

Involuntary Restriction Process Framework Phase 1 Island Restoration in Cape Verde, SPEA

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Marine Protected Area (MPA) of Raso, Branco and Santa Luzia is exceptionally important for nature conservation both at a Cape Verde's and international levels. It holds the entire world population of the Critically Endangered Raso Lark (*Alauda razae*) and the most important known breeding colony of Cape Verde Shearwater (*Calonectris edwardsii*, Near Threatened), among many other seabirds and taxa with unfavourable conservation status within the region and the country. Loggerhead Turtle (*Caretta caretta*, Endangered), of which Cape Verde holds the third largest population in the world and the only one in the eastern Atlantic, breeds in Santa Luzia, with a population larger than 500 nesting females. These islands have a history of uncontrolled poaching and harvesting of seabirds and sea turtles. Several taxa are now extinct, particularly from Santa Luzia, where seabird colonies have disappeared together with many reptile species. Just until twenty years ago Santa Luzia had a small settlement that relied mostly on cattle and goat grazing, but now the island has no permanent human settlement. Cattle and goats are no longer present, but introduced mice and feral cats remain in Santa Luzia.

With this project we aim to:

1. Complete a detailed and costed operational plan for feral cat eradication in Santa Luzia.
2. Develop a detailed operational plan to establish a second population of Raso Lark on Santa Luzia.
3. Prevent illegal seabird chick harvesting in Raso by maintaining a presence of project teams in Raso during the relevant season, and developing collaborative action with local fisherman. At the same time, we will develop a plan for seabird recovery in Santa Luzia.
4. Improved conservation status of the Loggerhead Turtles nesting on Santa Luzia, by involving local fisherman communities in a surveillance scheme, with a regular presence of project staff and volunteers during the most vulnerable periods.
5. Produce a biosecurity protocol, to be added to the management plan for the MPA, already approved (but not implemented) by the Cape Verde's Government.
6. Seek funding, and other necessary conditions, for the implementation of the cat eradication plan and other associated conservation operations developed by this project outputs.

Several of the project activities will have potential implications on the resource use of local fisherman communities, predominantly as this relates to unsustainable, illegal and destructive fishing and hunting practices. Despite of this project and the management plan for the MPA being globally positive for small scale fisheries and local fisherman communities, we need to clearly identify the points where potential conflicts can occur. Particularly how fisherman livelihoods are expected to be affect and how these communities will be involved in the process and in the decisions.

It is important to highlight there will be no displaced human populations, due to the simple reason these three islands have been uninhabited since 1992. The three islands of the MPA are actually being used by fisherman as nigh time campsites during week fishing journeys. During

weekends these campsites are normally deserted. Campsites are distributed in MPA the following way:

- Raso islet has one temporary campsite, used irregularly by 20 fisherman coming from the neighbor major island of São Nicolau.
- Branco islet was never used by fisherman, due to very difficult landing conditions.
- Santa Luzia Island has three campsites, two used in regular way and third used sporadically. About 120 fisherman from the neighbor major island of São Vicente fish in MPA waters, but only around 40 land in Santa Luzia island.

Biosfera 1, the partner NGO from São Vicente, has developed a strong and long lasting cooperation relation with the fisherman communities, particularly the ones from São Vicente. These fishermen come mainly from small communities that have participated in Biosfera 1 conservation activities for several years. There is a relation of mutual trust between local fisherman and Biosfera staff. Many local fishermen will be involved in the project through transport and communication between São Vicente and Santa Luzia. Some former fisherman members of this community are actually Biosfera staff. There are frequent meetings and discussions about the future of MPA in the fisherman community centre of Calhau, (in São Vicente shore facing Santa Luzia).

Most of fisherman from these communities understands that illegal and unsustainable predatory activities are contrary to their interests. They are usually not sympathetic to poachers, due to several circumstances:

- Illegal harvesting of shearwater chicks in Raso was performed by few fishermen from outside these communities. These were 20 to 30 fishermen that don't live or depend on this catch. They used to come from the far away island of Santo Antão for catching shearwater chicks in Raso, to produce a delicacy highly demanded in Cape Verde communities abroad. The activity was banned in 2008 and this action is fully supported by local fisherman.
- Sea turtle poaching in Santa Luzia was always an occasional and opportunistic activity performed by local fisherman. Local communities don't depend on this resource and understand quite well the need to protect the species and potential it can have for future income to their people, via sustainable tourism.
- They also see illegal fisheries, using destructive methods like poison and explosives, as a serious threat to their activity and livelihoods, and expect the implementation of MPA management plan can stop these illegal fishing practices.

Local fishermen tend to be supportive to the management plan of the MPA and to this project, including cat eradication. They know nature conservation measures protect the quality of the fish stocks they depend on, and help them in their livelihoods, throughout banning destructive activities, keeping industrial large scale fisheries out of their waters, improving facilities in campsites, creating jobs or simply allowing friendly conservation and research staff to be around and help them when they need.

PARTICIPATORY IMPLEMENTATION

The project is fully in line with MPA management plan framework. The management plan proposal will soon enter in a period for public consultation. The designing of this management proposal have had some initial inputs from Biosfera 1 and fisherman communities that improved the first version regarding the local fishermen interests. The management plan proposal evolved from a non landing obligation in all MPA to a landing permit for fisherman in certain places with certain conditions. The proposal that is now under discussion includes the following landing rules for fisherman:

- Landing on Raso islet and the use of actual campsite will be forbidden, except in emergency situations. This is highly acceptable for fishermen, because Raso is quite close to São Nicolau and the actual campsite is not used in a regular way. This will affect 20 fishermen actually using Raso as an overnight campsite in non-regular way.
- Landing on Branco islet will stay unpractical e forbidden. Doesn't affect local fishermen.
- Landing on Santa Luzia will be allowed for local fisherman communities in two places only. In these landing and camping places the facilities will be improved (basic shelter, sanitation and garbage disposal). This will affect 40 fishermen regularly using Santa Luzia as an overnight campsite

The proposal management plan for the MPA was presented in Mindelo (São Vicente) on 5 and 6th December 2012, and will stay in public consultation during several weeks. Fishermen communities can contribute with complaints and suggestions.

Regarding only the project development, there will be regular meetings with the fishermen communities. At least 3 meetings will occur in community centers during the 18 month duration of the project. These meetings will be used to explain the project and the project actions to fisherman, ask for their opinion and suggestions, and to engage them actively in some of the project operations (surveillance, monitoring and helping in field work).

CRITERIA FOR ELIGIBILITY OF AFFECTED PERSONS

The affected persons are unlikely to be eligible for mitigation/compensation measures as involuntary restrictions will be predominantly placed on activities which are clearly illegal, unsustainable and destructive. Activities like shearwater chicks harvesting and sea-turtle poaching are clearly seen by local fisherman as non-essential for their live, mainly because these where strongly seasonal and taken only by a small part of the community individuals. On the other side, the local fisherman community as whole will be benefited from campsite facilities improving and from MPA surveillance, with the consequent ban of destructive fisheries.

SPEA, Biosfera 1 and other partners are seeking to establish a sustainable conservation model which not only benefits the conservation targets, but local fisherman communities as well. This approach aims to provide an alternative value to the wildlife and an incentive for conserving native wildlife and prevent future alien introduction. This approach will be based in the sustainable use o MPA resources, promoting sustainable local fisheries and small scale sustainable tourism program. Actual fishing activities will be maintained and future jobs in nature conservation and tourism will take aboard local community persons.

MEASURES TO ASSIST THE AFFECTED PERSONS

The project staff in São Vicente will be in permanent contact with local communities, plus the community meetings will determine whether any persons are affected and considered eligible for mitigation/compensation measures. Possible measures should come out from meetings with fishermen communities and the relevant government body (DG Environment). But we firmly believe there will be no need for mitigation.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND COMPLAINT MECHANISM

Resource use (fishing and baiting for fish) in the MPA are well known to Biosfera 1, due to long time contact and previous projects with fisherman communities. For five consecutive breeding seasons Biosfera 1 managed to prevent the illegal shearwater chick harvesting to happen in Raso by just being present with a team of researcher during the problematic month of October. There were no conflicts of any kind until now, and they aren't expected to occur. Nevertheless, it is very important to carry on the surveillance and prevention measures in order to prevent old predatory practices to return. In a similar way sea-turtle poaching was prevented to occur in Santa Luzia for the last two summers, due to surveillance projects developed by Biosfera 1. Fishermen in Santa Luzia camps helped the teams in the island, informed about turtle trails and nest. Once more no conflicts aroused and are not expected to arise, due to the reasons stated above.

The only possible source of conflicts will be with some fisherman using illegal destructive methods. But even those will be minimized, because generally the local communities perceive these practices as being contrary to their own interests. These notions of sustainability and the advantages on nature protection that local communities already have will also get stronger due to awareness-raising component of this project. We will ensure local fisherman are aware of the location of the MPA boundaries, and the implications of the management rules on their natural resource use. There will be opportunity for communities to consult with the DG Environment and Biosfera 1 on these matters which will likely involve community leaders and other relevant members discussing key issues.

Criticism and conflicts raised by some individuals eventually caught in illegal fishing activities will not be relevant and will be censured by their own community members. Biosfera 1 has been acting (and will carry on doing it) as the first receptor of any grievance coming from local communities. Biosfera 1 will have responsibility to ensure any grievance is dealt with promptly and will work with project partners to achieve this. Upon receipt of a grievance, we will hold meetings with local communities or individuals, to discuss the issues and develop shared solutions which will be implemented by the project.

IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

SPEA and Biosfera 1 are responsible for overall management of the project, but will require close cooperation with DG Environment, the government body responsible by nature conservation. Although DG Environment delegates to Biosfera 1 many of the monitoring and conservation tasks in the MPA, they need to be maintained fully aware of the project

developments and results. Joint responsibility will be necessary for Biosfera 1 and DG Environment, to develop the operational plan for feral cat eradication, the Raso Lark translocation plan and other relevant bits of the project. Certain action and methods, like the use of rifles for example, need to be authorized by this government body.

Other aspect that will run in parallel to this project but will involve the same stakeholders, is the establishment of proper law enforcement and monitoring with trained wardens. Biosfera 1 will assist the government with implementation during the project as it relates to improving enforcement and monitoring activities in particular. A biosecurity protocol will be discussed with and approved by all MPA users, including government and fishermen communities. Local community members will assist in implementation of the biosecurity protocol and of enforcement and monitoring activities by joining patrolling teams in certain occasions.

SPEA and RSPB are responsible for the capacity building component of Biosfera 1, including providing training in field techniques, awareness-raising techniques, and organizational procedures. The fundraising component will be an important component of the capacity building.