Marine Protected Areas and Tourism: Making MPAs Self Sustaining
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Bungalows South of Chumbe, Zanzibar
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There’s no such thing as a free lunch!!
We pay for everything……or so it seems. I’m amazed that we have never paid for the real cost of using environmental goods and services. It’s only relatively recently that the notion of payment for ecosystem services has entered the public consciousness.

Payment for ecosystem services has been touted as an effective market-based solution for the conservation challenges facing protected areas. Some examples demonstrate that well-managed tourism can provide incentives for protecting marine and coastal biodiversity while at the same time providing revenues to continue supporting conservation efforts. In many developing countries, tourism is a top foreign exchange earner and thus some far-thinking nations have embraced the need to preserve their attractive natural heritage – gorgeous land & seascapes and rich bio-cultural diversity. For this reason, tourism is perceived as a seductive route for promoting strategic partnerships between development and conservation and for facilitating sustainable livelihoods.

And yet when we consider the situation of MPAs in our Western Indian Ocean region - wide diversity, often remote sites, lack of capacity and insufficient political will - it begs the question whether MPAs can really be self sustaining. Are the revenues generated from visitations enough to support the operations of MPAs? Is it possible to have activities in MPAs that support community-based income-generation? Are governments willing to allow tourism revenues to be directed to MPA management? Are protected area and conservation agencies giving enough attention to MPAs? Are there sufficient professional cadres in place for proper MPA management? In fact, there are may be more questions than answers.

Shifting government and donor priorities mean that conservation is receiving less funding. The current expectation is that MPAs should be adroit in satisfying their budgetary needs through tourism and other user fees. However, in the rush to fill the coffers, the delicate balancing act between protecting ecosystems and making money from them is often left face-down in the dust. If the focus is to grow MPAs as economic units that generate their own revenue, as much emphasis must be placed on managing or mitigating the impacts on the ecosystems that attract the visitors in the first place.

Attempts at answering these nail-biting questions must be relevant to the MPAs on the ground. Solutions cannot come from top-down directives or be donor-driven. This issue of the magazine looks at tourism and MPAs from the perspective of MPA Managers themselves. We have tried to get the people who are on the front lines to talk about the real-world challenges and successes in balancing conservation and tourism. The magazine highlights case studies where paying for ecosystem services and community-focused marine tourism has worked for MPAs in Seychelles, Madagascar, Tanzania, Mozambique, Kenya and South Africa. Enjoy the read.

Nirmal Shah
Crystal clear, warm tropical waters teeming with life and color swimming around healthy coral reefs that are surrounded by high paying scuba divers is what we first conjure up when we think of tourism around our marine protected areas (MPAs). However, when we consider the huge diversity and location of our MPAs, this then is not always a viable proposition and with many communities and governments calling for MPAs to provide tourism benefit, we need to consider other options.

With conservation being at the lower end of receiving governmental funding, more and more pressure is being placed on MPAs to start generating their own incomes. Tourism is often seen as the “golden egg” that will allow this. However, is increasing the number of people undertaking a variety of activities (both consumptive and non-consumptive) within a MPA necessarily the best option and will this not place further pressures on already stressed ecosystems that were proclaimed to protect what few intact and healthy areas remain? We need to think carefully about opening a floodgate of activities within our MPAs. Should MPAs be expected to generate tourism income or do the other benefits to fisheries and ecosystem functioning that they bring suitably justify their existence?

These are the questions as conservationists and managers that we should constantly be asking ourselves. Sadly, where we are often not good communicators and salespersons to the outside world, we get pushed into a corner and loose the delicate balance of allowing tourism while ensuring protection and as a result we increase human use and in particular the number of paying tourists to our MPAs. There is also the misperception that many of the so-called non-consumptive uses, such as scuba-diving, kite-surfing, marine mammal watching etc. have no negative impact on the environment and yet, there is increasing evidence that if these activities are uncontrolled and unsupervised they can be very destructive through their disturbance values.

A prime example of this is the recently published article in National Geographic magazine (April, 2013) where the Florida manatee has become so popular with tourists that authorities now have to seriously limit numbers of visitors due to the level of disturbance by these
visitors to the manatees. At the end of the day, it is all about balance and ensuring that the original objectives for which an MPA was proclaimed are not compromised. We need to have good scientific-based evidence of the value that our tourism can play and also understand the impacts of this tourism on the environment.

On the other hand, sustainable and non-consumptive tourism does play an extremely important role in providing socio-economic opportunities and is often the better option to consumptive use. In 2006, WWF-SA, commissioned a study within the three MPAs that lie within Garden Route Region. Focus was given to the Tsitsikamma National Park in South Africa that was under threat of being re-opened to fishing due to political pressure. The Tsitsikamma National Park is South Africa’s oldest marine protected area and is a priceless national asset, having enjoyed total protection since 1964. It is the marine equivalent of the Kruger National Park and is a major tourist draw card.

The report was called for to better understand the socio-economic value of these MPAs and the economic implications of changes in protection. This study estimated that estimated that relaxation of protection will result in a 16% decrease in visitation, or a direct economic loss of R4.7 million (US$ 510 000) per annum.

Conversely the value of fish extracted from these previously closed areas was only likely to yield a once off value of R4 million (US$ 440 000), before fish stocks are degraded to the same levels as outside the park. These benefits would also be extremely short lived, and it is estimated that the natural capital built up in these MPAs since 1964 would be fished down in approximately 33 fishing days.

In a similar study undertaken in 2008 in the Kogelberg along the southern Cape Coast biodiversity hotspots to fishing practices, but rather following sustainable tourism practices.

To further promote non-consumptive tourism and to try and encourage job creation within South African MPAs, a marine guides training course

At the end of the day, it is all about balance and ensuring that the original objectives for which an MPA was proclaimed are not compromised.
was developed by WWF-SA and the Field Guides Association of South Africa in 2010. Since inception of the training, over 120 persons have been trained and many are now working within MPAs where they lead tourists on guided marine trails. Dalfrenzo Laing, is one such example and who despite having a university exemption was only able to find employment as a petrol-pump attendant with little opportunity for the future. He was one of the first to have successfully completed the training course and has been employed at the De Hoop MPA since that time.

Not only has tourism created long-term and well paying employment for Dalfrenzo, but also importantly, he has become an incredible ambassador for MPAs. He leads on average 2500 – 3500 persons on these guided trails per annum, educating them on the importance of our MPAs and why they need to be conserved.

Given the very isolated location of a number of South African MPAs, popular three to five day hiking trails have been developed along the coastline. These trails follow breathtaking beautiful coastlines where dolphins, whales and otters play in the surf-line. Their isolated nature is vital in terms of finding our sense of place and allowing for relaxing from our stressful lives. They also provide critical work opportunities through trail maintenance, transportation and the cleaning of the facilities for neighboring communities who are often impoverished and seldom have other employment opportunities.

The above are just a few examples of the value that MPAs can play in socio-economic development but for tourism to ultimately succeed within our MPAs we need to be creative and think beyond just the norm of perceived activities. More importantly we need to ensure that any such activities are truly sustainable and are managed in such a way that we do not just “chase the money”. We must safeguard that ecological integrity is maintained and that any visitor also carries home with them the message of the value of these critical areas that need support and protection. Lastly, we must enable the funds that are generated benefit the very communities who live adjacent to these critical life and ecosystem support services and have often had to compromise other rights for the proclamation of the MPA.

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The entry fee for Cousin Island Special Reserve is too high”, grumbled a tourism operator recently. This has been his pet grouse for many years. Yet independent surveys have shown that 90 percent of the visitors are satisfied with the price. I suppose he wants a bigger cut from the tourists he brings to this outstanding and award winning Special Reserve.

First, I explained to him we don’t charge entry fees but rather user fees. There is a difference – visitors to Cousin Island Special Reserve use the various services we put at their disposal including boat landings and guiding, as well as the “product”, one of the best examples of a wild and wonderful Seychelles. But more importantly, we have calculated some of the environmental values of this incredible and unique protected area as well as the costs of maintaining and improving them. And, we charge accordingly.

We want people to understand that Cousin is not an ordinary island. It’s taken 40 years of hard work and millions of Rupees to transform Cousin from a coconut plantation and where turtles and...
features

Above: Fish © Alec Taylor

Above: Hawksbill Turtle © Martin Harvey

Fish were harvested for trade to what BirdLife International calls “one of the world’s great conservation success stories”. Surely, only that is enough to place an enormous value on the Reserve. Cousin’s overall importance is based on what environmental economists call ecological, scientific, option and existence values.

The ecological and scientific values of Cousin are so high that the renowned science magazine New Scientist described Cousin as “priceless” recently. The Reserve is also one of the clearest examples of what an option value Seychelles could have predicted that 40 years later conservation would be more sustainable, more equitable and more valuable than coconut plantations, turtle shell and dried fish.

Eco Tourism on Cousin began in 1972. However it is only recently that it has been developed as a tool for sustainable financing of conservation. The financial flows from Cousin to conservation in general in Seychelles have been important. For example, Cousin revenues have been used for over a decade to support a national youth and grass roots organisation, the WildLife Clubs of Seychelles.

Small to medium sized operators and charter boat businesses based on Praslin. The employees of these businesses are in the majority all Seychellois. Apart from the landing fees collected by Cousin management, foreign and local currencies are generated by the local private sector every year from Cousin-based tourism activities through direct and indirect revenues.

And we know that communities and businesses understand the importance of Cousin because poaching of the much-desired resources is very low compared to other protected areas nearby. In addition, poachers may not feel comfortable about entering an area containing tourism activity.

So, if I come back to the example of the grumpy old tourism operator, the justification and raison d’être for making tourists pay to enjoy Cousin is not only domestic but also global. Although Cousin provides multiple domestic economic benefits, other benefits accrue globally, especially ecological, scientific, option and existence values. This presents a strong justification for some of the costs of conserving Cousin and the Seychelles environment in general being borne by the global community. The maintenance of a world class reserve and the resulting high value visitor experience is a perfect fit with the Government’s policy to maintain an up-market image of the tourism product. In the words of Alain St. Ange, Seychelles Minister for Tourism and Culture, “Cousin is a jewel in our crown”

The benefits to surrounding communities and private sector are also impressive. Tourism to Cousin is serviced by Seychellois-owned travel agencies, and several other local businesses. The benefits to surrounding communities and private sector are also impressive. Tourism to Cousin is serviced by Seychellois-owned travel agencies, and several other local businesses.

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Cousin’s conservation history began in 1959 when Dr. J.H. Crook visited Cousin in 1959. His discovery that the Seychelles Warbler population which was confined to Cousin had been reduced to less than 30 birds prompted him to recommend turning the island into a nature reserve.

Cousin at the time had been cleared of its native vegetation and planted wall to wall with coconuts. Pigs, chickens and cattle had been introduced. An annual crop of up to 6,000 Wedge-tailed Shearwater (Puffinus pacificus) chicks were taken for food. By the early 1960’s the island yielded only 13 tons of copra annually. About 4,000 fouke, tobacco, salted fish, turtles, pigs and poultry were still taken off the island every year. In 1968 after 7 years of discussions the International Council for Bird Preservation (ICBP), now BirdLife International, purchased the island for what seems like petty cash today- 16,452 GBP. Soon after, the Seychelles Government designated the island as a Nature Reserve under the Wild Animals and Birds Protection Act and in 1975 Cousin was designated a Special Reserve. This included the marine area up to 400m beyond the High Water Mark and this is today one of the most effectively managed MPAs in the region.

Cousin has been transformed to a thriving native woodland. The numbers of nesting hawksbill turtles have increased 8 times since 1972 making it the most important nesting site for this species in the Western Indian Ocean. There has been successful translocation of Seychelles Warblers from Cousin to several other islands, and of Seychelles Fodies from Cousin to Denis. To save the Magpie robin which was at the time on the brink of extinction, BirdLife translocated the bird from Fregate to Cousin, the first time a translocation of this species had been tried. Today Cousin has almost 50 Magpie robins – the second most important population. The Reserve hosts seven species of nesting seabirds, 5 species of endemic birds and 7 species of endemic reptiles. It is one of the few places free of introduced predators like cats and rats. Research has showed that the Reserve’s reefs are very well protected resulting in a very diverse and abundant fish fauna, especially of fish targeted by local fishers.
Preserving Marine Areas for Tourism Education and Development

By Olivier Fournajoux, Solofo Andriamaharavo, Tiana Rahagalahala

For six years now, the Alametso Community Marine Reserve and its adjacent lowland forest has succeeded in preserving a pristine marine habitat and conserving biodiversity in an almost intact manner while at the same time acting as haven and paradise for snorkelers, whale watchers and divers. The Alametso Reserve is a perfect example of how the government, conservation agencies, tourist investors, tourists and the community can partner together successfully to the share benefits from tourism. The reserve is located in the Antongil Bay (Madagascar’s largest bay) in the northeast of Madagascar. The Alametso is next to Masoala and Tampolo Marine Parks and is comanaged by the local community and a tour operator and hotelier- Arol Ecolodge, with support from Masoala Marine Park and the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS). Its objective is to conserve the unique biodiversity of the areas, while providing enough resources for local peoples through managed fisheries and tourism.

From the Forest to the Ocean: an Idyllic four day adventure of walks in a primary forest and snorkelling with reef coral fishes at Alametso Reserve

The Alametso Reserve has much to offer to tourists. The Alametso is an amazing complex of marine habitats, with coral reefs, rocky shores, and sandy beaches contiguous.
with a river shoreline and a lowland forest. This area is teeming with fish, shrimp, turtles, dolphins, and critically endangered dugongs and sharks. It serves as one of the most important breeding, calving, and nursery area for the western Indian Ocean humpback whales.

The reserve’s close proximity to the surrounding Masaola Forest gives visitors the opportunity to conquer various hiking trail of varying difficulties and discover exceptional biodiversity including the Aye Aye, Brown Mouse lemur, Eastern Avahi, Eastern Grey Bamboo lemur, Greater Dwarf lemur, Red Ruffed lemur, Weasel Sportive lemur, White-fronted Brown lemur, Boas, chameleons, uroplatus, brookesias and endemic birds.

Thanks to abundance of rain in this region, the Masoala forest is one of the most luxuriant and unique forests in the world with the most magnificent botanical trails where wild fruit trees that attract both diurnal and nocturnal lemurs abound. It has many precious woods like ebony, pallisander, rosewood and several species of orchids. Accommodation in Alametso is at the chez Arol Ecolodge which boasts 8 bungalows, 6 of them with indoor plumbing facilities and hot water, twin size bunk-beds with mosquito nets. It can host up to 25 people. A tour of Alametso generally combines 4 days of fun in the surf and sand with invigorating forest hikes.

Day 1: taxi from airport to the harbour, boat transfer to chez AROL Eco-Lodge, a morning walk to the scuba dive site at the Alametso Community Marine Reserve; night safari walk.

Day 2: whale watching (whale watching season is from the last week of July to the second week of September). Spend the day snorkeling and relaxing in the Marine Park with picnic meals.

Day 3: Bird watching during the morning and a visit of the observatory and botanical trail in the afternoon.

Day 4: snorkeling in the Alametso Community Marine Reserve in the morning then spend an afternoon of dance and cultural discovery in the small village of Ambodiforaha where the local Betsimisaraka fish and cultivate vanilla, cloves and coffee.

The key to Alametso’s success: shared benefits between local communities, conservation agencies, and tourism

The Alametso Community Reserve typifies a situation where tourism has created a win-win solution for conservation and the community by providing an economic incentive for protecting natural and cultural diversity, as well as providing revenues to not only continue supporting the conservation efforts but to also better the livelihoods of the community. A particular value that the Alametso Reserve has added to its community is that acts as a live classroom for children in the community. When the reserve
was commissioned, there was no school in the area. The hotel management in collaboration with WCS motivated the villagers to build the school and then equipped it through donations from tourists and visitors to the reserve who sent equipment and educational tools. The Alametso contributes significantly towards the provision of resources for the local community. The reserve is run by about 150 villagers structured into an association, who manage the reserve, conduct patrols using the local convention (Dina) and inform the authorities in case of infractions. The villagers rent pirogues, tubas and diving equipment to tourists and visitors as a means of earning revenue. The tour operator, Arol Ecolodge, assures quality lodging for tourists; and in compliance with the conservation pact that all partners signed, provides support to the local school by paying salaries of the headmaster and the teaching staff. The tourists who come into the village are also doing their bit by continuing to contribute to the school’s supplies and equipment. The conservation agencies support the program from governance perspective providing advice to the locals on fisheries management, ecological monitoring. They also collaborate with the Arol Ecolodge in developing tourist attractions and circuits.

**Shadows in the water**

In spite of the success that the reserve has enjoyed in its 6 years of existence, there are certain practices that are casting a huge shadow in the waters of Alametso. Overharvesting of shrimp, sea cucumber, lobster, and reef fish in Antongil Bay; industrial shrimp trawlers; bycatch of sea turtles and sharks; migrant fishermen illegally collecting and the use beach seines are some of the daunting challenges that the reserve is facing. And yet a new threat looms in the future of Alametso- Antongil Bay has been targeted by the government for oil and gas exploration. This could potentially impact the humpback whales habitat. Changes in the Bay’s water temperature and current patterns that is driven by climate change is a threat to the coral reefs, sea grass beds, and mangroves, and the human livelihoods that depend upon them.
Fisher at Goukamma Marine Park, South Africa

© Peter Chadwick
Having read many guidelines, and management manuals on the proposal, formation, proclamation and management of Marine Protected Areas, there seems to be a gap around the delivery success, and failures around management. Being very aware of the Protected Area Management Effectiveness Assessment tool, this does give an indication of management objectives being achieved and or not achieved, but it is there is a shortfall in measuring and or exploring tourism potential.

Allow me to share with you my experience as a manager on the ground in KwaZulu-Natal which will hopefully provide a portal view into where we need to be. One of our programmes has a project that looks at alternatives to extractive harvesting of marine resources, so as try ensure benefits other than directly impacting on the Marine Protected Areas resources. A consultant was independently appointed to investigate alternative opportunities, of which key tourism opportunities arising from the Marine Protected Area must be looked at. The key recommendation was the people can make curios, and sell them to visitors. These fishers live on the boundary and fish in a Marine Protected Area that achieved 10 green stars with a score of 75% and better and 5 yellow stars with a score of 51% - 75% so it is fair to say according to the Management Effectiveness Assessment, it operates as an “A” student. This, without adding the normal diving, fishing and sense of place tourist related activities, was surely falling short, and where was the lateral thinking.

MPA’s and Tourism

By By Cedric Coetzee
This lead me to opinion that the consultants either showed apathy to the task or they were not fishermen, divers, and or naturalists, and therefore had no other experience of Marine Protected Areas, and therefore limited in their understanding of what potential can be unlocked. This also clearly depicts how narrow the Marine Protected Area tourism market is considered to be.

A “Sea World” and or “Aquarium” has far more visitors than a Marine Protected Area, not because people cannot get there, but because they have a multiple fun filled experiences, not talking about jumping dolphins but the experience of the full marine environment. The key is in the experience and not just listing a bunch of activities that is only available to those specific users groups.

There is an initiative that was launched in 2000, namely the Lubombo Spatial Development Transfrontier Conservation Area, which had the foresight and vision to bring three countries together in a transfrontier programme that would enhance the opportunities that exist between sense of place, culture, conservation, heritage being brought into life by a partnership with governments and people. One of the key routes was the St Lucia and Maputaland in South Africa linking up with the Maputo MPA in Mozambique. A world class stage is now set to merge sense of place, culture, heritage, and conservation to merge new marine environmental experiences.

Marine Protected Areas have mainly diving, fishing and turtle tourism initiative. It is now time to look at other options available, and capitalise on the tourism initiative benefiting from Marine Protected Areas, the need to look at some way of sharing the coelacanth at Sodwana Bay, and the shark at Aliwal Shoal experiences in some other way than just the normal dive experience, either by technology, recreation of the experience and or performing arts, all of which could be amalgamated with cultural and heritage themes. The Ezemvelo’s iMfolozi Game Reserve Game Capture Centenary Centre in KwaZulu-Natal is an good example of what can be done, with the exciting world of game capture bringing a new experience to the visitor of this Game Reserve. The experience shows the history, allows tours of the animal pens in capture season and also takes visitors through a capture operation.

Marine Protected Area tourism opportunities need to be further investigated with an open and creative mind. It is time to move away from traditional thinking, and to steal a quote from Ezemvelo’s Chief Executive Officer, “It is time to do business unusual”. It is time to create real alternative opportunities that allows Marine Protected Areas to play a bigger role in the tourism arena.

Above left: Kosi Bay © Ricky Taylor, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife
Below: Sodwana Bay Scuba Diver © Cedric Coetzee, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife
Mombasa Marine Park & Reserve Branding
A Vision 2030 Flagship Project

Mombasa Marine Park & Reserve is world renowned for marine conservation with its diverse habitats of beach, coral reefs and sea grass. These support a wide range of tourism and recreational activities which include boating, scuba diving, sun bathing, kite surfing, sailing as well as the use of motorized vessels. Today, the branding of the park represents a significant landmark towards realization of the tourism pillar as envisioned within Vision 2030 by the Kenya Wildlife Service.

Mombasa Marine Park and Reserve continues to play a pivotal role in the maintenance of beach environments, improvement of security and safety for beach users, enhancing preservation of coral reef areas and capacity building of local tour operators to deliver good services. This sustenance of Kenya’s invaluable marine life provides sea food, recreational, enjoyment, carbon sequestration, storm protection and opportunities for pharmaceutical discoveries.

Tourism and recreational activities along Kenya’s Coast are a key foreign exchange earner and contribute Kshs. 20 billion annually to Kenya’s Domestic Product.

In 2011 tourism arrivals by air and sea closed at 1,265,136 as compared to 1,095,482 in 2010, a growth of 15.4% yet beach tourism declined by 16%.

THE BEACH MANAGEMENT PROGRAM
Kenya Wildlife Service as mandated through the Government of Kenya from November 2011 piloted the Beach Management Programme to mitigate this decline. The environmental and visitor management perspectives of the programme aim at enhancing coastal tourism and thus significantly improving the product.

KWS received funding of Kshs. 150 million from Treasury to pilot the Beach Management Programme which focused on seven strategic objectives: enhancing beach cleanliness, enhancing visitors security and safety, reduction in social vices on the beach, improvement of the beach environment for marine species, enhancing partnership with hotels and communities, enhancing the image of North Coast Beach and Mombasa Marine Park and Reserve with reduced conflicts among the beach users.

Through the programme KWS continues to ensure beaches along the marine park are clean and safe for visitors. Local boat operators have been trained in tourism and customer care and their boats equipped with life saving equipment. Park signage and visitor information have been improved and beach amenities for local tour operators are being put in place.

The scope of the program covers Mwapa Creek to Tudor Creek.

The programme has successfully been implemented jointly with the industry players and the local community towards restoring the competitive edge of Kenya’s coastal area as a tourism destination while ensuring that the marine and beach tourism products are sustained.

KWS is committed to redefining and branding its marine parks and reserves into tourism products that will significantly contribute to increasing visitation into Kenya. This, together with the beach management program will refresh Mombasa’s image and promise as the preferred tourist destination in Africa.
Beach Tourism in Kenya Revamped

By Arthur Tuda

Kenya’s tourism is mainly driven by beach and safari. Nearly 60% of international tourist visits the Kenya coast because of the good climate and lovely beaches. Over the years however the beach product has faced serious threats as the coastal population grows and the demand for beach space increases. Some of the issues that threaten beach tourism in Kenya include pollution from beach hotels and the public, social vices on the beach including visitors’ harassment by beach vendors and beach degradation from developments. All these factors have contributed to the decline in beach standards in Kenya particularly in high tourism areas like Mombasa, Malindi, Watamu and Diani. Low beach standards have reduced the appeal for Kenya’s beach destination with serious ramifications on visitation.

For a long time there has been increased debate over the declining beach standards with various proposals brought forth by tourism stakeholders on how to remedy the situation. Several solutions have been proposed but none has ever been implemented to address the beach problem. Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) has now taken the lead in beach management by attempting to implement an alternative beach management model which will address the threats. The beach management model by KWS takes a holistic approach to the beach problem addressing both environmental and social issues which are usually tied together. It focuses on four areas: beach security to reduce visitor harassment, solid waste management, beach ecology and beach resource use by beach operators.
To manage the solid waste KWS has created a solid waste unit with the overall responsibility for effective collection of solid wastes from public beaches and their environmentally-safe disposal at designated sites. Over 40 local community members have been employed in the solid waste unit. Beach ecology is enhanced by regular patrols and monitoring of important turtle nesting areas and to control any unplanned beach developments.

Under the beach programme beach operators have been trained in tourism business management and have allocated specific use zones based on the beach to reduce competition among traders and visitor harassment. Security for tourists has been improved by regular beach patrols by KWS rangers.

Since the launch of the beach management programme in January 2012, there has been a lot of progress in many areas. Tourists along Kenya’s coastal beaches now have a new life— they can enjoy sun-bathing laced with relieving breeze from the beach. The beaches are cleaned on daily basis solid waste management, particularly non-bio degradable waste, has improved. The beach is now devoid of plastics, bottles and other solid wastes that used to choke the beaches. Before the programme, there were no sun beds on the beach. Since the programme started security on the beach has improved and beach hotels are making optimal use of the beaches as a value addition to their facilities.

The number of reported thefts and visitor’s harassment has dropped significantly since the programme started. There has been increased positive feedback from tourists and other beach users. The programme has shown that despite the problems associated with beach tourism in Kenya, concerted efforts by the tourism industry can bring about the changes required.
The Aliwal Shoal Marine Protected Area (ASMPA) is located about 50km south of Durban, South Africa with the boundaries being Umbkomaas in the north and Mzimiyi River in the north. The Aliwal Shoal which is a submerged reef forms the core of the Marine Protected Area (MPA).

The Aliwal Shoal MPA has been the destination of the recreational fisherman since the early 1960’s and SCUBA divers really started to access the reef in the 1980’s. Aliwal Shoal is considered as one of the 10 top dive destinations in the world by locals SCUBA Concession Operators. According to the Boat Launch Site Monitoring ORI Unpublished Report No. 299, in 2011, there were a total of 7110 launches recorded from the three launch sites that provide access to the Aliwal Shoal MPA. Of the total launches, 2839 were for SCUBA diving, and 3646 for fishing, so the recreational use is fairly evenly split between consumptive and non consumptive, and the users are managed by access restrictions according to the MPA zoning regulations.

A notable focus of the SCUBA diving users is the diving for ragged tooth and tiger sharks that frequent the Aliwal Shoal. The Aliwal Shoal reef in particular, provides an important habitat during a key life stage of the ragged tooth sharks, as for a few months of the year, they aggregate here for mating. This provides a unique experience for SCUBA divers. The diving with tiger sharks and reef diving also provides a great diving experience and there is a need to ensure these species and their habitat are carefully managed to ensure the sustainability of the biodiversity and to ensure that the non consumptive SCUBA diving activities are maintained as a unique and wild experience.

Management of the Aliwal Shoal MPA, is a National function of the Department of Environmental Affairs, South Africa with certain management functions such as compliance, monitoring and research being assigned to the Provincial Conservation agency Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, via a delegation agreement.

The Aliwal Shoal MPA area comprises of three zones:

Crown Area Restricted Zone; no fishing, and or spearfishing, and all gear to be stowed when transversing the area.
**Produce Restricted Zone**; no fishing, and or spearfishing, and all gear to be stowed when transversing the area.

**Controlled Zone**; no fishing before 04hr00 and after 08hr00, and restriction on catching certain fish.

Ezemvelo undertakes beach, inshore and offshore patrols to enforce the Marine Living Resources Act and the MPA regulations. In the 2012 / 2013 year, Ezemvelo staff undertook inspections of 784 boats and 6 607 fishers. 60 launch site checks were also undertaken on the 3 recognised launch sites of Umkomaas, Scottburgh, and Park Rynie (Rocky Bay) as these are the points of access to the MPA.

There were four fishing competitions held over the same period all monitored by Ezemvelo compliance and awareness staff. The majority of patrols are undertaken as visible patrols to ensure a presence is established so that fishers and divers are aware that there is a state of control and intent to enforce the regulations. A total of 135 prosecutions were effected with the majority of these, 102, being for undertaking activities without the prescribed permits. Ezemvelo also has a dive unit who undertake underwater SCUBA patrols to ensure diver behaviour is regulated. During the year, four such underwater patrols were undertaken.

One challenge that the MPA faces is that there is a vacuum in the setting up and maintaining SCUBA and fishing guide standards that should be set and implemented via the Tourism Authority. This will ensure that there is a consistent safe and professional service in the charter industry. The implementation of norms and standards, and recognition of guides is being discussed with the Department of Environmental Affairs.

During the development of the Aliwal Shoal MPA Management Plan, one of the requirements was the establishment of a Liaison Forum, the Aliwal Shoal Liaison forum (ASLF) whose members are representatives of the Aliwal Shoal MPA stakeholders. During the 2012-2013 year, 4 meetings of the liaison forum were held. One of the critical matters that formed a key discussion in these meetings is the presence of shark nets at the Scottburgh and Park Rynie beaches which are there to protect bathers from potential shark attacks at these two popular tourist beaches.

Alternatives for bather protection are being looked at that will see the reduction of shark nets. Whilst there is general agreement that the nets are not environment friendly, the removal of these bather protection facilities could have a major impact on beach tourism. There has been a need identified to try and find new and innovative tourism activities to ensure that Aliwal Shoal MPA can play a more sustainable role in the regions tourism attractions. Providing alternatives will also create other opportunities for a broader involvement in the benefits of the MPA, it must be noted that the traditional activities do and should still have a place in the planning, and the alternatives should create new opportunities.

The Aliwal Shoal MPA presently plays a significant role in tourism attraction on the kwaZulu-Natal South Coast and this must be sustained into the future with innovation and involvement of its stakeholders.
More and more, business is working in conjunction with NGOs to promote community-focused marine conservation tourism. This type of tourism increases the impacts of conservation and development projects and ensures that tourism operators, the environment and local people benefit in an equitable manner.

Community-based marine conservation tourism is a rapidly growing market sector in the western Indian Ocean, particularly as the region is emerging as a top tourist destination. It taps into the unique combination found along many of the region’s coasts – extreme poverty in a setting of extreme beauty. In such an environment, tourism can combat poverty and conservation obstacles simultaneously, while providing a unique experience for adventurous tourists looking to contribute in a meaningful way.

This form of tourism differs from traditional ecotourism in that it usually incorporates some form of action on behalf of the paying visitor, such as scientific research through data collection or direct participation in ongoing conservation projects. Tourists provide financial and technical support to conservation projects, and inject much needed cash into local economies. Community-based conservation tourism recognizes the impact it has on remote communities, and operates not just as an environmentally conscious ecotourism business, but also as a socially conscious organization that bring benefits to local people and the environment.

Projects in Madagascar, Tanzania and Mozambique exemplify this approach – simultaneously benefitting communities and marine conservation projects, while running a commercial operation and aiming to maximise both profits and benefits. Guludo Beach Lodge in Mozambique’s Quirimbas National Park runs alongside the Nema Foundation; Blue Ventures Expeditions in Madagascar runs in conjunction with Blue Ventures Conservation; and Chumbe Island Resort is entwined with the Chumbe Island Coral Park in Zanzibar.

Guludo Beach Lodge’s Nema Foundation partners with 24,000 people in 16 local communities in northern Mozambique, where life expectancy is 38 years and 1 in 3 children die before age 5. The foundation focuses on health, water, education, enterprise and the environment. The lodge itself is self-described as an ‘eco-chic beach lodge’ and has thrived precisely because of its community focus. In fact, it has experienced exceptional growth while nearby competitors floundered, a testament to the fact that tourists want to spend their money where it matters.

Blue Ventures Expeditions brings paying volunteers from around the world to collect underwater data on coral and fish health for 6 weeks in the remote southwest. The southwest is home to half of Madagascar’s traditional fishers. Volunteers...
receive intensive training in marine science and scuba diving. Blue Ventures’ charity arm, Blue Ventures Conservation, takes an integrated population, health and environment approach to community conservation across Madagascar. Its portfolio includes reproductive health work, reef and mangrove conservation, community-based aquaculture and more.

The privately-managed Chumbe Island Coral Park is financed through ecotourism at Chumbe Island Resort. It was the first managed marine park in Zanzibar, an important achievement in Tanzania, where rapid population growth of close to 3% per year is putting unprecedented pressures on the marine environment. The resort is made up of 7 eco-bungalows and has fully funded park management, along with conservation and community education programs, since 2000.

These tourism operations aim to make profits, as any commercial business aims to do, while also economically benefiting local economies. They ‘buy local’, pump in much needed cash through money spent by on tourism and employ local staff in both tourist operations and conservation projects.

‘Buying local’ keeps cash in the immediate economy and supports local fishers and businesses. Guludo Lodge buys from over 150 local suppliers and even developed a seafood buyers’ guide to promote responsible seafood purchases by hotels in the region. Chumbe Resort buys 90% of all kitchen supplies fresh from the nearby market and employs local women to cook local cuisine, despite the availability of commercial food products given the rise in tourism in Zanzibar. Blue Ventures also sources all food locally, with fish purchased from the local community.

Operations also have a direct financial impact through tourist nights and the income this creates. With 8 expeditions annually and most volunteers staying for 6 weeks, Blue Ventures has generated approximately 5,000 tourist bed nights per year for the last 10 years with over 75% of volunteer fees, excluding carbon offset payments, spent in-country. With an average income of USD 0.83 per person per day in the southwest, the additional income is enormously significant.

Visitors and volunteers also inject cash into local economies, purchasing local food and drink, as well as crafts. Blue
Ventures works with the Andavadoaka Women’s Association promoting hand-crafted gifts. In Mozambique, Guludo Lodge partners with 8 local craft enterprises to sell products like ceramics and woven palm fronds to visitors. This allows women to take part in ecotourism, which can often be male-driven.

All 3 operations focus on employing local people whenever possible, in both hotel and expedition staff and in conservation projects. Out of Guludo Lodge’s 70 staff, over 50 are from the surrounding area. Nearly 60% of Blue Ventures’ 50-plus staff in Madagascar is Malagasy and 95% of Chumbe Resort’s 43 staff members are Tanzanian, with the majority of staff hailing from local communities. About a third of Chumbe Resort’s staff are directly involved in conservation management and education.

Not just employment, but local training, is critical to the success of conservation allowing them to better manage their resources. In Madagascar, over 250 community leaders have undergone marine management training with Blue Ventures. Chumbe Resort trains and employs former fishers from nearby villages as rangers for the park, who are also involved in local conservation education and monitoring, and serve as guides to park guests. The employment of local fishers as park rangers enabled the creation of solid partnerships with the local community. Blue Ventures also trains and employs local staff in marine science, essentially creating community marine conservation ambassadors.

Local staff can also improve their English in places where access to English language learning can be extremely limited. Language development is a critical skill for tourism and opens doors to future jobs and international fellowships, as has been the case with Blue Ventures’ staff. English training also extends to local ecoguide associations, better facilitating locally-run ecotourism.

Guludo Lodge and Blue Ventures recognise that social services within their regions are limited, and are acting on this, particularly through health and education outreach. For example, Guludo Lodge has built a health clinic and provided clean water for 20,000 people. They have distributed 9,500 mosquito nets and have provided health education in nutrition, malaria and HIV prevention and sanitation.

In Madagascar, Blue Ventures provides critical reproductive health services to 10,000 people in 40 villages where these services are otherwise scarce, and works with 30 local women who act as community-based distributors (CBDs). The CBDs sell contraceptives to women in their villages, and provide basic consultations.

Education – health, environmental and traditional – is critical to the success of local conservation, and to the future of communities. Both Blue Ventures and Chumbe Resort provide environmental education – Blue Ventures through environmental youth clubs and Saturday School classes, and Chumbe Resort through programmes integrated into local schools. Chumbe Resort also uses its profits to offer free island excursions for local schoolchildren and their teachers, while Blue Ventures has provided expedition scholarships to Malagasy students studying marine science. Guludo Lodge and Blue Ventures also support school enrollment through scholarships, giving hundreds of children the chance to go to school. Guludo Lodge has also built a primary school and has plans to build more.

The economic and social benefits to communities are matched by the ecological benefits to the environment and conservation progress. Research by volunteer tourists is critical to the success of community-based marine conservation. At Chumbe Resort, between 1992 and 2004, more than 50 volunteer marine biologists, zoologists, botanists and educators from several countries conducted baseline surveys on the ecology of the Island and trained local rangers, laying a strong foundation for park development.

Blue Ventures’ volunteer programme has also provided the surrounding locally managed marine area with one of the most thorough sets of data on reef change over the last decade in southwest Madagascar. Thirty-seven reefs are currently surveyed at least twice a year for benthic cover, fish diversity, fish biomass, coral bleaching and coral recruitment.

Guludo Lodge attracts conservation-minded volunteers by providing a wide range of activities geared toward the outdoor traveler: SCUBA diving and snorkeling, whale watching and visits to see local wildlife on nearby islands including fish eagles. Guludo Lodge also uses this tourism to gather data. For example, whale watching helps inform Guludo Lodge’s humpback whale data collection, which has been ongoing since 2006.

By promoting community-based conservation of the surrounding marine environment, tourism operations are able to offer a more satisfying experience to their clients while bringing benefits to local people. This model is one that can be replicated across the western Indian Ocean, allowing more visitors to have a ‘hands-on’ experience that leads to tangible positive impacts.

Tourism and Conservation in Marine Parks and Reserves - Tanzania Mainland

By Ildefons Masekesa, Tourism Warden, MPRU Tanzania

Introduction
The protection of coastal and marine resources is a policy priority in the mainland of Tanzania. The growing and cumulative threats to coastal and marine resources and degradation of the coastal environment led to the establishment of the Marine Parks and Reserves Unit (MPRU) in 1994, under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism on mainland Tanzania. MPRU has a mandate to establish and ensure sustainable conservation for areas of outstanding marine ecological importance and to manage them in partnership with coastal communities and other stakeholders on mainland Tanzania.

The principle legislation for MPAs in Tanzania mainland is the Marine Parks and Reserves Act No. 29 of 1994, which allows for the establishment of two types of MPAs: Marine Parks and Marine Reserves.

The Management structure for Marine Parks in Tanzania consists of the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries Development; the Board of Trustees for Marine Parks and Reserves Unit, the Marine Parks and Reserves Unit, under the Manager, Advisory Committees of individual Marine Parks, the park management of individual Marine Parks under the Warden In Charge and the village liaison committees for all villages.

3 large multiple use zoned MPAs, have been gazetted so far in Tanzania. These include: Mafia Island Marine Park, Mnazi-bay Ruvuma Estuary Marine Park and Tanga Coelacanth Marine Park. Mafia Island Marine Park forms part of the Mafia Island/Rufiji Delta system. The Park was established in 1995 occupies an area of 822km2, which includes, among others, estuarine, mangrove, coral reef and seagrass ecosystems, critical habitats for dugong and sea turtles.

The Mnazi Bay Ruvuma Estuary Marine Park was established in 2000 and is located at the southern end of the Tanzanian coast bordering Mozambique. This park occupies an area of 650km2, with seven villages surrounding the Bay. The Tanga Coelacanth Marine Park was established in 2009 is located in Tanga region and it occupies an area of 550km2. The Park is famous for the presence of the fossil fish known as Coelacanth. In addition to the marine parks, there are 15 Marine Reserves located in different parts of the marine and coastal areas of Tanzania. These small Islands declared as Marine Reserves include Funguyasini Marine Reserve, Mbudya Island Marine Reserve, Bongoyo Island Marine Reserve, Pangavini Island Marine Reserve, Inner & Outer Sinda Islands Marine Reserve, Kendwa Island Marine Reserve, Inner & Outer Makatube Islands Marine Reserve (all of which are in Dar es Salaam), Maziwe Island Marine Reserve in Pangani, Tanga, the Mafia Island Marine Reserves which are Nyororo Island Marine Reserve, Shungimbili Island Marine Reserve, and Mbarakuni Island Marine Reserve.

The Tanga Island Reserves include Ulenge Island Marine Reserve, Kwale island Marine
Ecotourism Potential in the Marine Parks and Reserves:

Basically all the MPAs are excellent areas for offering a special holiday experience because they have unspoiled natural and peaceful environments. The natural and cultural resources attract various visitors who pay revenue to support conservation and the livelihood of the local communities. Some of the tourist attractions in Tanzania’s parks include mangrove forests, beautiful beaches, endangered species, coral reefs, clean water, historical sites, and the Swahili culture.

Accommodation facilities and number of Tourists

Mafia Island Marine Park has 6 Lodges and Hotels with a capacity of 187 beds. Number of visitors have been increasing. In 2000 there were a total of 877 visitors to Mafia compared to 4,575 in 2011. Visitation to Dar es Salaam Marine Reserves rose from 4,984 in 2000 to 18,440 in 2011.

Tourist Activities

Tourist activities are varied because of the many attractions as previously described. These include the following: bird watching, diving and snorkelling, boating, sailing, sea cruising and kayaking, sport fishing, trekking and camping, relaxing and sunbathing on beaches, cave exploration, sea turtle and whaleshark watching, and camping.

Opportunities for Expansion of Conservation and Tourism in Tanzanian MPAs

Local communities surrounding the MPAs in Tanzania are committed to environmental protection, since there are enough awareness campaigns and educational conservation programs at all levels. There is growing interest in coastal and marine tourism as many tourists are visiting the MPAs and statistics show that domestic tourism is likely to increase in MPAs. There is also a number of investors willing to invest in MPAs as a result of improved tourist attractions and facilities through conservation measures.

Challenges facing Conservation and Tourism

The high dependency of coastal people in Tanzania on coastal and marine resources for livelihood and income generation causes severe degradation of coastal and marine environments. Much of the degradation of reef ecosystems in Tanzania has been caused by destructive fishing methods. Coral mining is another highly destructive activity that is also widespread along the entire coast. Other significant pressures on wood resources in the coastal area include mangrove and forest cutting for household cooking, charcoal production, building poles, and fuel-wood to produce lime from coral. Tanzania is putting more emphasis in the establishment of new MPAs and to improve the management, conservation and protection of the existing ones. Tanzania is also establishing a national representative system of MPAs. An Integrated Coastal Management unit has identified critical coastal areas and areas of high biodiversity that should be included within existing or new protected area programs. Such areas are being identified through a consultative process that includes input from local and central governments, NGOs and resource users.

The key is in the experience and not just listing a bunch of activities that is only available to those specific users groups.
Above: Introductory course on MPA Management, De Hoop Nature Reserve and Marine Protected Area © Peter Chadwick

Below: Sodwana Bay Launch Site © Cedric Coetzee, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife

Top right: Blue Ventures Conference Jumpshot © Blue Ventures

Far Right: Introductory course on MPA Management, De Hoop Nature Reserve and Marine Protected Area © Peter Chadwick

Right: Barrel snorkelling lessons © Blue Ventures

Bottom right: Tow surfing in action in Table Mountain National Park Marine Protected Area © Alan van Gysen, Zigzag Magazine
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Tow surfing in action in Table Mountain National Park Marine Protected Area ©Alan van Gysen, Zigzag Magazine

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Located on the same amazing Beach as Bluebay & Spa
Tow surfers prove the value of self-policing in an MPA

By Wanika Rusthoi, South African National Parks

The ability to surf some of the world’s biggest waves is the envy of thousands of big wave surfers the world-over. In Cape Town however, in the Marine Protected Area (MPA) of Table Mountain National Park (TMNP), it is an unprecedented reality. Up until 2005, the use of jet-skis within a MPA, and namely that of TMNP, was not permitted. This meant that tow surfing into two of the best big wave surf reefs, Dungeons off the Sentinel in Hout Bay and Sunset Reef in Kommetjie, was simply not possible.

This all changed near the end of 2005, through a cooperative approach with the big wave tow surfers’ organisation, Tow Surf South Africa (TSSA) and TMNP. Through mutual cooperation, a successful and efficient example of self-policing within an MPA was developed which today sets a benchmark for many big wave sites across the globe where tow surfer numbers have increased dramatically.

With the proclamation of the TMNP MPA in 2004 and the subsequent ban of jet ski’s within the area, complaints were received from the surfing and jet ski community, and in particular, Tow Surf South Africa (TSSA). After numerous consultations and discussions with TSSA, the City of Cape Town and the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA), TMNP Marine management applied for an exemption to the Marine Living Resources Act, Section 43 (Act 18 of 1998), to allow for jet ski’s to be used specifically for tow surfing activities. In 2005, the first exemption was granted, permitting TSSA to use personal watercraft such as jet ski’s for tow surfing on an experimental year exemption.

According to the exemption, jet ski’s could only be used for non-commercial recreational purposes and could include the following activities:

- Acting as safety for paddle-in and tow-in surfing at offshore reefs
- Safety training
- Tow-in surfing
- Surf photography

Requirements of the exemption include:

- Paddle-in surfers take precedence over tow-in surfers, therefore forbidding the use of jet ski’s if paddle-in surfers are in the water, unless used for safety purposes
- All personal watercraft should remain at least 300m from any whales present in the area
- Personal watercraft should travel at 60% maximum speed when moving between surf locations and should always travel in a direct line from launch site to surf location
- A distance of at least 200m from the shoreline must be kept at all times
- Only launching from specified launch sites (Kommetjie and Hout Bay).

After the first 12 month trial period, application was submitted by TSSA, with input from the affected Rate-payers Associations, to include more sites within the TMNP MPA, however the application was opposed by TMNP, and after further discussion and evaluation of TSSA’s performance, a few changes were drafted into the exemption application for 2006.

In 2007, TMNP requested automatic exemption for TSSA from DEA, providing no further changes to the exemption were required and that no transgressions were found from the previous year. This exemption is thus automatically renewed annually, with a review of the conditions and requirements every three years. “The original permit was valid for a 12 month period, yet over the years and with our good track record this validation period has since been extended further. One of the requirements of this permit is to keep a look out and report any illegal activity happening in our waters, of which we have done many times over the years. We take our obligations and requirements of the permit very seriously and thus continue to have a great working relationship with TMNP.” Says David Smith, Chairman, TSSA.

Through working cooperatively with TMNP, TSSA has indirect control of who, how many, and how the sites are used, as per the exemption – a situation unique to such world-renowned surf sites across the globe. Membership to TSSA is open to anyone who wishes to join, thereby promoting non-exclusive use of the MPA, yet it is still controlled and strictly managed.

Members of TSSA may access the area if they are on the open ended membership however, if deemed to have transgressed against one or more of the regulations repeatedly, membership is removed and the transgressor is banned from the use of some of the best big waves in the world. “This is a great example of a world class model of cooperation that is working well for both parties and we thank TSSA members for their valued contribution and support” says Paul Sieben, Area Manager of the Marine section for TMNP.

The cooperative effort between TMNP and TSSA is just one example of the countless ways that South African National Parks connects with society – always striving to work together with surrounding communities of the national parks both for the benefit of the environment and its people.
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WIOMSA's mission is to generate the best in marine science through its comprehensive research funding program and then use the results to ensure that the marine environment is understood, protected, enhanced and maintained for the benefit of everyone that works and lives on the coastal areas of the Western Indian Ocean.

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