

VOLUNTEERING PROGRAM

ILHA DA BOA VISTA – CABO VERDE

MARINE TURTLES CONSERVATION

2026 Campaign - July to October

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BIOS Cabo Verde



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I. GET TO KNOW BIOS CABO VERDE



OUR HISTORY AND MISSION

BIOS Cabo Verde is a non-profit environmental organization founded in 2012 with the aim of conserving the biodiversity of the Cape Verdean archipelago, promoting environmental education, and strengthening local communities through science, participation, and cooperation.internacional.



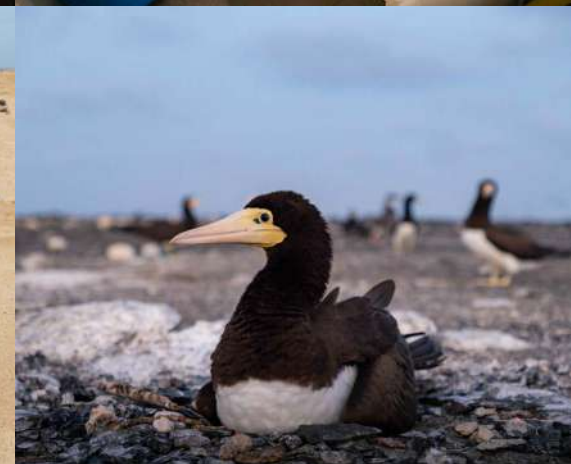
Since its beginnings, BIOS has focused its efforts on protecting threatened marine and coastal species, with special emphasis on the loggerhead sea turtle (*Caretta caretta*), an emblematic species of Cabo Verde.





The organization works under a holistic sustainability approach: nature conservation is closely linked to the well-being of the communities that coexist with it.

For this reason, BIOS develops environmental awareness programs, scientific research, university training and volunteer initiatives, as well as projects aimed at community empowerment and the promotion of responsible tourism.



CONSERVATION AREAS

The work of BIOS Cabo Verde is structured around different programs that integrate research, monitoring, and environmental education:



MARINE TURTLES

Protection, tagging, monitoring and nest management of *Caretta caretta* and other occasionally nesting species throughout the reproductive season, as well as monitoring juvenile sea turtles in coastal areas.



SEABIRDS AND BIRDS OF PREY

Population monitoring, ringing, and ecological role studies within coastal ecosystems.



MARINE MAMMALS

Stranding records, cetacean monitoring, including the humpback whale (*Megaptera novaeangliae*), and collaboration with international conservation networks.conservación.



SHARKS AND RAYS

Research on their ecology and threats derived from fishing activities.



SUSTAINABLE FISHING

Promotion of responsible fishing practices through participatory monitoring programs developed with the fishing community

Each of these areas combines science and citizen participation, involving students, researchers, volunteers and local communities.



WHERE WE WORK: JOÃO BARROSA, BOA VISTA

BIOS Cabo Verde is headquartered in Sal Rei, the capital of Boa Vista Island, where its office operates year-round and serves as the operational base for its programs.



The core conservation work takes place in the **Reserva Natural das Tartarugas**, located in the northwest of the island. On **João Barrosa** beach — one of the most important nesting areas for the loggerhead turtle in the eastern Atlantic — the BIOS Cabo Verde Camp is installed each year, operating between July and October.



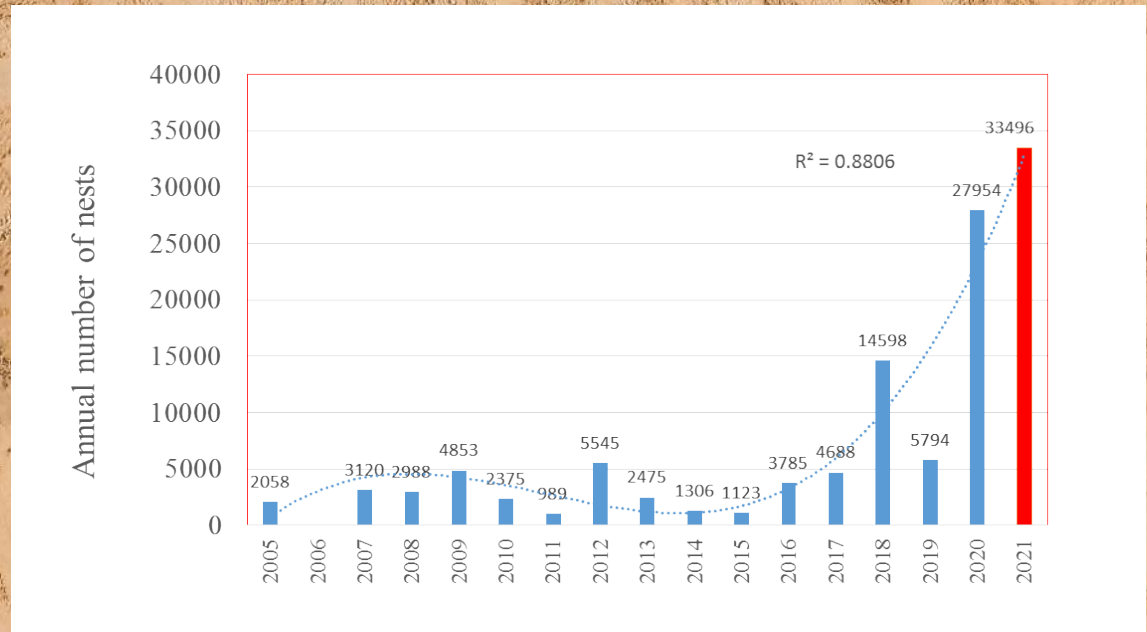
Surrounded by dunes, coastal scrubland and open sea, this site functions simultaneously as a research laboratory, workplace and shared living space for those involved in protecting marine life.

THE LOGGERHEAD TURTLE (*CARETTA CARETTA*)

Cabo Verde hosts one of the main breeding colonies of *Caretta caretta* in the eastern Atlantic. Although the species is globally classified as **Vulnerable**, the Cape Verdean population is considered **Endangered** due to multiple threats, including illegal hunting of females and eggs, bycatch, coastal erosion, urbanization, and unregulated tourism.



Thanks to conservation efforts, since 2018 the country has recorded nesting figures exceeding 150,000 nests annually, placing Cabo Verde among the main global sanctuaries for this species.



João Barrosa beach has an annual average exceeding **11,000 nests**. Its conditions — fine sand, stable temperatures and low light pollution — make it an optimal environment for nesting and scientific monitoring.

BRIEF HISTORY OF CONSERVATION IN BOA VISTA

Sea turtle conservation efforts in Boa Vista began in 1997 to combat illegal hunting. Initial actions included night patrols, nest protection, female monitoring and awareness campaigns directed at the local population.

In 2007, nearly half of the turtles nesting on the island were hunted, leading to its international classification as an **Endangered population**. In response, the **National Plan for Sea Turtle Conservation** was established in 2010, creating a national legal protection framework.



Today, this plan operates around five key pillars: research, environmental education, legal enforcement, surveillance, and habitat protection. It is coordinated by the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment, in collaboration with BIOS CV and other organizations such as CV Natura 2000 and Fundação Tartaruga.



Thanks to this joint effort, Boa Vista has become one of the leading references in sea turtle conservation in the Atlantic.

II. YOUR EXPERIENCE IN BIOS CABO VERDE



THE FIELD TEAM

Each season, the BIOS Cabo Verde Camp hosts approximately **40 people**, including hired staff, students, and national and international volunteers.

The permanent camp team includes:

- **1 Camp Director**
- **2 Hatchery Coordinators**
- **8 Group Leaders**
- **1 Cook**



The team is joined by students from Cape Verdean universities, community leaders and international volunteers who participate for varying periods. At certain times, researchers conducting specific studies or groups receiving specialized training in sea turtle monitoring techniques may also stay at the camp.

LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION

Cape Verdean Creole and Portuguese are primarily spoken in the camp. Coordinators and office staff also speak Spanish and English. English usage in the camp is limited, as only part of the team uses it regularly. However, experience shows that communication flows well and intercultural coexistence is one of the most positive and enriching aspects of the camp.



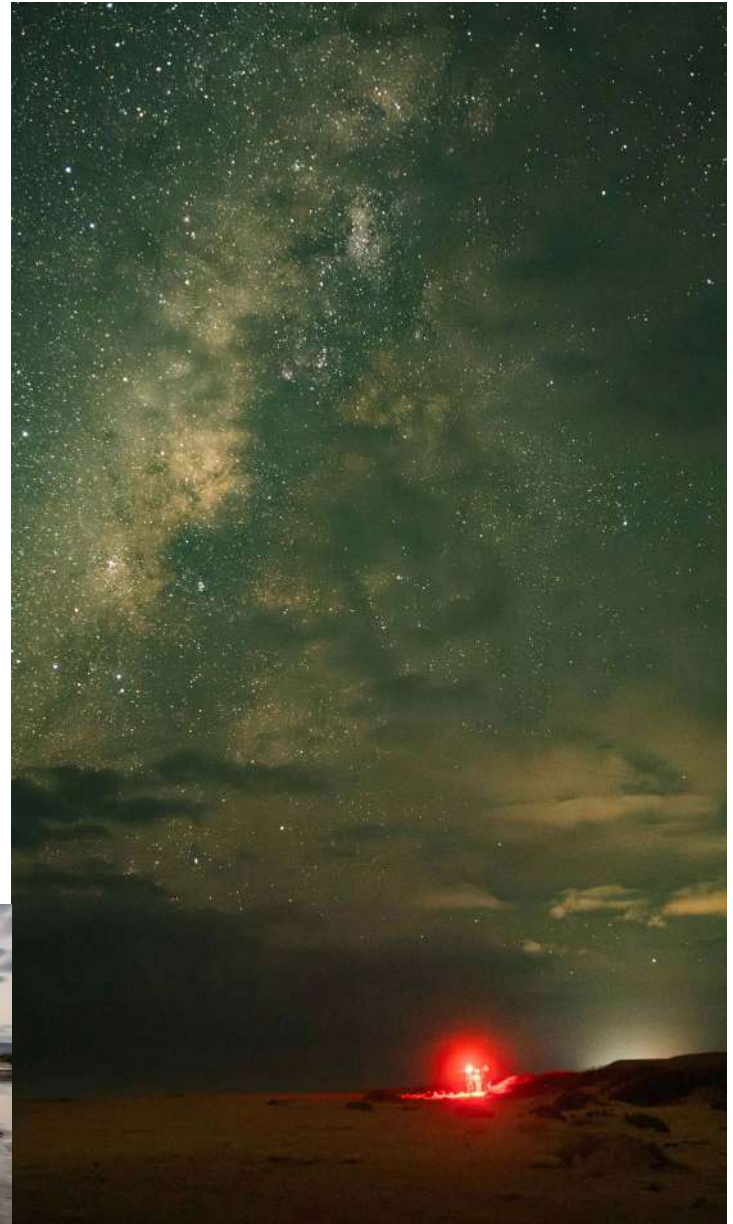
WHAT YOU WILL DO DURING YOUR VOLUNTEER PERIOD

Fieldwork is mainly organized in **night shifts**, typically between:

- 20:00 – 02:00
- 02:00 – sunrise

Tasks include:

- Surveillance and protection of females and nests
- Turtle tagging and monitoring
- Daily nest and hatchling census
- Rescue of disoriented individuals
- Control and relocation of at-risk nests
- Nest exhumation and analysis at the end of the incubation period



Daytime tasks include data entry and review, research activities, camp maintenance, and environmental education actions with local communities.



FACILITIES, ENERGY AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

The camp includes **spacious tents**, common areas, an equipped kitchen, dining area, and a controlled incubation hatchery. ([Watch camp video here](#))



There is a **basic bathroom** nearby, without running water, and a freshwater well from which water is manually extracted for shower cubicles.

Electricity is generated through a hybrid system of solar panels and a generator, optimized for responsible use. Volunteers are recommended to bring power banks, preferably solar-powered.

Communication is via mobile network and radio. **Internet access is limited** and available approximately 150 meters from the camp, encouraging disconnection from urban rhythms.



LOGISTICS AND MEALS

Due to its isolated location, the camp depends on carefully coordinated logistics.

Drinking water comes from a desalination plant located about 10 km away and is transported every two days.

A vehicle regularly travels to Sal Rei for supplies and staff rotation.

The cook prepares **two shared meals per day:**

- **Lunch** between **13:00** and **14:00**
- **Dinner** around **19:00**



The menu is simple, balanced and adapted to the local context, including rice, pasta, fresh fish or chicken, legumes and vegetables. Breakfast is prepared individually using basic pantry products (bread, eggs, canned goods, etc.).

Fruit availability is limited due to logistics and cost. Volunteers with specific dietary needs should bring supplements or necessary products.

Bottled water costs approximately **€2 for 5 liters.**

COMMUNITY LIFE, REST AND LOCAL CULTURE

Camp life is based on **mutual respect, sustainability and cooperation** — core values of BIOS Cabo Verde.



Each volunteer has **one day off per week**, which can be accumulated for **two consecutive days** or used to visit Sal Rei. During free time, sports activities, handicraft workshops, sustainable fishing outings, excursions and group dynamics are organized when logistics allow.

Transport is usually by pick-up vehicles with local drivers, costing approximately **10-12€** per person (shared). The cost of living in Boa Vista is similar to Europe. **Euros** and **Visa** cards are accepted (MasterCard may present limitations).



HEALTH MONITORING AND WELL-BEING

Volunteering requires good general physical condition and willingness to work in a natural environment with night schedules and variable weather conditions.



Proper hydration, rest, sun protection and insect protection are recommended. The coordination team will provide basic well-being monitoring and general prevention and safety guidance.

III. PREPARING YOUR VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE



HOW TO PARTICIPATE

BIOS Cabo Verde volunteer program runs between **July and October**.

Specific participation dates are agreed individually based on availability and volunteer profile. **Minimum stay are two weeks**. The places are limited and arrivals are staggered in order to organize logistics.





REGISTRATION PROCESS & CONFIRMATION

1) Registration

The first step is to complete the online registration form on the BIOS Cabo Verde website.

2) Confirmation and acceptance.

After confirmation, you have 14 days to formalize participation by:

- Replying to the confirmation email
- **Paying a €50 deposit** (deducted from total contribution)

An online interview may be required in some cases.

BIOS Cabo Verde maintains agreements with universities for the accreditation of external internships. Interested individuals should get in contact with their university and with BIOS Cabo Verde in order to coordinate the formalization of the agreement between the three parts.

SUBMISSION OF SIGNED FORMS, FLIGHTS AND INSURANCE

Within one month after confirmation, volunteers must email:

- **Signed forms:** Volunteer Conditions, Volunteer Agreement, Health Declaration.
- Confirmed flights details (dates, flights numbers and arrival airport).
- Proof of **travel insurance** (including medical assistance, hospitalization and repatriation)

Some recommendations: Heymondo, Iati, Intermundial e ImaWay

Health center in Boa Vista:



DELIVERY OF DOCUMENTATION UPON ARRIVAL

Upon arrival, the volunteer must present the following documents **printed and signed**:

- Vounteer Conditions
- Volunteer agreement
- Health declaration



COST AND COVERAGE

BIOS Cabo Verde covers national volunteers costs. International volunteers make a **20 € per day** contribution that includes:

- Theoretical and technical training
- Accommodation and meals
- Internal transport in Boa Vista
- Stay at BIOS headquarters in Sal Rei during days off

Travel, administrative fees, insurance, medication and personal expenses are covered individually.



PAYING METHODS

La aportación podrá realizarse preferentemente a través de las siguientes modalidades:

- **Online Payment**, through BIOS Cabo Verde webpage
- **Cash Payment**, upon arrival.
- **Bank transfers** to BIOS Cabo Verde bank account (details provided after confirmation of the placement)

The payment method is agreed in advance with the BIOS CV team during the participation confirmation process.



HOW TO ARRIVE TO BOA VISTA

Boa Vista has an **international airport (BVC)**. Access is also possible via **Santiago (RAI)** or **Sal (SID)**.

Please note that domestic air and sea connections may vary depending on operational schedules. We recommend allowing some flexibility in your travel itinerary, especially if you plan to reach Boa Vista via Sal or Santiago.

Domestic flights are operated by **BestFly Cabo Verde** (<https://bestflycabo Verde.com>) and **Cabo Verde Airlines** (<https://cabo Verdeairlines.com>). Tickets can also be arranged through the local agency Morena, Lda. (boavistamorena@gmail.com | WhatsApp +238 992 4872).

The approximate cost of a domestic flight is €100 per one-way ticket.

Inter-island ferry services are provided by **Cabo Verde Interilhas** (<https://www.cvinterilhas.cv>), with fares ranging between **€30** and **€40** per one-way trip.



VISAS AND FEES

EU citizens are **exempt from visa** for stays up to **30 days**.

For longer stays BIOS Cabo Verde manages a free extension with the inmigration and fronties in Boa Vista.

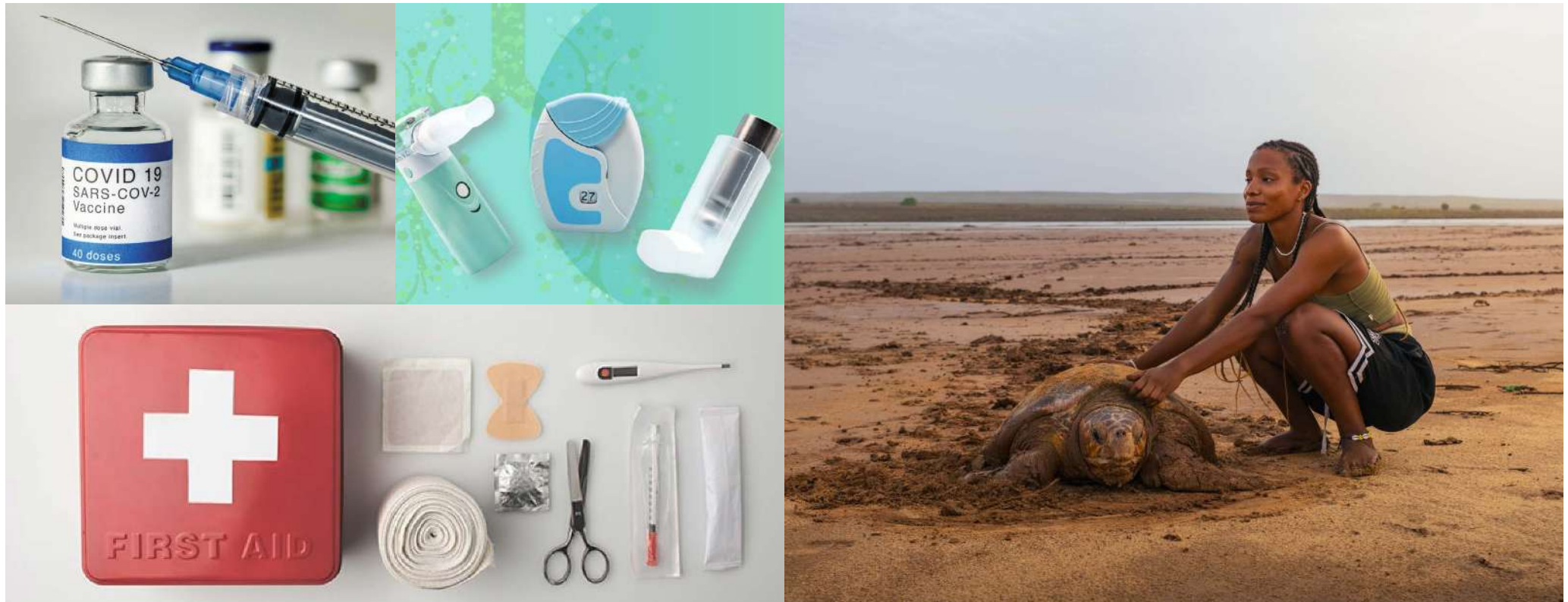
It is mandatory to do a pre registration (**EASE**) y do the payment of the TSA airport fee (3.400 CVE aprox. **31€**) via www.ease.gov.cv. We encourage it to do it before arriving in order to safe time at the passport controls.



SANITARY CONTROL

There are no mandatory vaccinations, except for individuals arriving from countries where yellow fever is present. We recommend consulting a healthcare professional regarding recommended vaccinations.

There are currently no COVID-19-related health requirements. However, we advise checking airline regulations before traveling. **International medical insurance** is mandatory. Volunteers must also bring sufficient personal medication, as **some products may not be available on the island.**



VOLUNTEER CHECKLIST

Documentation

- Valid passport
- Entry registration and QR code.
- Printed signed forms and insurance copy
- Two passport photos (if visa extension applies)
- University certificate (if applicable)



Personal Equipment

- Headlamp with red light and USB charger
- Water bottle
- Two sets of bed sheets
- Dark warm clothes for nights
- Light clothes for daytime
- Comfortable shoes and sandals
- Hat, sunglasses, sunscreen, insect repellent
- Personal hygiene products



Basic First Aid Kit

- Gauze, disinfectant, antibiotic cream
- Painkillers and personal medication

IV. BEM-VINDO TO BIOS CABO VERDE



BOAS-VINDAS

We warmly welcome you to the **BIOS Cabo Verde Volunteer Program** and sincerely **thank you** for your interest in contributing to marine biodiversity conservation.

Your participation is essential for the success of sea turtle protection in Boa Vista. By joining the camp, you become part of a diverse team united by a common goal: **protecting marine life and contributing to fair and sustainable conservation.**

Volunteering at BIOS is physically and emotionally demanding, but deeply enriching. It requires commitment, responsibility and respect — and offers learning, cultural exchange and direct impact in one of the Atlantic's leading sea turtle conservation programs.

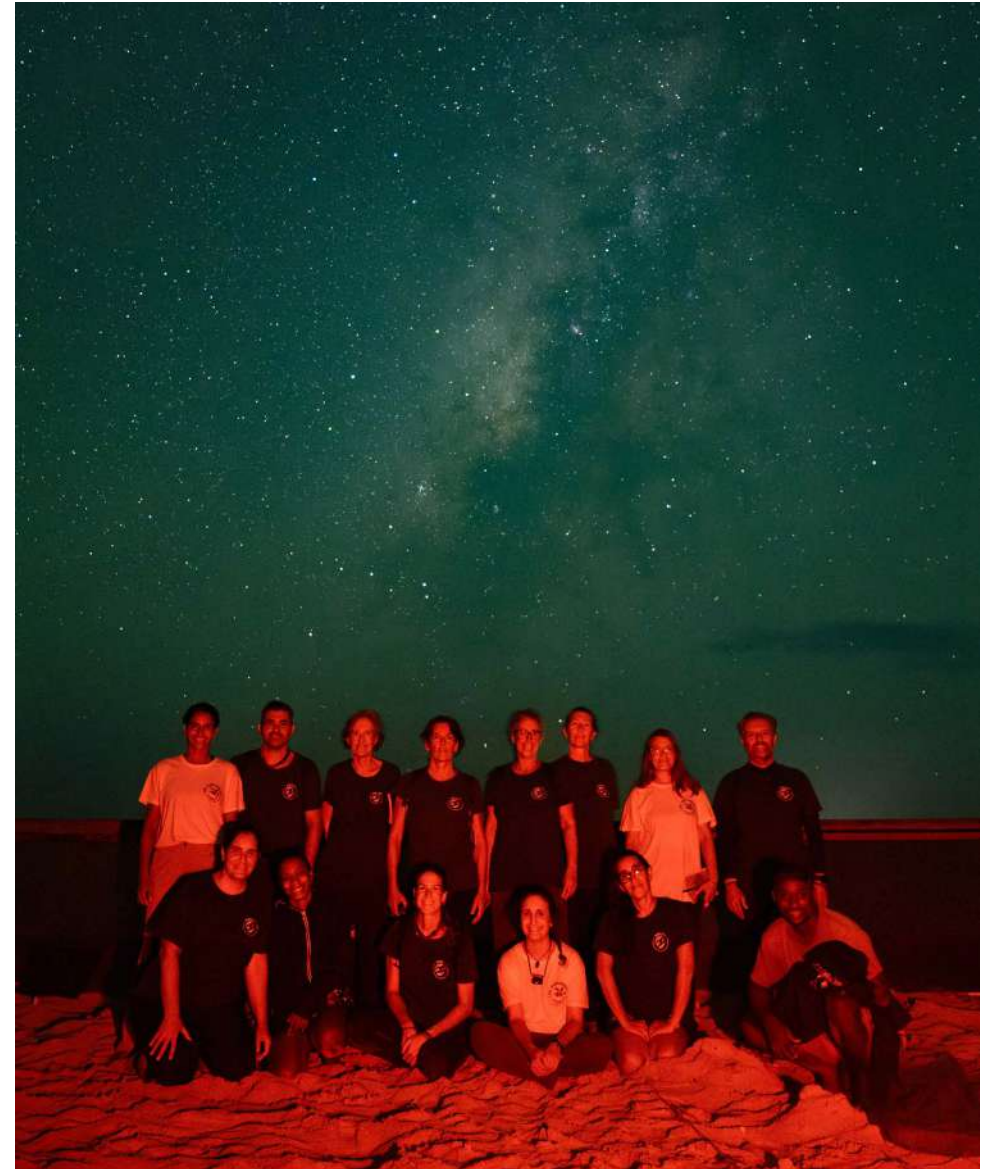


COMMUNITY LIFE & VALUES

Life at the camp is guided by the core values that define BIOS Cabo Verde:

- **Respect for nature and local communities**
- **Teamwork and cooperation**
- **Equality, inclusion and intercultural coexistence**
- **Responsible use of resources**
- **Commitment to science and conservation ethics**

We expect every volunteer to maintain an open, collaborative attitude and to understand that collective well-being is essential for the smooth operation of the camp.



CONTACT & COMMUNICATION

Before and during your stay, you will be able to contact the BIOS Cabo Verde team through the official channels provided after your placement is confirmed.

We also encourage you to follow us on social media, where we share updates about fieldwork, program results and volunteer experiences:

- Instagram: [@bioscaboverde](https://www.instagram.com/bioscaboverde)
- Facebook: [BIOS Cabo Verde](https://www.facebook.com/BIOS-Cabo-Verde)
- Página web: www.bioscaboverde.com



Thank you for your interest, your time, and your willingness to contribute to the conservation of sea turtles in Boa Vista.

It will be a pleasure to accompany you on this shared journey of conservation and learning!



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