

"NETS CATCH MORE THAN JUST FISH" – THEATER AS A TOOL TO INVOLVE FISHERMEN IN SEA TURTLE CONSERVATION IN ALMOFALA, CEARÁ, BRAZIL

Eduardo H. S. M. Lima¹, Maria Thereza D. Melo¹

¹Fundação Pró-TAMAR, Acesso Projeto TAMAR, 151, Almofala, CEP: 62.592-000, Brasil ,
(E-mail: eduardo.lima@tamar.org.br)



The Projeto Tamar Station in Almofala, at the West coast of the State of Ceará – Brazil, was established in 1993 to protect sea turtles and their feeding grounds along the area. Prior to its establishment, all sea turtles captured in fish corrals – a regional fishing method developed by Tremembé's indigenous community – were killed and their products were sold locally. Once the project started its activities, it developed environmental education programs at local schools and encouraged community involvement through income generation activities. Since then, TAMAR has been carrying out the campaign “Nets catch more than just fish”, which aims to engage fishermen in sea turtle conservation.



Figure 3: Theatrical performance of “Nets catch more than just fish” for fishermen, disclosing sea turtle resuscitation protocol for accidentally captured animals.

So far, eight presentations have already been done to 392 fishermen, who are close collaborators with Tamar on sea turtle Conservation activities. The play has also been held for the general public, as a means to raise awareness and engage people in the conservation process.



Figure 1: Theatrical performance of “Nets catch more than just fish” for fishermen and their relatives.



Figure 4: Groups of fishermen, who are close collaborators with TAMAR on regional sea turtle conservation activities.

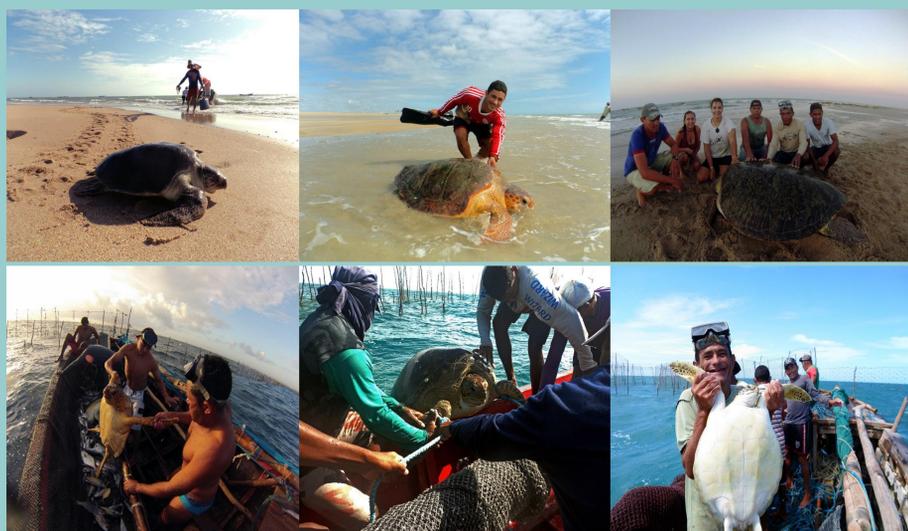


Figure 2: Fishermen reanimating a turtle that was accidentally captured in their fishing.

The Campaign is a conservation initiative focused on artisanal fishermen and its main goal is to teach them how to rescue and resuscitate sea turtles that were accidentally captured in fishing nets. For this purpose, a theatrical performance has been used as a fun, interactive way to teach fishermen to properly handle, reanimate and release accidentally caught sea turtles.

The results have been really encouraging. Fishing communities have proven to be sensitive to sea turtle conservation and the theater has been considered a great success, since it helps addressing in a playful and dynamic way, a very serious conservation problem. Many fishermen have become greatly engaged with environmental issues, such as responsible fisheries and regional sea turtle conservation activities.



Figure 5: Campaign posters being placed at key points to increase awareness of sea turtle conservation within fishing communities.

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