



MAIO BIODIVERSITY FOUNDATION

JANUARY- MARCH 2023
Maio Island, Cabo Verde

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**NEWSLETTER
Nº 4**



WELCOME TO OUR FOUNDATION

Message from the Executive Director

Dear friends and members of Maio Biodiversity Foundation,

This new year has brought us more energy and an unbreakable will to do more and better, for FMB, for the "maienses" and for nature.

In this perspective, it is with great joy that I inform you that from april, my dear friend and colleague from FMB, Janete Agues, will be the new Executive Director.

Strengthening local skills and ensuring the sustainability of FMB are two of our main objectives. The new National Board therefore decided to accept my proposal to launch an internal application to identify, within the team, someone from Maio capable of managing the destiny of our NGO. Janete applied, was interviewed by members of the National Board, had a brilliant performance and was selected for the position. I will continue to be part of the team, as a technical advisor, and to assist the new director with great pleasure and a new spirit.

I take this opportunity to thank you for your support and good advice over the last 6 years of total dedication to Maio and FMB. The recent election of the new governing bodies that integrate several members of the different Maio communities, gave us encourage. We believe that 2023 will be a promising year. We count on all of you so Maio Biosphere Reserve will always be an example of "Djunta mon" for biodiversity conservation and sustainable development.

Yours faithfully,

Rocio Moreno



JOURNEY



Born in Spain, Rocio Moreno holds a PhD in Zoology and Animal Ecology. Throughout the years of her professional career, this adventurous and admirable woman has played an important role in promoting integrated approaches to conservation in dynamic, interdisciplinary and challenging environments in different organisations and countries. Responsibilities include coordinating the IUCN Red List of Threatened Seabirds, improving threat assessment and marine actions, coordinating a development programme in Nepal and environmental consultancy.

Considering her experience, leadership skills and passion for community-based focused conservation work, she arrived on Maio Island in 2017 to work as a Executive Director of Maio Biodiversity Foundation.

Her challenges include strategic planning, team and relationship management, fundraising and representing the NGO at all levels, maintaining positive relationships with government, local communities, major donors and key stakeholders. Her leadership and performance in collaboration with her collaborators has contributed immensely in building the history of this magnificent organisation, which has become a national and international reference in terms of environmental conservation and sustainable development work.



FMB HAS A NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Starting in april, our dear Janete Agues will formally take over as Executive Director of FMB. Janete graduated in Geography and Territorial Planning from the University of Cabo Verde in 2012 and has been working at Maio Biodiversity Foundation for 10 years.

Throughout this decade she has participated in building the history of this magnificent organisation that has become a national and international reference in environmental conservation work. She currently holds the position of Education and Sustainable Development Program Coordinator.

Janete is a young, firm and discreet woman, quite skilled in team leadership, design and management of key FMB initiatives: i) author of the "Environmentally Friendly Zone" initiative, ii) development of the ecotourism brochure entitled "Ilha do Maio: Nature, Culture and the Protected Areas", iii) identification of key community awareness raising actions and strategies to reduce the impact of human action on biodiversity, and iv) development and operationalisation of the Homestay Program.

Janete is from Maio and therefore has a very particular relationship with the island's natural and cultural heritage and with the communities of which she is a part. According to Janete Agues, the new FMB Executive Director, feels joyful and confident in effectively supporting the development and achievement of the organisation's objectives and in promoting the sustainable development of the island in close collaboration with the local communities and local and national authorities.

We wish her success and a long journey at FMB.

The Board of Directors and the entire FMB team



MAIO BIODIVERSITY FOUNDATION

TESTIMONY



JOSÉ MONTEIRO DOS REIS

Farmland within the dunes

"My family has a tradition of farming here, since I was a little boy. Unfortunately, in recent years cultivating anything has been very difficult due to the droughts.

I am very happy with the maintenance work being carried out by the warden inside the Park, and I believe that the recuperation of the wells will be an added value for us farmers and cattle breeders who use the park.

At first, my intention was to cut the tarrafes to make protection for my farmland, but I changed my mind when the wardens spoke to me and demonstrated the importance of this endangered species for our dunes.



Phoenix atlantica

One of the most important ecosystems in Maio island is located in the Natural Park of North of Maio and is a refuge for a large part of the native and endemic flora species of the island such as the *Phoenix atlantica* (Palm tree) - an endangered species (IUCN).

It is a palm tree with 2 to 6 trunks, measuring 5 to 15 m tall and with dark green leaves 2 to 3 m long. The fruit is an oval pink drupe 2 cm long and 1 cm in diameter containing a single large seed. The flesh of the fruit is edible but very rare.



MAIO BIODIVERSITY FOUNDATION

HIGHLIGHTS

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

1ST QUARTERLY MEETING



Special thanks
to the
members of
the Board of
Directors
attending to
the first
meeting of
the year.

On november 21st of 2022, the General Assembly of members held in the city of Porto Inglês, elected the new governing bodies of FMB. The Board of the General Assembly is responsible for summoning the General Assembly and leading its work, as well as preparing and signing the minutes and empowering the members of the governing bodies. The Board of Directors, which is the executive and administrative organ of FMB, is responsible for its administration and day-to-day management, legal representation and the coordination of the external representation of the Foundation. The Fiscal Board examines and supervises the organisation's accounts and verifies compliance with legal and statutory duties.

On march 18th 2023, the new Board of Directors organized its first meeting in Porto Inglês. The Executive Director presented with the support of the team, the activities report and a summary of the financial situation of FMB in 2022, confirming a positive balance and good prospects for the future.

The activities program and budget for 2023 were approved as well as an internal restructuring, we can highlight the selection of a new Executive Director and a new turtle program coordinator, both from Maio.



PEW'S 2023 MARINE FELLOWS SET TO ADVANCE OCEAN SCIENCE AND CONSERVATION

Juan Patino-Martinez, Ph.D., a conservation biologist at Maio Biodiversity Foundation, has been named a 2023 recipient of the Pew Fellowship in Marine Conservation. As one of seven conservation researchers from around the world awarded the fellowship this year, Patino-Martinez will receive \$150,000 over three years to develop new, low-cost, open-source satellite telemetry devices to scale-up monitoring of highly mobile marine species.



“Through the development of low-cost technology we will identify the spatial distribution of distinct sea turtle populations and assess the effectiveness of coastal and marine protected areas,” said Patino-Martinez. “[We will] determine marine hotspots of high conservation value for marine turtles to promote the conservation of crucial habitats; implement a comparative analysis of sea turtle distribution and fishing activities to enable marine spatial planning; and provide free access to project information and data online to encourage research in monitoring and tracking species as a contribution to ocean conservation.”



FIRST NESTS *Caretta caretta*

Praia Gonçalo and Santo António beaches

On march 15th, we recorded the first *Caretta caretta* sea turtle nests in Maio island.

The 2 nests, of different females, were registered by two residents of Santo António and Praia Gonçalo. We would like to thank you very much to Adilson and Emiliano for their involvement and interest on protecting the turtles and the nests.

Each year, the first nesting events are recorded earlier and earlier. In 2020 the nesting season started in may, in 2021 and in 2022 the first nests were found in april and in 2023 in march.



Recent data indicates that loggerhead turtles are nesting earlier than before. Such tendency might be related to climate change.



YOUNG AFRICAN LEADERS INITIATIVE (YALI)

The Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) was launched by former President of the United States Barack Obama as a signature effort to invest in the next generation of African leaders.

The aim is to support young African leaders in their efforts to stimulate growth and prosperity, strengthen democratic governance and improve peace and security in the African continent.



Herval Silva, Education and Sustainable Development Programme technician, participated in Civic Leadership, which took place over 5 weeks, of which two weeks of training were online and 3 weeks were a face-to-face training in Dakar. It was attended by 93 young people representing 25 countries on the African continent, including young people from Santiago, Fogo and Sal islands.

"I am grateful to have been selected by the programme out of thousands of applications. I have learned a lot about how to lead a community, to lead a project, to be a modern leader who does not allow himself to be negatively influenced during his duties. This training allowed me to discover new realities, challenges and new paths to solve problems. Gender equality was a very debated theme, where we had to demonstrate our resolution and leadership capacity in a fair way. Also, we were able to visit several social projects related to agriculture and beyond, projects that empower and provide income to local communities".



**SUSTAINABLE
EDUCATION AND
DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAM**

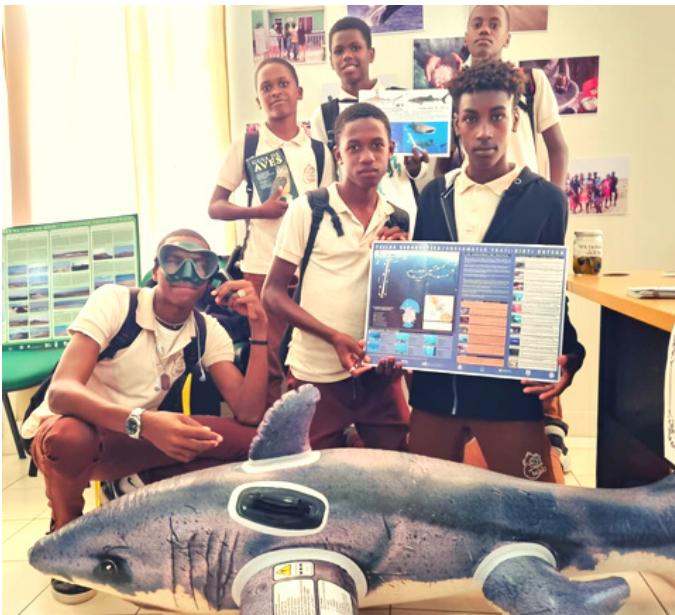
CAREER FAIR

Be the master of your own future

On March 21st, the Foundation was present at the 13th Career Fair held at Horace Silver Secondary School,

A fair dedicated to all students, in which we presented our work on environmental conservation and sustainable development, as well as inspired the new generation to care for the environment.

A special thanks to the whole educational community of Horace Silver Secondary School for the invitation, organization, and for the excellent work they have been doing for education in Maio Island.



BEACH CLEANING

As part of Maio 2025 Programme, we carry out monthly cleaning campaigns in order to keep our beaches clean, and reduce the impact of plastic on marine biodiversity.

Between January and March, 3 sessions were held on 4 beaches of the island, namely the beaches of Porto Bandjom, Laja Branca and Praia Real, where a total of 801,372 kg of rubbish was collected.

Once again we thank the participation of people from the communities near these beaches and the Red Cross volunteers.



MAIO BIOSPHERE RESERVE

With the aim of promoting and informing the communities of Maio Island of the status of World Biosphere Reserve attributed by UNESCO, four workshops were held, two at the Horace Silver Secondary School and two in the communities of Calheta and Morrinho.

The workshops, which were preceded by a visit to the Natural Park of North of Maio, were attended by 161 people, including students and people from the communities.

These actions are being implemented under the scope of the Maio 2025 Programme, an EU-funded project in Cape Verde implemented by the Municipality of Maio in partnership with IMVF, ADPM Mértola and FMB.





World Wetlands Day

"It's time to restore the Wetlands"

Wetlands play a key role in storing, absorbing and cleaning fresh water, protecting people from extreme weather impacts and protecting coastlines from storms, in addition to protecting biodiversity.

As a way of celebration, we organized a visit to the Porto Inglês Saltpans Wetland together with the Primary School, António Cruz Silva. This wetlands was declared RAMSAR Site due to its unique ecosystem. Its important is recognized internationally because hosts important populations of resident shorebirds and receives visits from migratory and seabirds. On this day, students were able to learn a little more about this wetland, the Salinas interpretative centre and birdwatching.

This is an action that is being implemented under the Maio 2025 Program, an EU-funded project in Cabo Verde implemented by the Municipality of Maio in partnership with the IMVF, ADPM Mértola and the FMB .



A photograph of a sandy dune with several tall palm trees and a person standing in the distance under a clear blue sky. The palm trees are the central focus, with their fronds reaching towards the top of the frame. The ground is light-colored sand with some sparse green vegetation. A person is visible in the middle ground, standing near the base of one of the palm trees. The sky is a solid, clear blue.

**PROTECTED
AREAS
PROGRAM**

HABITAT PROTECTION IN THE NATURAL PARK OF NORTH OF MAIO

After the technical training with the local delegation of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Environment, the watchers are carrying out the removal of the American Acacia tree, *Prosopis juliflora*, which is invading the Morrinho sand dunes.

A native South American species, it was introduced in Maio between 1964 and 1975, in the area surrounding the villages of Calheta and Morrinho. The forest perimeter of Calheta is still today the largest and oldest in Cabo Verde, and is composed entirely of acacias.

Initially, its introduction was to help local people to have shade and seed pods in the dry period of the year and to supply themselves with firewood and charcoal, but this species became invasive and occupied areas of natural vegetation compromising the survival of native species.

Aiming to contribute to the protection of habitats within the park, awareness-raising sessions were held with farmers from Morrinho, as a way of stopping and preventing the cutting of tarrafes (*Tamarix senegalensis*), a species native to Cabo Verde, which also occurs on the coasts of northwest Africa (Morocco, Mauritania and Senegal). It has a key role preserving the fauna and flora of dunes and combating degradation.

This project is funded by the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF), the European Union in Cabo Verde, through the Programme - MAIO 2025, and with the collaboration of the residents of the locality of Morrinho.



Prosopis juliflora
has become
invasive and
represents a threat
to biodiversity and
traditional
practices



1ST ENDEMIC AND NATIVE PLANTS NURSERY AND RECOVERY OF WELLS

Maio Island has rare natural vegetation, threatened by several environmental and anthropic factors, including low rainfall, soil erosion, invasive species (*Prosopis juliflora*), free grazing, cutting down for charcoal production and traditional agriculture.

The creation of a nursery of native plants to be later reintroduced in degraded areas is one of the important measures for the restoration of the Park's ecosystems.

A total of 34 plant species will be cultivated in the nursery, making the park one of the important points for ecotourism, for raising awareness among the local population and visitors about these unusual and unknown species.

In this context, the recovery of the existing drinking water wells within the dunes is crucial for the irrigation of the nursery, but also for the farmers and cattle breeders.

This project is funded by the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF), the European Union in Cabo Verde, through the Programme MAIO 2025, and with the collaboration of the residents of the locality of Morrinho.



**Join us
and discover
the first nursery of
endemic and
native plants of
Maio**





**MARINE AND
SUSTAINABLE
FISHERIES PROGRAM**



CETACEAN STRANDING

Short-finned pilot whale
Globicephala macrorhynchus

On february 9th, together with technicians from the local Delegation of the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment, we were called to attend a mass stranding of 12 Short-finned-pilot whales (*Globicephala macrorhynchus*), on one of the northern beaches, the first recorded stranding this year on the Maio island.

Among the 12 individuals, only one was alive although with injuries, which caused his death later.

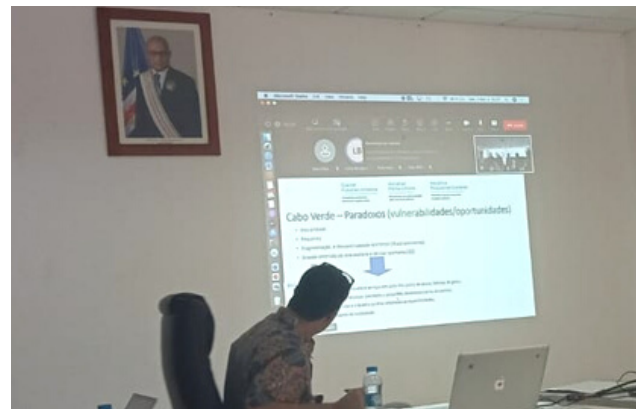
Despite the enormous effort of the whole team, the conditions were not ideal to return the animal to the sea. Biometric data and tissue samples were collected from the 12 individuals, being 2 males and 10 females.

FMB would like to thank all those who took part in this operation, for the excellent teamwork between FMB and DMAA. An special thank you for Mr Adilson dos Santos, "Di", from Praia Gonçalo for calling us.



CO-MANAGEMENT FISHERIES WORKSHOP

From February 1st to 4th, the marine team participated in the meeting on fisheries co-management held by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) with the aim of creating a temporary protected area in Calheta. National and local marine authorities were present as well as the fishing association Vindos do Norte da Calheta.



During the meetings, FAO presented proposals for a co-management plan, and provided moments in which all participants could give their opinions on where the temporary protected area should be established and the target species for conservation. The grouper and lobster were chosen as target species due to their economic importance and also because their populations have been declining in recent decades, according to reports from fishermen in Maio.

FMB presented the work done with Guardians of the Sea, in which it presented the records of illegal activities being a key indicator to assess the effectiveness of marine protected areas. It was concluded that there is still a need for awareness raising work with all fishing stakeholders (fishermen, fisherwomen, divers and sport fishing companies) and support for the collection of scientific data on the area where the MPA is intended to be created.



VOICE OF THE FISHERMEN



"ESPAÇO DA PESCA" (FISHING SPACE)



With the aim of strengthening and consolidating environmental awareness in the fishing sector, a new space was created on Community Radio "Voz di Djarmai" dedicated to the fishermen and fishwomen of Maio Island, with the objective of listening to stories, creating theme days, addressing issues and curiosities related to their profession.

During the thematic days on illegal fishing and marine megafauna activities there will be questions and answer sessions for the general population, where the winners will receive a prize.



This action is being implemented with funding from the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

FMB's VISION

"Maio is an example in Cabo Verde and in the world, based on djunta mon, the conservation of biodiversity and social progress based on respect for local culture and gender equality."



FMB's MISSION

"Promote the protection of biodiversity and the social progress of Maio Island through conservation actions and the empowerment and economic sustainability of local communities."



**BECOME A MEMBER
SUPPORT FMB**

Designed by Andreia Adrião & Honorine Sylva

