beirona, where two nests have fallen from dead palm trees in the last two years.

Our team continued to conduct systematic surveys in the seabird breeding colonies of Sal, monitoring the Red-billed tropicbird (*Phaethon aethereus*), Bulwer's petrel (*Bulweria bulwerii*), Cape Verde shearwater (*Calonectris edwardsii*), Cape Verde storm petrel (*Hydrobates jabejabe*) and the Cape Verde small shearwater (*Puffinus boydi*), the last three endemic of the islands. A highlight of the season was the confirmation of a 6th seabird species in the island, the White-faced storm petrel (*Pelagodroma marina*), also known in Sal as Calca-mar, the bird that gives the name to our new boat. Although we could not confirm whether is breeding in Sal, we found some individuals using mist nest near colonies of other species.

In total, **over 97 visits to all the colonies were made**, including night-time visits, where 165 new Red-billed tropicbirds were ringed, mostly chicks (128). Another 183 birds from the other 5 species were also ringed, with the Bulwer's petrel representing the majority (128). A total of 21 nests of the Cabo Verde shearwater were registered, with two new adults ringed and 26 other adults recaptured from previous years. From the 21 nests, 16 were successful and produced a chick that fledged. From those, our team managed to ring 15 before they left the nest. This is the highest reproductive success recorded to date, with 76% of eggs with a fledged chick.

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	Red-billed tropicbird	Bulwer's petrel	Cape Verde storm petrel	Cape Verde shearwater	Cape Verde small shearwater	White-faced storm petrel
Recaptures	153	52	3	34	0	0
New ringed	165	128	33	17	1	2

Figure 18 – Table with the number of recaptures and new individuals ringed for the six seabirds species present in Sal Island.

On the negative side, at least 41 Red-billed tropicbirds (adults and chicks) were predated during the year, mostly by stray dogs. After many years of ecological monitoring and research, our team will start focusing on controlling IAS (Invasive Alien Species) that are risking the future of all seabird colonies of Sal. The only colony where no predation has been registered until now, is the small Rabo de Junco islet, where up to five species reproduce. This shows how Sal Island would have looked in terms of seabirds in the past, with little anthropogenic threats. To boost our new priority, the team participated in a comprehensive training on IAS control and eradication, with experts from New Zealand. During 2024 we deployed traps for rats and cats, with the later one showing little success. Two large traps for stray dogs have been locally built and will now be deployed nearby the main Red-billed tropicbird colony.

All the seabird monitoring and conservation activities are part of a long-term nation-wide effort, with five different NGOs implementing the project in almost all the islands of the archipelago. In November, the project entered its last year of implementation and funds.



Figure 19 – A technician and an international volunteers carefully walking near the cliffs of Serra Negra, the largest colony of Red-billed tropicbirds of Sal.



Figure 20 – A grown chick of Red-billed tropicbird before being weighted, measured and ringed. Chicks can be differentiated from adults for the colour of their beak: white-yellow for the chicks, and red for the adults.

Together with the education and tourism outreach team, the seabird project has also increased its awareness and communication activities, with the new seabird's exposition and involving the youth and fishers. The work done with seabirds was also showcased in the first episode of “Mundo Sustentável”, our TV program.



Figure 21 – Seabird exposition in the port of Palmeira (left) and in during the Ocean Decade Conference in Sal Island, with the President of the Republic caught pointing the distribution map of the Cape Verde shearwater (right).

4. Marine Monitoring Program

This year, the Marine Monitoring Program achieved unprecedented milestones in marine biodiversity research in Sal Island. Using the footage **from the deployment of 71 BRUVs, the team identified 10 elasmobranch species** in the coastal waters of Sal. The species identified are: spinner shark, atlantic blacktip shark, nurse shark, lemon shark, smooth hound, tiger shark, scalloped hammerhead, rough tail sting ray, round stingray and a still-to-determine species of mobula. These discoveries not only reaffirmed Sal's marine richness but also highlighted the need for enhanced protective measures. It is important to note that the areas with more concentration of sharks are not included in MPAs, with only 19% of sightings inside those.

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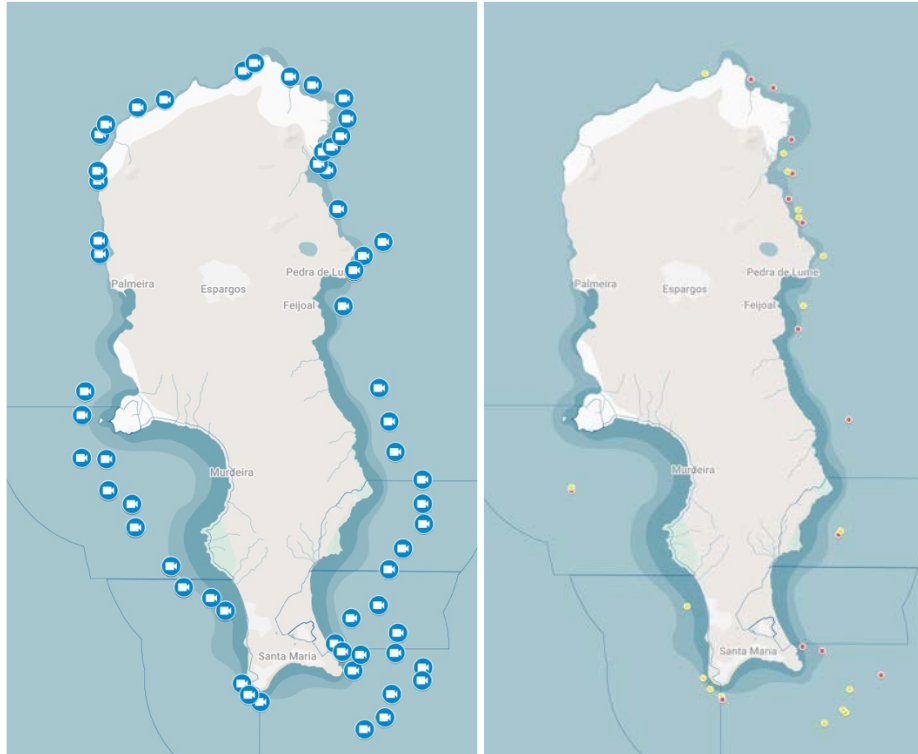


Figure 22 – BRUVs deployment distribution map (left) where each camera a deployed BRUV. On the right side, sightings of sharks (red dots) and stingrays (yellow dots). The east side of the islands is preferred by elasmobranchs, specially the north-east. Interestingly, a minority of sightings where inside current protected areas (blue borders).

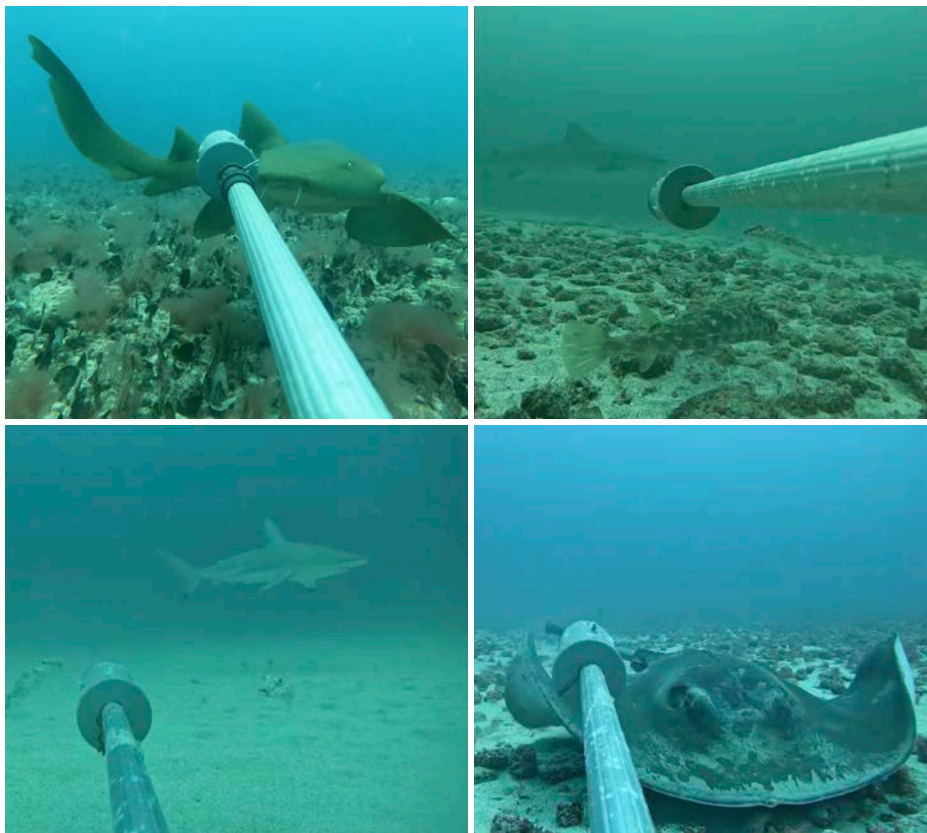


Figure 23 - Different species of elasmobranchs identified during the BRUV surveys. In the pictures we can see a nurse shark (top left), a bull shark (top right), an Atlantic black-tip shark (bottom left) and a round stingray.

Underwater surveys covered over 7,250 m² within and around the four different MPAs of the island, cataloging fish biomass and benthic habitats to establish baseline data. These insights are vital for monitoring ecosystem health and assessing the effectiveness of conservation interventions. 152 drone surveys complemented these efforts, mapping the spatial and temporal distribution and abundance of marine megafauna across 5 coastal areas throughout the year. **A total of 50 hours of flight videos** are being analyzed by our collaborators from Queen Mary University of London.

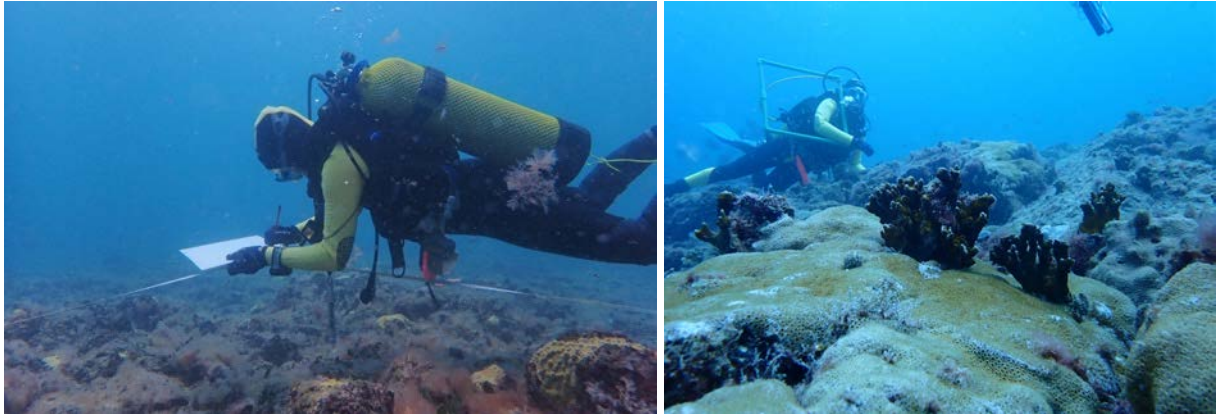


Figure 24 – One of our last underwater surveys to collect the baselines on bioindicators and to categorize the seafloor.

In the Reef of Parda, where our organization have been working during the last years, the team continued the tagging and recapture missions. The overall objective of this project is to improve the knowledge on this area as a lemon shark nursery. During 2024, the team has been increasing its efficiency and with improved protocols, reducing considerably the time spent to catch and release juvenile sharks. In total, **39 juvenile sharks were tagged and another 42 were recapture during 29 missions**. The shark tagging not only involve the Marine Monitoring team, but member of all the other programs as well as local and international volunteers and, when possible, members of the Association of Workers of Parda Bay (ATSB). Since the start of the program in 2023, we have tagged 81 juvenile sharks, from which 78 are lemon sharks from Parda.



Figure 25 – Team in the reef of Parda getting ready for another lemon shark tagging.



Figure 26 – A juvenile lemon shark is being measured before inserting the tags and being released back to the water.

In parallel to this work, we have been working with the ATSB to improve their capacity and, at the same time, reduce the impact of the shark watching excursions in the sharks. During the year several capacity-building activities were organized, such as a workshop on shark biology and ecology and a 28-lessons French course. New informative panels were designed informing about the shark biology, the best practices for shark watching and the conservation work. The signs were placed in Parda during the 1st anniversary of the ATSB association. To ensure the participation of the community in the future of Parda, we have been working with the tourism authorities and consultants to create a Participative Management system, including an architectural project and the legal statutes of a potential society to manage the area.



Figure 27 – Two sets of signs were placed in the Reef of Parda to improve the shark-watching activity and to reduce its impact.

As a direct result of our work in Parda shark sanctuary, we aim at proposing to the government the creation of a new MPA or Special Area for the Conservation of Sharks. The proposal will be the last activity of our three and a half years project and, although will be prepared during the first trimester

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of 2025, we have started official negotiations with the government that have shown interest on joining this process. Along the year, the team also confirmed the Nature Reserve of Costa Fragata as another shark nursery, confirming the presence of juvenile Atlantic black-tip sharks, spinner sharks and the critically endangered scalloped hammerhead shark.

At the end of the year, the program coordinator, Berta Renom, joined Bimini Shark Lab team during a mission in Florida Keys where she learned different technics that we will start to apply in Sal in the coming years, such as the use of acoustic tags. She also visited the research group from the Pritzker Laboratory for Molecular Systematics and Evolution of the Field Museum of Chicago, where she kick-off a collaboration with the analyzes of the skin samples collected during the last two years. More information on this mission can be found on its detailed report.

5. Sustainable Fisheries Program

The work done through our Sustainable Fisheries Program have continued empowering fishing communities, giving them an active role in biodiversity conservation. With the fishers from the Guardians of the Sea program, which counts with 54 fishers from the three different communities of Sal, we have been testing different methodologies to reduce bycatch of seabirds and sharks: the Scarybird® kite, the SharkGuard® and the introduction on special circular hooks. With those we aim at decreasing the conflict between wildlife and fishers, reducing the damage to the fishers' daily work and preserving marine life. Although we are facing some important challenges with the SharkGuard device, mainly due to the poor user-friendly built and battery life, the results reported by the fishers on the use of both devices was positive. Bigger efforts were placed with the use of the Scarybird, with several boats using the at the same time and the objective of starting the same experience in different islands of the archipelago. Fishers have received training on how to use them alongside practical training on safe handling of bycaught seabirds. On the other side, fishers rejected the use of circular hooks. To test them we finally recruited one of the fishers that joined other fishers during normal fishing days. This experienced finished in September and the results are being analyzed.



Figure 28 – Fishers received training and tools for safehandling of seabirds and the use of Scarbird to avoid bycatch (left top and bottom). The kites were been tested during most of the year (right), with a general positive feedback from fishers.

The firsts workshops started with the women fishmongers to support them in the creation of the first Sal's fishmongers' association. This was one of the key actions identified in the fishmongers' Action Plan prepared in the past also with our support. Fishmongers had decided to finally engage in the creation of a single association for Sal Island, which will represent mainly women from different communities. While our team have been preparing the next steps for the officialization of the association, a three-days workshop was conducted introducing sustainable practices and innovative market strategies for utilizing fishery by-products, fostering economic independence and diversifying income. Twenty-six women and four men fishmongers participated in the workshop, and were later invited to apply for a 12-months incubator that we are developing together with our partners from the Future Shaper House from the Tui Care Foundation.



Figure 29 - Exhibition of fishery products and by-products after the three-day workshop with fishmongers. At the end of the training, they received certificates of participation.

Concurrently, preparations for solar-powered energy systems advanced steadily, aiming to improve fish preservation capabilities at two fishers' associations. This initiative represents a leap forward in sustainable practices, reducing reliance on traditional energy sources, which have increased the costs for the use of freezers and ice-production machines. The first plant is scheduled to be inaugurated around mid-February.

In November, our organization finally signed an Agreement of Collaboration with the IMar, the national institute of ocean research. The protocol focuses on sharing knowledge and data, increasing the reach of both institutions' activities. Surveys on fish-landing and fishing effort continued during the whole year, ensuring a constant evaluation of fish-stocks in Sal.

6. Education and Awareness Campaign

Education and awareness campaigns flourished in 2024, emphasizing youth engagement as a driver of change. The inaugural **Youth and Environment Forum** emerged as a landmark event in Sal's environmental education history. Over 260 youth gathered in Santa Maria school to explore critical topics such as recycling, biodiversity conservation, and community action. This forum not only empowered Sal's youth but also solidified their role as future stewards of the island's natural heritage. It is important to mention that the forum was organized and ran by our Youth Nature Ambassadors, a program with 50 youth from Sal. The same ambassadors participated in 11 different activities, including shark tagging missions, beach cleanings and round tables.



Figure 30 - 1st Youth and Environment Forum, with panels on recycling (top left), sharks (bottom left) and seabirds (seabirds), with the participation of teenagers and youth from Santa Maria and Espargos (top right).

A total of 60 lessons were conducted in the schools, covering subjects such as the importance of sea turtles and sharks. In addition, 15 field visits were organized, visiting our plant nursery, our sea turtle hatchery, nesting beaches, seabird colonies and others. Our ambition is conducting more outdoor lessons instead classic school's lessons. However, the challenge remains with the transport, with little support from other institutions. Complementing these efforts, snorkeling expeditions, experimental diving experiences, and the use of Virtual Reality underwater experiences offered participants tangible connections to marine ecosystems.



Figure 31 – Different environmental awareness activities using new methods of communication such as VR headsets (left) and traditional school lessons about sea turtles (right).

This year we also increased the amount of beach cleanings, with five large cleanups and two 2 underwater cleanings, one with the participation of the President of the Republic and other authorities. **Approximately 7.325kg of trash was collected.** In summary, **2.342 kids and youth, 115 educators, 50 youth nature ambassadors and 472 people** from the public participated in our activities.

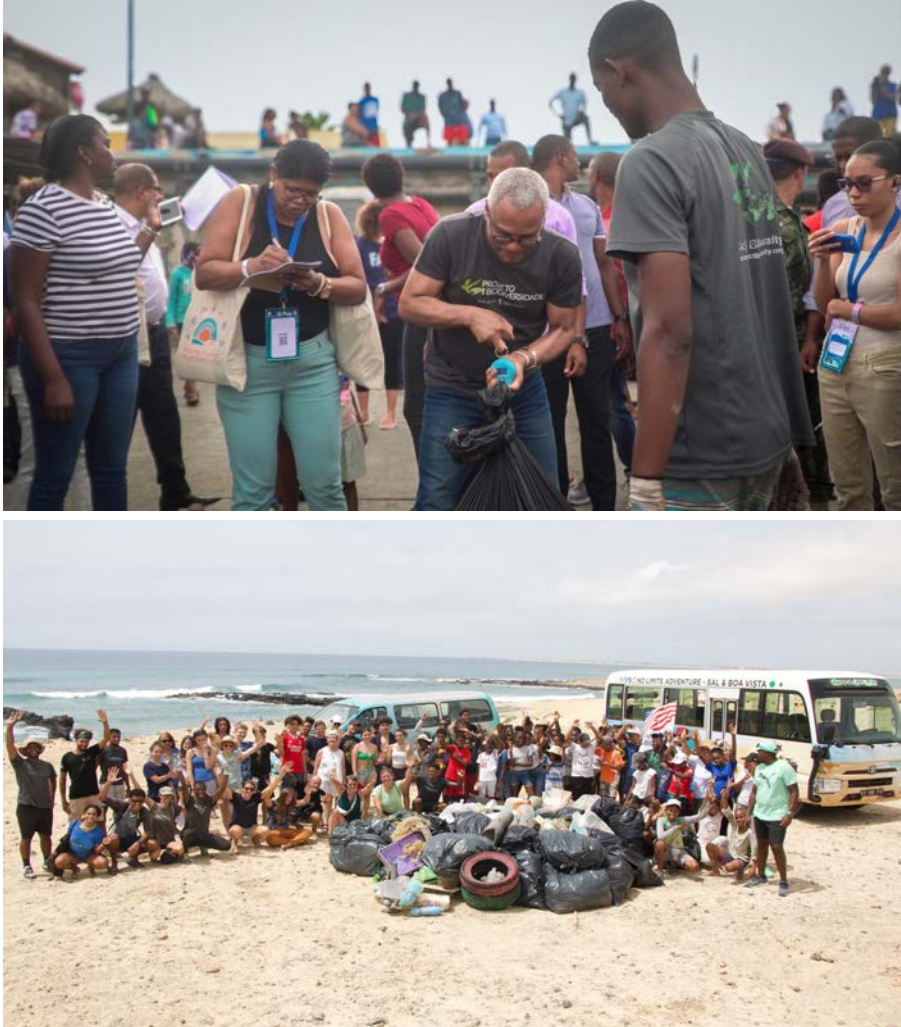


Figure 32 – The of the cleaning activities organized this year. To celebrate World Oceans Day, the traditional underwater cleaning was organized in the port of Palmeira, coinciding also with the Ocean Decade Conference and the participation of the President of the Republic (top). On the bottom, a beach cleaning in Serra Negra prior the sea turtle nesting season.

In terms of communication, this year we aired 18 radio programs from our "Environment in Focus" radio program. We also aired the first two episodes of the second season of our TV program "*Mundo Sustentável*" or "Sustainable World" with more than 5.000 views only our social media and an unknown reach on local TV, where the episodes are constantly shown. Until the end of the year four other episodes are ready to be broadcasted, and six more will be produced. The episodes are also available on our [YouTube channel](#) with captions in Portuguese and English.

Two new expositions were added to our outreach and communication tools. A series of nine posters about the seabirds of Sal, and a series of real-size sea turtle sculptures. Those expositions were used to target both local population and international visitors, being exposed in schools, the airport, the port of Palmeira and in the Oceans Decade Conference in Sal. The seabirds exposition have now been duplicated by Bios CV, a partner organization from the island of Boa Vista.

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Figure 33 – Sea turtle exposition during the Ocean Decade Conference in Sal. The same exposition has been used during the kids visits in our conservation hatchery.

7. Sustainable Tourism and Fundraising

Tourism played a pivotal role in broadening our reach and enhancing our fundraising capabilities. Over 23.200 visitors engaged with our conservation hatchery, exhibits and hotel activities gaining firsthand knowledge of Sal's ecosystems and our conservation efforts. Visiting our sea turtle conservation hatchery remains as the [“#1 Things to Do”](#) in Santa Maria on TripAdvisor. All these events and public activities with tourists translate into increased environmental awareness among them, highlighting the impact of their visit and giving them tools to reduce it. A milestone of the program was the production and launch, during the World Turtle Day, of the [new video](#) promoting sea turtle conservation, with an accumulated 50.700 views only on our social media (main video with pre-campaign videos).

During 2024, the team has also managed to slightly increase the donations received, both in cash and online, by 5%. The success of our fundraising strategy is more visible when comparing with 2022, before we boosted the program. From 2022 to 2024 we registered an increase of 56,6%. In total, the organization fundraised 70.159€ during 2024, representing 10% of the yearly income. Near half of this funds are used to cover core costs of the organization, and the rest are reserve funds.

The organization started to improve our digital marketing strategy. During 2024 we focused on improving the digital marketing for our international volunteering program, with [new visual material](#), a more friendly [website](#) and a social media campaign. This effort was made after recruiting new international volunteers had become more difficult and numbers were decreasing. In the coming months we will follow up with a full website renew and improving our online presence. Partnerships with publications like the Bradt Travel Guide and features in global outlets further elevated our profile as a reference in conservation and responsible tourism source of information in Cabo Verde.



Figure 34 – Different tourism outreach activities with turtle watching tour guides (left), hotel staff (top right) and in the airport of Sal (bottom right).

8. TAOLA+ National Network

One of our greatest achievements in recent years has been the creation and operationalization of **TAOLA+**, Cabo Verde's national nature conservation network, where we played a key role. In 2024, we co-organized and hosted the **2nd annual TAOLA+ meeting**, bringing together conservation leaders, government representatives, and international partners to align conservation strategies and foster knowledge exchange. A major milestone was the first General Assembly, where members elected the network's governing bodies, with our organization joining the **Direction Board**. The assembly also approved new guidelines, codes of conduct, and internal regulations, strengthening TAOLA+'s governance. To further support conservation NGOs, we organized a half-day workshop on best practices for NGO management, reinforcing our commitment to their growth and effectiveness.

In November we also hosted in our office a group of 16 representatives from the different conservation NGOs of Cabo Verde and the coordinator of TAOLA+. During three days, the participants worked to prepare the first Strategic Plan of the network, process facilitated by the PPI coordinator, Aurelien Garreau, who also facilitated the preparation of our Strategic Plan.



Figure 35 - On the left, all the elected members for the different boards of TAOLA+, after the 1st ever General Assembly of the new network. On the right, our sea turtle coordinator, Artur Lopes, presenting the work of Project Biodiversidade.

Financial Report

Summary of expenses 2024

Table 1 – Annual expenses from 2024 by general category. 77% of all costs were direct project costs, while general costs was only 14%. The program with the largest budget was the Sea Turtle Conservation Campaign, with almost 37% of the total budget. The second biggest spenditure was for the Marine Monitoring Program, with 16%.

Category of expenses		Amount CVE	Amount EUR
General Costs		CVE 10 406 413	€ 94 376
Fundraising and Tourism outreach		CVE 2 784 479	€ 25 253
Capacity Building		CVE 1 133 457	€ 10 279
Support TAOLA+ Network		CVE 3 271 890	€ 29 673
Direct Project Expenses		CVE 60 240 284	€ 546 323
Programmes	Education & Awareness	CVE 1 594 465	€ 14 460
	Marine Monitoring Programme	CVE 12 707 055	€ 115 241
	Sea Turtle Conservation Programme	CVE 21 866 406	€ 198 308
	Seabirds Conservation	CVE 5 831 449	€ 52 886
	Sustainable Fisheries Programme	CVE 4 573 545	€ 41 478
	Terrestrial Conservation Programme	CVE 4 937 721	€ 44 780
	International Volunteering Programme	CVE 3 159 643	€ 28 655
	Common Expenses (cars purchases)	CVE 5 570 000	€ 50 515
		€ CVE 77 836 523	€ 705 904

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Summary of income 2024

Table 2 – Total income during the year 2024, with 27% of unrestricted funds, including the grant from Fondation Hans Wilsdorf.

Source income	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total EUR
Corporative Donations	€ 30 081	€ 27 500	€ 57 581
Individual Donations	€ 480	€ 50 902	€ 51 382
Foundations and Grants	€ 501 104	€ 80 000	€ 581 104
Government	€ 9 069		€ 9 069
Universities	€ 30 007		€ 30 007
Volunteer Fees		€ 28 995	€ 28 995
Total Income	€ 570 741	€ 187 397	€ 758 138

Balance 2024

By the end of the year, a positive balance of 18.581€ was registered. This balance results from the difference of **income** (758.138€), **registered expenses** (705.904€) and **delayed expenses** (33.653€). The delayed expenses represent planned expenses during 2024 that we were not able to use, but that will be used during 2025. A positive balance means that the organization fundraised more than what had expended. These funds are normally used as reserve funds for future potential uncovered salaries.

	Total EUR
Income	€ 758 138
Expenses	€ 705 904
Delayed expenses	€ 33 653
Balance 2024	€ 18 581