

## **REPORT OF THE FIRST MONTH SENSITIZATION AT SCHOOLS & TURTLE MONITORING ALONG THE BEACH FROM GUNJUR BOBOLONFENYO PROJECT SITE TO MADIANA**

### **Acknowledgement**

Special gratitude goes to Ames Family, Eagle Heights UK through Sally Ames for funding this sensitization, turtle monitoring and turtle eggs collection for the hatchery programs and within the peripheral schools. The provision of a vehicle for the team by the DPWM Head of Research and Development Unit on Behalf of the Director is really appreciated. The sensitization team is also commended for their concise presentations. Actually the whole exercise would not have taken place without the support from school heads and science teachers by arranging the time and students for the presentations

The Bolong Fenyo Community Wildlife Reserve is a protected area owned by the community of Gunjur, covering 320 hectares. It has a very important and high diversity of avi-fauna. That was the cause of its protection. It is more importantly a roosting and feeding area for terns, gulls and other species. The Bolong Fenyo Community Wildlife Reserve is gazetted in 2008 as the first national community owned reserve and has been an area under close monitoring as an African Waterfowl Census area since 2000.

The Gunjur Environmental Protection and Development Group (GEPADG), is the local NGO responsible for the management of the said area.

Biodiversity has been utilized for socio-economic development, while providing to the local communities, local and international visitors splendid recreational opportunities. BolongFenyo Community Wildlife Reserve is well placed for the improvement of community livelihood, biodiversity conservation and tourism development objectives. It is envisaged that the Community Wildlife Reserve will safeguard the biological diversity and the landscape within the BolongFenyo Area for the benefit of contemporary and future generations

### **Zoning Scheme**

The BolongFenyo Community Wildlife Reserve zonation is aimed at providing a framework for Achieving and reconciling the management needs for sustainable utilization of Natural Heritage Resources and regulating and promoting visitor use. The zones identified in the planning workshops are namely Strictly Reserved Zone, Limited Used Zone, Intensive Used Zone, Buffer Zone and Cultural Preservation Zone.

#### **Strictly Reserved Zone**

It is the whole area right at the middle of the reserve called (Fabadinka), the area stretches 100 Meters either side along the banks of the bolong (see zonation map). In these selected areas there are no existing trails, it is set aside for monitoring and research purposes. No one is allowed to venture in there except the managers of the area. These areas are very important for conservation hence we are struggling to regain the amount of species lost long time ago before the inception of the area as a protected area. The bolong is playing an important role for it being the wildlife corridor for species to come and settle in the reserve.

#### **Limited Used Zone**

It is the biggest area of the reserve, which encompasses the coastline, the seasonal swamp area,

and the rest of the wetland area, the grassland, and some part of the woodland areas. With an estimated area of 65% more than the total area of the reserve set aside for potential tourism activities. Only bikes and foot users are supposed to utilize the trails which lead to the village. Non-consumptive Exploitation of natural resources and activities are allowed here. It is in this area where there is forest cover with thick forest, having animals like hyenas, bush buck, rats and grass cutters. Part of this area issued for palm wine tapping, firewood, and fencing. Long time ago it used to be an upland rice farming area

### **Intensive Used Zone**

It is a stretch covering the area between the road leading to the fisheries center at the beach side and the mangrove fringe on the eastern border of the reserve. This area is suitable for a planned office building to be constructed. The area consists of 40ha of dry woodland where cattle graze and controlled logging or pole collection is done by adjacent community members. Palm wine tapping, palm nuts and leaves collection are allowed in the area under serious supervision. The authorization of this kind of exploitation will be centralized at the management headquarters where acquisition of permits will be enforced. Cattle grazing on vegetation needs to be monitored so that an acceptable level of utilization can be determined. The activities mentioned above will help in maintaining the area open to enable nocturnal antelopes occurring in the reserve to have grazing patches

### **Introduction**

The Gambian coastal zone is rich in natural resources and maintains a high biodiversity of regional and global environmental significance. In addition established the hatcheries are to supplement the habitats for turtle nesting sites and increase population in Gambian waters. However, the coastal area of The Gambia is under increasing anthropogenic pressure from both subsistence, economic, and development purposes. This has resulted in a significant impact on the health and condition of the coastal ecosystem. More than 3800 eggs have been protected : 3596 taken into bolonfenyo hatching center, the other ones hidden from "predators". 3,300 **Released To The Sea**

This preliminary report represents the work conducted during the 2010 nesting season and a preliminary analysis of the data collected.

### **Objectives**

The overall objectives of this project are:

1. To identify critical feeding, reproductive and juvenile habitats for marine turtles.
2. To determine and establish the biological cycle of the marine turtle on the Gambian coast.
3. To determine and establish baseline scenarios for marine turtle conservation.

4. To design a monitoring system for marine turtles in The Gambia.
5. To sensitize the schools of the peripherals on the importance Marine turtle conservation and reasons of establishing of the hatchery to supplement the breeding habitats

### Methods

The project team conducted weekly surveys of the coast from Gunjur to Medina Salam, beginning at the pre-dawn hours and ending after dawn. In order to monitor the entire coast under their monitoring jurisdiction .

The approach taken on sensitizing young generation as they are the best vehicle to spread the message into every household in the communities.

Our school programme include visits to local schools, during which children are taught all they need to know about turtles, with links to their curricula, from sciences to arts. Drawing, composing songs, writing poems and dancing the **TURTLE DANCE** are amongst the activities.

### Beach Monitoring

A preliminary analysis of the data collected during the 2017 nesting season indicates that fewer marine turtles in general utilized The Gambian coastline for nesting.



The dead turtles found tended to be at the juvenile life stage, however dead adult turtles were found as well. A number of potential nesting sites were found but no eggs had been laid as of now. The dead marine turtle found on the beach, the tracks of turtle breeders observed on the days of monitoring along the stretch from Gunjur to Mediana Salam a village before kartong by the team of five people. The team is expecting the breeding will start from mid June onwards.



The issues of resolving the problem in Gunjur and the dumping of juvenile fisheries are undertaken by Department of Fisheries and National Environment Agency to address the issues and condemned illegal dumping and polluting the marine resources and sea.

.The suspected has been closed down immediately, and the situation is under investigations get started and ongoing till the full truth of the matter is unearthed, thence a proper trial be carried out to serve justice.

The abuses of the dictatorial regime cannot be left to continue forever. Our country heavily relies on tourism; hence the sea and the beaches, plus fishing, hence clean seas are a prerequisite. Anyone found to abuse our system must receive the fullest reach of our laws, period.

Last year newly hatched juvenile turtles



Newly hatch last year

community sensitization

Below egg collection last year



school sensitization sanyang lower Basic

Gunjur Lower Basic

Kartong Basic Cycle



Gunjur Senior School

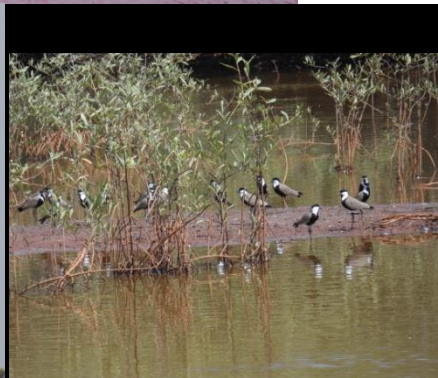
stranded green turtle found dead on the beach



Disaster of fisheries on the beach cause by the chinese Factory in Gunjur and within Bolonfenyo



Bald Eagle sighted at Bolonfenyo



spur winged plover breeding at Bolonfenyo





White faced whistling ducks bolonfenyo



western Nile crocodiles

### **Conclusion**

The presentations were well appreciated by students and teachers. In most of the schools the head teachers requested the team to organize more sensitizations in future as they found the topics presented very relevant to their science and environmental classes.