



## COSTA RICA: PROTECTING FISHER LIVELIHOODS AND MARINE BIODIVERSITY

*"The Central American region and its valuable ecosystems are very environmentally vulnerable, which added to the model of economic development pursued in the region has created a very inequitable territory. Indigenous peoples, local communities and organisations are the hands and voices that defend and support biodiversity. **Strong conservation actions towards defending biodiversity will not only protect the valuable ecosystems in the tropics, but will guarantee food security and contribute to the maintenance of social and environmental resilience into the future.**"*



**Vivienne Solis-Rivera, CoopeSoLiDar, Costa Rica**

Fauna & Flora International has been working with CoopeSoLiDar, a local NGO in Costa Rica, since 2013, to protect the marine environment and ensure local community involvement in the creation of new protected areas. This led in 2017 to the designation of the Área Marina de Manejo Cabo Blanco (Cabo Blanco Marine Management Area), a 831km<sup>2</sup> marine protected area on the Nicoya peninsula of the country's Pacific coast. The area was established to safeguard the livelihoods of hundreds of fishermen and their families, as well as the rich biodiversity in Cabo

Blanco National Park which includes humpback whales and four species of sea turtle, including the critically endangered Kemp's ridley.

The fishers of Cabuya have worked the waters of this area for generations, using low impact fishing gear like lines and nets, and even freediving and collection by hand. With the fishers' recommendations and their proposal for the management of the area, the Ministry of Environment protected the area taking into consideration traditional knowledge and local governance.