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Community Centred Conservation—C3-Comores

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4  
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## Turtle and dugong awareness-raising in Hamba

C3, in collaboration with the community ecoguards of Hoani and Hamba, conducted an awareness-raising evening in Hamba on Thursday 18th October. The C3 team was accompanied by the community ecoguards of Hoani, Nema Madi and Mousdalifa Issoufa, who spoke to the villagers of Hamba about turtle and dugong conservation. The awareness-raising evening was rated a success by both the C3 team and the villagers of Hamba. Furthermore, the evening provided the community ecoguards with experience in community awareness-raising events.

## Coral Reef Conference

C3 Projects Coordinator, Melissa Hauzer, attended the International Society for Reef Studies conference in Bremen, Germany, between 19th and 22nd September 2006. The conference brought together coral reef scientists and students from around the world to present and discuss current research, use, and management of coral reefs. Melissa was awarded a Young Scientist Award for her poster presentation of C3's work on community-based management of coral reefs.



The C3 team with Village Association members and Ecoguards in Hoani



Le Roi speaking at Hamba.



C3 volunteer Mouzdawi Boussuri conducting dugong surveys with local fishers.



Chris Poonian studies seagrass beds.

## Dugong and Seagrass Surveys

C3 members Bjorn Alfthan and Melissa Hauzer, aided by the Moheli Marine Park (PMM) ecoguards and volunteers Mouzdawi Boussuri and Ben said Omar, conducted dugong sighting interviews in all ten villages inside PMM over several days at the end of October. The interviews involved asking fishers about their knowledge of dugongs, the location(s) where they have seen the dugong, and whether they have fished or eaten dugong meat before. In conjunction with the interviews, C3 has been active over the past two months mapping seagrass habitats in the waters of Mohéli. Seagrass habitats are the sole source of nutrition for the dugong, so knowing their location is vital for its effective conservation. The mapping was carried out by snorkel surveys of the coastal waters to identify which species of seagrass occupy which areas. These surveys have also provided the opportunity to involve and train ecoguards of PMM in general seagrass surveying techniques.

The dugong fisher interviews and seagrass mapping both provide vital information on the location of the dugong and its habitats in the waters of Mohéli, which is a first step in creating effective conservation solutions for the dugong on the island of Mohéli and throughout the Union of the Comoros.

## Quarterly Turtle Monitoring

On the 1<sup>st</sup> October the C3 team and a number of Mohéli's ecoguards, completed the first quarterly turtle survey of the ten most significant turtle nesting beaches on Moheli. The most frequented nesting beach was Mtsanga Nyamba (Itsamia). The beaches of Fomboni Hoani (Hoani) and Mtsanga Nyamba (Itsamia) showed the lowest levels of poaching, with 0 carapaces. Mtsanga Nyamba (Hamba Domoni) had the highest levels of poaching, with 39 carapaces recorded. This survey will be repeated on 1<sup>st</sup> of January, 1<sup>st</sup> April, 1<sup>st</sup> July and the 1<sup>st</sup> October to monitor changes in turtle nesting and poaching, and the effectiveness of the Marine Park. C3-Comores also hopes to re-initiate the annual survey of all turtle nesting beaches on Moheli in 2007.



C3 member Le Roi and Itsamia ecoguards Matarafi Hamadi Abdallah and Anrifondine Hamza find a fresh carapace during the quarterly turtle monitoring survey.

'...to develop conservation efforts worldwide by building the capacity of local individuals and institutions through grassroots research and training initiatives'

*In memory of  
Bouna: One of the  
Jr Ecoguards*

No words will ever be adequate to express the tremendous loss of young Bouna. At age 16, he was strong and healthy, full of laughter and full of dreams.

Bouna was very bright and achieved high marks at school. He wanted to study electrical engineering so that one day he could aid the development of his country. Bouna was also an active member of his community and the Jr Ecoguards. He participated in all of the Jr Ecoguards' activities, including beach clean-ups and a play on turtle poaching. He also participated in training on AIDS prevention to help educate other youth on protection against the disease. Above all, Bouna will be remembered most for his wonderful sense of humour, his love of dancing, and his incredible spirit which brought happiness to all those around him.

May your big smiles and contagious laughter continue to sing throughout the world. We will miss you greatly.

'I am so-so'

'I am sodro-poto'

'Dumb-dumb for you'

'I am very well'



**BOUNA ABDOU DANIEL BOUNA  
1990-2006**

*Jr. Ecoguards*

This month the Jr. Ecoguards, accompanied by the Minister of Ecotourism for Mohéli, and C3 team members Melissa Hauzer and Joanne Nice, produced and performed a play for the residents of Nioumachoua. The play highlighted the importance of waste management on the beaches of Mohéli, and how improper waste disposal has a negative impact on the environment, human health, and the promotion of Mohéli as a tourist destination. The sketch proved to be an extremely successful and enjoyable way of educating the community and the Jr. Ecoguards about this important issue.



**Elhak as the Mayor of  
Nioumachoua in the Jr Ecoguard  
sketch**



**Jr Ecoguards in uniform**

*Ecoguard of the month*

**Name:** Cheikh Moussa  
(Bush)

**Village:** Ouallah I



**Biography:** Bush has been recognized as 'Ecoguard of the month' due to complete dedication to his work as an ecoguard in Mohéli Marine Park. As one of the original ecoguards of the Park, Bush has received environmental training in the Comoros, Madagascar and South Africa. He recently attended a two week course in Madagascar run by the Durrell Institute, a British organization, where he received training on biodiversity conservation and the protection of endangered species. The training particularly focused on terrestrial environments and National Parks, and community awareness-raising. C3 would like to thank Bush for all of his hard work, and looks forward to continuing working with him in the future.



**Melissa Hauzer**



**Audrey Clark**

*New team members*

We would like to welcome Melissa Hauzer, a previous C3 intern, as the new Projects Coordinator for Mohéli. She will be working with a team of interns in collaboration with local organizations to continue with C3's projects on Mohéli over the next year. The C3 team also welcomed new intern Audrey Clark this month, Audrey is from the USA and specialized in environmental studies and conservation biology.

*Future Projects*

In the coming months, C3-Comores will be going undercover to investigate turtle poaching on Moheli: by interviewing poachers and those that eat turtle meat, we hope to get a better understanding of the problem. We will also be starting work in Grande Comore, including dugong and seagrass surveys which will be used to write the National Dugong Conservation Action Plan.

*The C3 team*

- Patricia Davis, Director
- Chris Poonian, Projects Manager
- Melissa Hauzer, Projects Coordinator
- Bjorn Alfthan, intern
- Audrey Clark, intern
- Joanne Nice, intern
- Zaharani Moindjie (Le Roi), intern (AIDE)