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September 2006

### Day of the Dugong

On 26th August, C3 and Mohéli Marine Park (PMM) held a day to celebrate the dugong in the village of Nioumachoua, funded by the BP Conservation Programme, PADI Foundation and Rufford Small Grants for Nature Conservation. C3, PMM, ADSN (Nioumachoua village association), Nioumachoua officials and residents organized the celebration, which began on Friday and lasted until Sunday. Speeches were given by PMM Director Kamardine Boinali, C3 Director Patricia Davis, The Minister of the Environment and ecoguard Hamada Issouf. The celebration included a dance competition, a women's traditional tam tam, football, volleyball, a dugong quiz, and children's activities such as a treasure hunt. The celebration was well attended by Nioumachoua residents, ecoguards and officials from throughout Mohéli.



Patricia Davis presents at the Day of the Dugong



Sand-building competition at the Day of the Dugong



Sunrise at Hoani

### New Conservation Centre in Hoani

The Hoani Conservation Centre will be established under direction of FADEVICHO (Hoani village association) and C3 as a centre for ecological and cultural information. The centre is intended to provide information to local communities as well as visiting tourists. C3 is grateful to IOSEA Year of the Turtle and BP Conservation Programme for funding this centre and associated materials

Already constructed, the centre is located on a beach that is frequented by nesting sea turtles. This centre will assist

community ecoguards in encouraging conservation efforts. Plans for the centre include painting a mural and creating information boards. The centre will provide information on endangered species of Mohéli such as the green turtle and dugong, as well as the history of Hoani and cultural information of the Comores. Tourists will be able to purchase t-shirts, postcards, and artisanal items, providing revenue to sustain conservation activities in the region

### PMM Village Tour

At Day of the Dugong, Melissa Hauzer presented the results of C3-Comores' surveys of the village communities' perceptions of PMM to the management committee and PMM technical team. The findings were well received by the attendees and will be soon be published in a technical report. This work forms a useful background on which to base future initiatives within the Park.

Anyone who would like to find out more about the results in their own village is encouraged to speak with their local ecoguard or committee representative.



### Dugong Surveys

Our dugong research is now well underway following fisher consultations in villages outside of PMM. We now have local knowledge of the dugong for the entire island and most importantly the regions where dugongs have been sighted historically and recently. Based on this information, we will now begin to conduct field studies to locate important seagrass habitats and hopefully confirm the presence of dugong populations. Ecoguards and C3 volunteers have contributed to these surveys. This work is part of 'Operation Mohéli', funded by the BP Conservation Programme.

### Jr. Ecoguards

Ecoguards Hamada Issouf and Soibaha mentored the Jr. Ecoguards for a day on the islet Ouenefou. The ecoguards demonstrated turtle monitoring activities such as counting tracks, marking and measuring turtles, and identifying nests. On the islet, the Jr. Ecoguards were also exposed to the remaining turtle carcasses left by poachers. In addition to monitoring techniques, the Jr. ecoguards learned about the current threats to the sea turtle population, such as poaching, and also the influence their own activities has on turtles. One ecoguard commented that turtles arriving on Nioumachoua's beach to nest leave without laying any eggs because of the rubbish on the beach. Also during the trip, the Jr. Ecoguards had the chance to practise swimming and snorkeling. Jr. Ecoguards Elham Tchaké Souldine and Idlalle Soibaha reported that the day was well spent and everyone enjoyed the activities. They learned a lot about turtles and took a keen interest in the ecoguards' daily work.



Hamada shows Jr. ecoguards turtle monitoring techniques.



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

## Capacity-building in Moimbasa

In July, FADEVICHO (Hoani village association) requested C3-Comores to build conservation capacity in the Moimbasa region of Mohéli. The region is an important turtle nesting site, but has been plagued by poachers. In order to address this issue, C3 has been working with PMM ecoguards Hamada Issouf, Cheik Moussa Ibouira and Maturafi Hamadi Abdallah to implement a community ecoguard training programme for the region, funded by the BP Conservation Programme.

Community ecoguards will be responsible for voluntarily monitoring the turtle nesting beaches near their village, participate in annual or quarterly counts of turtle tracks, nests, and carapaces, enforce anti-poaching measures, and educate their communities about the importance of conservation.



Le Roi presents C3's work

The training course included fieldwork and lectures in marine and forest ecology and sea turtle and dugong conservation. There were forest and beach excursions to practice monitoring and gain personal understanding and experience. This was followed by an oral and written exam which required a minimum score to receive a community ecoguard certificate.

Twenty participated in the course in Hoani and ten individuals decided to enter the final exam. Three community ecoguards and four community ecoguides were chosen to begin

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### Hoani community ecoguard exam

work in Hoani. Nema Madi obtained 95% in the final exam, the highest mark in Hoani.

The second training course was held in Hamba, one of the more remote villages of Mohéli. Out of a class of fifteen, six people achieved the minimum score or higher to become community ecoguards; four were from Hamba and two from Domoni. The highest score was obtained by Sourati Ldjomolya Abdou.

Following the completion of the course, Chafi Kou Said, another community ecoguard from Hamba was already busy advocating the protection of turtles and warned those that fail to heed his advice will find themselves in court in Fomboni.

Overall, the training in Hamba and Hoani were extremely successful and laid a good foundation further environmental capacity building in the region. C3-Comores would like to wish sincere congratulations to all who participated in the course.



C3 team with PMM ecoguards and Hoani participants



September 2006

## Ecoguard of the month

**Name:** Nema Madi

**Village:** Hoani



**Biography:** Nema Madi was raised in Hoani, Mohéli and studied in Grande Comore to become a primary school teacher. She spent three years teaching in Grande Comore and is now teaching in Hoani. Nema became involved in the C3 program during the school drawing competition for IOSEA year of the turtle 2006. She has always taken interest in the environment and has shown great enthusiasm for C3's activities in Hoani. She finished the community ecoguard training course with the highest exam marks and is the first female ecoguard in the Comoros. We are delighted to work with someone as intelligent and motivated as Nema.

## Turtle poachers convicted in Hoani

C3-Comores is proud to announce that as a direct result of training activities in Moimbasa three turtle poachers were captured by the community ecoguards in Hoani on the 29th August. The poachers had their car and bicycles confiscated. They were found guilty at trial in Fomboni and each received one month in prison and a total fine of 300,000 Kmf.

## Future Projects

Next month, C3-Comores will be finishing the Conservation Centre in Hoani. We will also be out on the water, mapping seagrass habitats of Mohéli. C3 will also be working with PMM and village associations to establish sustainable monitoring and conservation programmes for turtles, dugongs and seagrass throughout the island. Further afield, Melissa Hauzer has been in Bremen, Germany, presenting C3-Comores work at the International Society for Reef Studies Conference.

## New team members

The C3 team welcomed two new members this month, Bjorn Alfthan and Joanne Nice. Bjorn is from Switzerland with a degree in biological sciences and Joanne is from England and specialises in international development and the environment.



## The C3 team

Patricia Davis, Director  
Chris Poonian, Projects Manager  
Melissa Hauzer, Projects Coordinator  
Bjorn Alfthan, intern  
Ariana Arcenas, intern  
Joanne Nice, intern  
Kileken Ole-MoiYoi, intern  
Zaharani Moindjie (Le Roi), intern (AIDE)

