



OLIVE RIDLEY  
PROJECT-KENYA

Registered NGO-EPF06

# From Bycatch To Protection: How Fishers Are Taking The Lead in Sea Turtle Conservation in Kenya.

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## INTRODUCTION

Sea turtles, crucial to healthy marine ecosystems, are significantly threatened by accidental capture in local fishing practices. In Kwale County, Kenya, we're investigating how engaging with fishing communities directly can effectively mitigate this threat. This study details our collaborative approach, working with local Beach Management Units (BMUs) to implement the Sea Turtle Ambassador program. We examine how this initiative empowers communities to actively participate in sea turtle conservation, highlighting preliminary results and the potential for long-term, inclusive protection.



### GOAL

To foster positive attitudes towards marine conservation initiatives that ultimately reduce threats to sea turtles and help maintain healthy coastal ecosystems in the South Coast region.

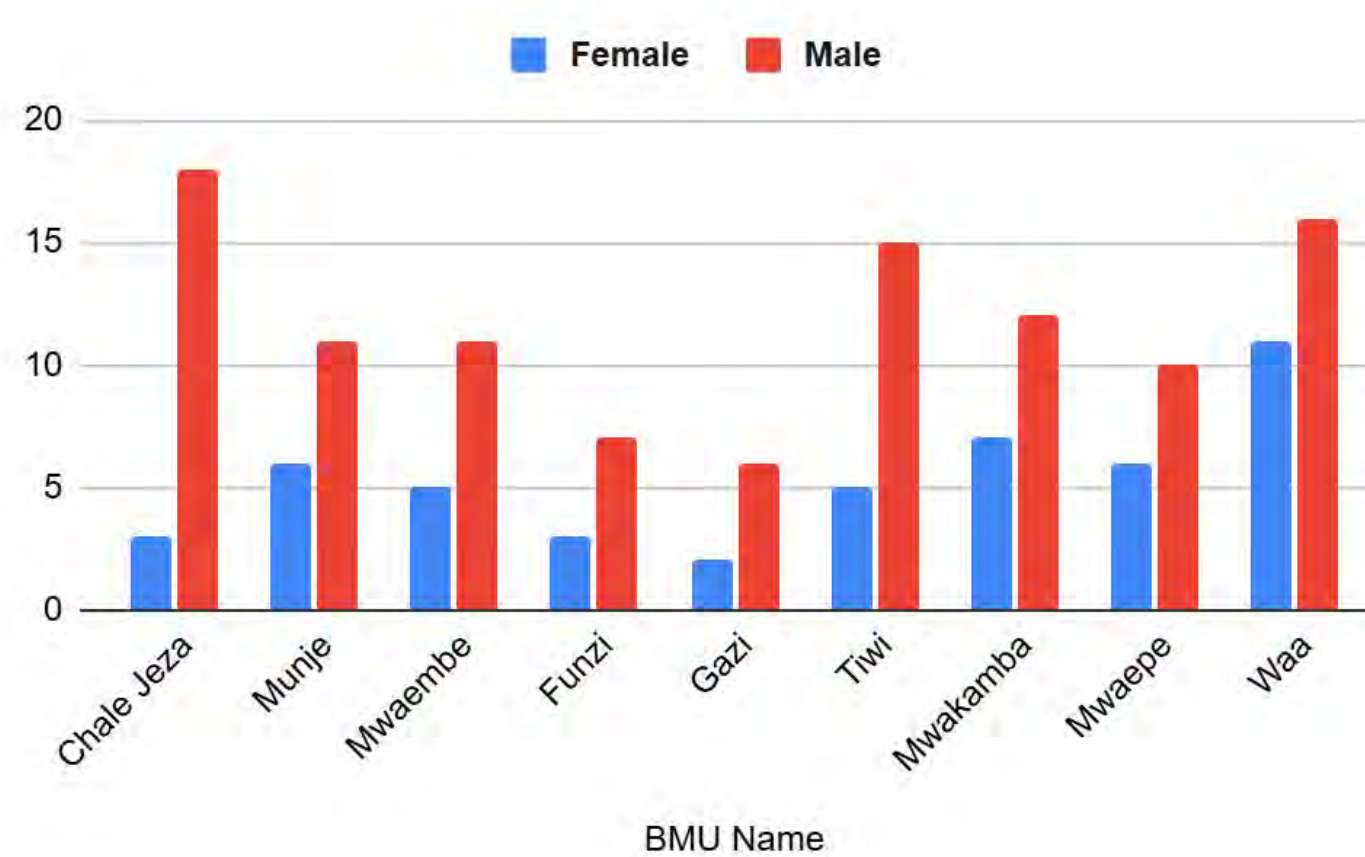
### OBJECTIVES

- Educate self-nominated members of nine fishing communities
- Facilitate peer-to-peer learning for community-led conservation
- Bridge the gap between the community and relevant authorities
- Ensure gender and age equality

## RESULTS

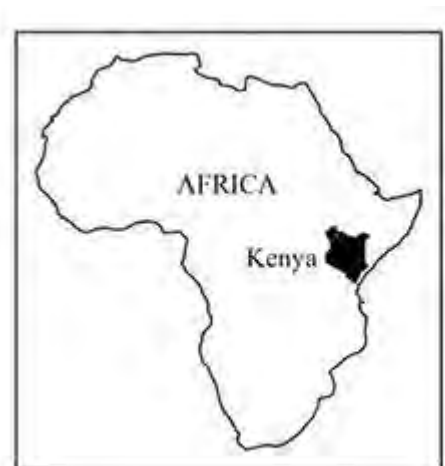
- During the study, a total of 67 workshops were conducted, with over 1000+ community members reached directly and indirectly through our peer-to-peer learning initiatives.
- A total of 57 fishers were certified as Sea Turtle Ambassadors (STAs) "Balozi wa Kasa" in 2023 and a subsequent 49 from the additional communities in 2024.
- A total of 106 men, both young and old, participated, along with 48 women.
- A documentary featuring Olive Ridley Project-Kenya was produced together with the community titled 'Sauti Za Kwale' translating to Voices of Kwale.

### PROGRAM GENDER INCLUSIVITY



## CREATION OF THE SEA TURTLE AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

### STUDY SITE



- Kwale County, Kenya
- 9 Beach Management Units
- 31 Landing Sites

### PROJECT TIMELINE 2022-2024



### STAs MAIN ACTIVITIES SINCE 2024



Updating outreach materials and training of additional STAs



Conducting own outreach



Participating in training workshops



Participating in Diani Sea Turtle Festival



Participating in recap sessions



Engagement in storytelling and production of storytelling materials

### KEY RESULTS

- Increased engagement in sea turtle conservation practices within participating communities
- Adoption of mitigation measures,
- Willingness to participate in community-led outreach
- Active involvement in the Sea Turtle Ambassador program.

## DISCUSSION

This study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on the potential of community-based conservation for sea turtle protection within Kenya. It showcases a framework for meaningful community involvement to foster long-term, inclusive sea turtle conservation efforts, highlighting the importance of addressing local needs and empowering communities to become stewards of their marine resources. However, challenges remain. Ensuring the long-term sustainability of these initiatives and consistently enforcing conservation measures are paramount, as is maintaining gender and age equality within these programs for inclusive and effective outcomes, demanding continuous monitoring and adaptive strategies

### NEXT STEPS

- Empowering fishers via peer-to-peer learning
- Turning text to visuals
- Gender inclusivity
- Engagement with the authorities
- Strengthening BMU governance
- Comprehensive outreach with local representation
- Stipends, incentives and employment
- Tackling broader fishing and habitat conservation
- Bycatch mitigation
- Wider engagement by fishers
- Data collection
- Incorporation of technology
- Storytelling
- Large scale funding
- Capacity building of the Sea Turtle Ambassadors

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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