

**3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of Signatories of the Memorandum of Understanding  
Concerning Conservation Measures for Marine Turtles of the  
Atlantic Coast of Africa**

*Saly, Senegal, 4-5 September 2023*

CMS/Atlantic-Turtle-MOU/MOS3/In.4.f

**NATIONAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR: 2023**

**SIERRA LEONE**

<b>Signatory State:</b>	<b>SIERRA LEONE</b>
<b>Memorandum in effect in Signatory State since (day/month/year):</b>	09/05/2002
<b>Full contact details of the agency or institution that has been primarily responsible for the preparation of this report:</b>	
<b>Name and affiliation of the person completing this report</b>	Lahai Duramany Seisay, Head of Monitoring Control and Surveillance; Head of Joint Management Committee
<b>List any other agencies, institutions, or NGOs that have provided input:</b>	
<b>Date of completion of the National Report (day/month/year):</b>	

**1. BACKGROUND:**

**1.1 Provide an update on sea turtle species present in your country:**

Species	Select one for each species	Number of nests per year	Trend	Ref.#
<b>Loggerhead (<i>Caretta caretta</i>)</b>	Nesting	Choose an item.	Increasing	1
<b>Green (<i>Chelonia mydas</i>)</b>	Nesting	11-100 nests	Decreasing	1
<b>Leatherback (<i>Dermochelys coriacea</i>)</b>	Nesting	11-100 nests	Decreasing	1
<b>Hawksbill (<i>Eretmochelys imbricata</i>)</b>	Nesting	11-100 nests	Decreasing	1
<b>Olive ridley (<i>Lepidochelys olivacea</i>)</b>	Nesting	11-100 nests	Decreasing	1
<b>Kemp's ridley (<i>Lepidochelys kempii</i>)</b>	No sighting	Unknown	Unknown	

**1.2 What is the total length of your coastline?**

506 km

**1.3 What percentage of the coastline has nesting beaches?**

30%

**1.4 What percentage of the nesting beaches is currently monitored at regular intervals? (Ref.#)**

46%

**1.5 Are there currently in-water projects in your country that monitor/characterize:**

- a. habitats?                                      yes                                       no
- b. sea turtle populations?                      yes                                       no

**1.6 Are there currently:**

- a. bycatch monitoring projects in your country?      yes                                       no
- b. bycatch reduction projects in your country?      yes                                       no

**1.7 List the national laws and regional/international agreements in your country that protect sea turtles and/or their habitats**

**The Fisheries and Aquaculture Acts - 2018**

Prohibitions regarding sea turtles, rays and sharks.

**9.** (1) A person shall not engage in fishing for –  
 (a) sea turtles;  
 (b) immature rays or immature sharks,  
 and where a sea turtle or immature ray or immature shark is caught as by-catch or in any other circumstances, it shall be immediately released and not be harmed, destroyed, killed or kept for any reason.

(2) The Director may require fishing vessels to install turtle excluder devices in its fishing gear as a condition of license

(3) A person shall not in the fishery waters or on a Sierra Leone vessel in any place within or beyond national jurisdiction, remove any part from the body of a shark or a ray, including the fins.

(4) The operator of a fishing vessel that lands or transships any shark or ray in the fishery waters, or of a Sierra Leone fishing vessel in any place within or beyond the national jurisdiction of Sierra Leone, shall ensure that each shark landed or transshipped is whole and intact, with no part of its body mutilated or removed.

(5) A person who contravenes this Regulation commits an offence and is liable on conviction, to such fines and penalties set out in the Fourth Schedule.

Declaration of endangered species of fish.

**10.** (1) The Minister may, on the advice of the Scientific, Economic and Technical Committee, by notice published in the Gazette, declare any species of fish to be endangered or threatened with extinction, including those adopted under any international agreement or instrument.

(2) A person who fish, catch, possess, transport, process, buy or sell any species of fish declared endangered or threatened with extinction under sub-regulations (1) commits an offence and is liable on conviction, to such fines and penalties set out in the Fourth Schedule.

Wildlife Act of Sierra Leone

CITES

CMS

**1.8 List protected areas (PAs), sanctuaries or temporary exclusion zones that were created to protect marine turtle habitat.**

The marine turtle is covered in the undermentioned protected areas it was not specifically for Marine Turtles though established for the overall conservation and protection of marine resources (Ref:#1)

1. The Yawri Bay Marine Protected Area
2. The Sherbro River Estuaries
3. The Scarcies River Estuaries (Great and Little Scarcies River)

**1.9 List government agencies that play a role in the conservation and management of marine turtles and their habitats in your country.** Very briefly list their responsibilities in relation to protecting marine turtles and their habitats.

<b>Name of the agency</b>	<b>Role in the conservation of marine turtles and their habitats</b>
Ministry Fisheries and Marine Resources	Protection, monitoring and conservation of fisheries and marine resources
Wildlife Department of the Forestry Division	Protection and conservation of wildlife
Environment Protection Agency	Charged with the mandate for the protection and conservation of the environment including marine environment
National Protected Area Authority	Responsible for the monitoring and preserving all protected areas and resident resources

**1.10 List the names and locations of NGOs and other institutions working on sea turtles in your country**

<b>Name of the NGO/Institution</b>	<b>Location</b>
Reptiles and Amphibians Programme in Sierra Leone	Murray Town, Freetown, Sierra Leone

## 2. THREATS

### 2.1 Indicate the intensity of threats currently to marine turtles at the nesting beach and/or in the water in your country

Nature of Threat	Intensity of Threat	Ref.#
Illegal exploitation of nesting females (i.e. direct harvest on land)	Medium	1
Illegal intentional harvest of animals in coastal waters	Low / rare event	1
Use: Meat consumption	Low / rare event	1
Use: Egg consumption	Low / rare event	1
Use: Fat and oil consumption	Unknown	1
Use: Traditional medicine	Low / rare event	1
Use: Carapace	Low / rare event	1
Use: Scutes for ornaments	Low / rare event	1
Use: Traditional ceremony	Low / rare event	1
Use: Other — please specify	Low / rare event	1
International trade in sea turtle meat/eggs/parts	Unknown	1
Incidental capture in artisanal fisheries	Low / rare event	1
Incidental capture in industrial fisheries	Medium	1
IUU fishing	Medium	1
Boat strikes	Unknown	1
Marine debris (e.g. plastics at sea, flotsam)	Medium	1
Degradation of in-water habitats (seagrass beds, coral reefs, etc.)	Medium	1
Industrial effluent	Low / rare event	1
Inshore oil pollution	Low / rare event	1
Coastal/beach degradation from Agricultural/urban/tourism development or construction	High / common occurrence	1
Artificial lighting (on land or near shore)	Low / rare event	1
Coastal erosion, debris that obstructs nesting, hatchlings, etc.	Medium	<u>1</u>
Vehicles driving on the beach	Low / rare event	1
Unregulated tourism	Low / rare event	1
Sand mining / removal	High / common occurrence	1
Predation by domestic / feral animals	Unknown	1
Increasing sand temperature	High / common occurrence	1
Other (specify)	Low / rare event	1

## 2.2 Provide more details on the fisheries in your waters (including territorial waters and the EEZ)

<b>ARTISANAL FISHERIES</b>			
	<b>Intensity of Threat</b>	<b>Species impacted</b> (please select all that apply)	<b>Ref.#</b>
Trawls	Medium	Loggerhead ( <i>Caretta caretta</i> ) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Green ( <i>Chelonia mydas</i> ) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Leatherback ( <i>Dermochelys coriacea</i> ) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hawksbill ( <i>Eretmochelys imbricata</i> ) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Olive ridley ( <i>Lepidochelys olivacea</i> ) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kemp's ridley ( <i>Lepidochelys kempii</i> ) <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure <input type="checkbox"/>	RAPSL/MFMR
Set gill nets	High / common occurrence	Loggerhead <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Green <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Leatherback <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hawksbill <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Olive ridley <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kemp's ridley <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure <input type="checkbox"/>	RAPSL/MFMR
Driftnets	Medium	Loggerhead <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Green <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Leatherback <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hawksbill <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Olive ridley <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kemp's ridley <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure <input type="checkbox"/>	RAPSL/MFMR
Purse seine	Low / rare event	Loggerhead <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Green <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Leatherback <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hawksbill <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Olive ridley <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kemp's ridley <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure <input type="checkbox"/>	RAPSL/MFMR
Longline	Medium	Loggerhead <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Green <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Leatherback <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hawksbill <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

		Olive ridley <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kemp's ridley <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure <input type="checkbox"/>	
Beach seine	Low / rare event	Loggerhead <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Green <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Leatherback <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hawksbill <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Olive ridley <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kemp's ridley <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure <input type="checkbox"/>	
Stownet	Low / rare event	Loggerhead <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Green <input type="checkbox"/> Leatherback <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hawksbill <input type="checkbox"/> Olive ridley <input type="checkbox"/> Kemp's ridley <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure <input type="checkbox"/>	
Other (specify)	Unknown	Loggerhead <input type="checkbox"/> Green <input type="checkbox"/> Leatherback <input type="checkbox"/> Hawksbill <input type="checkbox"/> Olive ridley <input type="checkbox"/> Kemp's ridley <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure <input type="checkbox"/>	

<b>INDUSTRIAL FISHERIES</b>			
	<b>Intensity of Threat</b>	<b>Species impacted</b> (please select all that apply)	<b>Ref.#</b>
Bottom trawls (including shrimp trawls)	High / common occurrence	Loggerhead ( <i>Caretta caretta</i> ) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Green ( <i>Chelonia mydas</i> ) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Leatherback ( <i>Dermochelys coriacea</i> ) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hawksbill ( <i>Eretmochelys imbricata</i> ) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Olive ridley ( <i>Lepidochelys olivacea</i> ) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kemp's ridley ( <i>Lepidochelys kempii</i> ) <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure <input type="checkbox"/>	MFMR

Pelagic trawls	Medium	Loggerhead <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Green <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Leatherback <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hawksbill <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Olive ridley <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kemp's ridley <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure <input type="checkbox"/>	
Driftnets	Low / rare event	Loggerhead <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Green <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Leatherback <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hawksbill <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Olive ridley <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kemp's ridley <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure <input type="checkbox"/>	
Purse seine	Medium	Loggerhead <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Green <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Leatherback <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hawksbill <input type="checkbox"/> Olive ridley <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kemp's ridley <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure <input type="checkbox"/>	
Longline	High / common occurrence	Loggerhead <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Green <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Leatherback <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hawksbill <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Olive ridley <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kemp's ridley <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure <input type="checkbox"/>	
Other (specify)	Choose an item.	Loggerhead <input type="checkbox"/> Green <input type="checkbox"/> Leatherback <input type="checkbox"/> Hawksbill <input type="checkbox"/> Olive ridley <input type="checkbox"/> Kemp's ridley <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure <input type="checkbox"/>	

**2.3 Which of the following are encouraging illegal take of marine turtles in your country? Provide Ref.#s**

- Relatively high prices, relatively high revenues earned from selling turtle parts and products (any of the following: meat, eggs, crafts)



- Lack of affordable alternatives to turtle parts and products
- Lack of culturally acceptable alternatives to turtle parts and products
- Ease of access to the turtle resource (e.g. proximity to nesting beaches, or ease of land/water access)
- Lack of patrolling and enforcement at nesting beaches and nearshore areas
- Low cost of land near nesting beaches
- Low penalties against illegal take
- Source of easy income
- Other (specify):
- None of the above
- Not Applicable

### 3. THREAT REDUCTION ACTIVITIES

#### 3.1 Indicate activities implemented currently at the nesting beach and the level of implementation based on the need for the activity

ACTIVITY	Need for the activity	IMPLEMENTATION	Ref.#
Monitoring eggs and nesting females (day time)	High	Extensive	1
Monitoring nesting females (night patrols)	High	Extensive	1
Predator control	Low	Low	1
In-situ nest protection from predators/ high sand temperatures	Medium	Extensive	1
Nest relocation (hatcheries, other sections of beach)	Low	Extensive	1
Vehicle access restrictions	Low	Moderate	1
Regular removal of debris/ beach clean ups	High	Moderate	1
Beach restoration	High	Moderate	1
Coastal protection from development/sand mining/pollution	High	Low	1
Light pollution reduction	Medium	None	1
Law enforcement	High	Extensive	1
Other (specify)	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	

#### 3.2 List the fisheries where the below methods are being used currently to address bycatch of marine turtles in your country, and indicate level of implementation

METHOD	FISHERIES (please list)	IMPLEMENTATION (mark with X) for each listed fishery			Ref.#
		Low	Moderate	Extensive	
Safe handling of incidentally caught turtles (e.g. resuscitation or release using de-hooking tools, line cutting tools and scoop nets)	Industrial and artisanal Fisheries			X	
Devices that allow the escape of marine turtles (e.g. turtle excluder devices (TEDs))	Tuna purse seiners			x	
Devices that allow marine turtles to avoid the nets (e.g. lights)					

Measures to avoid encirclement of marine turtles in purse seine fisheries					
Measures to release the turtles before the purse seine is hauled in	Tuna Purseiners			x	
Appropriate combinations of hook size and design, type of bait, depth, gear specifications and fishing practices	Londliners		x		
Monitoring and recovery of fish aggregating devices (FADs)	Tuna Purseiners			x	
Use of eco-friendly FADs	Tuna Purseiners			x	
Spatial and temporal control of fishing (e.g. seasonal closures of fishing activities)					
Onboard observer programmes	Industrial Fisheries			x	
Vessel monitoring systems	VMS/AIS Technologies			x	
Inspections (i.e. at sea, in port, at landing sites)	Industrial and artisanal fisheries			x	
Law enforcement at sea			x		
Training programmes / workshops to train fishers on the use of bycatch reduction methods	Industrial fisheries			x	
Informative videos, brochures, printed guidelines etc.	Industrial and artisanal fisheries		x		
Proper disposal of discarded gear to prevent ghost fishing	Industrial and artisanal		x		
Other (specify)					
None of the above					

**3.3 Are there efforts currently to recover degraded marine turtle habitats?**

Provide Ref.#

- a. Coral reefs:    yes             no             unsure             not applicable
- b. Seagrass:        yes             no             unsure             not applicable
- c. Other (specify): yes             no             unsure             not applicable

**3.4 Touristic Activities**

**3.4.1 Are there currently touristic activities linked to marine turtles in your country?**

- yes             no             unsure

If yes, indicate which type:		Ref.#
a. Nesting turtle observation	yes <input type="checkbox"/> no <input type="checkbox"/>	
b. Hatchling releases	yes <input type="checkbox"/> no <input type="checkbox"/>	
c. Swimming/ snorkeling activities	yes <input type="checkbox"/> no <input type="checkbox"/>	
Other (please describe)		

**3.4.2 Are there any standard and government-certified protocols to ensure that touristic activities do not harm turtles and/or hatchlings?**

yes  no  unsure

**If yes, have they been implemented?**

yes  no  unsure

**If they have been implemented, are they effective?**

yes  no  unsure

**3.5 Are education/awareness programmes currently in place?**

For each group indicate the extent of the programme nationally and provide Ref.#s

Target audience	Extent of the programme	Ref.#
Policy makers	Medium	1
Fishing industry	High	1
Communities that interact with marine turtles and their habitats	High	1
Local/Fishing communities	High	1
Women's groups	High	1
Indigenous groups	Low	1
Tourists	Medium	1
Media	Medium	1
Teachers	Medium	1
Students	Medium	1
Military, Navy, Police	Medium	1
Scientists	High	1
NGOs	High	1
Enforcement personnel	Medium	1
Judicial personnel	Low	1
Others (describe)	Not applicable	1

### 3.6 Involvement of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities

#### 3.6.1 Is traditional knowledge (including beliefs, taboos, etc.) being incorporated into conservation efforts?

yes       no       unsure       not applicable

**If yes, please provide Ref.# :** During community meetings, the locals would recount some historical perspectives regarding the sea turtle ranging from the use for ceremonies, indicating some particular calendar for events etc.

#### 3.6.2 Do indigenous peoples and local communities participate in conservation and management planning/decision making?

yes       no       unsure       not applicable

**If yes, please provide Ref.#**

During the implementation of the Project “Institutional Support for Fisheries Management from 2008 - 2011 where the principles of Co-Management was first introduced in the management of the Fisheries Resources, lead to the establishment of 4 Marine Protected Areas

#### 3.7 Are indigenous peoples and local communities benefitting from the presence of sea turtles and sea turtle projects?

yes       no       unsure       not applicable

**If yes, explain how by selecting from the following and provide Ref#:**

Benefits		Ref.#
a. financially (hired by the project)	yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no <input type="checkbox"/>	
b. ecotourism	yes <input type="checkbox"/> no <input type="checkbox"/>	
c. community development (infrastructure)	yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no <input type="checkbox"/>	
d. community members’ skill development	yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no <input type="checkbox"/>	
e. education (children/adults)	yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no <input type="checkbox"/>	
f. alternative livelihoods (specify)	yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no <input type="checkbox"/>	
g. other (specify)	yes <input type="checkbox"/> no <input type="checkbox"/>	

During the implementation of the Bycatch project in Sierra Leones, Observers and Fisheries Officers have been trained in the area of monitoring and data Collection and analysis of information from industrial fishing trawlers; Awareness raising activities were also conducted in various fishing communities on the importance of sea turtles within the marine ecosystems.

**3.8 Are there any studies currently in your country to investigate the effects of climate change?**

yes       no       unsure

**If yes, specify very briefly and provide Ref. #s:**

The institute of Marine Biology and Oceanography has engaged students to write dissertations and thesis on climate Change in the country. The department of Geography at Fourah Bay College (University of Sierra Leone) is also doing Likewise.

**4. STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION**

**4.1 Are there programmes currently to involve local stakeholders in activities to conserve marine turtles?**

Indicate the level of engagement, at the national level, for each stakeholder and provide Ref.#s

<b>Stakeholder</b>	<b>Level of Engagement</b>	<b>Ref.#</b>
Fishing industry	High	1
Communities that interact with marine turtles and their habitats	Medium	1
Local/Fishing communities	High	1
Women's groups	High	1
Indigenous groups	Not applicable	1
Tourists	Low	1
Media	High	1
Teachers	Medium	1
Students	Medium	1
Military, Navy, Police	Low	1
Scientists	High	1
NGOs	High	1
Enforcement personnel	Medium	1
Judicial personnel	Low	1
Others (describe)	Low	1

## 5. CAPACITY-BUILDING

### 5.1 For which of the following is capacity-building /training/technical expertise needed in your country:

Capacity-building needs		Further details (if needed)
a. Nesting beach monitoring	yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Aspect needed for sustainability
b. In-situ nest protection/predator control	yes <input type="checkbox"/>	Aspect needed for sustainability
c. Hatcheries	yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Aspect needed for sustainability
d. Bycatch monitoring	yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Aspect needed for sustainability
e. Bycatch reduction	yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Aspect needed for sustainability
f. In-water habitat monitoring	yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Aspect needed for sustainability
g. In-water sea turtle population monitoring	yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Aspect needed for sustainability
h. Community engagement/empowerment	yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Aspect needed for sustainability
i. Ecotourism	yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Aspect needed for sustainability
j. Training of law enforcement personnel	yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Aspect needed for sustainability
k. Habitat restoration	yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Aspect needed for sustainability
l. Light pollution control	yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Aspect needed for sustainability
m. Socio-economic studies	yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Aspect needed for sustainability
n. National database	yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Aspect needed for sustainability
o. Data management	yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Aspect needed for sustainability
p. Grant writing	yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Aspect needed for sustainability
q. Research	yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Aspect needed for sustainability
r. Other	yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Aspect needed for sustainability

## 6. ABIDJAN MARINE TURTLE MOU

### 6.1 How would you describe the current sea turtle conservation and management efforts in your country?

- a. Nothing is being done
- b. Ineffective
- c. Partially effective
- d. Very effective

### 6.2 Do you believe that the « Memorandum of Understanding Concerning Conservation Measures for Marine Turtles of the Atlantic Coast of Africa » is a useful framework for conservation and management in your country?

yes       no       unsure

## 7. REFERENCES

Provide details for all the references used in your above responses:

- 1) Reduction of Bycatch of Sea turtles and Seabirds in the Industrial Fisheries of Sierra Leone (Birdlife International) Project (2019 - 2022)
- 2) Reptiles and Amphibians Project in Sierra Leone (On-going)
- 3) Conservation Society Sierra Leone)