


# OCEAN

## GEOGRAPHIC

*Almanac of Our Seas*

[www.OGSociety.org](http://www.OGSociety.org)

ISSUE 1:1/2007  
THE INAUGURAL EDITION



**SMOKE IN THE SKY,  
FIRE IN THE SEA**

Australia \$13.95, Singapore \$13.95, Malaysia RM20, USA \$11.95, Brazil \$11.95, UK £6.95, Europe €6, Hong Kong \$50, Others US\$21

CLIMATE CHANGE • FEAST OF THE PREDATORS • TO BE OR NOT TO BE A HAMLET • VIEWS OF THE OCEAN



Chumbe Island bungalows.

# CHUMBE ISLAND: a template for ECOTOURISM

DUANE SILVERSTEIN



Seacology, a proud partner of Ocean Geographic, is the world's premier non-governmental organization with the sole purpose of preserving the ecosystems and cultures of islands throughout the globe. Seacology accomplishes its goals by offering the island villagers, tangible benefits that they request, such as a school, community center or fresh water delivery system, in exchange for establishing a marine or terrestrial reserve.

THESE low cost, win-win projects have not only improved the quality of life for the islanders, but have also preserved over 1,700,000 acres of threatened coral reef and rainforest ecosystems. In instances where there are no indigenous people living on an island, Seacology searches for other ways to help protect the local environment. Such is the case with Chumbe Island, located in the Indian Ocean, eight kilometers southwest of Zanzibar off the coast of Tanzania.

In 1994 the Zanzibar government officially established the Chumbe Reef Sanctuary, creating the first marine park in Tanzania. The marine park receives no financial support from the government and relies solely on revenue generated through a small eco-resort. This not only makes Chumbe the only privately managed marine park off the African coast, but also one of the world's most successful ecotourism projects.

As with many marine protected areas, Chumbe did not have demarcation buoys indicating the boundaries of the park. This made it all too easy for poaching fishermen to plead ignorance when caught within the marine sanctuary's borders. What Chumbe needed was an effective border marking system that was visible at all times and in all weather. The distinctly visible buoys in such a system would make it much easier for the local rangers to enforce the park's no fishing regulations. Seacology provided the funding to install several state of the art solar-powered buoys.

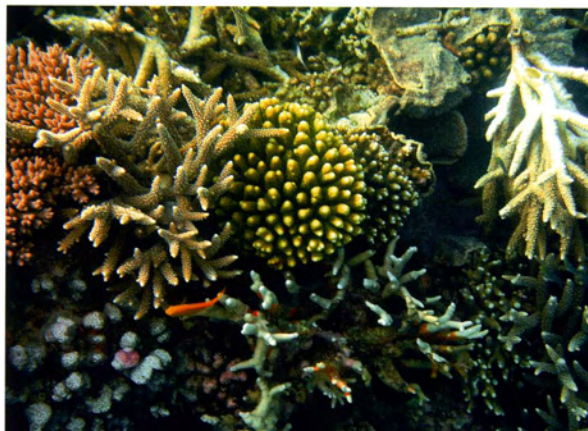
A delegation of Seacology board members and donors visited Chumbe recently to experience and inspect the progress of the project first hand. The sight of the seven beautiful African-style

bungalows, each with solar powered lighting, solar heated water and high-tech composting toilets, won the delegation's admiration unanimously. Next was the total absence of air-conditioners. The already impressed Seacology delegation learnt that when it gets hot (and it does!) guests are able to lower the thatched front wall of the second story bedroom so that an unobstructed ocean breeze flows into the room. Again, it was unanimous that this was a real, true blue eco-resort and not just some touted show-piece.

After the satisfied checking of the Seacology-funded mooring buoys the delegation snorkeled the Chumbe Reef Sanctuary; it's the best way to experience the reefs. It was breathtaking! After diving among the world's best-known reefs for the past 10 years, the Chumbe Reef Sanctuary in our books, stands now as one of the healthiest coral reef ecosystem. Too often these days, one comes away from a dive depressed by the dead and dying coral. In Chumbe, however, the variety and health of the reefs is amazing, as is the variety of fish life. In the words of Seacology supporter Donny Closson, "The Chumbe Reef Sanctuary is a spectacular site and requires ongoing protection."

The new Seacology-funded mooring buoys now clearly mark the marine protected area in all weather and light conditions. This also enables disabled boats to tie off before their hulls damage the irreplaceable beauty of the reefs." Seacology is thrilled to be part of the ongoing protection of these rich and beautiful reefs off this very unusual island.

For more information about Seacology visit [www.seacology.org](http://www.seacology.org).  
For more information about Chumbe visit [www.chumbeisland.com](http://www.chumbeisland.com).  
*Duane Silverstein is the executive director of Seacology.*



Chumbe Reef Sanctuary.

*Photos courtesy of Donny Closson*