



FUNDAÇÃO MAIO BIODIVERSIDADE

OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2023
Maio Island, Cabo Verde



NEWSLETTER
Nº 7

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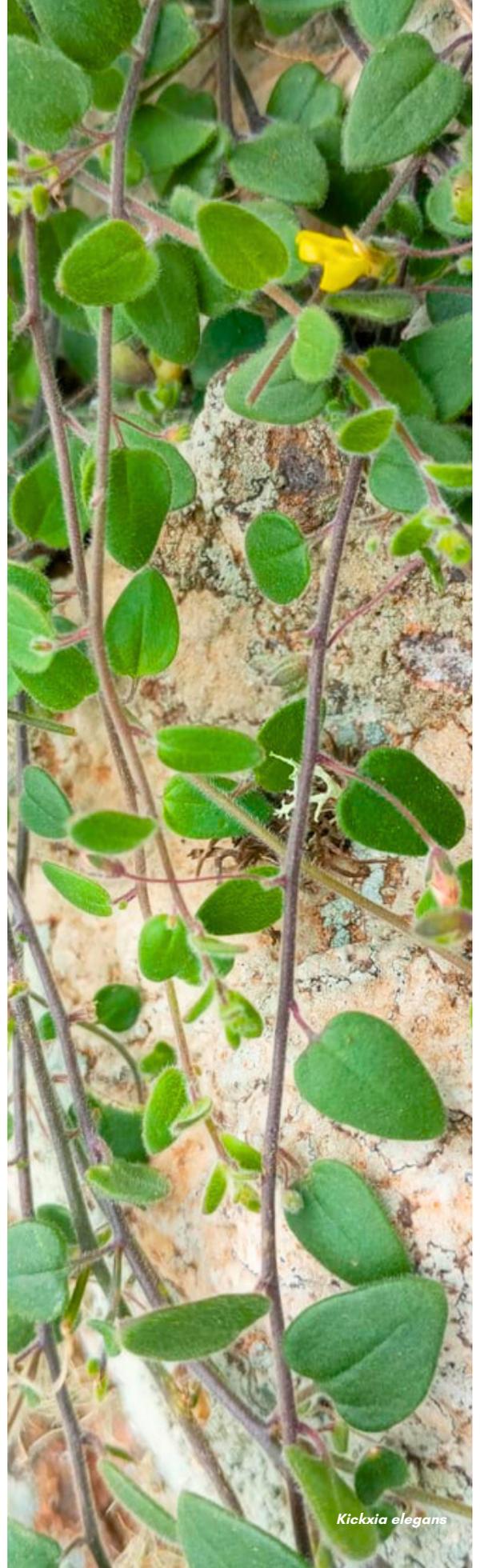
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"The exemplary dedication of the volunteers, who invest their time and precious resources, is the fundamental pillar of our project for the conservation, awareness, and monitoring of endemic, native, and species that choose this World Biosphere Reserve as a breeding site."



Kickxia elegans



Ivana Zdravkovic

September, 2023

For 15 days, as a volunteer in Cape Verde, I actively joined turtle preservation through nightly patrols. It was a meaningful experience collaborating with a dedicated and passionate organization.

Each night patrol was unique, allowing observation of turtles in their natural habitat. The locals' hospitality was warm and inviting. Feeling part of the community made the experience even more special.

I learned about conservation and the significance of small actions. I am certain this experience will impact my life. I can't wait to return and keep helping in sea turtle preservation."

"There are so many things I want to express about the Foundation. The learning experiences at FMB went beyond what I could have imagined, truly a school of life.

Taking part in turtle patrols and contributing to conservation efforts was incredibly rewarding. My involvement in the Protected Areas program, where I could join the bird study team as well as the marine team, allowed me to actively contribute to conservation efforts and the preservation of biodiversity and habitats. But the most invaluable aspect was immersing myself in the culture of Maio Island and discovering the richness of the communities.

My heartfelt thanks to the entire team for the guidance, for introducing me to amazing experiences, and for welcoming me into the FMB family. This journey has changed my life, and I will never forget this experience."



Julie Sahuc

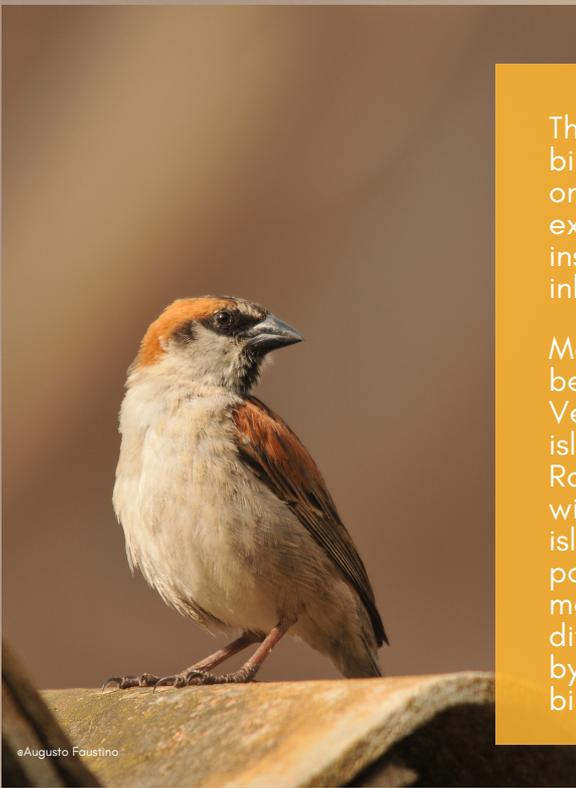
December, 2023

FUNDAÇÃO MAIO BIODIVERSIDADE

TESTIMONY



Alaemon alaudipes



The Cabo Verde Sparrow (*Passer iagoensis*), an endemic bird of Cabo Verde, was first described by Darwin during one of his expeditions to the archipelago. This species exhibits remarkable familiarity with humans, often seen inside our homes or just a few centimetres away from inhabitants.

Morphological variations in the shape of the beak have been identified among the island groups of the Cape Verde archipelago. Individuals inhabiting the Barlavento islands (Santo Antão, São Vicente, Santa Luzia, Branco, Raso, São Nicolau, Sal, and Boavista) have rounder and wider beaks, whereas those residing in the Sotavento islands (Maio, Santiago, Brava, and Rombo) have a more pointed and narrow beak. It is believed that these morphological differences emerged in the past due to different colonization episodes of the Cape Verde islands by this species. (source: Biosferal website/terrestrial-birds/cape-verde-sparrow/).



"I have been involved in sea turtle conservation since 2015. Starting as a volunteer in Praia Gonçalo, I became a team member as a monitor for the following 2 seasons. Due to my commitment and good performance, FMB invested in me by providing the opportunity for an exchange programme on Sal Island to enhance my existing knowledge about monitoring and the various data collected. After receiving this training, I began working as a team leader and have been serving as a team supervisor for the past 2 years.

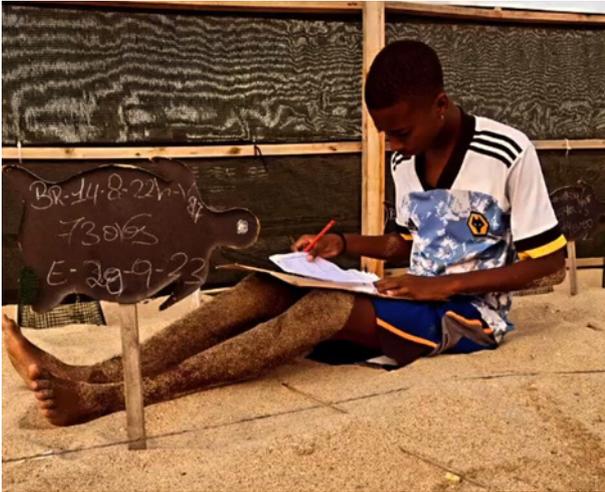
My dream is to contribute not only during the nesting season. I aim to expand my knowledge across different life stages of turtles and am committed to actively participating in conservation efforts throughout the year, aiming for a holistic and sustainable approach". - Natalício Teixeira

FUNDAÇÃO MAIO BIODIVERSIDADE

HEADLINE

YOUNG CONSERVATIONISTS

The youth of Maio united for conservation



Over the years, the Foundation has played a fundamental role in preserving the *Caretta caretta* sea turtles that choose the beaches of Maio Island for nesting. This species is emblematic and captivates nature lovers and conservationists alike. From the beginning, young people from the communities have actively engaged in sea turtle conservation activities.

This year, in particular, deserves recognition for a remarkable achievement: out of a total of 12 team leaders involved in sea turtle conservation, 11 were young individuals native to Maio Island, of whom 2 are girls.

"As a female leader of a predominantly male team, I have faced challenges, but I feel honoured by the trust placed in me. I encourage other women to join the team, taking on leadership roles in biodiversity conservation."

Aurisa Rosa



This high representation of local team leaders is a testimony to the commitment and passion of Maio's youth towards the protection of marine life.

The unity of Maio Island's youth in favor of sea turtle conservation is an inspiring example of how the community can play a central role in protecting the environment.

This involvement not only contributes to the preservation of biodiversity but also strengthens the identity and pride of the local youth in their roots and culture. Their dedication is worthy of recognition and serves as an example for other communities.



SURVIVAL OF SEA TURTLES

"An essential meeting to establish bonds between countries that, although they have different languages and cultures, share similar challenges and opportunities in the preservation of sea turtles and the coastal marine environment as a whole.

An essential moment to share experiences and strengthen partnerships among diverse organizations and nations." - Janete Agues, Executive Director of FMB

The presence of the Maio Biodiversity Foundation, represented by its Executive Director, Janete Agues, at the Steering Committee meeting of the Sea Turtle Survival Project in Nouakchott, Mauritania, from November 22nd to 26th, focused primarily on presenting the results achieved in implementing the sea turtle conservation programme specifically developed on Maio Island, a World Biosphere Reserve.

The event provided an opportunity to address challenges, propose innovative approaches, and define strategies to strengthen cooperation among partners of the Sea Turtle Survival Project (STM). Funded by the Regional Partnership for Coastal and Marine Conservation (PRCM), the STM has a four-year action plan (2023 - 2026) underway in West African countries such as Cape Verde, Mauritania, Guinea-Bissau, and Senegal.

The Cabo Verde archipelago was represented by the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment, accompanied by civil society organizations such as Lantuna, Bios.CV, Biosphere Cabo Verde, Cabo Verde Natura 2000, Fundação Tartaruga, Biodiversity Project, and FMB.

HUMANITARIAN RECOGNITION

For a stronger, more united, and prosperous Maio



It is with immense satisfaction that we share the news of the prestigious Honorable Distinction awarded to the Foundation on October 28th, through the esteemed Certificate of Recognition Granted by the Red Cross of Cabo Verde (CVCV). This recognition is the result of a partnership that has been ongoing since 2014 between FMB and their Headquarters on Maio Island, covering various areas and engaging diverse target audiences.

The CVCV is a non-profit humanitarian institution with interventions throughout the country in various domains, particularly in areas such as childhood, the elderly, education, health, youth, human rights, among others.

This recognition is the result of a solid and mutually beneficial collaboration, where both parties have come together for individual goals and, at the same time, converged towards a common objective: the development of Maio Island and its people.

In addition to capacity-building activities, lectures, visits to protected areas, and engagement with children, our partnership also extended to aiding in the protection and stranding of cetaceans, as well as providing resources such as vehicles and spaces for meetings, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Through these joint actions and the efficient use of available resources, we demonstrate that the power of collaboration is a solid path to achieve remarkable results, benefiting not only the parties involved but the entire community of Maio.

JOINT ENFORCEMENT GROUP (JEG)



JEG, an initiative implemented in 2016, brings together seven institutions from Maio Island: the Delegation of the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment (DMAA), the General Fisheries Institute (GFI), the Maritime and Port Institute (IMP), the Maio Municipal Council (CMM), the National Police (PN), the Society for the Touristic Development of Boa Vista and Maio Islands (SDTIBM), and the Maio Biodiversity Foundation (FMB). This partnership aims to carry out environmental inspections through terrestrial and maritime missions.

This partnership, by promoting continuous surveillance in protected areas, identifying infractions, apprehending offenders, and raising awareness about the sustainable use of natural resources, has demonstrated the commitment and effectiveness of the JEG in significantly reducing illegal sand harvesting on the beaches over time.

In 2023, monitoring activities were carried out by two partnership groups: the maritime authorities and the JEG. In collaboration with the maritime authorities, such as the fisheries inspector from the General Fisheries Institute (GFI) and the Maritime Police (PM), 33 inspection outings were conducted, comprising 18 in the maritime area and 15 at landing ports, inside and outside protected areas with higher fishing activity, such as the Casas Velhas Marine Reserve (RMCV), Morro Beach Natural Reserve, and the North Maio Natural Park.

During maritime operations, 297 vessels were inspected, comprising 286 artisanal and 11 semi-industrial vessels. At the landing ports, 45 vessels were inspected, all of them falling under the artisanal category. Only two irregularities were recorded, including one prohibited fishing activity using a mesh net and one artisanal fishing activity within the integral protection zone of the RMCV.

In a gesture of deep appreciation, the FMB expresses the most sincere gratitude to the members of the JEG for their tireless dedication in promoting environmental protection and preserving Maio Island. It is our aim to persevere in this partnership, founded on mutual trust, understanding that together, we progress along the same path, yielding increasingly significant results.



**SUSTAINABLE
EDUCATION AND
DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAMME**



UNITED FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Through the union of efforts and local partnerships, we celebrate important dates for the environment to raise awareness and engage the island communities in protecting their ecosystems. These celebrations involve enthusiastic participation from locals, governmental bodies, and volunteers, aiming to promote environmental awareness and develop practical actions that encourage concrete measures for the protection and sustainability of the local environment.

Our journey began on International Coastal Cleanup Day, where 65 residents from 8 communities came together to clean three beaches: Laja Branca and Praiona, located in the North Maio Natural Park (PNNM), and the bustling beach of Bitxe Rotxa. After the cleanup, everyone enjoyed a lively and musical lunch at Bitxe Rotxa. Next, we celebrated Tree Planting Day, distributing 90 seedlings of 6 different plant species across 9 island communities. Fruit, ornamental, and medicinal trees were planted, thanks to the generosity of the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment Delegation of Maio (DMAA), with the participation of 132 residents.

The third celebration took place on International Biosphere Reserve Day, in partnership with the Maio Municipal Council and DMAA. On this day, a lecture was held for students at Horace Silver Secondary School, which raised many questions about the benefits and obligations of the island's obtained seal for the local population, the economy, science, and environmental preservation. Following the lecture, the students observed birds from the terrace of the Interpretation Center of the Salinas of Porto Inglês and delved into the fascinating world of migratory birds.





2ND EDITION OF THE Z+AA CONTEST

After a long journey of 7 months, challenging the island's communities to adopt greater environmental awareness and implement about a hundred actions in favor of the environment in communities, protected areas, beaches, among others, FMB is extremely pleased to account for the collaboration of 1305 participants in this initiative, including local residents and visitors (residents of Maio, other islands, and foreigners), representing a clear demonstration of involvement and commitment to making the island increasingly environmentally friendly.

During the 'Zone + Environmentally Friendly' contest, five relevant environmental themes for Maio were addressed, including the island's Protected Areas, UNESCO's recognition as a World Biosphere Reserve in 2020, the issue of waste on the island, the protection of sea turtles, and the creation and enhancement of green spaces. There was a stimulus for creativity in all themes, encouraging participating groups to promote strong local dynamics to stand out positively among other competitors.

At the end of the contest, the jury composed of three members, including representatives from FMB, DMAA, and CMM, used pre-established criteria to choose the top three winners. The Morrinho community secured the 1st place, followed by Calheta in 2nd place and Pilão Cão in 3rd. The closing and award ceremony took place in Morrinho on December 12 and was organized in close collaboration with the winning community. The prizes were chosen by the winners: a coloured photocopier for the 1st place, presented by FMB's director, Mrs. Janete Agues; a set of 3 tables and 12 benches for group studies, presented by the Councilor of Environmental Sustainability from CMM, Mr. Emilio Ramos, for the 2nd place; and a set of small drums for the Pilão Cão drum group, presented by DMAA representative, Mr. Ronnie Lima, for the 3rd place.





**COMMUNITY-BASED
SEA TURTLE
CONSERVATION
PROGRAM**

CANARY CURRENT LARGE MARINE ECOSYSTEM (CCLME)

The Great CCLME, which encompasses seven countries in northwest Africa (Cabo Verde, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Morocco, Mauritania, and Senegal), is one of the richest and most diverse in the world. Encompassing diverse marine and coastal habitats such as wetlands, estuaries, seagrass meadows, mangroves, and coral communities, it is home to many endemic and migratory species. The annual fish production, between 2 and 3 million tons, amounts to a value of 3 billion dollars, highlighting its ecological and economic significance in the region.

This year, FMB presented the study entitled 'Conservation of migratory marine vertebrates: New insights into the habitat use, threats, and behavior of sea turtles (GPS),' conducted on Maio Island. This work was submitted by FMB and was selected among 150 to participate in the 'International Scientific Symposium on the Canary Current Large Marine Ecosystem.' The event was attended by the Coordinator of the Sea Turtle Protection Program, Herval Silva, and four other representatives from Cape Verde: Rui Freitas (UTA), Iderlindo Santos (BirdLife), Emilio Sanches (DGP), and Samir Martins (BIOS), who represented Cape Verde at the CCLME Scientific Research.

Held in Guinea-Bissau from November 20th to 22nd, and funded by the FAO, the symposium brought together experts from various backgrounds to discuss priority issues related to the decline of fishery resources, habitat degradation, marine biodiversity, and water quality in the CCLME, based on scientific findings. The themes addressed Living Marine Resources, Vulnerable Species, Habitats, Biodiversity, Water Quality, Climate Change, Sociology, Gender in CCLME Management, Session Abstracts, and Recommendations for Future Scientific Research.



VOLUNTEERING AND CONSERVATION

“Despite the challenge, I realized the meaning and impact of sacrifice in the preservation of turtles and the local community. The Foundation played a crucial role in this process, showcasing its work in the conservation and development of the island. The influence of women in the community, especially in education, was inspiring, demonstrating that even with limited resources, much can be accomplished. What I took most from this experience were valuable lessons, warm smiles, and affectionate hugs. Although I went to assist in turtle preservation, I was the one who gained the most from unforgettable learnings.” - Marta Fernandez

Volunteers play a multifaceted role in protecting threatened sea turtles, from monitoring beaches during nesting to educating communities and tourists and safeguarding nests against poachers. Their engagement reflects an essential human commitment to preserving vital ecosystems, generating economic impacts by promoting responsible tourism and bolstering the local economy through increased consumption at tourist establishments. Furthermore, their involvement in social projects culturally enriches communities, fostering social diversity through the participation of volunteers from different backgrounds united by this significant cause.

This year, 76 active volunteers, both national and international, with an average age of 25, contributed to this cause. With gender diversity, female participation was predominant, with 51 women representing various nationalities rallying around this common purpose. This unity among different nationalities demonstrates the strength of this cause in attracting and mobilizing people worldwide, highlighting a global commitment to the preservation of sea turtles and their habitats.



A Common Nighthawk (Falco tinnunculus alexandri) is perched on a palm frond. The bird has a brown and white mottled pattern on its wings and back, with a yellowish-brown underbelly. It has a sharp, dark beak and a yellow eye. The background is a dense thicket of palm fronds, with some green and some brown, suggesting a natural habitat.

**PROTECTED
AREA
PROGRAMME**

Falco tinnunculus alexandri



CULTIVATING KNOWLEDGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS IN SCHOOLS

The initiative to establish nurseries of endemic and native plants in educational institutions on Maio Island aims to create dynamic learning spaces, providing students with a unique opportunity to interact directly with nature. More than just creating a cultivating environment, these nurseries represent a living laboratory where students can closely observe the life cycle of plants, from germination to flowering.

The significance of this project goes beyond the educational aspect, playing a crucial role in the environmental awareness of students, who are the future guardians of our ecosystem. By actively participating in the cultivation of different plants, students develop a profound sense of responsibility and respect for nature, understanding the importance of preservation and sustainability for the future of our island.

Furthermore, the construction of these nurseries has a direct impact on the community, allowing the production of seedlings and plants used in urban afforestation projects, the recovery of degraded areas, and the strengthening of local agriculture. These plants not only beautify but also contribute to improving air and soil quality, while providing valuable resources for the community. By offering this opportunity for hands-on learning, plant nurseries become a catalyst not only for academic growth but also for the personal development of Maio's future guardians. Through this direct contact with nature, they are encouraged to become conscientious and active citizens capable of making informed and responsible decisions regarding the environment.





CONSERVATION OF MEDITERRANEAN PLANTS

For the first time, FMB and the NGO Biflores actively participated in the 4th Mediterranean Plant Conservation Week (4th MPCW) held in Valencia, Spain, from October 23rd to 27th, 2023. This international event marks a significant milestone in the sphere of plant preservation in the Mediterranean region, providing a crucial platform for sharing studies, research, and challenges related to the conservation and restoration of ecosystems. Additionally, the 4th MPCW serves as a forum for interaction among experiences from Southern Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East, laying strong foundations for future collaborations.

During the participation, FMB and the NGO Biflores had the opportunity to present the concrete results of their initiatives for preserving flora and restoring ecosystems on the islands of Maio and Brava. They shared innovative strategies adopted, conservation methods implemented, and the challenges faced throughout the process.

The representatives of the organizations highlighted specific projects such as the reintroduction of endangered species, sustainable reforestation techniques, and community awareness about local biodiversity. They emphasized the positive impact, including the recovery of natural habitats and preservation of rare species on the islands. The presentations not only showcased the commitment and dedication to environmental conservation but also facilitated valuable exchanges of experiences among participants, strengthening future collaborations. It is important to mention the support of the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) and express gratitude for the crucial funding that contributed to the achieved results, reinforcing the NGOs' commitment to sustainable preservation in Cabo Verde.





**MARINE AND
SUSTAINABLE
FISHING
PROGRAMME**



COASTAL AND MARITIME ZONE OF CABO VERDE

Between November 21st and 24th, the Maio Biodiversity Foundation had the distinct opportunity to participate in a training of paramount importance organized by the National Institute of Land Management (INGT). This training was part of the project for the development of the Coastal Zone and Adjacent Sea Zoning Plan for the Island of Maio, aiming at one of its main challenges and goals: the operationalization, follow-up, oversight, and monitoring of the aforementioned plan.

The focus of this training was to deepen the understanding of the "Legislation regarding the coastal and maritime zone of Cabo Verde, and the role of various entities in the preservation of the sea and the coastal zone." This event took place in Porto Inglês City, specifically at the Hall of the Maio Municipal Assembly, and had 20 trainees from various institutions, NGOs, and local associations on the island.

During the meeting, relevant topics were discussed, including laws related to the maritime public domain, Cabo Verde's Maritime Code, and the responsibilities of entities in marine management. Additionally, subjects such as biodiversity, marine ecosystem administration, and related legislation, such as the Coastal Zone Management Plan of Maio Island (POOC_M), were explored. The active participation of FMB underscores its commitment to sustainability and biodiversity in Cabo Verde, expressing sincere gratitude to INGT for the learning opportunity provided.





"Maio Biodiversity Foundation, on behalf of our entire team, wishes all our partners, funders, associates, friends, and especially our people from Maio Island, a Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year filled with light and love!

We aim to continue strengthening the bonds of this beautiful and magnificent family of environmental conservation."



Elaborated by Andreia Adrião

