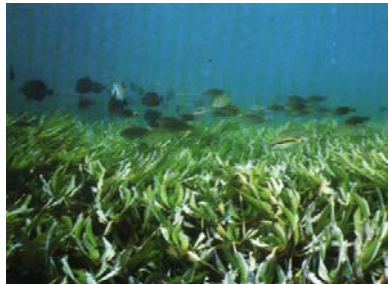


7th International Seagrass Biology Workshop



ISBW7 **First Announcement**

7th International Seagrass Biology Workshop, Zanzibar, Tanzania – September, 2006

Please return the following information to the workshop secretariat:

- I wish to receive forthcoming announcement
- I wish to register (and to receive final announcement)

Zanzibar, Tanzania – September, 2006

Organizing committee

- Dr. Matern Mtolera, Institute of Marine Sciences, University of Dar es Salaam
- Dr. Alfonse Dubi, Institute of Marine Sciences, University of Dar es Salaam
- Dr. Thomas Lyimo, Department of Botany, University of Dar es Salaam
- Prof. Sven Beer, Department of Plant Sciences, Tel Aviv University
- Prof. Mats Bjork, Department of Botany, Stockholm University
- Ms. Jacqueline Uku, Kenya Marine Fisheries Research Institute
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7th International Seagrass Biology Workshop

Scope and objective:

Seagrasses are submersed monocotyledons that have adapted to marine life (probably 70-140 million years ago). They are the only higher plants that live, and complete their full life history, entirely submerged in the sea. Seagrasses are found worldwide in tropical, sub-tropic and temperate coastal areas. Seagrasses have little direct commercial value; rather, their importance is in ecological aspects such as (1) providing food to fish, turtles and dugongs, and sheltering sessile invertebrates and epiphytic micro- and macro-algae, (2) improving the marine productivity by “pumping” nutrients trapped in the sea bed and sheltering nitrogen-fixing organisms capable of fertilising the water column with limiting nutrients, (3) stabilising shorelines and providing a nursery ground for fish, including species of commercial and recreational value. However, the provision of these vital services is threatened by seagrass degradation attributed to, among others, unsustainable use of coastal resources, pressures from the growing coastal population, land based pollution, inadequacy of information and research inputs into resource management and constraints in technical development of alternative livelihoods, and resource harvesting technologies. Acquisition of appropriate scientific and technological know-how is therefore crucial to arrest the situation.

This workshop brings together researchers, scientist and managers from around the world in a congenial and friendly atmosphere to discuss a wide range of seagrass topics with the view to sustainably manage this vital resource.

The symposium is hosted by the Institute of Marine Sciences of the University of Dar es Salaam, located along the Mizingani road in Stone Town (on the West Coast of Zanzibar). Participants will have a unique opportunity to visit tropical Indian Ocean seagrass environments in Zanzibar, Tanzania. Zanzibar Islands (Unguja and Pemba; total area 2,400 km²) is home to about 1 million people, whose livelihood depend mainly on fishing, family scale farming (including seaweed farming), and an upcoming tourist industry. After a long history of being a major

trading post between the Far East and the West (mainly of spices, but also of slaves), Zanzibar gained its independence through a revolution in January 1964, and three months later was united with Tanganyika to form the country Tanzania, which it is part of today. Being an island that has kept its own character and life style, Zanzibar offers a genuine and friendly atmosphere for a meeting such as the ISBW. The meeting is planned for September 2006 (the exact dates will be set soon). The venue for the meeting shall be Zanzibar Beach Resort, 3 kilometers from the Zanzibar Airport. The venue shall be 6 kilometers from the stone town and the closest seagrass site is a walking distance away.

According to previous WSA decisions, both scientists and graduate students from the region should be encouraged to attend the meeting. Also, while oral presentations from experienced professionals will be preferred, students are encouraged to give poster presentations on their specific research topics. The meeting will be 5 days long. In order to encourage interactions, the field trip to special seagrass sites will be on the 2nd day of the meeting. The meeting will be followed by an optional 2-day on hands training course for students of the region.

While the various scientific themes for the meeting will be decided upon based on the abstracts and presentation titles submitted, potential themes could include: Ecology, Adaptations to Various Environments, Cellular Biology, Monitoring and Mapping, Impact Assessments and Management. The topics and presenters of plenary talks will also be decided upon based on the titles submitted by the participants. There will be no parallel sessions, and ample time will be given for discussions.