
Africa's largest transboundary marine protected area

South Africa and its neighbour to the north, Mozambique, have joined forces to create Africa's largest marine protected area.

Mozambique has declared its first Marine Protected Area at Ponta do Ouro that now links with South Africa's iSimangaliso Wetland Park to create Africa's first transfrontier marine conservation area, the two countries have announced.

The Mozambique Marine Protected Area, Reserva Marinha Parcial da Ponta do Ouro, covers 678 square kilometres and stretches three nautical miles out to sea. It includes the Inhaca and Portuguese islands and the Maputo Special Reserve.

Southern Mozambique is a vital nursery for commercially important fish populations, with fish, larvae and eggs carried in south-flowing currents into South Africa's iSimangaliso Park.

The newly protected area now extends along 300 kilometres (200 miles) of shoreline and pristine beaches of the continent's southeast coast - from Maputo Bay in Mozambique to Cape St. Lucia in South Africa, the southern boundary of the iSimangaliso Wetland Park.

Above is excerpt from: <http://www.ens-newswire.com/ens/oct2009/2009-10-29-01.asp>

New Marine Protected Area

Mozambique's Tourism Minister Fernando Sumbana said the park was an important step in protecting marine turtles that nest in high densities in Maputo Special Reserve, as well as other rare or endangered species, marine mammals and ecosystems.

Industrial fishing, fishing on coral reefs or with explosives, and driving of motorised vehicles on them are now banned. The long-term aim is to create Africa's first trans-boundary marine World Heritage Site and to this end Mozambique is applying for a listing with UNESCO.

Above is an excerpt from: <http://www.realafrica.co.uk/35/new-marine-protected-area.htm>

Africa's Ocean: Protected

There's big news out of Africa, where Mozambique and South Africa have jointly created the [largest marine protected area on the continent](#).

The designation protects 200 miles of coastline in the two nations, including [coral reefs](#), important nurseries for many fish species, nesting beaches for leatherback [sea turtles](#) and waters that support everything from whale sharks to schooling fishes.

The timing is good, as many of the animals in the waters of the new reserve are threatened both here and beyond the limits of the protected area. Whale sharks, like so many other shark species, are targeted for their fins to feed the demand of Asian markets for shark-fin soup.

Fortunately, as the video below points out, if locals in Mozambique can make more money taking tourists to swim with whale sharks than they can by catching them and selling their fins, there's hope for these gentle giants. The reserves are an important step in that direction.

See here for the video: http://montereybayaquarium.typepad.com/sea_notes/2010/02/africas-ocean-protected.html

(Read more below)

South Africa, Mozambique Create Africa's Largest Marine Protected Area

ST. LUCIA, South Africa, October 29, 2009 (ENS) - South Africa and its neighbor to the north, Mozambique, have joined forces to create Africa's largest marine protected area.

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The Mozambique Marine Protected Area, Reserva Marinha Parcial da Ponta do Ouro, covers 678 square kilometers and stretches three nautical miles out to sea. It includes the Inhaca and Portuguese islands and the Maputo Special Reserve.

Southern Mozambique is a vital nursery for commercially important fish populations, with fish, larvae and eggs carried in south-flowing currents into South Africa's iSimangaliso Park.

The newly protected area now extends along 300 kilometers (200 miles) of shoreline and pristine beaches of the continent's southeast coast - from Maputo Bay in Mozambique to Cape St. Lucia in South Africa, the southern boundary of the iSimangaliso Wetland Park.

"Protection of these will benefit both countries and iSimangaliso directly," said Andrew Zaloumis, chief executive officer of the iSimangaliso Wetland Park Authority and chairman of the Ponta do Oura/Kosi Bay Transfrontier Conservation Area Task Team.

The protected area also contains sensitive breeding grounds of leatherback and loggerhead turtles, currently threatened by human encroachment and uncontrolled harvesting of their eggs.



Giant marine turtle on the beach in iSimangaliso Wetland Park (Photo courtesy IWPA)

Mozambique Tourism Minister Fernando Sumbana said, "This was a vital step in protecting marine turtles that nest in high densities along the pristine beaches of the Maputo Special Reserve, other rare or endangered species, marine mammals and ecosystems."

Activities such as semi-industrial and industrial fishing, fishing on the coral reefs, fishing with explosives, driving of motorized vehicles on the beach and construction, other than approved developments, are now prohibited in the protected area.

The South African nonprofit Zululand Wildlife eForum said, "All parties are to be congratulated on this transfrontier initiative which is desperately needed along a heavy exploited coastline, threatened under the weight of beach tourism."

"The challenge will be for the Mozambicans to manage and enforce their multiple use areas where it is reported South African visitors are at times running amok along the beaches, dunes, surf zone and coral reefs," the group said. "This is a step in the right direction and their efforts should be adhered to by the unruly visitors."

(Continue below)

The long-term vision for the Marine Protected Area is to further protect it by creating Africa's first trans-boundary marine World Heritage Site.

Mozambique has placed its new Marine Protected Area on its tentative list, the first step towards formal application for listing by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee, whose technical team will evaluate the proposal.

The iSimangaliso Wetland Park was listed as South Africa's first World Heritage Site in December 1999. The name iSimangaliso means miracle and wonder, and the 332,000 hectare park encompasses three major lake systems and eight interlinking ecosystems.

It takes in most of South Africa's remaining swamp forests, Africa's largest estuarine system, 526 bird species and 25,000 year-old coastal dunes ♦ among the highest in the world.



Mozambique's Ponta do Ouro Marine Protected Area (Photo by [Reciprocum](#))

"iSimangaliso must be the only place on the globe where the oldest land mammal (the rhinoceros) and the world's biggest terrestrial mammal (the elephant) share an ecosystem with the world's oldest fish (the coelacanth) and the world's biggest marine mammal (the whale)," Nelson Mandela once said.

The Ponta do Ouro-Kosi Bay Marine Transfrontier Conservation Area is one of five initiatives under the Lubombo TFCA, established in March 2000 by the governments of South Africa, Swaziland and Mozambique.

The Lubombo TFCA initiatives aim to consolidate the unique biodiversity of the Maputaland Centre of Endemism and link the elephant populations of both countries.

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