



Absent or unreported? Assessing the abundance of sea turtles in the northern coastline of Cameroon

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Abstract:

Cameroon has about 400 km of Atlantic shoreline divided into two principal sections including the north coast and the south coast. Several studies on sea turtles have been conducted already in the southern coast however, very little research and conservation efforts have been done so far in the north coast stretching for nearly 180 km long. The goal of this project is to collect baseline scientific data in order to make a first assessment of the abundance of sea-turtles in the north coast of Cameroon. Between May 2019 and June 2020, 127 questionnaires were applied in 04 project sites including Limbe (28), Batoke (33), Bakinguili (30) and Idénau (36). And a total of 96 daily patrols were carried out on beaches along the coastline during the 2019/2020 nesting period. As a result, very few sea turtles or signs of presence (track, eggs, carcasses) were detected during beaches monitoring over the nesting period. During 12 months we have recorded only 11 sea turtles and signs of presence. However, 74 sightings were reported at sea by local fishermen. Moreover, 78% of respondents to questionnaire surveys mentioned that sea turtles are most frequently observed in high sea all over the year but rarely on the beaches. Respondents also reported a small illegal trade of sea turtles in the region.



Biography:

Lionel Yamb is a postgraduate student from the University of Buea (Cameroon) and a Research Officer at the Cameroon Ministry of Scientific Research and Innovation. His current research is focused on the biology and conservation of marine mega-fauna species including sea turtles, elasmobranch (sharks and rays), marine mammal (whales, dolphins and African manatees). Lionel is also a Board of Governor and Secretary of the Society for Conservation Biology (SCB).

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