



## NEW CHAMPIONS OF THE QUIRIMBAS ARCHIPELAGO HOPE SPOT CELEBRATE WITH PLANS TO EXPAND LOCAL MARINE PROTECTED AREA

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QUIRIMBAS ISLANDS, MOZAMBIQUE, JULY 22nd, 2021

The 34 islands of the Quirimbas Archipelago span nearly 300 kilometers of coastline from the Tanzania-Mozambique border in the north to Pemba Bay in the south. Among the archipelagos' greatest treasures are the deep submarine canyons that run between many of its islands where cool water upwellings support the highest coral species diversity documented outside of the Coral Triangle. The islands' unique blend of environmental and social drivers establishes it as one of the most diverse, productive, and intact marine ecosystems in the Western Indian Ocean, which has led to its recent recognition as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve and a Key Biodiversity Area.



*(c) Dr. Mark Ziembicki*

Dr. Sylvia Earle, Founder of Mission Blue, considers the Quirimbas Islands as a “shining beacon of hope on the African Coastline” and designated the archipelago as one of the first Mission Blue Hope Spots in 2013. The Quirimbas Archipelago now has new Hope Spot Champions – Dr. Tessa Hempson, Programme Manager and Principal Scientist, and Dr. Mark Ziembicki, Research Scientist from Oceans Without Borders (OWB).



*(c) Dr. Mark Ziembicki*

In partnership with Universidad Lúrio and Friends of Vamizi Trust, Oceans Without Borders is working to expand the Vamizi Marine Sanctuary, a community-driven marine protected area (MPA). The Vamizi Sanctuary was established as a joint collaboration between the local community and the Vamizi Island Lodge and serves as a model for privately funded conservation. It is a powerful example of the significant role that ecotourism can play in facilitating, supporting, and driving sustainable marine conservation and community development, as well as promoting education and capacity building for local communities and educational institutions.



*(c) Dr. Mark Ziembicki*

As a collaboration between luxury travel company [&Beyond](#) and Africa Foundation, a community development not-for-profit organization, OWB strives to catalyze positive change across &Beyond's marine footprint. In addition to their work to conduct and support research and monitoring to inform conservation management, expand protected areas in the Quirimbas, and build local capacity, as Hope Spot champions their goal is to support and highlight the work of inspiring individuals and organizations working to protect the area, sharing their stories, challenges, setbacks, and successes.



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Responsibility for managing the sanctuary lies with the local Community Fishers' Council, the Conselho Comunitário de Pesca (CCP). With the support of the lodge owners, OWB and Universidad Lúrio, these volunteer community members are responsible for sanctuary patrols and fisheries regulations enforcement.



*(c) Dr. Mark Ziembecki*

"These CCP teams in northern Quirimbas are a cause for hope in the region. They serve as a model and have broader lessons for Mozambique and other small-scale fisheries communities in East Africa", explains Dr. Mark Ziembecki, Research Scientist from Oceans Without Borders and Hope Spot Champion.

*(c) Dr. Mark Ziembecki*

Much of Mozambique is dependent on a healthy ocean and coastline. "The artisanal fishing community has been a huge part of the backbone in preserving the Quirimbas Islands" explains Dr. Tessa Hempson, Programme Manager and Principal Scientist of OWB and Hope Spot Champion. "They understand that healthy fish stocks and a balanced marine ecosystem are the keys to long-term, sustainable food sources."



*(c) Dr. Mark Ziembecki*

As with many marine ecosystems on Earth, the area faces threats from overfishing, both from international fishing vessels and migrant fishermen from other provinces in Mozambique and Tanzania and from deforestation of island forests due to growing island populations as people move from the mainland. This has caused escalating food insecurities that have caused increased pressure on marine and other natural resources.

*(c) Dr. Mark Ziembecki*

"With the current challenges facing islands and oceans, it is imperative that those directly reliant on local ecosystems for their livelihoods and food security can sustain themselves", explains Dr. Hempson. &Beyond Vamizi Island contributes to coastal communities by providing employment. Through collaboration, &Beyond Vamizi Island facilitates the community-led development of sustainable marine resource use practices as well as alternative revenue and food sources that reduce marine dependency. Having established an extensive base, OWB is consistently employing individuals to ensure the upliftment of island communities.

Dr. Isabel Marques da Silva, Director, Centro Investigacao de Ciencias Ambientale (CICA), Universidad Lúrio, Pemba, Mozambique says, "The Quirimbas Islands have the most remote beaches in East Africa which have helped preserve the region's highest underwater biodiversity, best turtle breeding beaches and wild and healthy populations of wildlife."



*(c) Dr. Mark Ziembicki*

The Quirimbas Archipelago Hope Spot extends from Pemba Bay in the south, north to the Rovuma River mouth on the Mozambique/Tanzania border and east to the Lazarus Banks offshore. It includes 34 islands and the coastal and littoral zone including estuaries and mangrove forests on the adjacent mainland. The unique underwater topography of the islands promotes high productivity with breeding aggregations of numerous species including hawksbill and green sea turtles, giant grouper, grey reef sharks, and giant trevally, the endangered Indian Ocean humpback dolphin, bumphead parrotfish, and Napoleon wrasse.

*(c) Dr. Mark Ziembicki*

Dr. Hempson describes the passion behind her and her partners' work, "Oceans truly have no borders. They are the ultimate commons, connected by the salty waters that flow around the globe – a fragile blue expanse that connects us all, and on which we are all intimately dependent. The Quirimbas Islands Hope Spot embodies this connectivity and vitality. Teeming with life and located at the nexus of major ocean currents it is a critical source area for replenishing reefs up and down the African coast."

Dive into the interactive [StoryMap](#) hosted on *ESRI*!



*(c) Dr. Mark Ziembicki*

#### [About Oceans Without Borders](#)

Oceans Without Borders is a collaboration between &Beyond – a luxury travel company with its roots in conservation and experiential guest experiences, and Africa Foundation – a non-profit organization dedicated to community-led development and conservation of Africa's natural environments. Bringing together broad expertise, and working intimately with coastal and island communities, Oceans Without Borders is dedicated to marine conservation and community development at sites where &Beyond and Africa Foundation operate, including in Africa, South Asia and South America.

#### [About &Beyond](#)

&Beyond designs personalized high-end tours in 13 countries in Africa, five in Asia and four in South America, offering discerning travelers a rare and exclusive experience of the world as it should be. We own and operate 29 extraordinary lodges and camps in iconic safari, scenic and island destinations in Africa and South America. This enables us to positively impact more than 9 million acres of wildlife land and 3 000 kilometers of coastline. Established in 1991, &Beyond strives to leave our world a better place than we found it through our care of the land, wildlife and people, and the delivery of extraordinary guest experiences.

#### [About Africa Foundation](#)

Africa Foundation was founded in 1992 to uplift, up-skill and empower people living in key rural communities close to conservation areas. We believe that for true development to take place, we need to nurture, protect and preserve not only our natural environment and wildlife but our people, our cultures and our customs. By partnering with communities, governments and the private sector, Africa Foundation supports the development of sustainable projects that empower communities and contribute to conserving Africa's land, seas and wildlife.

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