

Annual Report 2017



marinecultures.org

Aquaculture & Marine Conservation

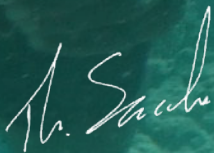
Messages of the president

Our concentrated effort in the sponge farms has paid off. By the end of 2017, we were able to show that our sponge farming concept is sound and scalable. The seasonally occurring cyanobacteria that damage the sponges, can be kept under control with little extra effort – a valuable insight for further development. More importantly, all 10 sponge farms are now operating completely sustainable, meaning that no further supply of sponges from the wild is necessary.

The important step for 2018 will be the establishment of a locally led sponge farming organisation. Ideally, such an organisation will autonomously be operating and developing the sponge farming business within 3-5 years. We are currently looking for long-term and reliable funding partners for this phase.

Because of insufficient funds, the planned extended educational program had to be put on hold for 2017. We are eager to resume our awareness activities once the funding situation has improved.

Thomas Sacchi, president marinecultures.org



... and the managing director

2017 was a year of change for marinecultures.org. The challenging octopus closed season project brought us significant exposure and credibility among the communities on Zanzibar's east coast.

Even though the pilot failed due to strong opposition and weak enforcement, we managed to catalyse the first steps of a locally managed marine resource management. Nearly everybody in the villages discussed the challenges intensely. With the former opposition group now being part of the organising committee I am confident that in 2018 the octopus closed season will be a success.

Other highlights are the sustained media coverage and an intensified cooperation with the Ministry of Natural Resources, Livestock and Fisheries. And finally, 3 years of dedicated fundraising allowed us to buy a bigger boat including two new engines. marinecultures.org is bound for new shores!

Christian Vaterlaus, managing director marinecultures.org



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Ambition

We strive to preserve the biodiversity of the ocean's fauna, the increase in marine stocks and the development of jobs through aquaculture. At the same time, we strive to show the local population that there is a direct relationship between poverty and the overuse of the ocean. We supply help for self-help.

Sustainable management improves food security and makes economic sense.

Through the example of its activities on the island of Zanzibar, marinecultures.org shows that in the long run active marine conservation is economically more successful than marine resource overuse.




Sponge farming development

A new sponge farm requires 2500-3000 seedlings. Therefore, in 2017 we more than doubled space and stock in the nursery farm. The larger nursery allows us to launch 6-8 independent small-scale businesses per year, benefitting 60-80 people. Currently, a new trainee is starting every two months while a senior trainee completes her training with a certificate and a farm, ready to continue as an independent entrepreneur.

The local market is developed gradually to ensure that the increasing production finds its buyers. However, the demand for sustainably cultivated sponges in Zanzibar is high and new shops must join the waiting list until the farmers can guarantee a continuous supply.

We are continuously expanding and improving the training. During the probation time a fresh intern is first trained by one of the independent farmers. This approach takes pressure off our local trainer, gives trainees the opportunity to get early on-the-job experience and benefits sponge farmers with an extra pair of hands. For 2018 we plan to train and hire a second local trainer and to create a teaching manual in Kiswahili. A manual is essential for transferring training knowledge along with autonomous operations and development of the sponge farming business to local people.

An underwater photograph of a coral reef. The scene is dominated by large, dark, porous rock structures covered in various types of coral, including branching and brain corals. Several fish are visible, including a prominent yellow and black striped fish in the center, and several blue and white striped fish. The water is clear and blue, with sunlight filtering through from above.

A collaboration with a large hotel group is in the works to setup a second coral farm on Zanzibar's west coast.

Our activities with mooring- and marker buoys to protect corals from anchor damages continue. For the first time in Zanzibar's history representatives from various scuba diving operators, NGOs and scientists have gathered for a coral reef monitoring workshop in Jambiani. The group will regularly monitor the reefs surrounding Zanzibar. Being the eyes and ears underwater, the group aims to be an alert network to spot emerging threats to local reefs and to provide important information for decision making in fisheries, tourism and reforestation.

Coral reef management

Our coral 'reforestation' project had a terrific start. We currently cultivate and reforest between 300 and 400 corals every month with focus on species that have shown good resistance against high temperatures. We successfully planted artificial reefs using previously placed reef balls and reforested a first part of our damaged 'house reef'.

In 2018 we will initiate reforestation events involving recreational divers to evaluate the logistic needs for bigger reforestation actions. In the cold season, we plan to conduct coral 'planting' events close to the shore to involve fishers from the community and to cut scuba dive time.

Marine resource management

The octopus closed season pilot could not be realised due to strong opposition. With all neighbouring villages on the southern east coast of Zanzibar participating, the project became too big and enforcement was not taken serious enough.

The opposition formed in Jambiani comprising a group of about one hundred fishers who were not part of the groups involved in the initial planning. It took us some time to fully understand the difficulties in play between the different groups. We were able to mediate and to convince the opponents to join the preparations for a closure in 2018. This time we are targeting a partial closure to ensure that some areas remain open to octopus catchment during the closure period. We are currently working towards strengthening the capacities of the local fisher committees and the new steering board to prepare everybody for their duties.

Our efforts were not without avail: Everybody in the village now agrees that closed seasons are needed to guarantee a healthy octopus stock and that an octopus management is for the benefit of all. An experienced catch monitoring team is ready to collect scientific data. Local and national authorities have expressed their full support and the necessary by-laws are being developed. All octopus buyers and traders have been identified and were involved in the process which includes analysis of octopus sales covering all local restaurants and hotels. Finally, consumers (especially tourists) will be informed when and why octopus should not be eaten.

Finance review (CHF)	2015	2016	2017
Income			
Members	4'386	5'784	6'220
Donations	13'111	22'639	35'712
Grants	70'990	19'500	37'961
Other Income	2'605	7'899	4'036
Special Reserves	-22'500	0	
In-house efforts	0	81'800	66'904
Total Income	68'593	117'623	150'833
Expenditure			
Projects *	67'115	136'872	134'990
Governance **	3'716	7'062	6'953
Total Expenditure	70'831	143'934	141'943
In-/Decrease Income (Ref. previous year)	+40.1%	+103.2%	-1.4%
Percentage of governance	5.2%	4.9%	4.9%

* incl. 90% of the managing director's salary and social costs

** incl. 10% of the managing director's salary and social costs

Financial statements and independent auditor's report 2017
 >> http://www.marinecultures.org/en/about_us/reporting/

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