



AFRICAN SEA TURTLE NEWSLETTER



Conservation dog, Karetta, is trained to detect turtle meat and poached turtle remains on Boa Vista Island, Cabo Verde.

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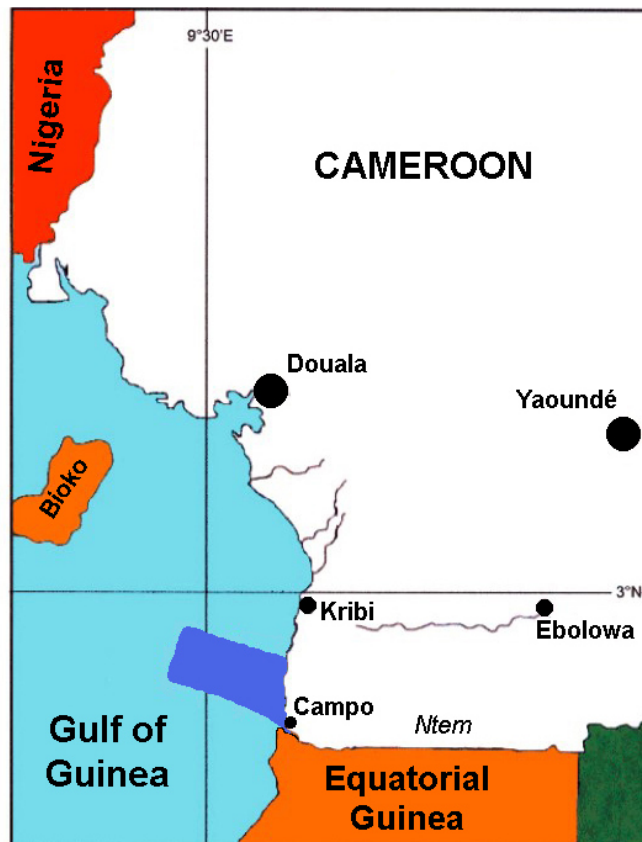
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Good news from Cameroon: The First Marine National Park!

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The Prime Minister of Cameroon, His Excellency Joseph Dion Ngute, recently (July 2021) signed the Decree 2021/4804/PM and created the Manyange na Elombo Campo National Marine Park.



*Location of the Marine National Park
(blue rectangle) in the Gulf of Guinea.*

The French NGO, Chélonée, provided technical assistance to Cameroon's Ministry of Forests and Fauna (MINFOF) for 18 years and helped create this vast Marine Protected Area. This Decree is a great victory!

The Marine Park is 110,300 ha, with a buffer zone of 3,400 ha on the terrestrial side that is 350 m wide and reserved for community activities. It extends 44 km out to sea in the direction of Bioko Island. At its southern end, it meets the Ntem River and joins the Campo-Ma'an National Park.

This vast Marine Park, the first of its kind in Cameroon, will be the fifth largest in West Africa. It aims to prevent trawlers from entering this area, which is important for the reproduction of several cetaceans, manatees, and marine turtles (olive ridleys, leatherbacks, green turtles). These coasts, rich in seagrass, corals, and mangroves, provide feeding and developmental

habitats for young hawksbills, green turtles, and possibly olive ridleys (which is unusual). Olive ridleys nest on these beaches as well as a few leatherbacks and green turtles.



Through more permanent support, this Decree will allow for improved conservation of nesting beaches and marine habitats. This Marine National Park will also protect the Iyassa and Pygmy Bagyeli cultures — threatened by rapid modernization and a nearby commercial port — by bringing them new resources (revival of smoked fish, ecotourism, employment as nature guides, etc.). The terrestrial section of the Park includes sacred sites, which will also be protected.

The next step, with the Ministry of Forests and Fauna, will be to combine two nearby Cameroonian National Parks with the Rio Campo Reserve in Equatorial Guinea into a single large transboundary complex.

*A departing green turtle in front of the sacred Manyange rock shaped like a turtle.
Photo: J. Fretey*



Bekolobe nesting beach (Photo: J. Fretey).

