



Madagascar's First Experimental Community-run Marine Protected Area

Andavadoaka, Madagascar



Partners

Blue Ventures Conservation, UK
(Int. NGO)

Institut Halieutique et des Sciences
Marines, Université de Toliara,
Madagascar (Research Institute)

Wildlife Conservation Society,
Madagascar Office (Int. NGO)

Cooperative Maritime du 22ième
Parallèle, Madagascar (Local
cooperative)

Copefrito, Madagascar
(International business)

Local Community

A partnership between the local community, international NGOs and research institutions aims to demonstrate the economic, conservation and fisheries benefits of Madagascar's first community-run Marine Protected Area (MPA).

The village of Andavadoaka, population 1,200, and its offshore islands represent some of the most remote and bio-diverse coral habitats in the western Indian Ocean. The poverty-stricken Vezo population is entirely dependent on marine resources for subsistence and family income.

Octopus constitutes the largest portion of marine life harvested in the region, caught through a fishing technique that is destructive to the underlying reef habitat. Changes in the international market have dramatically increased the value of octopus and the quantity harvested. Fisheries data and observations from fishermen now indicate that octopus is over-exploited.

The partnership is working with the Andavadoaka community to implement Madagascar's first experimental community-run Marine Protected Area, developing management solutions to help sustain the traditional artisanal fishing economy as well as minimise the environmental impacts of human activities on the region's marine and coastal environments.

In an effort to preserve the local octopus population and to increase the size (and value) of octopus caught in the region, an entire reef flat was declared an octopus no-take zone from November 2004 for a period of six months.

The closure followed meetings with local stakeholders and is supported by a local law introduced specifically to protect the no-take zone. Partners are now eagerly awaiting the opportunity to assess the ecological and economic impact of this rotational no-take zone.

The MPA project is also working to develop alternative sources of income, in particular ecotourism, aimed at generating revenue for the community and for the local management of the initiative.

It is hoped that the experiences of the project will contribute towards a model for the design and implementation of marine and coastal environmental management plans elsewhere in Madagascar and across similar regions.



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