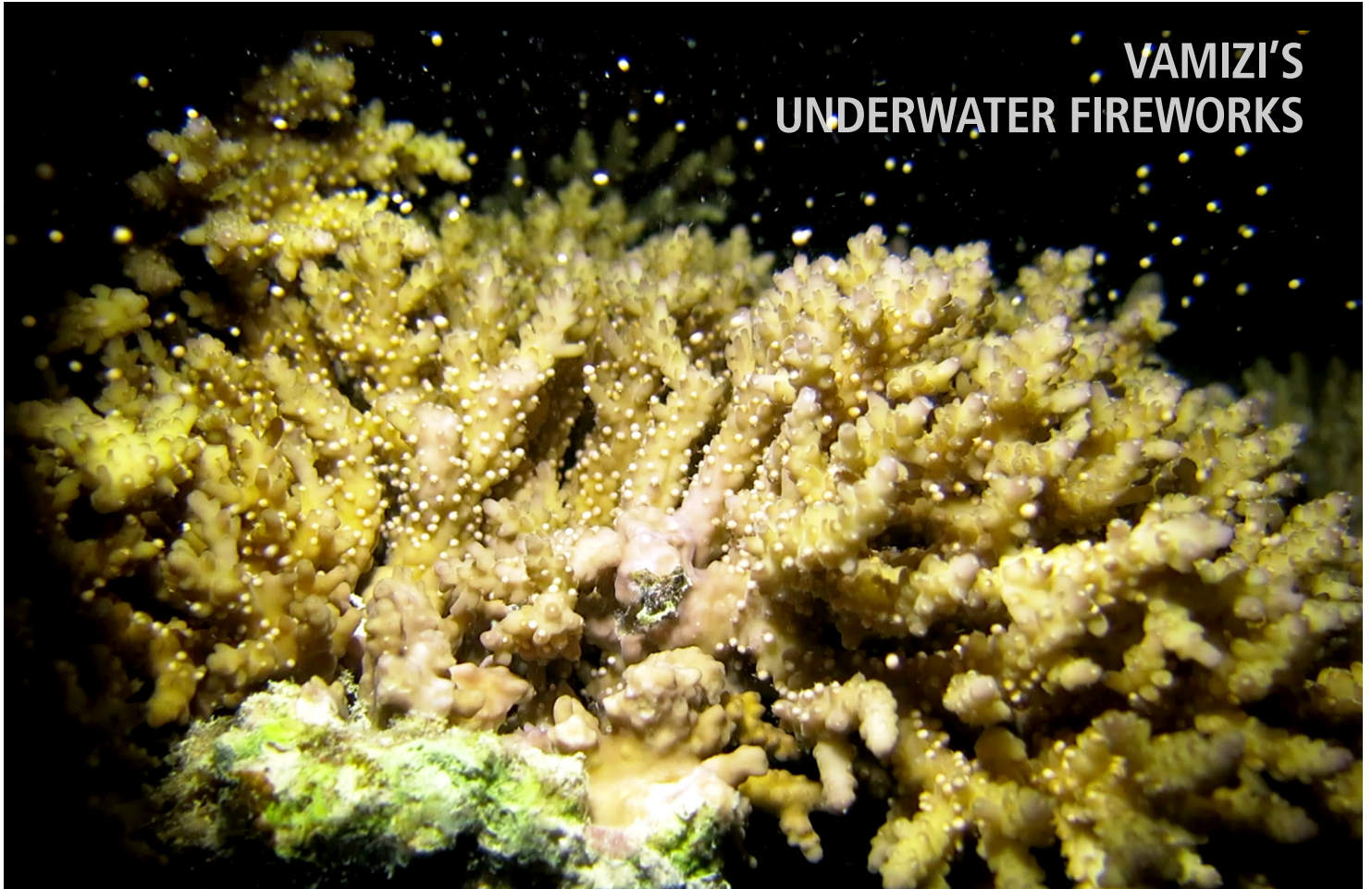


VAMIZI NEWS

ISSUE NO. 8 OCT - DEC 2014



VAMIZI'S UNDERWATER FIREWORKS

Every year we look forward to seeing the spawn slick that follows a massive spawning event. This year we saw it happening before our eyes.

The coral family in Vamizi just gained a few thousand members. Coral reproduces by releasing male and female gametes – these are tiny particles which meet in the water and create a larvae of fertilized coral cells. This larvae then settles and attaches to a hard surface below the water, eventually growing into a new coral polyp and multiplying itself into a colony. To increase the chance of the male and female gametes meeting, coral colonies sometimes release the cells simultaneously in what's known as a mass spawning event. In Vamizi's waters, this incredible phenomenon takes place over just one or two nights each year. This month Erwan Sola, a Mozambican PhD student studying this amazing event was on the island to take samples as well as these stunning images as it happened. This year it will only happen once, but already we can't wait for next year! ■



CONSERVATION MEANS LEARNING



Being a conservationist or working on a conservation project allows you to learn something every day. For two weeks in August our Conservation and Community Manager, Joana Trindade, participated in the Bermuda Turtle Project. She learned how to work with juvenile green turtles, tagging, measuring and weighing them and also taking blood samples. She met an amazing group of fellow “turtle people” and shared experiences and lessons about working with these amazing animals. The course gave her the idea to start tagging the hawksbill turtles that we find in Vamizi’s waters so that we can learn more about their breeding and feeding habits. Be sure to look out for Vamizi’s hawksbills and let our conservation team know each time you see one! ■



WHALES AHOY!

July to October is humpback whale season on Vamizi. Watching them breach in the distance or witnessing a mum teaching a calf how to be big yet graceful are experiences you will never forget. But more than that, our conservation team is interested in learning about this population’s biology and dynamic. In early September, we welcomed a team from the World Conservation Society,

Melinda Rekdahl and Emma Pettersson, together with a student from the Lúrio University, Gelica Inteca, to kickstart a project that will allow us to answer some of the more pressing questions about our whales. In just one week, the team was able to collect 11 biopsy samples and gather a number of tail fluke images that will go on a databate and help us start identifying individuals by their unique patterns. This is a long term project, and we hope that together with the shore observations we began in July, it will allow us to build a picture of the humpback whales that travel to Vamizi every winter. ■

TAGGING GREY REEF SHARKS

As we mentioned in our previous newsletter, we have started a project to tag Grey Reef Sharks in the waters at one of our most famous dive sites, Neptune’s Arm. Freediving World Record Holder and IUCN Oceans Ambassador, William Winram, was on the island for three weeks working with a team to launch this year’s project. He was able to place one acoustic tag on a 1,65m pregnant female and soon we should start collecting the data. The rest of the conservation team, along with Dr. Malcolm Smale from the Bayworld Centre for Research and Education and João Macuío, a student from the University of Lúrio, will spend the first days of October trying to place a few more tags on the same group of sharks. Wish them luck! ■



BIG SCREEN



If you have ever been to Vamizi you will know that it is a special place. If you’ve dived in these waters or taken some time to look at the island’s wildlife, you know it’s like no other place on earth. And for being such a unique place, it deserves its own film. Starting in October last year and concluding the filming in September this year, a documentary film crew was on the island, led by an internationally renowned film maker, collecting footage on the natural wonders that make it as special as it is. While most films get about 10 days of filming in the field, the crew has had 7 weeks in total, which gives us a hint of what to expect in terms of the richness of its content. From the tiniest nudibranch to the gargantuan humpback whales, we at Vamizi will be waiting with excitement to see the final product, and you should too. ■



A NEW MARKET FOR OLUMBE

In Vamizi we understand the importance of working with the local community, helping them improve their standard of living and preparing for the next generation. Not only do we work with the villages on Vamizi, but we also try to help out the closest communities on the mainland. Recently, we were asked to help build a marketplace in Olumbe. The project was a coproduction of the new Chef de Posto in Olumbe, Roberto and the Friends of Vamizi Trust. The FoVT took the initiative to provide the

roof with the very generous support of Oscar Monteiro, one of our trustees. This was our first point of contact with Roberto shortly after he took office and we have also recently sponsored the refreshments for the Olumbe Day celebrations, on the 17th of August. Markets offer key benefits for local entrepreneurs, including women. They are also essential to giving relevance to a village or town, helping it to develop and grow, and this is why we decided to help this great initiative to bring prosperity to Olumbe. ■





MEET COSTA

Raúl Costa is from Balemaa, south of Pemba, and has been working in Vamizi for 9 years. Costa received formal carpentry training in Copenhagen, Denmark, and was part of the original team that built the Lodge kitalas. Now he is part of our maintenance team, where his expertise in woodworking is in high demand. Costa likes Vamizi and the chance to meet guests from many different countries, as well as the fact that he has colleagues and friends from places like Zimbabwe South Africa and England. In his free time, Costa reads the newspaper and listen to the news. Sometimes he watches TV and talks with his friends. Costa has a vibrant and kind spirit, always smiling as he works away wearing his straw hat. ■

A HELPING HAND

Max Vermilye is a volunteer who arrived on the island in early October for a 6-week internship with our conservation and community team. Coming all the way from Geneva, Max has already been involved with our humpback whale project, measuring beach profiles, doing turtle patrols, as well as completing both his Open Water and Advanced dive courses. Max will also join us in Metundo for the second part of our shark tagging project, and help us make a short documentary film about the collaboration between the project and the local communities. ■



COMMUNITY MATTERS



The sea is a common good, shared by communities around the world. When you want to start a research project in the ocean, it is always better to include the communities that use and rely on that same ocean. And that's what our conservation project does. So before we went out to continue our shark tagging project, we sent João Macuio, a student from the University of Lúrio in Pemba with our intern Max Vermilye to speak to the CCP and to the fishermen to explain the purpose of the project, and why we need their support. Recovering the tags and knowing whether the sharks are still in the water will be important for ensuring the success of the project. Unfortunately in Mozambican it's still not against the law to catch most species of sharks, so by having the fishermen involved we are hopeful they can assist us to protect this important species for Vamizi. ■