



FRIENDS OF MAZIWE

NEWSLETTER

4th Edition

April - June 2012

Welcome to the fourth issue of the Friends of Maziwe newsletter. This newsletter will bring you news and updates on the various projects happening along the Ushongo coast and the island itself. Maziwe is a Marine Reserve which supports a vibrant coral reef ecosystem and is a nesting ground for the Green turtle. We hope that this newsletter will help raise awareness and generate support for the coming years.

Longest turtle track on Maziwe

Visiting Maziwe Island you may see turtle tracks on the island but not every turtle that comes up to the island will lay a nest. Turtles are choosing their site very carefully and it is common for female turtles to crawl up the beach and return to the ocean without laying a nest if the site did not suit her. This is called a false crawl. Last year 18 tracks with a nest and 47 false crawls were counted on Island.

The turtle crossing the beach on the picture did not nest. Very impressive was the fact that she crawled over the island from north to south which turned out to be the longest track ever seen on Maziwe with 404m.



Guidelines for nesting turtles

Some Green turtles (*Chelonia mydas*) are still nesting on the beaches around Ushongo. They will lay their eggs in the sand above the high tide mark, therefore they are emerging from the water moving up the beach. Sea turtles are very sensitive to lights and movement especially when leaving the water, crossing the beach and digging their nests. If a turtle gets disturbed she will return to the water without laying her nest.

To ensure turtles have a chance to lay their nests, precaution is needed, especially while walking on the beach during the night and in the early mornings. If you walk at night on the beach, stay below the high tide line and watch for turtle tracks crossing your way.

What to do if you come across a Nesting Sea Turtle?

1. Seeing a turtle emerging from the water or moving up the beach, stop where you are, turn your light off and remain very still.
2. Stay behind a turtle at all times and do not touch the turtle or the eggs.
3. Please do not take flash photographs, that might disturb the nesting turtle and she may return back to the beach without laying her nest.
4. After the eggs are laid, stand back and allow the turtle to close her nest with sand.
5. Allow the turtle to return back to the sea.
6. Watching a turtle nest may take some time, make yourself comfortable and watch. It is a great experience!





News Center

- Finally turtles started nesting on Maziwe again after 5 month with no nests
- Over 10.000 baby turtles hatched in Ushongo with nests from Maziwe and Kikokwe since the project started three years ago.
- On the 17.03.2012 a turtle got poached while nesting on Maziwe Island

Rubbish along the beach

Rubbish is a problem on many beaches along the coast line. People still throw their daily waste on the beach and the Ocean is also carrying a lot of rubbish that eventually will end up there. These days plastic Islands are floating in our Oceans that are as big as some countries like Belgium. In the end of last year Friends of Maziwe has started hanging up awareness posters in Kiswahili in the village. The posters are showing different waste items we usually find along the beaches, roads or in villages and explains how long it will take for each to break down. There are many problems with marine littering from turtles and other fishes eating plastic bags to chemicals in rubbish contaminating the water and entering the food chain which can result in us eating fish that have been poisoned. Rubbish can be dangerous to us and also affects the beach and the animals that live there. Let us try to keep our environment clean and healthy. Do not throw any rubbish away and pick some up when walking on the beach.



Diving and Snorkelling on Maziwe Island

Maziwe Island is one of the oldest Marine Reserve in Tanzania and the government gazetted Maziwe to a protected area in 1981. In the 1960's and 1970's a few visitors were able to see Maziwe with a 5 ha forest. Today, during low tide, a small sand island appears out of the Indian Ocean. Maziwe is a fantastic place for snorkelling and diving. The corals are pristine and in a very healthy condition and surrounded by many colourful reef fish. Green turtles still swim in the turquoise waters around the island, moray eels are hiding in the coral reefs and hundreds of shrimps are waiting for the groupers to visit the cleaning stations. Watch out for a school of yellowtail barracudas or blue spotted stingrays in the sand. Look closer and you will be surprised about the many flatworms, sea slugs, pipefishes, scorpion leaffishes and nudibranches you can see. Visit Maziwe Island and enjoy a wonderful day exploring the amazing underwater world.

The 'Other' Friends of Maziwe

This colourful eel lives hidden between sand and coral rubble. It gets it's name because of its long, slender, ribbon-like body. The males are brilliant blue with a yellow snout. Mature females are almost entirely yellow and juveniles and sub-adults up to about 65cm length are black with a yellow dorsal fin. Max. length is about 120cm and ranges in depths from 1-55m. The head and a very long part of the body reach out of the burrow to grab its prey of small fish. The ribbon eels can rapidly change sex and coloration. Often seen while diving and snorkelling on Maziwe Island.

Source: Indian Ocean Reef Guide, by Helmut Debelius. IKAN. 2001.

