



Gift to the Earth



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Mozambique establishes the Quirimbas National Park

SUMMARY

Establishment of the 7,500 km² Quirimbas National Park, in Mozambique's northern-most Cabo Delgado Province, close to the border with Tanzania, represents a globally significant conservation achievement. This new park is a conservation jewel, boasting an exciting mosaic of wildlife, and helping protect one of the richest areas of coral reef in the world as well as many other important features, including mangroves, coastal forest and woodland, turtles, dugongs and elephants.

In acting to establish this park the Government of Mozambique demonstrates bold environmental leadership in southern Africa, which can encourage other similar actions in the region and further afield. This is an important step towards creation of an ecologically-representative network of marine protected areas (MPAs) in Mozambique, at the heart of the Eastern African Marine Global 200 ecoregion – a top conservation priority for WWF. This follows from the government's recent decision to fully protect the entire Bazaruto Archipelago in southern Mozambique within an MPA.

The new Quirimbas National Park will also protect fish resources, supporting local livelihoods and food security, and boost prospects for environmentally sustainable development based on nature-based tourism and game fishing in this relatively isolated and impoverished area.

BACKGROUND

The initiative to protect the Quirimbas area was headed by the Government of Cabo Delgado Province, local NGOs (KARIBU and GECORENA) and is strongly supported by the local community. Part of the reason for establishing the national park is to help resolve the growing frequency of often tragic human/wildlife conflicts, in an area where 55,000 people live in close proximity with healthy wildlife populations, especially increasing numbers of elephant.



Common green turtle (*Cheloniemydas*) juvenile - © WWF-Canon / Meg GAWLER



Inter-tidal area in Quirimba Island - © WWF / Peter Bechtel

The park will combine important terrestrial and marine components, protecting a rich array of coastal forests and mangroves, coral reefs and sea grass beds, as well as charismatic species such as dugongs, marine turtles, whales, dolphins and sharks, plus elephant, leopard, buffalo, lion and African hunting dog. Through the park, sustainable use practices can be introduced into an area where there is heavy and increasing pressure on the natural resource base. The marine component of the new national park doubles Mozambique's marine protected area up to 5 percent.

The 1,500 km² marine component is made of 1,500 km² part of Quirimbas Archipelago, which includes eleven coral islands lying close offshore, stretching for 100 km along the coast. Over 50 genera of corals have been recorded, and the park includes the St Lázaro Bank – a world-class game-fishing spot, 42 nautical miles off the coast, which can be an important component for income generation from responsible nature-based tourism and leisure activities. The main threats to the marine environment, as identified with local communities and organizations, are intrusion of fishermen from outside the region, use of destructive methods including poisoning, loss of traditional resource management practices, and lack of effective resource protection.

The terrestrial component of the proposed park consists of 6,000 km² of a variety of forest types – including miombo woodland, acacia savannah, coastal thicket and tropical dry forest, mangroves, and many rare and endemic plant species.

THE CONSERVATION BENEFITS

The new Quirimbas National Park extends formal protection for a large and hugely important area containing coastal forest and mangroves, key marine sites including the richest coral reefs in the East African Marine Ecoregion, and major wildlife populations. This

advances also the development of a representative MPA network for Mozambique and the larger marine ecoregion.

Establishment of the park has been called for by the local communities, to help address serious conflicts with wildlife and to gain security for the natural resources they depend on. This offers an opportunity for an exemplary model of sustainable development, integrating conservation and wise resource use, helping support livelihoods and food security for the local human populations. The park can also develop environmentally-responsible nature-based tourism as a source of revenue and employment in the area.

THE GIFT TO THE EARTH

WWF recognizes the Government of Mozambique for its exemplary role in establishing the Quirimbas National Park, the environmentally-responsible leadership this demonstrates, and the example this sets for other countries in the region and elsewhere. In particular, this recognizes the contribution this makes towards achieving an ecologically-representative network of MPAs in Mozambique and the larger Eastern African Marine Global 200 ecoregion.

RELEVANCE TO WWF'S TARGETS

Endangered Seas Programme

Establishment of the 7,500 km² Quirimbas National Park represents progress towards the target of doubling by 2006 the global MPA cover for the world's oceans and coasts, and establishing ecologically representative networks of MPAs in priority Global 200 ecoregions. In this case, the emphasis is on the Eastern African Marine Ecoregion.

Forests for Life Programme

One of the targets of WWF's Forests for Life programme is concerned with the establishment and maintenance of viable, representative networks of protected areas in the world's threatened and most biologically significant forest regions, by 2010. The terrestrial



Protection for elephant corridors in the Messalo and Montepuez rivers will aim to decrease the number of conflict between elephants and local populations - © WWF / Peter Bechtel

area of the Quirimbas National Park is made up of important coastal forests and miombo woodlands, which are priorities for WWF. As such, the park constitutes a noteworthy contribution to this target.

Species Programme

This initiative also contributes towards the targets of WWF's Species Programme by supporting the protection of key species such as whales, dolphins, turtles, dugongs and elephants.

MARINE GIFTS OF THE FUTURE...

Gifts to the Earth provide international recognition and support for significant conservation actions such as the new Quirimbas National Park. Future marine Gifts are planned for Argentina, Australia, South Pacific nations, the UK and UAE.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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WWF Mozambique Coord. Office: www.wwf.org.mz
WWF Endangered Seas Programme: www.panda.org/ endangeredseas
WWF Forests for Life Programme: www.panda.org/ forests4life



Drying fish – a mainstay of the local economy - © WWF / Peter Bechtel

The **GIFT TO THE EARTH** is WWF's highest award for a globally significant conservation achievement, which addresses WWF's conservation priorities by:

🌍 Advancing conservation of biodiversity, especially forest, freshwater and marine ecosystems, or enhancing the prospects for survival of threatened species

🌍 Addressing global threats posed by climate change, toxic chemicals and unsustainable use of resources such as timber, freshwater and fisheries.

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