

VAMIZI NEWS

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A very skilled predator hides in the waters around Vamizi. As small as 1mm, nudibranchs protect themselves from virtually all predators. Their vivid colours warn that they are poisonous and can be deadly if eaten.

Vamizi's marine research centre recently hosted a team who are studying these fascinating creatures. Yara Tibiriçá from ACCM Závora Lab and António Manuel Malaquias from the University of Bergen were able to collect samples from about 69 species during their field trip, bringing the total for Vamizi to about 80 species. They believe several of the species sampled are completely new to science. Easily missed by divers due to their small size and the fact that they spend most of their time hidden in the reef or sea grass, nudibranchs play an important role in the ecosystem. Their defensive chemicals are so impressive that they have been studied to find the cure for diseases such as cancer. Some species are cannibals, which can be a problem when finding a partner to mate. We are looking forward to the results of their genetic and molecular studies – we hope they have discovered a new "Vamiziensis" species! ■





ALBINO HATCHLINGS

One of the amazing things about the natural world which keeps researchers and enthusiasts hooked is the remarkable feeling of discovering something for the first time. After more than 10 years of turtle monitoring on Vamizi, last month we found albino hatchlings for the first time while excavating a hatched nest. Two had not survived, but two were very much alive. They were found along with 3 other hatchlings with normal pigmentation, one of which had supernumerary lateral scutes (in other words, additional plates or scales on its shell). We released them all as the sun was setting, and wished them all luck out in the open ocean. Our initial research suggests this could be the first albino hatchlings found in Mozambique and we hope to learn more about their genetic make up from tissue samples taken from the hatchlings. ■



WORKING TOGETHER FOR A HEALTHIER REEF



CHILDREN'S DAY

The 1st of June marks one of the most important and celebrated holidays in Mozambique, International Children's Day. Each year on Vamizi, we celebrate with the children from the community school. This year, the headmaster and teacher, together with the children, the parents and our community team, organised a day of singing, dancing and activities to celebrate the children of Vamizi. The winners of the drawing competition were invited to spend the day with our conservation team, to experience a day in the life of our monitors. The children visited a turtle nest and went

snorkeling with Isabel and Salimo. By sharing Vamizi's beauty with the children who grow up on the island, we can help to protect it for future generations. ■



A recent research paper published in Plos-One magazine proves that the Vamizi Island marine sanctuary has had a positive effect on fish populations not only within the reserve but also in the surrounding area. Co-authored by Isabel Silva, Vamizi's Research Coordinator, the paper shares data from a 9-year period which measures, amongst other things, the evolution of fish stocks inside and outside our community sanctuary. Her findings show that the abundance and size of fish inside the reserve has increased, and that impact is also seen outside the reserve, through a

positive spillover effect. The benefits were detected up to 1km beyond the limit of the reserve. These results are very important for maintaining community support for the sanctuary as they clearly show the benefit to Vamizi's fishermen. Although they cannot fish inside the protected area, the fish that they can catch are more plentiful and larger in the area around the sanctuary thanks to the protection that the no-take zone offers. This message is an important one for Vamizi's fishermen and for communities in other parts of the world who are considering a protected area for their wildlife. ■

GREY REEF SHARKS UPDATE

Ten months have passed since we tagged two female grey reef sharks, and the results so far are fascinating. Our acoustic listening station has been picking up "pings" from the tags on an almost hourly basis, telling us that the sharks live year-round at Neptune's Arm and are almost never more than 200m away from the stations. The sharks average depth is around 20m, but with dives down to 200m at night. Initial findings suggest this is evidence of "thermoregulation"; that the sharks regulate their body temperature by changing patterns in their behaviour. The project isn't over yet, and we are now preparing for the next tagging season which will take place in October. Wish us luck!! ■



VAMIZI GOES SOLAR!

Vamizi took a big step forwards in its resource management strategy in June with the completion of a solar installation with battery backup. A team from Greenlink, experts in solar energy in East Africa, worked with us every step of the way through the complex planning, transportation and installation process. With 100 panels generating 25kW of solar power and 1,000kWh of battery storage capacity maximising our generator efficiency there is plenty of power to keep our six villas, swimming pools and

appliances running day and night! The current system will cover our base load comfortably and may require a top-up from the generator in busy periods.

"100 PANELS GENERATING 25KW OF SOLAR POWER"

We hope to add solar panels in time so that we can further reduce our generator usage. For now, we are enjoying listening to nothing but the birds tweeting and the gentle sea breeze. ■



BIOFUND MEETING

A new fund for conservation in Mozambique was launched in June 2015 during a ceremony held at the University Eduardo Mondlane in Maputo. The Foundation for the Conservation of Biodiversity (Biofund) has been established to support conservation, the sustainable management of natural resources and marine and terrestrial biodiversity. The launch ceremony included a speech from the President of Mozambique, Filipe Nyusi, who declared that conservation is one of the top priorities of the new government. The conference featured presentations from WWF and the World Bank amongst others, and highlighted the important works already taking place in the country to protect key areas and species. Our Community and Conservation Manager, Joana Trindade, attended the event to represent Vamizi and share experiences with fellow biologists and conservation experts. This new fund is an important step for Mozambique and demonstrates a commitment at the highest level to protect the country's precious environment. ■



biofund
Fundação para a Conservação e Biodiversidade

MEET RICHARD

Richard Chari is a popular and much respected member of Vamizi's management team. Richard joined Vamizi in 2010 as head of housekeeping, and now serves as the island's operations manager. Responsible for the smooth running of island services, he has a broad and challenging role. Fortunately as a former marathon runner, Richard has the stamina to keep everything under control!

Richard loves living in such a beautiful place and enjoys meeting so many different people through his work on Vamizi. In his spare time, Richard enjoys watching and playing sports such as volleyball, football and tennis, or finding a quiet place to read. He is also studying for a degree in Business Management from UNISA and we wish him every success in his upcoming exams. ■



COMMUNITY MATTERS

The community has a new representative. Ali Shafim was recently elected as the new president of the Community Committee, and is looking forward to working closely with the community leaders to help improve life on Vamizi. Ali is hoping to build a small office in the community that can serve as a meeting place for the villagers to discuss new ideas. Ali grew up on Vamizi and has worked for many years as a painter and supervisor, most recently as part of the construction team who built Vamizi's six private villas. We are looking forward to working with Ali in the coming months. ■