1. Conserving the most intact mangroves of Western Madagascar’s Manambolo Tsiribihina: Lesson learned after 10 years of WWF’s intervention

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The Tsiribihina-Manambolo Seascape spans the coastal areas of western Madagascar, encompassing an estimated 50,000 ha of mangroves and hosts an extraordinary amount of biodiversity and fisheries resources. While mangrove forests in this area are historically vast, rates of loss are higher than the national average, which was 1.85% between 1990 and 2010. The main driver of mangrove loss in this area is conversion of mangrove to rice fields due to limited availability of arable land and livelihood opportunities, informal systems of land tenure, and a lack of governance. Climate change also threatens mangrove resources and is likely to affect the productivity and conservation values. The ten years of WWF’s intervention in this area have demonstrated how positive conservation impacts can improve community livelihoods, providing a concrete model for scaling up community-based mangrove management throughout the broader landscape. In a decade, WWF interventions are focused in identifying and prioritizing adaptive management solutions based upon the challenges and local context through an approach based primarily on improving mangrove management, introducing and enhancing community-based conservation, and promoting approaches that direct financial benefits to vulnerable communities. In spite of Madagascar’s five-year political crisis between 2010 and 2014, important inroads and significant progress has been made by WWF, its partners, and local communities to secure community management rights over mangrove areas by transferring management rights to local communities. As an example of our concrete results: 24,000 ha of mangrove forests are currently being sustainable managed, nearly 250 ha of degraded mangrove area have been restored through work with local communities, and a rapid assessment confirmed that new crab fishing techniques increased annual average harvest three-fold and daily revenues by 50 to 75 percent. We always believe that addressing the basic needs of communities is critical to building their ability to manage these resources effectively.