

prospects

- Continue information, education and communication activities,
- Meet the needs for training and awareness-raising,
- Promote the use fishing gear with exclusion devices (e.g. turtle exculsion devices: TEDs) to reduce the capture of cetaceans and turtles,
- Identify migratory pathways and behaviour through the use of satellite tracking,
- Identify, monitor and protect marine turtle nesting sites,
- Strengthen the regional networks for marine turtles and cetacean conservation,
- Develop an integrated programme on threatened species,
- Develop a guide on the cetacean species found in the sub-region,
- Implement the sub-regional action plan for cetacean conservation.

partners

COREWAM: Conservation and Research for West Africa Aquatic Mammals

CRODT: Oceanographic Research Centre of Dakar Thiaroye

CSRP: Sub-Regional Fisheries Commission

DPM: Marine Fisheries Department

DPN: National Parks Departmen

FIBA: International Foundation for the Banc d'Arguin

GIRMaC: Integrated management of coastal and marine resources programme

GREP: Environment, Research and Media Association

PRCM : Regional Programme for the conservation of marine and coastal zone in West Africa

WWF network

RNCP: National network for coastal planning

UCAD: Cheikh Anta Diop University

UGB: Université Gaston Berger de St-Louis

IUCN: World conservation Union

URTOMA: Regional Unit for East Atlantic Coast Marine turtlese

WAME: West African Marine Environnement

WI: Wetlands International



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Species Programme

Western African Marine Eco-region programme

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background

The unique combination of tropical sun, trade winds, ocean currents, submerged mountains, underwater canyons and coastal rivers make the West African waters from Mauritania and Cape Verde to Guinea some of the most productive and biologically diverse in the world. Local inventories have catalogued over 1,000 species of fish. In comparison, there are only 4,629 species of mammals in the whole world!

In addition, the rich waters harbor some of the most threatened animal species in the world- including 27 species of cetaceans (dolphins & whales) and 6 species of threatened and endangered marine turtles. They also provide winter feeding and nesting sites for millions of migrating birds from Europe and Asia and shelter some of the world's most important coral communities.

However, this remarkable biological treasure is threatened by coastal development, poorly regulated fishing, and pollution. In order to promote biodiversity conservation, four international NGOs : WWF, IUCN, Wetlands International, and the International Foundation for Banc d'Arguin, along with the intergovernmental Sub-regional Fisheries Commission and over 60 African governmental and non-governmental organizations have joined together under the banner of PRCM: Programme Régional de la Conservation de la zone côtière et marine de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (Regional programme for marine and coastal conservation

in West Africa). Good progress has been made in some quarters. Shark finning has been reduced (IUCN and FIBA), regional conservation plans for marine turtles and cetaceans are being implemented (WWF lead), and a manatee conservation programme is under way (Wetlands International lead).

objective

The overall objective of WWF's Species Programme is to improve the status of marine turtles and cetacean conservation by reducing the major threats, improving knowledge and strengthening sub-regional collaboration.



achievements

Marine Turtles

- Biological, socio-economic and ethno-zoological surveys on marine turtles including a booklet surveying traditional knowledge on turtles,
- Development of a guide to aid field teams with the identification of marine turtle species,
- Identification and mapping of key nesting sites,
- Sub-regional awareness-raising campaigns,
- Training for technicians on the systematics and biology of marine turtles,
- Identification and establishment of a network of marine turtles focal points in the sub-region,
- Development of national strategies for marine turtle conservation,
- Participation in the trans-atlantic monitoring of Leatherback turtles between Latin America and Central Africa.

Cetaceans

- Organization of the first a sub-regional cetacean workshop to promote information exchange among technicians and provide with the most up to date information on cetaceans in West Africa,
- Establishment of a sub-regional network of experts on cetaceans,
- Development of a sub-regional action plan for cetaceans' conservation.

