



VAMIZI NEWS

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One of the greatest pleasures on Vamizi is to sit on the terrace, drink in hand, and watch in the glimmering watery distance the dance of the humpback whales. Often 40 tonnes and 16 metres long, and yet as elegant and fluid as ballet dancers.

Between July and November, the humpbacks make their seasonal visit to the warm waters off the beaches of Vamizi.

Whales, just like dolphins, are of the cetaceous family, taken from cetas (big marine animal) in Latin and ketus (marine monster) in Greek. Like humans, they are mammals, with a life expectancy of around 77 years. They need to come up to the surface to breathe, and have a very complex social structure, with their own "language" which is still not understood by scientists.

The males are known for their sweet serenades; the longest and most complex melodies of the animal kingdom which are sung during the breeding season. Each male has a song that is unique; an attempt to attract females, a sign of the strength of the male or a battle cry to mark their territory. This beautiful aquatic sound track can be heard for miles and often is the serene accompaniment to divers and snorkelers at Vamizi.

You can see these splendid creatures when they move to East Africa's warmer waters to breed, where their young will thrive and grow strong before making the return journey to their usual habitat in the icy depths of Antarctica. WWF members on the island are delighted to answer questions and you can help WWF by recording your sightings on the sheets in the dive centre. The WWF team also participate every year in the SWWD (Synchronized Whale Watching Day), a mass count of whales from several places along the East African coast. ■



NEW SPECIES?

In June we had the pleasure of John and Sandie Burrows from Buffelskloof Herbarium, Lydenburg, South Africa visiting Vamizi to carry out a botanical survey. John and Sandie are producing a book, 'The Trees and Shrubs of Mozambique', a first for Mozambique. They told us they could see, just on the drive to the Lodge from the landing strip, that Vamizi is extraordinary. Having just travelled up through Mozambique they were amazed at how lush Vamizi was during their stay.

In the four days that they visited, they spent every waking moment studying and documenting flora and fauna, and discovered that Vamizi has at least one undescribed species, a coral rag forest type that is not known to occur elsewhere in Mozambique and therefore every effort should be made to preserve the forest for future generations. The drift-seed flora and the area of vegetation between high and low tides is of particular interest; further work will be done to establish if these rare plants should be listed in Mozambique's Red Data List, for endangered species. ■



Sea trumpet (*Cordia subcordata*):
One of the species already recognised on Vamizi

FUTURE GENERATIONS



Environmental education programs at the Lodge, in the community and with the Vamizi Primary School have been launched as a joint venture between the Community Department and the WWF. The first initiative was a tree planting session where a Women's Group from the village "Aldeia de Vamizi" cleared an area in the southern part of the island and planted 50 coconut seedlings with more to follow.

In early September Cardoso Lopes (Supervisor of Conservation Monitors) and Stanley Phiri (Community and Conservation Liaison Officer) undertook a joint WWF/Community Environmental Education programme at the Vamizi Primary School, explaining the importance of Mangrove Forests to about 200 children aged between 6 and 12. Afterwards about 1,300 Mangrove seedlings were planted by all community members and it was such a success that the children are already asking about the next one. ■



COMMUNITY MARINE SANCTUARY BUOYS CEREMONY

With 2700km of coastline, fishing is abundant in Mozambique. However, the State has few resources to manage this and so chose to pursue community management, from which arose the Community Council of Fisheries (CCP). This group of fishermen control and manage the fisheries in coordination with the fisheries institutions. They can issue fishing licences, give technical advice, control the movements of fishermen and intervene with conflicts that arise. In 2006 Vamizi joined this scheme. One of the first initiatives of the "CCP Vamizi" was to establish a Marine Sanctuary around much of the eastern side of the island, where fish can reach adulthood and reproduce. Increased numbers of fish in the surrounds of the Sanctuary have meant there has been no conflict between the tourism industry and local fishermen, both of whom rely on this resource for income. The CCP now receive a \$3 fee for each dive boat entering the Sanctuary. 6 years on, the Sanctuary is an established success, both with lodge guests who enjoy an unusually vast array of fish and the fishermen who love the rich fishing just outside the Sanctuary. In recognition of their strong belief in the Sanctuary the fisherman held a ceremony on June 1st to put new buoys and markers on its boundaries. Congratulations to all involved! ■

LOCAL PEOPLE



CHEFE MUSSA
Political Leader of the Vamizi Island Community:

The governing structure of the local community on Vamizi is twofold. On the one hand there are the traditional tribe elders and the Iman, a historical governing body based in the Islam faith. On the other are the political parties more akin to the western world. FRELIMO is the governing party on Vamizi, and its leader is the 33 year old Mussa Momade. Chefe Mussa was born on Vamizi. His parents originally came from Pemba in Tanzania but they migrated to Vamizi during the recent civil war. In those days, before the Vamizi Island Project was born, fishing and subsistence farming were the mainstay of island industry. Since the Project, and the introduction of tourism to the island, the main income source is trade and jobs have become more prevalent. "The local community used to be mainly Kimwani-speaking people, but with the Project came opportunities, and from the mainland came people speaking Makonde and Makua and even English and German" says Chefe Mussa with a wink. He is delighted with the progress of the Vamizi Island Project and in particular the success of the Marine Sanctuary. He also highlights the positive changes brought to the island since the Project began and says "People have so many more opportunities now to develop the island and improve their livelihood". The future is bright on Vamizi. ■



'VAMIZI HAS A BRIGHT FUTURE'



FOOTBALL ON VAMIZI

It was only a year ago that Football for Environmental Education was mooted as an idea to promote recycling, when an area in the village of Kivuri was cleared of rubbish and a pitch laid for the island's debut football game. Now the well-supported matches are fortnightly, except during Ramadan, the holy month in Islam. The first

match after Ramadan this year was a contest between the Lodge Team (also known as "the sharks") and the Construction Team. The Lodge Team were victorious by 2 goals to 1. The villages of Kivuri and Aldeia now have teams as well and before long Vamizi could have its own league! One local team was invited to the mainland to compete in the new tournament called the "Quirimbas Cup". Although recycling has been now taken over by the Kivuri Recycling Group, a theatre group has been established to perform environmentally-themed plays at half time during matches. This continues to

educate and inform the Community and the football continues to energise the Vamizi spirit. ■



HEALTH & FIRST AID TRAINING FOR VAMIZI RESIDENTS



Can you help when there is a medical emergency? To ensure that staff from the Lodge can, a series of interactive first aid and basic life support sessions took place. Flamboyant acting skills caused much laughter as participants practised their Basic Life Support ABCs in role plays, but all were aware that in reality these are essential basic skills that can save lives and on Vamizi, however rarely required these skills are, we are proud that our staff will always be fully prepared.

The Community Team are also happy to announce one year of HIV-Education for the staff of the Lodge and the Community. Two Community workers from the Mozambican NGO "EcoSida" come to the island every three months to work with the staff and the Community on the topics of HIV/Aids, STD's and Malaria prevention. Two volunteers of the Vamizi staff have been trained up in this process to be able to perform HIV Education in the future on their own. ■



FISH AGGREGATION DEVISE (FAD)

In late June WWF deployed the first trial Fish Aggregation Devise or FAD. FADs have been widely used throughout the world by fishermen using local materials and by comercial trawlers using high tech equipment. The FAD is basically a long length of rope anchored to the sea floor by two large concrete anchors with 3 bouys at the top. The top 2 meters of rope are festooned with old rope, strips of plastic, mosquito netting; anything that provides a home for algae and small fish. In East Africa, especially Tanzania, trials have proved that FADs, when properly located, attract pelagic fish from the deeper waters where they can be caught on line by local fishermen. Here on Vamizi WWF have made a simple but hopefully effective FAD and with the help of the lodge fisherman, it was deployed at Panga Panga, an area to the north west of the lodge, in 85 meters of water. FADs first attract algae then progressively larger fish all seeking shelter and feeding off each other. Often tuna patrol up to 100 meters around the FAD where hopefully they can be caught by guests and local fishermen alike. We are hopeful this will provide additional fishing locations and we plan to deploy 5 more FADs this year. ■

KITUCULO: A UNIQUE CORAL REPRODUCTION STRATEGY



Vamizi Island is the location for one of nature's most amazing phenomenon, coral mass-spawning, locally called 'Kituculo'. One or two nights a year, countless corals from a variety of species simultaneously release their eggs in a colourful explosion of life. First documented in the Great Barrier Reef

in the 80's, mass-spawning is rare, occurring in only around 20 locations in the world but never seen along the coast of Eastern Africa!

This incredible reproductive synchrony renews the healthy coral and the success of the reef is essential for local coastal people and tourism alike. In cooperation with the University of Kwa-Zulu, Durban and headed by Mr. Erwan Sola, we have initiated a study to explain the mass-spawning event in Vamizi. Research is being done into the numbers of species involved and environmental factors affecting it, highlighting the importance and uniqueness of Vamizi on a global level, so conservation can be tailored to maintain this for the future. ■

