

1.1.1. Are there any best practice protocols relating to the protection of marine turtles and their habitats used in your country that you would like to share with other IOSEA Signatories? Please name the protocols and describe briefly, providing references or links to more detailed reports or online texts.

Marine Turtles in Kenya are protected under the Wildlife Conservation and Management Act, 2013 and the Fisheries Act, Cap 378. The two government agencies work together for improvement of law enforcement through joint patrols and collaboration with local communities in information gathering and conservation. Under the Fisheries Act, Turtle Exclude Devices (TEDs) are mandatory in the country's prawn trawl fishery. Recent tests on the efficacy of the current TEDs recommended adopting new designs based on our vessels and area. Regular training of inspectors on TEDs inspections is undertaken by the KeFS. In 2023, Kenya launched the Sea Turtles Conservation Protocols for use by the different Turtle Conservation Groups.

A National Sea Turtles Conservation and Management Strategy was developed to guide in turtle conservation initiatives in the country and implementation of activities which had not been accomplished during the strategy's implementation period (2011- 2015) is ongoing. These include development of a standardized sea turtle nesting beach monitoring protocol, where a web based monitoring system is under development. In addition, we are currently mapping sea turtle habitats and updating information on key threats to nesting grounds throughout the Kenyan coast. Local community and stakeholder participation in sea turtle conservation is promoted through establishment of community-based Turtle Conservation Groups (TCGs). The TCGs have established links with other stakeholders including private and public sectors, NGOs and the civil society, and they collect and provide nesting, mortality, and sea turtle sightings to KWS which is the custodian of the national marine turtle database. Additionally, the Kenya Wildlife Service is also working with other stakeholders close to the Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) especially in promoting data and information gathering and threat mitigation.

ICZM Policy, 2014

Development and the ongoing implementation of the ICZM policy, 2014 is a significant effort towards minimizing the challenges of destruction/obstruction of sea turtles nesting and foraging grounds brought about by unplanned coastal developments and associated tourism activities. The policy among other objectives aims at promoting integrated planning and coordination of coastal developments, as well as conserving the coast and marine resources and environment for sustainable development. KWS in collaboration with the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) have continuously been advocating for well-

planned coastal development based on the country's Environmental Management and Coordination Act (EMCA), 1999 which requires an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) be conducted for any development with a perceived impact on the environment.

Coral Reef and Seagrass Ecosystems Conservation Strategy

KWS, in collaboration with stakeholders, developed a national coral reef and sea grass ecosystems conservation and management strategy to guide in conservation efforts towards controlling the challenges. The strategy which among other objectives seeks to secure, restore and maintain healthy and resilient coral reef and sea grass ecosystems is under implementation. In 2015, KWS in collaboration with Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute (KMFRI) carried out coral and sea grass restoration in one of the degraded Locally Managed Marine Areas (LMMAs) in south coast and monitoring is ongoing.

Education and Awareness

Education and awareness programs are being carried out in many parts of coastal Kenya with a target audience of local people and schools. The programs are conducted by a number of stakeholders including Bahari Hai Conservation, Coastal Oceans Research and Development in the Indian Ocean (CORDIO), Local Ocean Conservation, Olive Ridely Project, MABICO, Oceans Alive, WWF-Kenya, Wildlife Conservation Society-Kenya Marine programme and the Wildlife Clubs of Kenya. The Kenya Wildlife Service and Kenya Fisheries Service-Mombasa have also programs that constantly engage fishermen and tour operators on the importance of sea turtles conservation.

Fishing Gear Exchange and enhanced law enforcement, KWS Watamu, 2022 to present:

KWS in collaboration with Bahari Hai Conservation implemented a gear exchange programme in Mida Creek Reserve, Watamu. This was accompanied by enhanced education and awareness campaigns and enhanced law enforcement through joint patrols and a community scout programme.