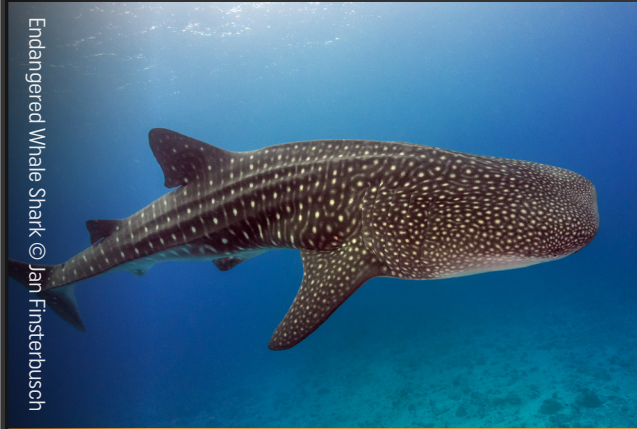


# Protect Brava Island's Last Stronghold of Biodiversity

Brava Island PA Network



Endangered Whale Shark © Jan Finsterbusch



Endangered Green Turtle © Tory Kallman

| PROJECT ACRES    | PROJECT COST     | COST PER ACRE | CO <sub>2</sub> e STORED |
|------------------|------------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| <b>1,388,604</b> | <b>\$269,256</b> | <b>\$0.19</b> | <b>126,788 mT</b>        |

Brava Island is the smallest island in Cabo Verde, a country comprising 10 volcanic islands in the Atlantic Ocean off the coast of West Africa. Though only one-fifth the size of Philadelphia, Brava Island nevertheless retains a high degree of biodiversity and endemism, including significant density of endemic plants, trees more than 100 years old, seabird colonies, shark and ray nurseries, and sea turtles. It hosts one of the most impressive water basins in the country feeding the Fajã de Água River, which is a Key Biodiversity Area that will be entirely protected through this project.

The intact terrestrial, coastal, and marine habitats of Brava Island face numerous threats. On land, these include urbanization, over-grazing, spreading agriculture, wood collection, and fires. The main marine threats are by-catch, plastic pollution, and potential offshore wind turbines and desalination plants.

Rainforest Trust seeks \$269,256 to support our partner, Associação Projecto Vitó, in their work with

the Cabo Verde government to establish the first network of protected areas on Brava Island, the only island in Cabo Verde currently lacking any sort of legal protection. The network will consist of four protected areas totaling nearly 1.4 million acres: the Brava, Fogo, Rombo and Cadamostro Marine Natural Park of 1,384,469 acres; the Brava Natural Park of 3,465 acres; and two Natural Reserves (Bafador-Baca of 404 acres and Tantum-Piram of 266 acres).

Urgent threats to the project lands and waters will be addressed by legal designation of the protected areas, improved management and law enforcement, and direct conservation actions like the establishment of marine no-take zones.

## Help protect vulnerable seabird colonies and endemic species

The project area is home to two seabird colonies that will be protected by Bafador-Baca and Tantum-Piram Natural Reserves. There are five



regionally important seabird species present on Brava Island, including three that are endemic to Cabo Verde. Invasive species/predator control is an important part of this proposal and a top priority for seabird conservation in Cabo Verde.

Five species of sea turtles rely on the coastal and marine areas of this project, including Endangered Green Turtles and Vulnerable Loggerhead Turtles. At least 20 Loggerhead nests are found each year within the project area. Endangered Whale Sharks are present in the area, and Cabo Verde is recognized as an important area for shark conservation. Brava Island is home to at least 20 critically endangered or endangered endemic plant species threatened by grazing and the expansion of agricultural land.

### Support legal protection of the entire coastlines of two biodiverse islands

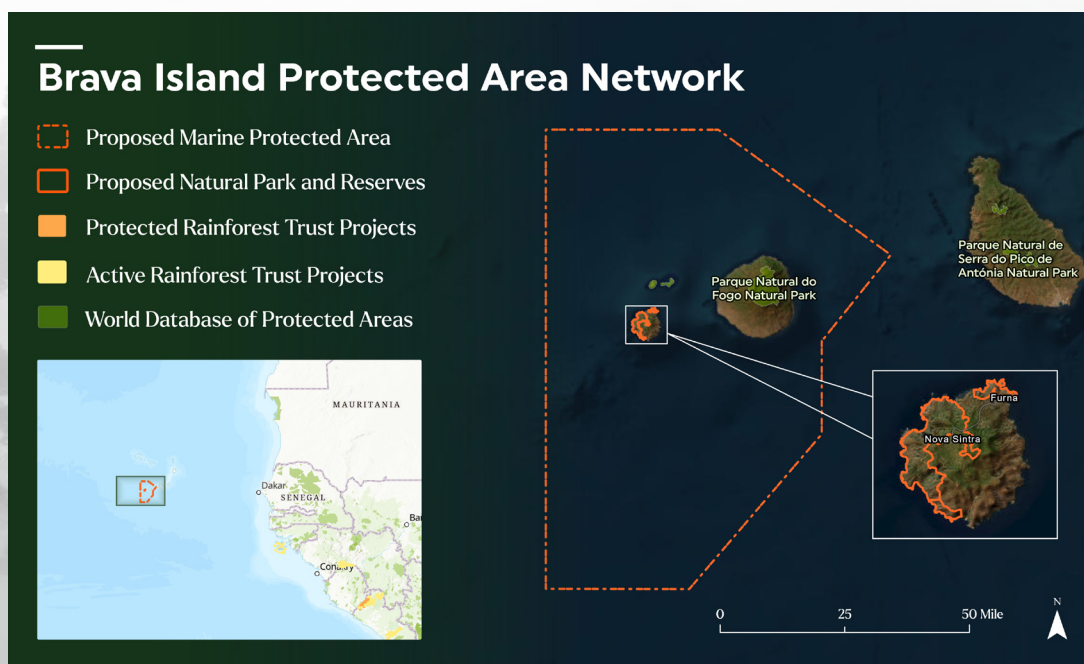
The proposed marine protected area encompasses both near-shore and offshore waters, including the entire coastlines of Brava Island and the larger Fogo Island to the east. They

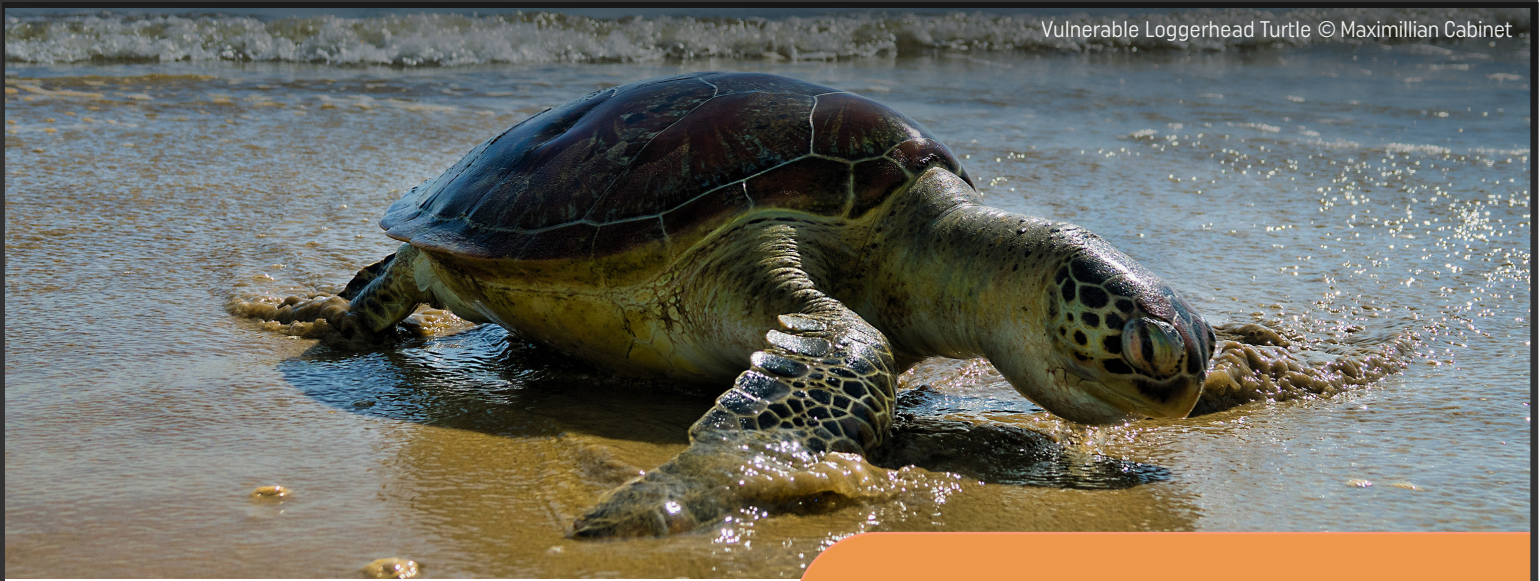
also include the Cadamostro Seamount, which rises from depths of approximately 4,600 feet below sea level. This seamount is of high ecological importance due to its structurally complex seafloor communities, its role in regional ecological connectivity, and its exceptional vulnerability to disturbance.

### Strengthen community engagement for lasting, legal protection of vulnerable areas

This project will support community consultations and training of local management teams. Our partner has already collected 500 signatures of support for the project from local communities on Brava Island (representing about 10% of the island's population), a letter of support from local fishing cooperatives, and letters of endorsement from local authorities.

The official creation of the Natural Parks and Natural Reserves establishes strong, permanent protection through legal decrees approved by the





Council of Ministers and signed by the President. Land-use protections developed with management plans allow limited, regulated human use while deforestation, land conversion, mining, quarrying, and major infrastructure projects are legally restricted. Natural Reserves represent the highest and strictest level of permanent protection, prohibiting almost all extractive activities while allowing access for conservation, research, and tightly controlled visitation to safeguard critical species, habitats, and natural features.

Marine Natural Parks in Cabo Verde create immediate, permanent legal protections in coastal and offshore waters that restrict or prohibit industrial fishing, destructive gear, mining, dredging, and habitat destruction, and establish enforceable no-take areas and regulated use zones.

Project landscape © Associação Projecto Vitó

## PROJECT PARTNER

### **Associação Projecto Vitó**

Associação Projecto Vitó is a local NGO that has established a strong partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment and with the National Institute for the Management of the Territory enabling them to conduct environmental conservation work within the Protected Areas. Since 2010, they have been working to implement the National Sea Turtle Conservation Plan. They have strong experience in protected area co-management, including in Fogo National Park.



**Rainforest Trust** • P.O. Box 841, Warrenton, VA 20188  
(800) 456-4930 • [RainforestTrust.org](http://RainforestTrust.org)

**RAINFOREST**  
TRUST®