

CHUMBE ISLAND CORAL PARK NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2004



Greetings to you all from Chumbe!!!

It has been all change within the Chumbe team, with Eleanor's departure to study in England. There have been more staff changes, lots of activity in the education programme, interesting conservation initiatives and Chumbe Island was the star of the African Travel Association Symposium, during which it was praised in no uncertain terms by the President of Zanzibar.

Staff Changes

The all-important team, which makes up the heart and soul of the Chumbe Island experience, has been in flux since Eleanor left:

Omari Mussa, who was Head Ranger, is now training rangers in the north of Zanzibar, with his extensive knowledge he has become a valued asset at Mnarani Beach Cottages, in Nungwi.

His replacement, by a quirk of fate, is the original and longest serving ranger, Omari Nyange. He is absolutely delighted to be back and has been spending lots of time guiding guests, visiting and sensitising fishing villages and is now working closely with Carol Daniels, our new conservation co-ordinator.

Hija Simai, one of our patrol rangers, has recently retired and is replaced by the skilled boat handler and mechanic Ussi Mchumi.

Chumbe's 'new' accountant, Adisai, left us suddenly in September to study an MBA on the Tanzanian mainland, we wish him all success in his studies. He is replaced by Esther, a much travelled and well experienced Tanzanian national, who we hope will stay with us for a long time.

Francesca - you will all be sad to hear - has decided to move on to pastures new. Fran has worked with Chumbe since September 1999 and has done a sterling job of instigating guest booking and marketing systems. Her good humour when dealing with guests and agents and attention to detail were a huge asset to the project. She is currently training her Zanzibari replacement Monalisa William.

Fran will leave in February but we all hope that her next career move will be in Tanzania and that she will visit us all at Chumbe frequently.

Education Programme.

The Island has seen more children in the last year than during the previous two put together. Almost 800 students have been delighted by the treasures hidden below the water of the Chumbe reef. The children have enjoyed, some for the first time, snorkelling and inter-tidal walks. These are joined with practical lessons with Assistant Head Ranger, Khamis Khalfan, who makes marine biology, conservation and environmental protection relevant to the children's' lives.

Lisa, our education coordinator, has been busy organising teacher training workshops, where the teachers are sensitised to field based learning, and linking in the Chumbe education programme with the national curriculum. She is also currently developing individual programmes for each school year consisting of lesson plans that incorporate all relevant parts of the curriculum to the current education programme. As part of the new programme there are pre-visit and post-visit questionnaires for the students to complete which are used to help the education team to monitor their progress.

Feedback so far indicates that the students have a greater understanding of the importance of protecting coral reefs and schools have responded enthusiastically about the project.

In 2004, we are planning many more visits for students, teachers and trainee teachers. Additional teacher training and evaluation workshops are being organised in close collaboration with the Ministry of Education. Also, we aim to help set up environmental clubs in four of the local coastal schools.

Plans are being made to extend the education programme to include more outreach work based in the students' villages. We would like to set up and monitor a new programme of follow up activities in schools. We are also hoping to research how much knowledge gained by the students is passed on to their families and village peers, and how much of an impact this new understanding has on daily lives and activities.

Conservation and Research Programme.

Carol has been extremely busy from the beginning with further training for the rangers; organising, together with the rangers, international schools visits (Earlham College, International Honours Programme and the School for International Training, all from America) and supervising national and international researchers, among many other activities.

Researchers' in the last six months have included surveys of the reef, with some of the key project titles as follows:

- Interlinkages of fish communities on adjacent coral reefs and seagrass beds
- Factors influencing fish movement between marine reserves and non-protected areas in Tanzania
- An investigation of the effectiveness of marine protected areas with respect to fish and coral abundance and diversity, as well as macro-algal cover - a case study in Zanzibar, Tanzania
- Assessments of abundance and species of sea urchins and migratory birds on Chumbe Island.

The Coconut Crabs on the island have been busy in their burrows over the last few months, and many baby crabs have been seen at dusk actively running around. They are soon to become the stars of the BBC Really Wild Show , UK, who will come and film them in February along with many of the species found on Chumbe's coral reef.

The Ader's duikers have recently been very quiet so we organised trackers from the south-east of Zanzibar Island to make a survey with the assistance of Chumbe staff. After a lot of planning and strategic discussions with the trackers and the Department of Commercial Crops, Fruits and Forestry, the duikers were quietly tracked and counted. The surveys resulted in sightings over a three-day period of three different duikers; two male and one female. There are various suggestions as to whether this is the whole of Chumbe's population but it seems that those observed were of a new generation. This is great news as it indicates that there has been successful breeding on the island. Further surveys and investigations with the help of the infra-red and heat-sensitive cameras strategically placed in the heart of the forest will continue.

There will be an international conference hosted by Zanzibar on duiker and dwarf antelopes in Africa. This will be held in February 2004, with a trip by the delegates to Chumbe island to learn about the translocation programme and progress of this population.

Events

Eleanor's leaving party was a very grand affair, with the presentation of many farewell gifts and speeches from the Chumbe staff, old and new, and invited guests. Everyone enjoyed a feast of pilau and biryani, and the day ended with Eleanor's last snorkel on Chumbe as manager and lots of traditional dancing.

It was an emotional time as six years of devoting her life to the success of Chumbe came to an end. Eleanor is now studying a Masters in Environment and Development at Darwin College, Cambridge University. I am sure that she will involve Chumbe in the core of her dissertation and promote the cause with all the new people she meets.

Another major event was the involvement of some of the Chumbe Island personnel, invited by the Commission of Tourism, in the organisation of the conference of the celebrated African and Tourism Association (ATA) based in the USA.

The seventh Symposium on Cultural and Ecotourism, held on December 2nd-7th, was a major showcase for Zanzibar tourism, under the auspices of the Ministry of Trade, Industry, Marketing and Tourism. On 3rd December HE the President, in his opening speech, said:

"we are very fortunate to possess one of the world's famously recognized tourist attraction of value in eco-tourism. I am of course referring to the Chumbe Island Coral Park which won the Global British Airways Tourism for Tomorrow Award in 1999".

The Symposium was a huge success and we presented a paper on ' The Fes declaration for Responsible Travel in relation to Chumbe Island, Zanzibar, as a case study'.

Chumbe also recently received an accolade as one of the "Top Eco-Tourism Destinations in the World" in the international Harpers and Queen magazine travel supplement. The November edition heralded Chumbe Island as the 'most romantic eco-lodge in the world'.

And on that romantic note I will finish.

Best wishes,

Helen Peeks

New Project Manager as of July 2003