

Sea Sense leads pioneering sea turtle research in Tanzania



The Sea Sense team with 'Lulu' as she heads back to the sea

Sea Sense is using the latest satellite technology to conduct vital research into sea turtle migratory behaviour. Over the past four months, satellite tags have been deployed on six nesting green turtles. The tags transmit a 'message' to a satellite every time the turtle surfaces to breathe, providing details of her location.

In just a few short weeks, the tagged turtles have displayed some very interesting movement patterns. One of the turtles, named Mwisho has migrated to feeding grounds just north of Mombasa while Zianna is currently swimming past Lamu in northern Kenya and shows no sign of stopping yet! Tulia has decided to head south and this morning was passing Kilwa!

Understanding migratory patterns is crucial to the long term survival of sea turtles. The tracking data is helping Sea Sense to identify the location of important feeding grounds in Tanzania and the wider region. From there we can determine where the high risk areas are for migrating sea turtles and focus our efforts on reducing risks at those locations, particularly the risk of entanglement in fishing nets.

Marine education programmes get creative!

Sea Sense has been using art to encourage local school pupils to express what the marine environment means to them. The education programme focused on the 'ecosystem' concept to develop understanding of the interconnectedness of all marine species and their habitats. Each student was invited to present their picture to the rest of the class and explain their drawings. It was a great way to share knowledge about the marine environment and dispel many myths about marine species. Sea turtles are not fish!!!



Protecting sea turtles in our national parks

Saadani National Park (SANAPA) is a unique national park in Tanzania because it integrates both marine and terrestrial ecosystems. The park supports a small population of nesting green turtles which are monitored by SANAPA Rangers. In February, Sea Sense conducted a sea turtle conservation training programme for the Rangers to improve understanding of their vital role in monitoring and protecting sea turtles in SANAPA.

There are currently five nests incubating on beaches within SANAPA so the Rangers are getting chance to put their new skills into action!



SANAPA Rangers refresh their skills

Communities in Mafia celebrate the natural environment



Tree planting on World Environment Day

Sea Sense celebrated World Environment Day (June 5th) and World Sea Turtle Day (June 16th) with local communities in Mafia Island. Various activities were organised including tree planting, beach clean-ups, football and netball matches and fun challenges and competitions. Hundreds of villagers from all over the island participated in both events which was a great opportunity for Sea Sense to distribute posters amongst the crowds to raise awareness of human impacts on the marine environment.

Acknowledgements

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Ladies compete in a coconut grinding competition!

