

Turtle Tracks...

Between July and December 2009, a total of 90 turtle nests were recorded by Sea Sense. 41 were laid in Mafia District, 29 in Pangani District and 20 in Temeke and Mkuranga Districts. 4,119 turtle hatchlings successfully reached the sea. Many nest hatchings were witnessed by guests staying at coastal hotels in Mafia and Temeke. In Pangani, a nest hatching brought out hundreds of local villagers, many of whom had never seen a turtle nest hatch before! (Right)



Illegal turtle poaching for meat and eggs continues to be a threat to turtle survival. In several cases, Sea Sense Conservation Officers have reported suspects to District Fisheries Offices. In Kilwa, one suspect was found guilty and sent to prison. A further six have been fined for selling turtle meat in Kilwa and Mafia. Other causes of turtle mortality include predation by monitor lizards, honey badgers and termites and entanglement in fishing nets.

Live Dugong Sightings!!!

Once again 2009 proved the existence of dugongs in Tanzania. Following three live sightings in the Rufiji Delta in October, Sea Sense Conservation Officers in Rufiji met with village leaders and local fishers to stress the importance of conserving dugongs and discuss strategies to protect this endangered mariner. In addition, local fishers in Mafia reported to see a lone dugong regularly in coastal waters on the west coast. The fishers agreed to take the Sea Sense team to see the dugong and verify the report. The team did indeed observe the dugong but were unsuccessful in taking quality

photos due to poor water clarity. The Sea Sense team will continue to liaise with village leaders and fishers in Mafia to ensure appropriate measures are in place to ensure the dugong is protected.



Awareness and Education

In August, the Sea Sense Education Officer was busy publicising the work of Sea Sense on East Africa Radio. A week later, Sea Sense participated in the famous Dar es Salaam Goat Races. Hundreds of people visited the Sea Sense stand to get information about marine endangered species and several adopted a turtle nest. In December, the Sea Sense Education Officer appeared on the local television channel, TBC1, to talk about the effects of climate change on endangered marine species. Presentations on marine endangered species were also given at the International School of Tanganyika 'Wanyama' and 'Roots & Shoots' Clubs.



Sea Sense Education Officer with IST
Wanyama Club

Dynamite Fishing

Early in 2009, a fisherman in Temeke District lost both of his lower arms when a stick of dynamite exploded in his hands. In July, the fisher agreed to talk to Sea Sense about dynamite fishing and the impact the accident has had on him and his family. Sea Sense organised an interview with a journalist and the story was published in The Guardian in December.

Despite significant reports of dynamite fishing and continued lobbying from anti-dynamite fishing networks, there remains little action from the responsible authorities. Such inaction continues to have a devastating impact on the biodiversity of Tanzania and is a major threat to the livelihoods of millions of coastal people.

Funding Success!

In November, Sea Sense was awarded funds from the European Union under the RECOMAP programme. These funds will enable Sea Sense to further develop turtle ecotourism in Mafia and Temeke Districts.



WWF have funded the production of a turtle 'Adoption Pack' which includes a personalised adoption certificate, interesting facts and information on turtles and a turtle poster, photo and gift. Posters and leaflets promoting turtle ecotourism have also been produced.

In August, Sea Sense received funds from the Dar es Salaam Charity Goat Races to provide English Lessons for Conservation Officers involved in turtle ecotourism in Temeke District. Eight COs are attending classes and have been provided with learning materials including text books and dictionaries. All they need now is a little confidence to try out their new skills!

Fund raising events including a quiz, an aerobathon and a sponsored swim have also helped raise vital funds for Sea Sense.



Dynamite fishing victim

Scientific Symposia

In August 2009, Sea Sense was invited to attend the 6th Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association (WIOMSA) Symposium in La Reunion. Posters detailing Sea Sense work on turtle ecotourism and whale shark awareness in Mafia District and dugong conservation activities in Rufiji District were presented by the Education Officer. Sea Sense has also submitted two papers to the 30th International Sea Turtle Symposium which will be held in Goa, India in April 2010.



Acknowledgements

Sea Sense would like to thank all their donors, including Born Free, WWF, EU and the Dar es Salaam Charity Goat Races for their support and funding. We would also like to thank all those who adopted nests as their contribution will help to make a real difference to our conservation activities. Finally we thank our Conservation Officers, District Authorities, Village Chairs, Council members and Environment Committees for helping to protect endangered marine life in Tanzania.



Please help us to keep turtles alive by adopting a turtle nest!!

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