



Zoological Society London

Our Sea Our Life – Securing climate-resilience in coastal communities and marine biodiversity in Mozambique



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The Zoological Society of London (ZSL) is a world-leading conservation organisation and scientific institution that aims to inspire, inform and empower people to stop wild animals going extinct, so we can create a world where wildlife and people thrive. ZSL's global marine conservation programme aims to protect the last ocean wilderness areas and the overlooked marine species and habitats under threat of extinction.



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Northern Mozambique has East Africa's highest recorded levels of marine biodiversity. Cabo Delgado province, where ZSL operates, is crucial for threatened species like sharks and the Endangered Napoleon wrasse. Cabo Delgado's mangrove forests and coral reefs also act as fish nurseries, and help protect coastal communities from erosion and extreme weather. The province's marine biodiversity is essential for its people, who are among the poorest in Mozambique – more than half live below the poverty line, and 80% rely on fishing for food and income. However, unsustainable fishing (driven by poverty), natural gas exploitation, and climate change are degrading Cabo Delgado's vital ecosystems. That's leading to declining fish catches, and leaving coastal communities more vulnerable to devastation by natural disasters.

Since 2013, [ZSL has been working with communities and local partners in Mozambique](#) to set up protected marine areas, co-managed by government and local communities. Alongside this, we support local residents (particularly women, who are often the worst hit by poverty) to diversify their livelihoods and income, creating aquaculture and horticulture livelihood opportunities. We also help them establish Village Savings and Loan Associations, providing access to financial services to meet basic needs and invest in sustainable livelihoods. Finally, we support community-led mangrove restoration to help safeguard the communities and marine life that rely on mangrove forests.

We've already seen this model replicate to cover larger areas of protection, and its potential to recover fish stocks and increase wellbeing for communities. With support from the Levine Family Foundation, we scaled up our work, protecting 20km² of coral reef, restoring 100ha of mangrove habitat, and helping 2,500 vulnerable people.

Learn more about [Vellmari Association](#)