

2013 as compared to the same area and only 2% of the nests were poached on the protected beaches.

One of the main strengths of the strategy was that turtle conservation teams were based in eight of the coastal communities around the island. The teams were made up of a minimum of two guards from the communities, a team leader from Maio or another island and national and international volunteers. The team members were hosted by local families. The integration of the teams in the communities made the efforts to protect sea turtles more visible in coastal villages, while men, women and especially the youth had opportunities to observe and participate in night patrols, nesting beach clean-ups and awareness raising events. The activities opened the door to the turtle world, showing the threats these animals are facing, especially during the highly vulnerable nesting period. In addition, host families received financial benefits for their hospitality. It seems that the combination of both practical education and turtle friendly income opportunities were key to the success of FMB's strategy.

Human predation is considered to be one of the major threats for sea turtles in Maio. In contrast to the islands of Sal and Boa Vista, the island has not yet been influenced by mass tourism. There still remain beaches not covered by the protection teams, where turtles and nests are still taken frequently. It is very important to expand the project to include the remaining villages of Maio, for which additional funding is urgently needed.

Fundação Maio Biodiversidade, Vila do Maio, Janeiro de 2014.

Monitoring Kentish plover populations in Maio, Cape Verde Islands

The Kentish plover *Charadrius alexandrinus* is the most common breeding shorebird in Cape Verde. Since 2007, a breeding population of Kentish plover has been monitored at the Salinas do Porto Inglês, Maio Island, where 502 adult plovers have been ringed along with 695 chicks. This is the largest breeding population of Kentish plover in the Macaronesian islands. Kentish plover also breeds in Azores, Madeira and the Canary Islands, as well as in other islands in the archipelago of Cape Verde, including Santiago, São Vicente, Sal and Boa Vista.



Salinas do Porto Inglês, Maio, Cape Verde Islands. © Cristina Carmona.

From September to December 2013, the *Fundação Maio Biodiversidade* (FMB) - together with the Biodiversity lab of the University of Bath, U.K. - undertook the yearly activities of monitoring and ringing the plover population during the breeding season. We searched for nests in the area, ringed all unringed adult breeders and waited for the chicks to hatch to ring them. In addition, weekly surveys of the plover population were carried out this year for the first time. Surveys involved two main objectives: 1) recording individuals' sex, colour rings and their location, and 2) recording the presence of external agents that could potentially endanger breeding birds and/or the protected area of the Salinas (e.g. large numbers of tourists, cattle, ravens, cars).



Colour-ringed adult Kentish plover (left) and chicks (right), Salinas do Porto Inglês, Maio, Cape Verde Islands.
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In 2013, we found a total of 104 plover nests, of which 36% hatched and 51% disappeared. We followed 62 plover broods, of which 22 reached the fledging age (representing 34% of all broods). Therefore, a high proportion of nests and chicks were lost or presumably predated.

Monitoring of the plover population at the Salinas do Porto Inglês is important for three reasons. First, by estimating the number of individuals we can obtain a yearly assessment of population changes. Second, evaluating nest success reveals threats and can lead to conservation actions. For instance, brown-necked ravens *Corvus ruficollis* have become more common in recent years. The increase of ravens in the area coincides with the establishment of the Salina Beach Resort in 2010, which in turn coincides with the increase in predation percentage observed in Kentish plover nests and chicks. Ravens pose a threat not only to plovers, but to all the breeding birds in the area. Third, monitoring nests and broods has revealed that plover families use a large area around the Salinas. Therefore, building houses and vilas in close proximity to the Salinas will most likely endanger nests and plover families.

Periodic surveys at the Salinas allowed us to identify an additional potential risk in the cruise tourism. Cruise tourism to Maio will increase in the near future and, given the proximity of the Salinas to Maio's pier, the access to the Salinas during the breeding season should be restricted, along with the building of a fence to avoid disturbance of nesting birds.

We anticipate that the plover monitoring project run jointly by FMB and the University of Bath will continue in future years. We are always looking for volunteers to help with our work. Please contact us at office@maioconservation.org if you'd like to get involved.

We would like to thank the Direcção Geral do Ambiente (DGA) and the Câmara Municipal do Maio (CMM) for their support and permission to work at the Salinas do Porto Inglês and all staff and friends of FMB for their support.

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A third record of Fraser's dolphin for the Cape Verde Islands



On the morning of 24 February 2014, the carcass of a dolphin was found at Praia Cabral, north of Sal Rei, Boa Vista, Cape Verde Islands. Before being buried, a few photographs of the dolphin were taken, which allowed the animal to be positively identified as Fraser's dolphin *Lagenodelphis hosei*. Total length was reported to be 2.24 m. After the place of burial had been pointed out to BIOS.CV collaborator Pedro López-Suárez, skin samples were taken and preserved in 80% ethanol. Upon checking the burial site again the next morning, it was found that the carcass had been butchered during the night, with the flesh presumably being taken to be sold locally. Nevertheless, the animal's head could still be saved and this was buried elsewhere, with the skull to be retrieved at a later date and subsequently deposited in the Boa Vista reference collection, maintained jointly by BIOS.CV and Cabo Verde Natura 2000.



Fraser's dolphin *Lagenodelphis hosei*, Praia Cabral, Boa Vista, Cape Verde Islands, 24 February 2014.
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