

## Improving sea turtle monitoring in our marine parks

Mnazi Bay Ruvuma Estuary Marine Park (MBREMP) is located in southern Tanzania, at the border with Mozambique. Green turtles nest on several beaches within the park and a team of Community Turtle Officers (CTO's) work with MBREMP staff to monitor and protect them. In October, Sea Sense organised a sea turtle training workshop for MBREMP staff and CTO's to help improve their skills in sea turtle conservation. Village leaders from three local communities also took part in the training to improve their understanding of the threats to sea turtles and encourage them to take greater action against those who slaughter sea turtles and poach sea turtle eggs.



*Practising sea turtle nest translocation techniques*

## Searching for Tanzania's Dugongs

Sea Sense, together with the Ministry of Livestock Development and Fisheries has recently completed interview surveys with over 300 fishers in Mkinga and Mtwara Districts to collect up to date information on dugong distribution and abundance. Identical surveys are being carried out in other countries where dugongs are known to occur to determine the true status of this shy and elusive creature so that effective conservation strategies can be developed.

Sadly the surveys in Tanzania revealed that dugongs no longer survive in these areas. Village elders reported large herds of dugongs in the 1970's but most of the younger fishers had little knowledge of dugongs and had only heard of their existence from older members of the community. It seems that the Rufiji Delta does indeed support the last population of dugongs in Tanzania.



*The Sea Sense Education Officer interviews a fisher in northern Tanzania*

Data from the Tanzanian dugong survey will be submitted to the Convention on Migratory Species project team in Abu Dhabi and will contribute to a global effort to protect this species which is thought to be at risk of extinction across much of its global range.

## Using theatre to raise awareness

Theatre is an entertaining way to stimulate debate and raise awareness of important social and environmental issues. With the help and guidance of staff from Bagamoyo College of Arts, Sea Sense has been working with two communities in Pangani District to create a number of short plays to convey messages about the impact of human activities on the marine environment.

Following days of training and rehearsals, several members of the community acted out a series of short sketches including a piece involving two fishers who had accidentally captured a sea turtle in their net and were debating whether it should be released or slaughtered.

What a response this piece provoked! Many members of the audience defended their right to eat sea turtles whilst others argued that it would damage the very ecosystem on which they depended for their livelihoods. After intense debate, the communities agreed that the turtle should be 'released'. Theatre really can help to raise awareness and change attitudes!



**'Fishers' capture a sea turtle**

## Joining hands with a local orphanage

In September, Sea Sense visited the Help2Kids orphanage in Dar es Salaam as part of their 'Environment Week'. Sea Sense staff spent the day with the children playing environmental games, telling sea turtle stories and explaining how they could help to protect the marine environment.



## New website launched!

The new Sea Sense website went live in September after months of design and preparation. Check out the new site [www.seasense.org](http://www.seasense.org) to get all the latest information about Sea Sense projects and find out when a sea turtle nest is due to hatch near you.

You can also follow Sea Sense on Facebook!

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Sea-Sense/198707600182212>

### Acknowledgements

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

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