



NEWSLETTER

MWIOPO

OCTOBER
2012



© WWF-MWIOPO/Inig Brand

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

In this issue, I turn my focus to the Western Indian Ocean marine ecoregion. We've been pleased to see a welcome growth of attention and momentum in what is increasingly being recognized as one of the most important marine regions of the world for biodiversity and productivity.

Beginning in 2007, WWF MWIOPO and WWF-France led an Indian Ocean Commission program, co-funded by AfD, FFEM and WWF, to identify marine conservation priorities in the Western Indian Ocean. The focus was on the island nations that make up the **IOC** (Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles, and the French overseas territories located here), but also included specialists familiar with the East African coastal countries. The process brought together local and international scientists and specialists with fisheries departments and local communities, utilizing commissioned studies and the best available scientific data, to develop a mapping of the most important biodiversity and fisheries conservation spots as a foundation for regional conservation efforts. Though the program funding ended, the **IOC**, with WWF support, is continuing to move forward the process of garnering national consensus on the plan and moving toward regional ratification of this strategy by all **IOC** member-states. At the same time, the fruit of the labor has helped to foster and enrich [a growing recognition of the importance of this region for marine biodiversity](#), global and local fisheries, and the well-being of the nations and coastal communities who depend on these resources.

At the same time, the fruit of the labor has helped to foster and enrich a growing recognition of the importance of this region for marine biodiversity, global and local fisheries, and the well-being of the nations and coastal communities who depend on these resources ([read more](#)).

Rick Hughes

IN THIS ISSUE:

The Sapphire Sea ... p.2

Outcry on turtle traffic ... p.4

HPFC Day ... p.4

Capacity building in communications ... p.4

Research on SULAMA ... p.5

When FIER MADA inspires farmers ... p.6

Recommendations to the FOCAC ... p.6

A wealth of biodiversity and hydrocarbons in the WIO ... p.7

New projects ... p.9

New opportunities ... p.9



© WWF-MWIOPO

THE SAPPHIRE SEA (continued from previous page)

“The islands of the Western Indian Ocean emerge from a sapphire sea rich in dazzling reefs, and shimmering schools of tuna. The unique fish and corals of this sea’s myriad fringing reefs and large Madagascar Coral Reef System, the third largest on the planet, mirror the ancient isolation of Madagascar and the Seychelles. Rising out of the ocean depths, the vast shoals of the Mascarenes ... create shallow plateaus, the size of countries, that grow great plains of seagrass and jumbled reefs thick with fish, sharks, turtles, and seabirds. Aldabra, Astove, Ampalaza, and the Scattered Islands (Tromelin, Glorioso Islands, Europa) reefs are among the very last relatively intact coral reefs on the planet, jewels of creation abundant with sharks and enormous fish and offering a rare glimpse of what used to be.

Nowhere else can one watch blue and humpback whales off a windswept promontory surrounded by lemurs bounding among the thorny branches of Madagascar’s spiny forest, or swim over Seychellois coral reefs encrusting massive granite boulders that were once the core of continents. Pods of sperm whales lolling in view of the grand volcanoes of the Comoros, boiling seas of tuna, seabirds, and whale sharks, and flights of petrels returning to roost among the lofty pinnacles of the Mascarenes—snapshots of a marine paradise largely gone unnoticed by the rest of the world. Indeed, the massive Madagascar Coral Reef system was not on global reef maps until just last year and the world’s largest seagrass beds are little known outside the islands.” [IOC draft document]

Two of the most interesting results of this work are WWF priorities. One is the northern Mozambique Channel, believed to be the next most important center of marine biodiversity after the Coral Triangle, and a center for regional endemism. It comprises an incredibly rich zone running from its heart on the north-west coast of Madagascar across to the northern Mozambique and southern Tanzania coast, potentially extending north to the Aldabra group of the southern Seychelles, and of course encompassing the Comoros as well as Mayotte and the Scattered Islands. The other is the Saya de Malha, one of the ‘open ocean jewels’, which covers a large section of the Mascarene banks that run between the Seychelles and Mauritius. These banks are highly fertile fishing grounds of great importance, particularly to Mauritius’ fisheries sector. And both of these are now appearing high on the list for other organizations and initiatives.



(c) WWF MWIOPO/Zambrunn



(c) WWF MWIOPO/Zambrunn

Some of the developments of note, which give us hope that the products of this long effort and our continued advocacy and support are now bearing fruit:

- Within the region, efforts such as the Western Indian Ocean Coastal Challenge (led by the Seychelles) and the Western Indian Ocean Consortium appear to be gaining credibility and momentum
- The Seychelles and Mauritius governments are pursuing the expansion of their continental shelves across the Mascarene banks, with a joint management framework which could provide a new and realistic mechanism to improve management in these open ocean areas
- The Southern African Development Community (SADC), at the last meeting of its transfrontier conservation programme, discussed the concept of a marine transfrontier conservation area in the northern Mozambique Channel (though this has not been proposed as yet)

UNESCO has identified both of these areas as being among the highest priorities for marine world heritage sites

A recent meeting on the CBD Ecologically or Biologically Significant Areas (EBSA) in the region also highlighted these same areas as candidates having high potential for recognition.

Coming up in November, we are planning on convening several of the different WWF parties (WWF global marine team, East Africa, Coral Triangle, etc.) that have an interest in this work to discuss our role and how best we move forward, as an organization – with one voice and taking advantage of our best learning and resources. This will be followed by consultations with other partners to see how best we can work together in a coordinated way to best support the regional bodies and countries that have an interest in capitalizing on these opportunities.

Rick Hughes
rhughes@wwf.org

Editors:

- Domoina Rakotomalala;
- Lalanirina Rasoanandrianina;
- Martin Nicoll;
- Martina Lippuner;
- Mialisoa Randriamampianina;
- Rick Hughes;
- Sonia Razafimahazo

- Wolfgang Shaeper;
- Zumbrunn

Translator:

- Rojotiana Ratovona

Contacts:

WWF MWIOPO
Près lot II M 85 ter Antsakaviro,
101 Antananarivo
Madagascar
tél: +261 20 22 348 85
tél: +261 34 49 888 04
email: wwfrep@moov.mg
website: www.wwf.org

Photographs:

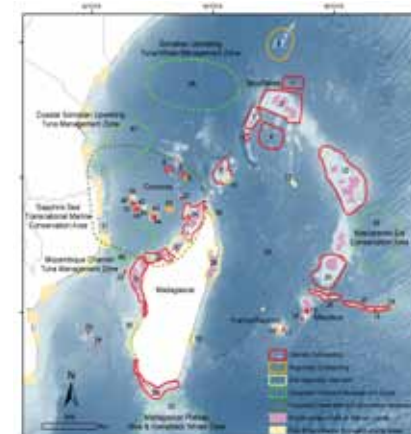
- Anna Gray;
- Brent Stirton;
- Domoina Rakotomalala;
- Jurg Brand;
- Martina Lippuner;
- Mialisoa Randriamampianina;
- Rob Webster;



© WWF MWIOPO/Zumbrunn



© WWF MWIOPO/Zumbrunn



© WWF MWIOPO/Anjara Andriananahina

RAMP COI map

(c) WWF MWIOPO/Anna Gray



OUTCRY ON TURTLE AND TORTOISE TRAFFIC

Madagascar’s southern coast fishing villages have reported an alarming phenomenon: the traffic of turtles. Traffic cases have been discovered by the local police who are now aiming at dismantling the network. Grassroot communities are important to fight traffic: “ In the south, the drastic reduction of terrestrial tortoise populations led the Androy region to establish a «lilintany», a commitment to bring to an end **tortoise traffic** in the region” concludes Tiana Ramahaleo, Coordinator of WWF’s Conservation Science and Species Programme.

(c) WWF MWIOPO



HCPF DAY

In September, the **Holistic Conservation Programme of Forest (HCPF)** organized in Antananarivo a day dedicated to exchanges and reflections on the project achievements and on its second phase.

The day focused on the progress and challenges in the intervention sites and assessed the work with the grassroots communities who are at the heart of conservation projects. At the end of the day, a technical, environmental and human overview allowed the participants to anticipate the challenges ahead.

(c) WWF MWIOPO



CAPACITY BUILDING IN COMMUNICATIONS

WWF MWIOPO was delighted to welcome WWF Internationals Conservation Communications Director Richard McLellan in Antananarivo at the end of June. Richard agreed to hold a capacity building workshop for the communications team and also led a one day exercise with the heads of all programmes to identify our strength and weaknesses and define a new communications strategy.

“I am still motivated by the great team effort that went into our workshop and the spirit of integrating comms and conservation” said Richard after he returned to Gland. It’s the same for the comms team in Madagascar which makes better strategic choices and works with a broader vision now.

RESEARCH ON SUSTAINABLE LAND MANAGEMENT (SULAMA)

The Mahafaly Plateau is famous worldwide for its unique biodiversity. The spiny forest growing on the plateau has the highest rate of floral endemism in Madagascar (95%). These biodiversity elements with the soil and the ecologic and hydrologic phenomena are all part of what we call “land”, and are the main natural wealth of the region. Moreover, the land provides direct livelihoods for most of the local populations, through agriculture and farming. Thus the land should be sustained to ensure the survival of the local populations who rely on it for their food, water, wood, medicinal plants, building materials and ecosystem services.

Currently, changes in the use of land for livelihoods, exacerbated by the lack of water and rain (climate risks), seriously threaten the land resources of the region. There is a real land rush. On the coast, farmlands overlap with pasture areas, thus the cattle have to go into to the Tsimanampetsotse Park. The same problem of access to resources is present on the Plateau: Savannas have become pasture lands and farmlands are moving towards the forests through slash and burn agriculture. As a result, the resources are deteriorating: clearing, vegetation and soil degradation.

Our project aims at finding a management and regulation system for the land that will enable to meet the challenge for the development of the Mahafaly Plateau while developing climate change adaptation strategies. The team will therefore conduct case studies and analysis with the local communities. The researches will focus on improving land productivity (mixing agriculture/ farming; e.g.: growing maize in a zebu shed), fodder crops, better materials, conservation agriculture). The approach will also include the improvement of livelihoods (through the diverse alternative activities to forest use: trade, paid work, education, agriculture/ farming/ collecting), and protecting the environment (environment friendly actions). Among these new practices, the project will identify those that are best suited to the populations.

The information gathered on the use of land resources (through aerial photos, using a small aircraft, and satellite images) and the results of the case studies are centralized in a data base.

We are pursuing the researches on «conservation grants» (paying for environmental services) in order to reduce the economic attraction of clearing and to encourage the grassroots communities to lead conservation actions.

Rakotomalala R. Domoina
drakotomalala@wwf.mg



© WWF MWIOPD/ Domoina Rakotomalala



© WWF MWIOPD/ Wolfgang Staepfer



(c) WWF MWIOFO/Mialisoa Randriamampianina

WHEN FIER MADA INSPIRES FARMERS

About fifteen farmers from Ampanihy, South of Madagascar, came to visit the agricultural, farming and artisanal fair, Fier Mada, held from 8- 12 August 2012 in Antananarivo. These farmers come from village associations supervised by the SLM team of WWF Toliara in five municipalities of the Mahafaly and karim-bola plateau. The aim of the SLM project is to initiate sustainable and effective models of land management and governance, «we would like to develop activities which will improve the income of the villagers while preserving the natural resources of their regions» states the president of the association.

Visiting Fier Mada has been revealing: The villagers could enquire on the progress of their peers, from other regions: «poultry, rice planting and artisanal products really attracted me» says Daretry. I received a lot of useful advice from other farmers: vaccinations, agricultural techniques, how to find new markets. As for H el ene Niasy, it was more a cultural revelation: «I had the proof that women can work and succeed in their projects, that they can play more than just small subordinate roles». The villagers no longer intend to stay isolated in their villages: through exchanges of business cards and contacts they developed a network of professional farmers, breeders and artisans, «to keep in touch and continue to help each other».

They are now back in Ampanihy and they already have a busy schedule: « we are organizing sharing sessions so that the experiences may be known to all. «We are also planning technical sessions to put into practice the advice and refine the development projects» says Herizo Andriamifidy, communications manager of this project within WWF Toliara. Good prospects are ahead, as the villagers already have a very important work force: Motivation.



(c) WWF MWIOFO

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE FOCAC

China has opened its doors to the African States and to nongovernmental organizations during the [Forum on the China - Africa Cooperation \(FOCAC\)](#), in July 2012. WWF International issued forty recommendations to ensure that the environmental considerations highlight the china- Africa development opportunities. Madagascar has also been part of its recommendations in the fields of natural resource extractions, financial investments and cooperation and clean energy.

A WEALTH OF BIODIVERSITY AND HYDROCARBONS IN THE WESTERN INDIAN OCEAN

By any measure of wealth, recent major gas finds in Mozambique, Tanzania and Kenya are set to revolutionize these countries' economic prospects and propel the region into becoming a new world-class hydrocarbon region. Estimated minimum reserves of recoverable gas range from 7.1 to 12.5 trillion cubic meters, rendering East Africa the most important region for gas on the continent, surpassing Libya and Nigeria. Furthermore, Mozambique is likely to become the world's third largest exporter of liquefied natural gas (LNG). The big finds are already stimulating new interest in exploration elsewhere across the region, including the Comoros, Madagascar, the Seychelles and France's scattered islands.

But there is a need to balance the wealth generated from these finite hydrocarbon resources with the importance of the region's remarkable biodiversity. As Richard Hughes has elegantly noted, the Western Indian Ocean is home to one of the planet's most important marine biodiversity centers while also sustaining a world-class commercial fisheries and supporting the livelihoods of millions of coastal people.

So the big question is: is the new and anticipated economic wealth from hydrocarbons a threat or a unique opportunity in favor of the region's environment in general or, more specifically, its biodiversity? There is no easy answer and it mostly depends on governments, companies and citizens 'getting it right.' In its broadest sense, getting it right that finite fossil fuels are converted into sustained economic, social and environmental development.

There is of course a major debate over the global consequences of an abundant supply of relatively cheap natural gas in the world's markets. For example, converting gas to energy is relatively clean with lower greenhouse gas emissions compared to conventional or unconventional oils, but at the same time its availability could reduce motivation to turn from fossil fuels to renewable energy. However, critical though this debate may be, here we consider the more immediate environmental and intertwined social impacts that could arise.

Possible direct impacts of offshore and coastal gas development do of course exist. They include the risk of conflicts with parks and reserves, mass strandings of whales and dolphins during seismic exploration, seafloor habitat degradation, disturbance of migratory species and pollution. Most recent finds involve deep-water wells well outside of traditional coastal fisheries and away from sensitive near-shore biodiversity centers. If governments and companies get it right by taking appropriate safety measures, these impacts should pale in comparison to potential social and political impacts.

Getting it right includes, among many other factors, responsibly applied government legislation and regulatory frameworks. It also



(c) WWF/Getty Images/Brent Straton



(c) WWF/Rob Webster

includes the highly complementary voluntary adoption of corporate social and environmental responsibility (CSR) by oil and gas companies. Ideally, CSR should bring added value to national development and natural resource strategies and aim for net gain in social conditions as well as biodiversity conservation. Getting it right also requires that citizens understand the consequences of the hydrocarbon industry, be they good or bad, and are able to actively participate in and benefit from unfolding developments.

Even with all the good will in the world, getting it right is never going to be easy. The challenges are perhaps highest in nations that are among the least economically developed. Education opportunities and levels are limited, civil society is usually relatively weak, and people are highly dependent on natural resources. When the potent factor of political upheaval is thrown in, the outlook for the future takes a clear turn for the worse.

If we do get it right, what are the prospects? If the region's nations successfully transform finite hydrocarbon resources into sustained development through wise investment, one possible outcome is better standards of living backed up by improved social services, citizens who are well educated and informed, and less direct dependence on vulnerable biodiversity resources. These factors should help to ease pressures such as overfishing or other damaging practices such as exploitation of living coral reefs for construction and other purposes. But there are no guarantees that this will happen and balanced regional and national policies that mainstream the environment are surely required. The option of not getting it right does not bear contemplation.

What are environmental organizations like WWF doing? What more can we do to contribute? WWF's Coastal East Africa Initiative and the Madagascar and Western Indian Ocean programs are actively involved in hydrocarbon development in differing ways. Both programs have funding from the Norway's Oil for Development initiative and play a critical role in encouraging and supporting governments to get it right through policy, legislation and the adoption of best practices. Both programs also actively support civil society development with the aim of fostering well-informed, responsible grassroots participation in hydrocarbon development. WWF is also a member of the Western Indian Ocean Conservation Alliance and other similar initiatives that take an active interest in oil and gas development.

What more can we do? Our program in Madagascar and the region's island nations has a primary mandate to help conserve their outstanding biodiversity. To do this we must defend the region's biodiversity interests, including vital ecosystem services, and we need to strengthen our ongoing partnerships with government, civil society and industry to build upon our successes to date. Hydrocarbon development is going to change the political, social and environmental landscapes within several countries, most notably for the moment in Madagascar. Our challenge is to help ensure that these changes are net positive across the spectrum.

Lalanirina Rasoanandrianina
lrasoanandrianina@wwf.mg

Martin Nicoll
menicoll@gmail.com

NEW PROJECTS

MG200100- “Protection of tropical forest and improving livelihood of local population in the North of Madagascar”

Start date: **July 2012**

Planned end date: **June 2013**

Donor: **WWF Switzerland**

Summary:

The project will contribute to the protection of one of the largest pristine forest blocks in the North of Madagascar. It will for thus take into account sustainable management approach: implementing new protected area, the promotion of measures to decrease farmers' dependency on forest resources and augment farmer revenues by their professionalization and diversified livelihoods. The innovative aspect of the project is to develop sustainable financing mechanisms for local managers for the management and monitoring of conservation.

MG200300- “Efficient electric lighting in Madagascar as part of the Global Climate and Energy Initiative”

Start date: **July 2012**

Planned end date: **June 2013**

Donor: **WWF Switzerland**

Summary:

The project aim put in place a good quality and affordable efficient light bulbs market in Madagascar favoring energy consumption savings. During the first phase of the project, 100 000 Compact fluorescent lamps (CFL) will be distributed among households in 5 towns of Madagascar (Toliara, Antsirabe, Antsiranana, Nosy Be and Mahajanga). The lighting market will also be regulated by the adoption of a national framework and regulation that favors good quality and affordable efficient lighting market in the country. This project is undertaken in partnership with JIRAMA, the Ministry of Energy of Madagascar and TELMA Foundation.

Sonia Razafimahazo

srazafimahazo@wwf.mg

NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Support for the emergence of actors and the sustainability of fuelwood reforestation activity

Donor : **The Direct Aid Program (DAP) of the Australian High Commission / Embassy**

Duration : **6 months**

Status : **Concept submitted**

This project's objective is to sustain the energy reforestation in the South-West of Madagascar by strengthening the capacity of local communities and the Decentralized Territorial Community.

Sonia Razafimahazo

srazafimahazo@wwf.mg

WWF MWIOPPO IN NUMBERS

11

offices in
Madagascar

+200

staff members in
Madagascar



1963

WWF MWIOPPO started
its activities in 1963

+30

More than 30 projects
undertaken in Madagascar and
the Western Indian Ocean

© WWF MWIOPPO / Jung Brand



Why we are here

To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and
to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature

www.wwf.mg

(C) 1986 Panda Symbol WWF - World Wide Fund For Nature (also known as World Wildlife Fund)

(R) WWF is a WWF registered trademark
WWF MWIOPPO, près lot II M 85 ter Antsakaviro
B.P. 738, 101 Antananarivo
Tel #: +261 20 22 348 85/+261 20 22 304 20
Tel #: +261 34 49 888 04/+261 34 49 888 05
Fax: +261 20 22 348 88
Email: wwfrep@moov.mg
Website: www.wwf.mg