



Zavora is home to a healthy manta ray population. One of our goals is to understand the structure of this population and to analyze divers' interaction with these beautiful giants.



Reef Monitoring is done once per month to observe changes on the reef over the coming years; we are now creating a baseline to help monitor eventual changes.

## Notes from the editor

This is the first Newsletter of Zavora Marine Lab. From now on new issues will come on trimester basis. On this first one, we give a general explanation of our projects and goals. The newsletter is only to keep our friends, contributors and people interested informed. If you have any question, suggestions or request please do not heisted in send it by email to [yara@responsibledive.org](mailto:yara@responsibledive.org)

## Zavora Marine Lab.

Zavora Marine Lab is located in Inhambane Province, Mozambique. Our aim is to protect, educate and understand marine life. For those that have never heard about us, I would like to introduce our projects and tell you a bit of our story.

Zavora Marine Lab (ZML) started in late 2009, about a year after Mozdivers began to operate in Zavora beach. Zavora Marine Lab. was created in partnership between Mozdivers, Zavora Lodge, Iemanjá, and Oceans Research to assist with the sustainable development of diving tourism in the region, as well as to increase knowledge and raise awareness about the fabulous marine life of Zavora.

## What we do?

1. Manta Rays – photo ID and divers' impact
2. Nudibranch diversity & ecology
3. Fish assessment
4. Environmental education
5. Reef monitoring
6. Klipfontein assessment

We are also collaborating with the following projects:

1. Manta ray distribution using acoustic tags (Marine Megafauna Foundation).
2. Sea Turtle Monitoring (MCI)
3. Whale shark photo ID (Marine Megafauna Foundation)

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## Nudibranch research

The Nudibranch project is the first of its kind in Mozambican waters and has already showed very interesting findings, including a few species that have not been described. We have identified 80 species of nudibranchs in Zavora Bay. Until last month the nudibranch survey was mainly looking at nudibranch diversity through focal searching. Twenty to twenty five nudibranchs were observed in one unique dive, i.e 1 nudibranch each 2-3 minutes! Now that the most abundant species have been collected we are starting the spatial and temporal study. We are proud to have such a big abundance of nudibranchs, making it possible to investigate nudibranch distribution using belt transects! If you have dived in Mozambique and photographed nudibranchs you can help out by sending your pictures to [yara@responsibledive.org](mailto:yara@responsibledive.org)

## Manta Ray Photo ID

Manta rays are seen in Zavora throughout the whole year. Each ray has individual marks on its belly, which make it possible to recognize individuals. We have identified over 70 individuals. If you have been diving in Zavora and you have some pictures that can contribute to our research, we would appreciate if you send them to [yara@responsibledive.org](mailto:yara@responsibledive.org)

## Fish Assessment

We did a baseline study on fish communities. Roving diver technique was used during our first months here. We found over 210 species of fish, including 27 species that have not yet been registered to Mozambique.

## Klipfontein

The Klipfontein is a wreck that lies at 53 meters. For many, how it sank is still a mystery. The wreck is not only a historic lab, but also offers the unique opportunity to study manta rays at depth and is a critical habitat for the Giant Grouper, which is often observed swimming or hiding on the wreck during the winter.



## Fighting for life! The story of a seal lost in Zavora.

On 17<sup>th</sup> June a seal was observed in Zavora. This unusual event started with a lot of confusion but had a happy ending. The seal was first sighted by a couple of tourists, who advised the Zavora Lodge's manager. He requested Yara to go there and look after the animal, in case someone might want to kill it. Seals are completely unknown to the local population. From their point of view, the seal was an easy protein source. After much conversation, several questions were clarified; however, more and more people were arriving and some still wanted to eat the animal. As a last resort Yara ran in the direction of the animal and scared it away. Minutes later, to our relief, the Director of Provincial Tourism Ministry and the local police arrived to explain the protection status of this animal. The seal was then observed from the diving boat at the launching area about 20 minutes later. Now, we can only hope that it made it the whole way south safely.

**“THE RESULTS OF THE PROGRAMS IMPLEMENTED  
HERE WILL PROVE USEFUL FOR FUTURE  
DEVELOPMENTS IN OTHER 'UNTOUCHED' AREAS  
OF THE WORLD.” (CHRISTINE CHAN)**

## Beyond Blue

The magazine Beyond Blue published in its 8<sup>th</sup> issue a report about the Klipfontein and the research potential on this massive wreck. To read it go to [www.beyondbluemag.com](http://www.beyondbluemag.com)

## Zavora Lodge Talks

We give free talks weekly about Zavora Marine Life. Everybody is welcome to join us. During the talk important concepts on conservation, and interesting facts and curiosities about Zavora Marine Life are presented.

## Activities at the School

Each week a new activity is designed to involve kids in marine conservation. This month they participated in the manta ray game. Through this they learnt the importance of the mantas to the region, its biology and conservation status. They also had the shark competition where the girls bite the boys to show that they knew more about sharks than the boys. Despite the deception from the boys, they all enjoyed the shark paint and hopefully the common misconception that sharks are only useful dead has been changed, at least for some of these children. Last week we had the turtle day where the kids listened to a story of a turtle that was born in Zavora 30 years ago and came back to lay its eggs. The story presented information to the kids, and they proved their understanding during the sea-turtle corner game. The day finished with smiles, clay turtles and a typical turtle African dance!



## Primary School

We are working weekly at the local Primary School to raise environmental awareness. Our project involves activities, movies and fieldwork.

## Fieldwork

In June, 48 Mozambican students participated in field activities on Zavora Beach. Basic concepts of marine ecology and conservation of the dunes were discussed. The kids also had the opportunity to visit Mozdivers dive center and talk with the Mozambican dive master and technical diver Manuel to learn more about diving tourism and the importance of iconic species such as mantas, sharks and sea turtles for divers and the environment.

## EcoCineMar

At the school, more than 320 children watched "Finding Nemo". After the movie they participated in a talk "Nemo from Zavora": Our differences, our oceans, our marine life. Other movies showed during these last months were: Recycle from Alma Association and Zavora Underwater from Amanha Ltda.

**"THE BIGGEST THREAT FOR THE SHARKS IS THE HUMAN"**

*(JUACIRA, 10 YEARS OLD, ZAVORA)*



## We would like to thank...

...All interns that have been here. Your contributions are fundamental to the success of this program. Thank you! David Delaney (March), Adam J. Smark and Seteven (May), Stephanus Rossouw (June), Amy O'Brien and Jesse Alpert (July), Erin McFadden and Christine Chan (August).

...Sponsors:

Project Aware, Idea Wild, Zavora Lodge and Mozdivers

...All other people that direct or indirectly contributed for the success of our research

If you would also like to help, please contact Yara Tibirica ([yara@responsibledive.org](mailto:yara@responsibledive.org)) or visit [www.oceans-research.com](http://www.oceans-research.com) or our blog <http://www.zavora.blogspot.com> for more information.

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