

# Acting Globally

## SWOT Small Grants 2017

SWOT small grants have helped field-based sea turtle research and conservation partners around the world realize their goals since 2006. To date, 73 grants have been awarded to over 50 applicants in 42 countries and territories for work addressing three key themes: (1) networking and capacity building, (2) science, and (3) education and outreach. The following are brief updates from our 2017 grantees. Visit [www.SeaTurtleStatus.org](http://www.SeaTurtleStatus.org) to apply for a 2018 SWOT small grant!

### CABO VERDE

#### Projeto Biodiversidade

Cabo Verde is home to the third-largest loggerhead subpopulation in the world. However, illegal harvesting of turtles and eggs remains a serious threat to these endangered animals. Recognizing that community engagement is a crucial element to conservation success, Projeto Biodiversidade has been working to educate and empower local people for many years. This SWOT grant will help to train five prominent community members in conservation techniques, data collection, and conflict management skills.



### DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

#### ACODES

Four species of sea turtles are found in the DRC's Muanda Mangrove and Marine Park, where they face pressures from poaching, beach erosion, and fishery bycatch. Since 2006, ACODES has led an awareness campaign for children to encourage environmentally friendly values and behaviors and to teach sustainable fishing practices. This SWOT grant will support an effort to reach roughly 6,000 schoolchildren and 350 fishermen in nearby communities that total 100,000 inhabitants.



### GREECE

#### Kostas Papafitsoros

The Greek island of Zakynthos is a popular tourist destination and is renowned for its nesting and foraging loggerheads. Wildlife-watching operators rely on tours focused on seeing turtles, yet laws protect turtles on the beach only during nesting season (May–October). This SWOT grant will be used to examine foraging behavior of resident turtles, measure tourism pressure, develop best practice guidelines for wildlife operators, and expand regulations to include protection of turtles in foraging areas.



### INDIA

#### Wildlife Institute of India

There is limited information on olive ridley nesting in northwestern India, where peak nesting coincides with the monsoon season. That unique characteristic may indicate a distinct subpopulation. This SWOT grant will support intensive beach monitoring in underexplored areas in the state of Gujarat that are known nesting sites for greens and olive ridleys. The research will serve as a model for other nongovernmental organizations and government agencies working in this little-known region.

### MALDIVES

#### Atoll Ecologists Programme

The Maldives is home to five species of sea turtles that are threatened by poaching and the capture of turtle hatchlings as pets. Through hands-on educational activities with schoolchildren, the Atoll Ecologists Programme seeks to change the way Maldivians perceive sea turtles and marine life. This SWOT grant will help reach 130 students to motivate positive behaviors and habits and to empower them to influence their families and others to commit to sustainable behaviors relating to the oceans.



### NIGERIA

#### Wildlife Africa

In Nigeria, too little is known about where the main nesting areas are for the four turtle species found on the beaches adjacent to Lagos's rapidly expanding urban sprawl. Direct take of animals for meat and eggs is an ongoing threat, and although turtle protection laws exist in Nigeria, enforcement is ineffective without knowledge about the location of specific beaches and of communities that harvest turtles. This SWOT grant will identify where monitoring and enforcement efforts should be directed.

### PHILIPPINES

#### Large Marine Vertebrates Research Institute (LAMAVE)

The Philippines Apo Island Protected Landscape and Seascape (ALPLS) is a popular snorkeling and diving destination for turtle-dedicated tourism. LAMAVE conducts research on turtle habitat use and tourism interactions and has photo-identified dozens of green and hawksbill turtles. This SWOT grant will deploy time-depth recorder tags and expand on LAMAVE's past studies to include new partner NGOs and government agencies with the aim of establishing more sustainable tourism practices.



### TUNISIA

#### Maissa Louhichi

Loggerheads, leatherbacks, and greens suffer impacts on beaches and from bycatch throughout the Mediterranean, and in Tunisia, little has been done to understand their situation. This SWOT grant will support researcher Maissa Louhichi in conducting a comprehensive assessment of fishing and sea turtle bycatch rates in Tunisia. She will be using interviews and on-board observation in various ports and will create a database and GIS maps to design fisheries mitigation measures.