



the sanctuary

Santuário Bravio de Vilanculos Lda



welcome to the sanctuary

The Sanctuary is a 30 000 ha conservation protected area incorporating both land and sea, situated on and around the São Sebastião peninsula along the Indian Ocean coastline of Mozambique. The Sanctuary forms the southernmost portion of the Bazaruto Archipelago, 20km south east across the bay from Vilanculos.

The Sanctuary is the product of pioneering vision by The Mozambican Government who declared it a Fully Protected Area under private management in 2003. Since then a progressive symbiotic alliance between Government, homeowners and the local community has led to The Sanctuary being recognised as a leading example of successful cooperative development.

The reserve incorporates a rich mosaic of wetlands, mangrove swamps, coral reefs, small islands, tidal mud flats, salt marshes, fresh water lakes, estuaries, and tree and shrub forests alongside coastal dunes, tree savannah and Miombo woodlands. It is an area where some of the richest biodiversity in Mozambique is found and ranks amongst the top biodiversity “hotspots” in Africa. Our three core functions are conservation, community upliftment and eco-tourism development.

Only 54 residential (maximum 12 beds) and 3 commercial sites (120 total beds) have been approved for development on The Sanctuary. This to ensure extremely low density development in order to keep the lightest possible footprint and to maximise exclusivity of The Sanctuary as a tourist destination.

The Sanctuary’s operations are managed by a dedicated team based on site at The Sanctuary and overseen by a Board of Directors appointed by the company’s shareholders.





climate

It is hot year-round at The Sanctuary, with a typical sub-tropical climate.

SUMMER (OCTOBER – MARCH)

Beautiful sunny days with the occasional quick afternoon thunderstorm to clear the air. This is peak tourist season time and there are many visitors to the area. It is also the rainy season and there may be one or two days of light continuous rain.

Temperatures generally range from 28°C – 33°C with humidity between 70% and 95%.

WINTER (APRIL – SEPTEMBER)

Cooler and dryer with average daytime temperatures of 22°C – 27°C with humidity much lower than in the summer. Frequent mist and dew in the mornings.

CYCLONE SEASON (JANUARY TO MARCH)

Semi-continuous wind and exceptionally high spring tides.

WIND

Prevailing South Easterly, switching to North Easterly.

WATER TEMPERATURE

Average of 25°C, with 30°C reached in summer.

RAIN

Average rainfall is 750 mm per annum, of which most occurs between December and March.



marine environment

The immediate coast on the easternmost shore of The Sanctuary is a marine area of seabed upwelling where nutrients brought to the surface provide a rich plankton “soup”. This attracts large numbers of manta rays and whale sharks, as well as the massive humpback whale, now showing remarkable recovery after being mercilessly hunted to near extinction.

Jellyfish, feeding on plankton, attract the critically endangered Leatherback turtle. Past research has shown that male leatherbacks stay in this area while females feed here but lay eggs near the Mozambique/South African border. However, recent sightings have confirmed that leatherback turtles actually nest on The Sanctuary, joining the loggerhead and green turtles that come ashore to lay eggs each summer and the Olive Ridley and hawksbill turtles that feed in The Sanctuary’s waters.

The elusive and critically endangered dugong finds shelter in The Sanctuary’s tidal areas and may be seen around Bangué Island and further north towards Paradise Island. Schools of dolphins are a regular sighting in The Sanctuary’s waters, regularly parading up and down directly in front of the beaches at high tide.

To further protect these increasingly rare species, and to promote fish and invertebrate breeding, The Sanctuary has implemented Marine Protected Areas, also known as no-fishing zones, with essential cooperation and support from the local fishing communities. Within these zones a wide variety of fish species breed in abundance. Sensitive areas such as seagrass beds are recovering well with spinoff benefits to dugongs, fish, invertebrates and bird numbers.

The intention of The Sanctuary is to provide a network of protected marine areas / breeding grounds adequate to significantly enhance fish and invertebrate stocks and, in so doing, to produce ever increasing numbers of stocks to emigrate from our waters to the ocean.



mangroves

Mangroves are tropical trees which grow in swamps or shallow salt water.

Seven species of Mangrove are found within The Sanctuary, more than found in all of South Africa. They form discrete communities in the sheltered areas of The Sanctuary and, while some are eroding, others are stable or expanding and have been for many years. Mangrove areas tend to be dynamic, especially in sandy areas, but all are extremely important in terms of successful breeding of fish and invertebrates. Mangroves also provide nesting and protection for many species of water birds.

The tidal range on The Sanctuary is often over four meters over spring tide, compared to the norm in South Africa of under 1.5 metres. This creates an extensive area that is inundated and then dried twice per day; an inhospitable environment for most vegetation other than mangroves which thrive in these conditions and outcompete all other trees in these areas. Mangroves populate what would otherwise be barren areas, filling them with magnificent, evergreen cover and creating areas abundant in vast amounts of nutrition, while also offering plentiful protection to allow many fish and invertebrate species to spawn at high tides.



flora

Visitors to The Sanctuary are astounded by the remarkable variety of trees that flourish in the sub-tropical climate.

This is despite the drastic impact of historical slash and burn agriculture activities. In recent years much of The Sanctuary's vegetation appears to have returned to a more natural state. There are many vegetation types present including some open grasslands, large areas of Msasa trees and extensive wetland and open lake areas. In order to guide and promote their return to a more natural state, interventions such as alien plant control, bush encroachment work and fire management have been undertaken. Areas like these also require a suite of suitable animals to fill the niches and exert some grazing and browsing pressure.

fauna

Over the past decade The Sanctuary has introduced large species such as Livingston's eland, sable, blue wildebeest, kudu, nyala, bushbuck, giraffe, zebra and waterbuck. Some of these species have done remarkably well, with over 100 wildebeest and eland roaming The Sanctuary currently. Species like red and grey duiker, suni, steenbok and bush pigs that were present in low numbers are showing pleasing population growth. Artificial water points attract game resulting in excellent game viewing areas in the vicinity of the water holes. Animal numbers, condition and herd composition are monitored by routine patrols and camera traps that provide ongoing insight into the species present and their activity patterns. Eland and giraffe, for example, can regularly be seen among the mangroves where they seem to lick salt off the leaves. Challenges remain, however, as retaining ever increasing game numbers on a peninsula with a greater than four metre tidal range is challenging. Species like zebra and eland often wander across to Linene Island and adjacent sand spits at low tide, requiring monitoring to ensure their safety. Poaching, although currently at low levels, is an ever present threat that requires constant vigilance by game scouts on patrol.



a bird's perspective

Wetlands form the principal habitat of water birds, and The Sanctuary is fortunate in having an array of wetland types forming one of its most outstanding features.

The diversity of these in such a small area is significant and as such migratory species have evolved in using it as a flyway to exploit this rich resource. The Bazaruto Archipelago is one such vital (East African) flyway through which vast numbers of migratory birds move from their breeding to non-breeding grounds, and the estuary serves as a resting and feeding spot. It also provides wintering grounds for some species of Palearctic migrants.

Flagship species to look out for are Grey Plover, Bar-tailed Godwit, Common Greenshank, Ruddy Turnstone, Sanderling, Little Stint, Curlew Sandpiper, Ruff, Eurasian Oystercatcher, Lesser and Greater Sand Plover and the charismatic Crab Plover. Some of these have been recorded in their thousands during the migratory season and is vital data for future conservation management of our coastline. Annual wader studies conducted at The Sanctuary since 2012 have begun to highlight this criticality, particularly given the massive estuary mouth and associated sand spits; Pelican Bay as well as the entire Palmerhina sand spit and tract of mangrove-beach along the western side. The return of these water birds in numbers to the shoreline off Mazarette and Linene is a direct outcome of the creation of Marine Protected Areas in these locations.

Among the Tern species Sandwich, Lesser Crested, Swift, Little and the handsome Caspian Tern should all be looked out for. Other charismatic water-bird species of conservation importance are Greater Flamingo, Terek Sandpiper, Yellow-billed Stork, Woolly-necked Stork, African Openbill, Western Osprey and Mangrove Kingfisher, most of which are can be seen year-round on The Sanctuary.

Several breeding colonies of Olive Bee-eaters – the second largest breeding occurrence in Africa, can be located near the office and the Southern-banded Snake Eagle a near-threatened raptor, can often be spotted perched in a large tree or flying along the estuary or eastern Ocean View road. The endangered Plain-backed Sunbird can regularly be heard in the tangled moist dune forest on the eastern Ocean View road. A small group of Pink-backed Pelicans can almost always be seen in the outermost mangroves at Pelican Bay and is the only pelican species to roost in trees. The Msasa dominated woodland of the Sanctuary is fairly homogenous and thus species poor, but once in the more mature Miombo woodland, Dune Forest, community open ground and the magnificent freshwater wetlands, interesting and 'icon' species can be seen.

The Sanctuary's comprehensive Bird Check List is available from the office. Please report your unusual sightings or records to sanctuarymanager@mzsanctuary.com or christine@everard.co.za.



artificial reefs

Artificial reefs created in deeper waters within the Marine Protected Areas of The Sanctuary have shown remarkably rapid increases in fish numbers as well as impressive widening of species observed. Large female fish, critically important to breeding, find protection among the artificial reefs where they can reproduce undisturbed.

The fish attracted to the artificial reefs vary from reef to reef, depending on the age, size and structure of the reef. At least 78 different species of fish have been identified at one reef alone and up to five brindle bass, weighing around 200 kilograms each, have been seen at one time making the artificial reefs of The Sanctuary one of the few places in the world where such fish can be seen during an “easy” snorkel.

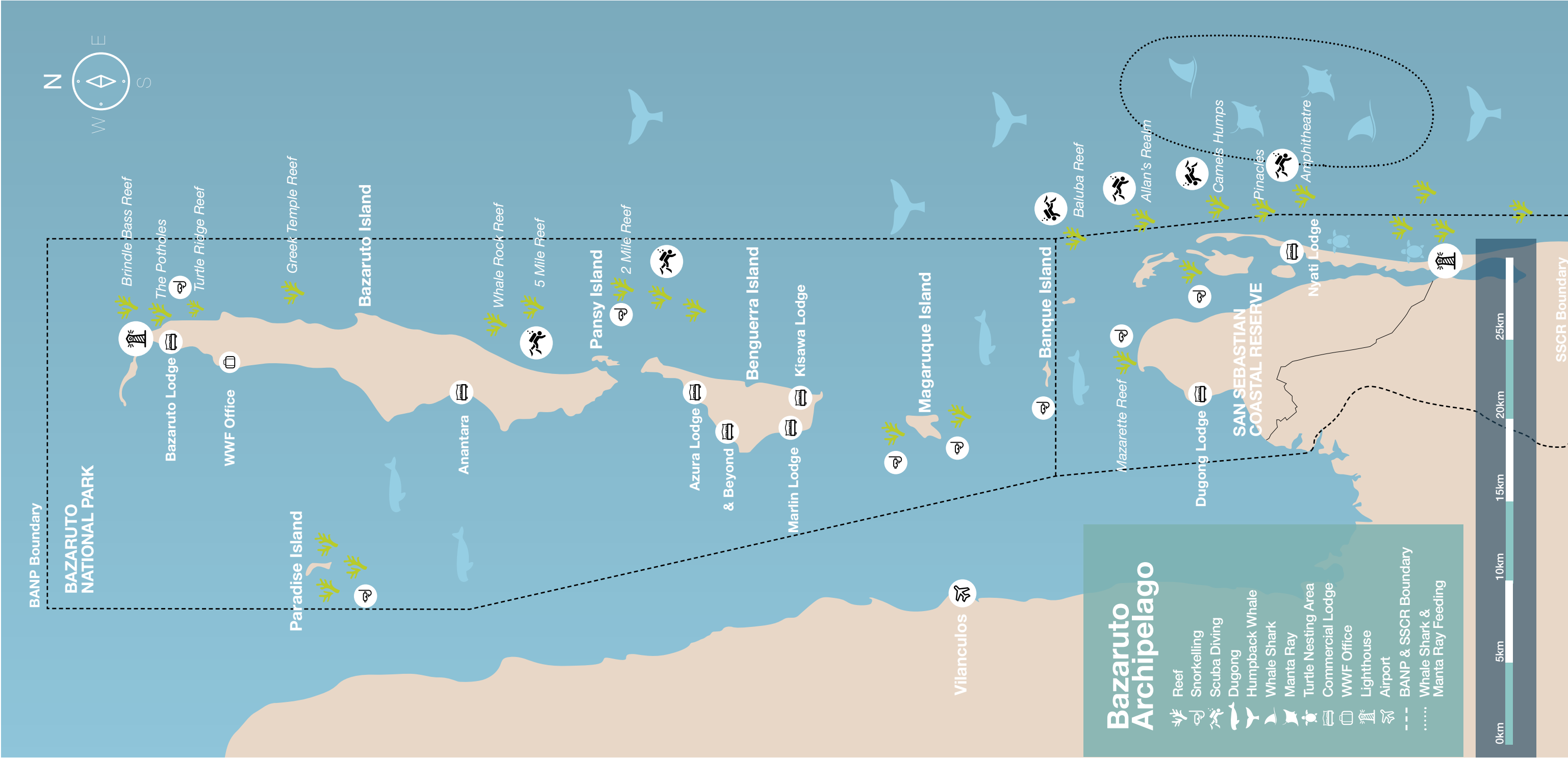
The protection of these areas has created spectacular snorkelling attractions with easy access for visitors. The artificial reef off Mazarette and jetties along The Sanctuary’s coastline are all excellent snorkelling areas notable for their safety and good visibility.

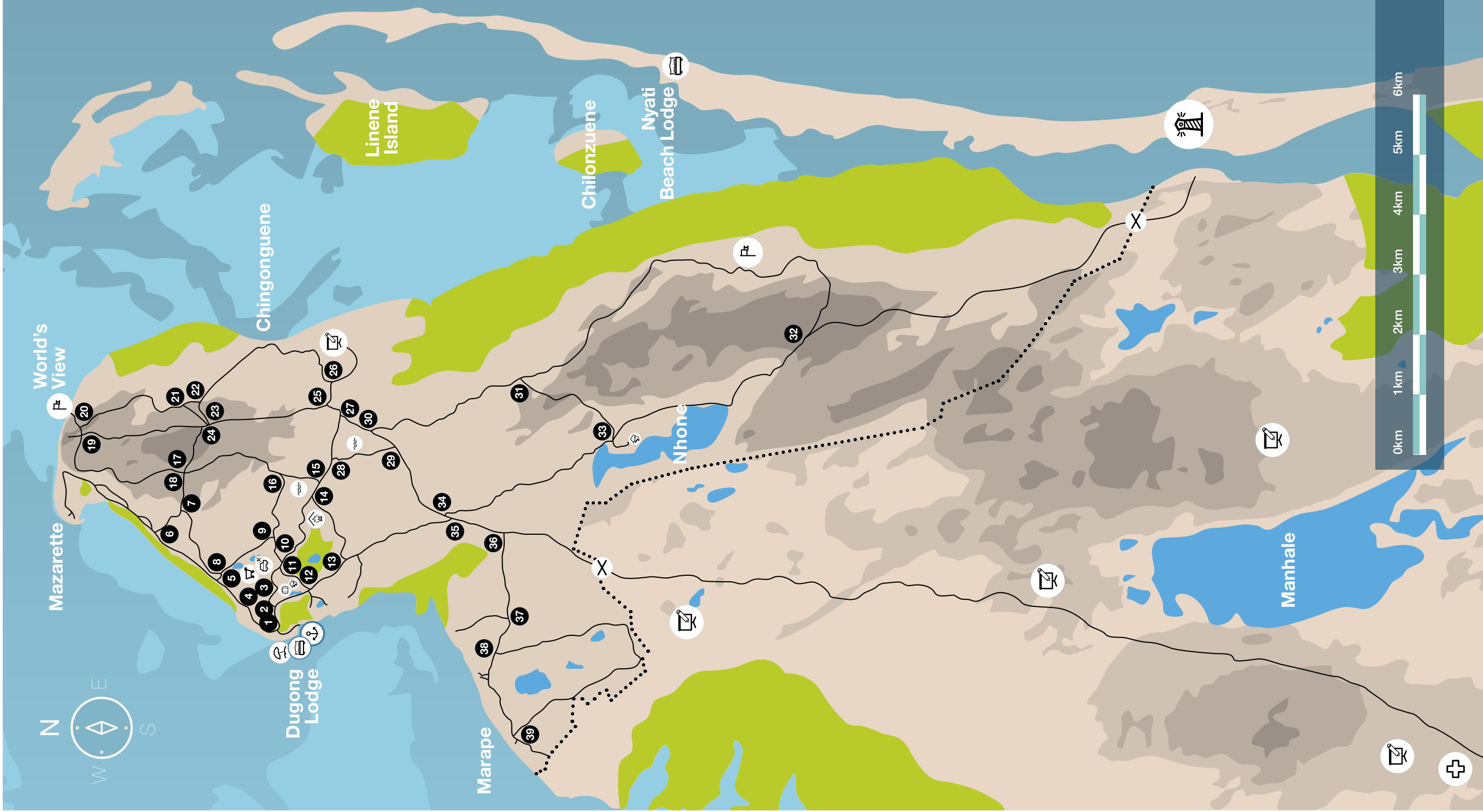
natural reefs

Snorkelling and scuba diving opportunities abound in the areas adjacent to The Sanctuary, with natural reefs along The Sanctuary’s eastern shoreline reputed to be among the best diving spots in the archipelago which divers from other areas visit regularly.

With the continental shelf nearby this coastline is considered as one of the best diving areas in Mozambique. There are many opportunities to dive up to 40m among caves and overhangs with an array of fish and other sea life to rival the best underwater experiences in the world.

Deep sea diving and snorkelling outfitters operating out of Vilanculos can be engaged by private arrangement to guide diving and snorkelling excursions if private facilities are unavailable.





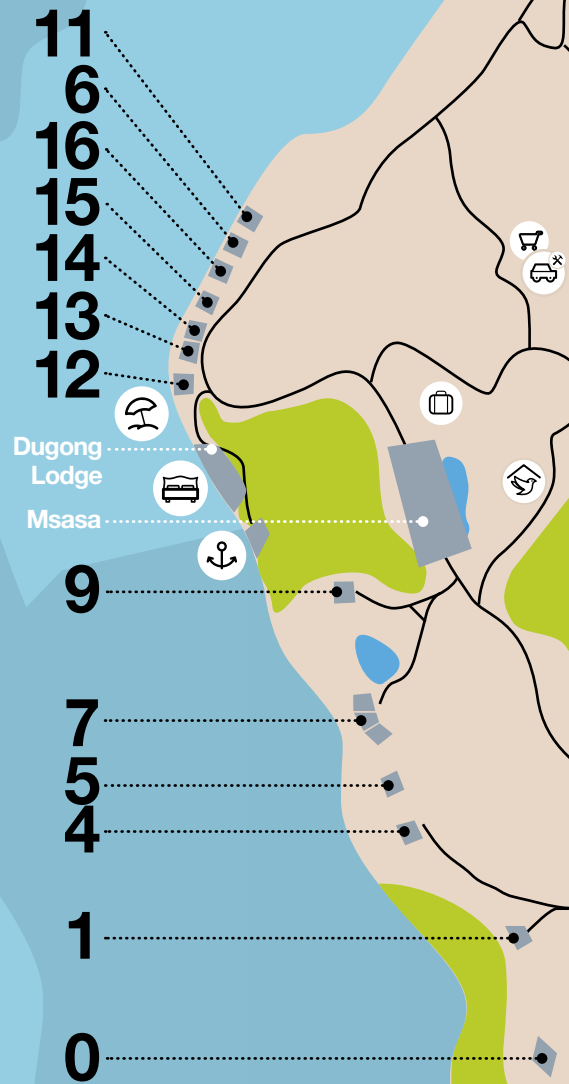
The Sanctuary

- Waterhole
- Gate
- Viewpoint
- Boma
- Bird Hide
- Office
- Bonita Shop

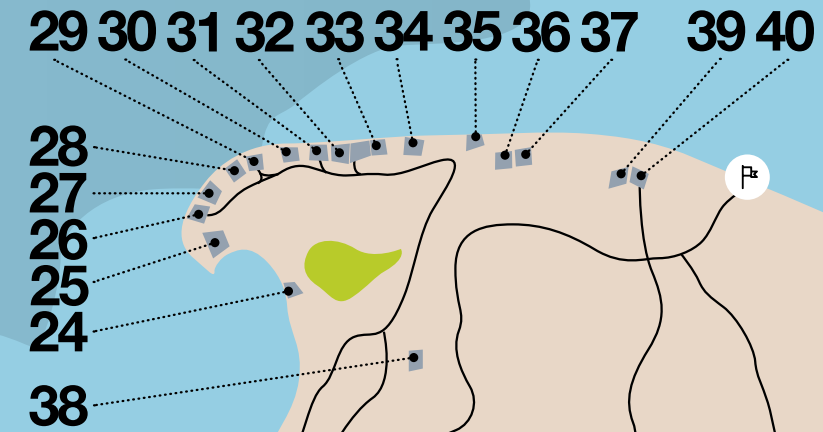
- Workshop
- Beach Arrival Point
- Commercial Lodge
- Marina
- Community School
- Lighthouse
- Clinic

- Road Intersections
- Roads
- Fence
- Freshwater Lakes
- Ocean
- Mangrove & Wetland

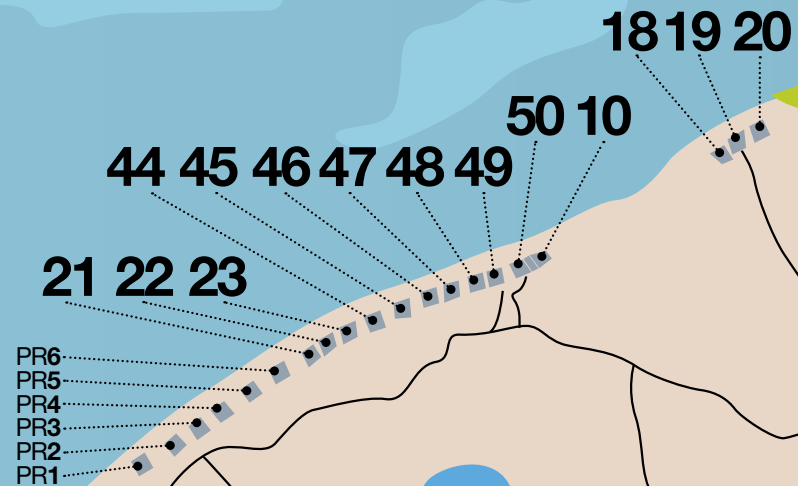
Dugong



Mazarette



Marape



Linene Island



Chilonzuene

The Sanctuary development map

The Sanctuary has four distinct development nodes with Linene Island and Chilonzuene Island comprising one unified node. Each node has unique features and aspects of appeal, with the Mazarette node being the most developed to date.

Dedicated water systems supply fresh water to each node while water to Linene Island is pumped for nearly 3km through a pipeline underneath the seabed.

The mainland nodes are all integrated into the road infrastructure. Access roads were designed in such a way that they also serve as firebreaks to protect each node from runaway fires.



fishing

Fishing of any kind is prohibited within the Bazaruto National Park and the Marine Protected Areas off the immediate shoreline of The Sanctuary, as demarcated by the buoys. The cooperation of all stakeholders in this regard, including home owners, visitors and local fishermen, is critically important in the preservation and rejuvenation of these areas.

DEEP-SEA FISHING

The waters off the shores of The Sanctuary are reputed to be amongst the best deep sea fishing waters on the East coast of Africa and are regularly cited in various media for the abundance and variety of game fish species encountered here. Numerous trophy species including various types of marlin, sailfish and swordfish are commonly caught off The Sanctuary.

Fishing waters are easily accessible and hospitable. A catch and release policy is widely adhered to with daily catch limits.

Deep sea and spear fishing outfitters operating out of Vilanculos can be engaged by private arrangement to guide fishing excursions if private facilities are unavailable.

FLY FISHING & SPINNING

Salt water fly fishing and spinning is permitted in the main channels beyond the limits of the Marine Protected Areas.

A fishing license is required for any fishing activity (obtainable from The Sanctuary office).

WATERSPORTS

The Sanctuary boasts excellent conditions for sailing and kiteboarding with wide expanses of water at high tide, deep channels and moderate winds.

Glassy calm, open expanses of water offer perfect conditions for water-skiing, wakeboarding and tubing as well as more tranquil activities such as canoeing and SUP-boarding.



private homes

At the time of print, private homes on 17 sites have been developed on The Sanctuary. A building code is applied to all projects and plans must be approved by an Aesthetics and Building Committee followed by Government approval before building can proceed. Homes must be single storey, roofed with jekka, and adhere to certain aesthetic requirements in keeping with the style agreed. Every precaution must be taken to ensure that building works make the lightest possible impact on the surrounding fauna and flora, and strict rules govern practical considerations such as noise and pollution emissions and refuse storage and removal.

Syndicated ownership is recommended with an ideal number of 5 owners and a maximum complement of 11 owners.

Homes are private property and you are asked to not access homes without invitation.

lodges

There are 2 commercial lodges on The Sanctuary namely Dugong Beach Lodge (28 beds) and Nyati Beach Lodge (32 beds).



our community

Since inception, a sound relationship has been built and nurtured between The Sanctuary management, homeowners, commercial lodges and our local community. Through co-management and ongoing interaction, community programs, support and job creation, the livelihood of the local community improves year on year and we continue to strengthen our relationship which is uniquely symbiotic.

Our neighboring communities, collectively known as Queueene, consist of several distinct zones with chiefs representing each one. Regular meetings are held between The Sanctuary's management and all chiefs resulting in true co-management of our resources. The meetings deal with matters affecting the conservation area and communities such as equal employment representing all the zones amongst other.

Agriculture and fishing are the main means of support. Swift agriculture is practiced and typical crops include cassava, maize, wheat, beans and peanuts. Coastal, and some migratory inland communities, have been fishing for centuries from which trade and barter between the farming and fishing communities has created a fairly balanced diet that continues today.

A clinic has been built by The Sanctuary and staffed by Government to provide much needed medical care. Malaria prevention and treatment is a high priority, especially because children are most affected. The Department of Health and The Sanctuary regularly spray to control mosquito numbers.

Five primary schools with nearly 2,000 students fall inside The Sanctuary's main area of responsibility. In addition to the government prescribed curriculum, The Sanctuary provides additional input and material on conservation and tourism to the local schools.



use of the sanctuary

Each visitor experiences and enjoys The Sanctuary in different ways. For some, paddling a canoe silently among the mangroves at high tide is a highlight. For others, the excitement of deep sea fishing, or whale watching, or swimming with manta rays and whale sharks off the sand spits represents the pinnacle of their experience. Some visitors prioritise birding while others enjoy the bush experience more. Whatever a visitor takes from The Sanctuary, and you may only take your photographs and memories with you, you are encouraged to leave only footprints behind.

rules

The Sanctuary is a tranquil, peaceful place -

- Please respect the environment and your neighbours by not making noise early in the morning, when leaving your lodge by boat, or by playing loud music at night or on game drives.
- No skiing or tubing directly in front of properties or inside the marine protected areas / zones demarcated by buoys.
- Special care must be taken when approaching artificial reefs by boat.
- No fishing of any kind is permitted inside the Marine Protected Areas.
- Jet ski's and hovercrafts are not allowed.
- 4-stroke boat engines are preferred due to lower noise and fuel emissions.
- Fires are only allowed in designated areas. Fires may not be made on the beach and firewood may not be cut from vegetation.
- Direct purchase of goods or resources from community members is not allowed. The Sanctuary shop sources from them wherever possible and makes these items available to visitors.
- Maximum tyre pressure is 1.6 to reduce erosion.
- Maximum speed limit is 25km for the safety of animals and guests.

Please note that The Sanctuary team includes security guards, game and marine scouts who are specifically tasked with the care and protection of the Sanctuary's resources, its visitors and its values. Please respect their role as guardians.



precautions

- While the incidence of malaria at The Sanctuary is low the use of prophylaxis is recommended as a precautionary measure, especially during the summer months of September to April. At the very least during the cooler months, mosquito spray should be applied regularly and long-sleeves and long trousers worn at night. Mosquito nets are essential.
- Malaria is prevalent in Vilanculos and surrounds. Apply mosquito spray liberally when visiting Vilanculos or passing through.
- Sand fleas tend to feast on particular victims. They breed in the lala palms along the beachfront and are particularly active during wet weather. Regular spraying of household garden areas and decks helps to break their breeding cycle and is strongly recommended.
- Razor clam shells nestled in the mud flats in tidal areas can inflict nasty cuts to unsuspecting waders– water shoes are strongly recommended.
- The tide comes in extremely fast and unsuspecting walkers may be overtaken by a rising tide. Plan your walks carefully and avoid trying to walk between the sand spits on a rising tide. Similarly the tide goes out extremely fast so boat trips should be planned carefully with this in mind to avoid being stranded.
- Life jackets are to be worn by all boaters when negotiating the Washing Machine en route out to sea and in rough water. It is strongly advised that boat radios are in working order and a cellphone in a waterproof Pelican box tethered to the boat accompanies all boat rides.
- Ensure that adequate drinking water accompanies all excursions.
- Appropriate sunscreen is essential for land and especially sea safaris.
- It is strongly advised that you tell someone where you are going when leaving your site and how long you intend to be away.
- Blue bottles and jellyfish are common. It is recommended that antihistamine medication is taken along on excursions.
- Tap water is drinkable but bottled or filtered water is preferable as a precaution.
- When venturing out by vehicle ensure that you have a spare tyre, necessary tools, a working jack and a solid item to anchor the jack to so that it doesn't sink into the sand.
- Vervet monkeys are very common and regularly access houses to steal food. Please do not feed them at any time.
- While security on The Sanctuary is good it is advisable to lock valuables, money and passports away when not in use. Belongings should not be left on boats or on the beach at night.
- The local fishermen make a lot of noise in the early mornings when launching their dhows. Do not be alarmed by this. Should you encounter a local fisherman fishing in a marine protected area please alert The Sanctuary's management as soon as possible on the Emergency number. Do not confront the fishermen yourself as transgressions need to be handled with particular protocols.
- Please keep The Sanctuary's Emergency number stored in your phone.



amenities & services

THE SANCTUARY OFFICE

The Sanctuary office is the central port of call for all matters.

Office hours:

Monday to Friday 07h00 – 12h00 and 13h00 – 16h00

Saturday 08h00 – 12h00

THE SANCTUARY SHOP

The shop is located next to the boat yard. The shop stocks a basic selection of dry groceries, toiletries, household cleaning products and drinks. Firewood, charcoal, firelighters, bait, fuel and basic hardware can also be purchased.

Shop hours:

Monday to Friday 07h00 – 12h00 and 14h00 – 17h00

Saturday By arrangement

A large variety of general and fresh food items and drinks sourced from Vilanculos can be ordered in advance of your arrival through The Sanctuary offices. Stocks can be replenished as needed. Please allow up to 48 hours for delivery.

SANCTUARY STAFF

The Sanctuary prides itself on an average local employment rate of 97% over the past decade. Temporary or permanent staff such as boat skippers, chefs and cleaners can be arranged through The Sanctuary office.

HOME MANAGEMENT SERVICE

The Sanctuary office offers a comprehensive home management service which strives to meet all home management needs including human resource management and training, sourcing of general supplies and hardware, supply of fuel and general upkeep and housekeeping supervision of homes. A building maintenance and repair service is also available.

BOAT LAUNCHING, STORAGE AND REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE FACILITIES

Centrally situated, lockable boat sheds are available to purchase. The Sanctuary office facilitates the launching and storage of boats and will arrange for maintenance and repairs to be carried out.

LOGISTICAL SUPPORT

Given the remote location of The Sanctuary logistics tend to be complicated. The Sanctuary office will facilitate the receipt of cross-border goods as well as carriage of goods from Vilanculos to The Sanctuary on local dhows. Please note that goods received are not insured in Vilanculos storage or when on water.

CELL PHONE RECEPTION

There is 3G cell phone reception at The Sanctuary.



contact details

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