THE CONGO MARINE PROGRAM
JANUARY-MARCH 2018

©Kristian Metcafle/UoE

SUMMARY

o 17 days of patrols carried out, during which 50 of the 55 fishing vessels checked were found to be fishing illegally.

o Economic evaluation of the infractions made by industrial fishing vessels shows that 2,047 million FCFA would have been generated since 2006 if vessels had been fined the minimum penalty for infractions of fisheries laws.

o Organization of a workshop to present the possible strategies for carrying out maritime spatial planning and revising fisheries laws.

o Participation in the debut meeting of the steering committee for the creation of the Loango bai marine protected area project.

o Development of a SMART (Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool) database to improve monitoring and surveillance of fishing vessels.

CREATION AND EXPANSION OF MARINE PROTECTED AREAS

The first meeting of the steering committee for the creation of the Loango bai marine protected area was organized by the Government, with funding from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and WCS. Three days of workshops were held at the Loango Prefecture to officially launch the project in the presence of the Ministry of Forest Economy (MEF), and to present the project's annual work plan and budget.

Kristian Metcalfe, a researcher from Exeter University, carried out a mission from February 26th to March 15th 2018 to improve the design of the strategies for the creation of new marine protected areas (MPA). Complementary analyses on sea turtles (since 2002), the use of the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and the patrolling effort made by the Fisheries Departmental Direction, were carried out to identify trends useful for the planning of marine space.

In November, 3 days of discussions were held in Pointe Noire, with various partners in the marine sector, to revise fisheries laws. This was followed by two workshops to 1) present the possible strategies for maritime spatial planning and to 2) present the contributions made by civil society towards the revision of fisheries laws. These workshops gathered more than 30 representatives from the local administration, technical partners and civil society, including the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries (MALF), representatives of the autonomous port of Pointe Noire, artisanal fishermen and representatives from industrial fishing vessels.

4 meetings with the Government were carried out in February and March to provide support on the revision of fisheries laws; the reinforcement of surveillance efforts against Illegal fishing; and the design of a sustainable management plan for marine resources. This collaborative effort was reinforced by the decision to develop an official agreement to formalize the partnership between MALF and WCS.

Continuous monitoring of patrol efforts was reinforced together with the Fisheries Departmental Direction and Renatura. A SMART (Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool) database is currently under development as the data to be collected was recently defined in order to improve the transparency of the efforts of law enforcement.

©Tim Collins/WCS

The continuous increase in the number of industrial fishing vessels, especially freezer trawlers, over the past three years is alarming (from 4 to 22 vessels since 2015 = ⬆550% increase). If sustainable management measures aren't adopted, these vessels are expected to have a major negative impact on fish stocks.
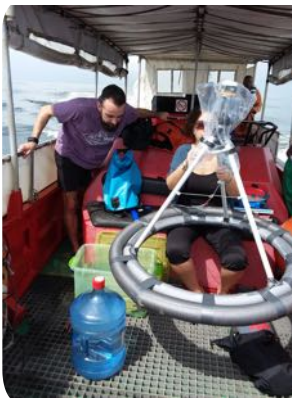

©Tim Collins/WCS

The yield of artisanal fisheries has decreased over the last two years due to pressure exerted by industrial fisheries vessels, and their non-compliance of authorized fishing zones.

A **partnership with Pointe Noire's aero club** was established to accommodate WCS Congo's Cessna aircraft so that aerial surveillance of Congo's Exclusive Economic Zone (ZEE) can be carried out, and provide additional support in the fight against Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) exploitation.

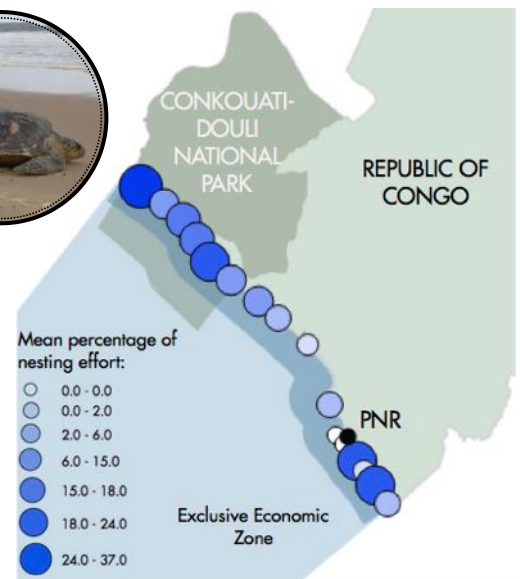# SPATIAL ANALYSIS OF THE EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC ZONE (EEZ)

From February 26th to April 6th, WCS facilitated the **scientific research of Rebecca Scott**, a sea turtle specialist. The study aims **to better understand the swimming behavior of baby sea turtles** as well as the impact of oil platforms on their migratory behavior.

Ecological monitoring data on sea turtles, from 2002 to present, was collected and analyzed. The results show that **leather back turtles and Olive-Ridley turtles nest all along the Congolese coastline, and that the beaches of the Conkouati-Douli National Park, and those south of Pointe Noire are particularly important for these turtles.**

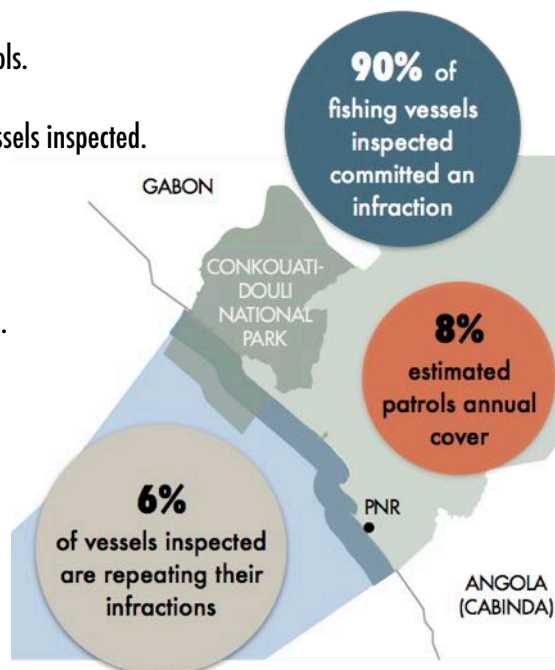Data from 2010/2011 and 2013/2014 (n = 4 seasons).

Mean percentage of nesting effort:
- 0.0 - 0.0
- 0.0 - 2.0
- 2.0 - 6.0
- 6.0 - 15.0
- 15.0 - 18.0
- 18.0 - 24.0
- 24.0 - 37.0

REINFORCEMENT AND IMPROVEMENT OF FISHERIES MANAGEMENT AND THE SURVEILLANCE OF THE EEZ

<u>Patrols:</u>

17 days of patrols.

55 industrial fishing vessels inspected.

Patrol effort remains weak, but has increased since 2015 (with an average of less than **4** mission days per month).

In **2017** enforcement of the fisheries laws could have generated **572 000 000 FRANCS CFA** (or 871.951 EUROS) if the minimum fine had been applied for each infraction committed by vessels.

90% of fishing vessels inspected committed an infraction

8% estimated patrols annual cover

6% of vessels inspected are repeating their infractions

Infractions*:

35% of attempts to check vessels were obstructed

28% **AMP** of fishing was carried out in protected areas/ outside of the fishing season/with non-compliant fishing gear/fishing of protected species

13% Unregistered vessels

13% Absence of fishing permits

*Data from 2006 to 2017