



## Valorization of Indigenous Knowledge as a Contribution to Ecotourism



## **Executive Summary**

Valorization of indigenous knowledge and practice for the sustainable development of communities through ecotourism, is a complex process. This project looks at the strategies to address the problem of integration of indigenous knowledge in activities of birds watching ecotourism, as a means of enabling active participation and increasing the earnings of the local communities whilst conserving the biodiversity and safeguarding cultural landscapes and traditions.

## **Introduction**

The Ibo district, is a small administrative district of Cabo Delgado province, in northern Mozambique. It is composed of three islands: Ibo, Matemo and Quirimba. Vila do Ibo is its principal town, located on the Ibo Island. Despite the measures introduced for the involvement and participation of citizens in decentralized administrative local structures in Mozambique, local governance has not significantly included private-public partnership in management of biodiversity, natural resources and ecotourism. That is, local communities do not benefit from opportunities offered by decentralization policies. This contributes to increased community vulnerability and disadvantage. In an attempt to alleviate this situation, initiatives to boost self-participation and self-involvement should be implemented. These activities can bring about the establishment of interventive attitudes towards a better management of biodiversity, including birds slaughter and hunting, and awareness in relation to excessive exploitation of resources, especially fishing resources which are main food for most of seabirds. In spite of high levels of illiteracy within the community, there is a strong local or indigenous knowledge about the nature and development. However, this knowledge is not reflected in the local strategic development programs, resulting in poor integration of communities in the local governance. Being Ibo district part of Quirimba National Park (PNQ), this research will also update the PNQ bird's database and integrate communication and information technology approaches to deliver digital database of birds and a sustainable tool for birds' management in the area. This will be complemented by the mapping of bird confluence sites in order to introduce monitoring programs for resident and migratory birds in the area.

## Approaches and Results

The data collection process found around 200 different bird species in Ibo district, distributed within the three of its islands. Most of birds have their corresponding names in local language, meaning and cultural sense. Below, are examples of some of the found birds with corresponding names, status and importance or cultural sense.




	<p><b>Nomes:</b>  <b>Português:</b> Caranguejeiro.  <b>Científico:</b> <i>Dromas ardeola</i>.  <b>Kimwani:</b> Kipira.  <b>Habitat:</b> Especialmente nos mangais com abundancia de Caranguejos e estuários.  <b>Estado:</b> Migrante costeiro.  <b>Importância Local:</b> Nenhuma.</p>
	<p><b>Nomes:</b>  <b>Português:</b> maçarico-das-rochas  <b>Científico:</b> <i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>  <b>Kimwani:</b> Kididi  <b>Habitat:</b> Zonas Húmidas e ao longo da costa  <b>Estado:</b> Migrante paleártico comum, principalmente em Agosto e Abril.  <b>Importância Local:</b> Indicador do enchimento da maré. Quando a maré começa a encher, ele canta muito alto.</p>
	<p><b>Nomes:</b>  <b>Português:</b> Garça-branca-grande  <b>Científico:</b> <i>Ardea alba</i>  <b>Kimwani:</b> Kipira.  <b>Habitat:</b> Aquático (marinho, pântanos, barragens rios de fluxo lento e estuário).  <b>Estado:</b> Comum.  <b>Importância Local:</b> Usado na alimentação.</p>

Figure 1: Sample of birds observed in data collection process, with their characteristics.

The list of birds with a description of their characteristics given above is part of the brochure being produced to help tour guides perform their job better, benefit tourist operators and visiting tourists. This brochure will help and improve local communities' awareness on the need to preserve and management of birds' biodiversity. Training of local tourist guides on birds watching and other relevant issues was conducted. The training module included materials such as: identification of birds, rules of tourist escorting, etc. Also, a digital/computerized bird's database has been created. The process of gathering requirements for the design of the tool for managing the bird's database is currently underway. In order to identify a tourist operator to collaborate and host the bird management system, a meeting with project team and all interested parties (see Figure 2 below), was held and their decision on this is awaited.



Figure 2: Meeting with Ibo tour operators.

To help evaluate the performance of trained tourist guides, a questionnaire has been created and tourists served by each tour guide, have to feel in the questionnaire and leave their opinions. This activity is under tour operator's responsibility.

## **Conclusion**

Valorization of indigenous knowledge and culture can be done in several ways. Thus, production of brochure with these knowledges is one of possible approaches.

Improving the income of local communities through their involvement in ecotourism activities can reduce community vulnerability and make them more aware of the need to protect and better manage birds' biodiversity, whilst the local community members can continue traditional resource use in a manner that is sustainable to them.

## **Implications and Recommendations**

Agreement between local communities and tourist operators as to control the level of slaughtering and hunting of some bird's species used as food stock.

Each tour operator will have a list of tour guides names and contacts in order to hire them in case they receive tourists.

There is a need to provide a beginners English course for tourist guides, as most of them have poor language skills.