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Well, it’ll be news to nobody that things did not return to normal in 2021. Much of our global fieldwork has remained on pause, due to the pandemic and associated challenges, but it was still a huge year for MMF programs. It’s been a real pleasure to collate all these successes in this annual overview.

In Mozambique, we started the year with the announcement that manta rays and whale sharks had been granted legislative protection, and ended the year with Inhambane Seascape becoming a global ‘Hope Spot’ for ocean wildlife – technically announced in January 2022, but don’t kill our buzz. There were lots more achievements in between, too, including the creation of Inhambane’s first locally-managed marine area following years of consultations by our hard-working conservation team.

Across the world, the Florida Manta Program continues to go from strength to strength, scientific capacity-building work in Indonesia has been supercharged by recruiting great students and interns, and lockdown boredom for some of our scientific team through 2020 led to lots of new discoveries being published in 2021, along with a new textbook on whale sharks. We’re now working with many more species, including multiple sharks, rays, and even marlin, continuing our core mission of protecting the world’s most endangered ocean wildlife.

The past year hasn’t been a typical one, but we’ve learned plenty about building resilience, in both our programs and funding. We’re immensely grateful to the long-term supporters that have supported MMF’s work throughout. We also welcome, and thank, the many people and organizations who have joined our mission through 2021. And we wi-five our friends and collaborators working in international marine conservation around the world.

Here’s to healthy oceans, and a busy year ahead!

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FROM OUR CO-FOUNDERS

Dr. Simon Pierce & Dr. Andrea Marshall

“..."
Mozambique’s Inhambane Seascape was declared a Mission Blue global ‘Hope Spot’ for the ocean, based on MMF’s research and conservation work (announced in Jan ‘22).
MMF Founder, Dr. Simon Pierce, co-authored the definitive book on the world’s biggest fish: *Whale Sharks: Biology, Ecology, and Conservation*, bringing together top researchers to collate their knowledge of these gentle giants.
SAVING PELAGIC SHARKS & RAYS

MMF Founder, Dr. Andrea Marshall, co-authored a Nature paper documenting a global 71% decline in pelagic sharks and rays since 1970 – and how we can help them recover.
PROTECTING GALAPAGOS

MMF’s collaborative research informed the expansion of the Galapagos Marine Reserve protected area, and a swimway was created through to Cocos Island off Costa Rica to protect whale sharks and other endangered ocean wildlife.

2021 MAJOR IMPACT #4
INSPIRING OCEAN GUARDIANS

MMF built a new marine environmental education center in Tofo, Mozambique, as a permanent hub for teaching, outreach and training activities.

2021 MAJOR IMPACT #5
MMF was founded in 2009 by renowned marine scientists Dr. Andrea Marshall and Dr. Simon Pierce to further their mission to save the world’s ocean giants from extinction. Since then, many others have joined the team. The organization has expanded to worldwide research, education, and outreach on marine megafauna conservation.

Our team has conducted pioneering work on sharks and rays, particularly manta rays and whale sharks, which has helped these species move towards global protection. These iconic animals are also excellent flagships for the marine environment.

Our work has broad benefits for the other lesser-known endangered species that share their habitats and the creation and management of protected areas to ensure their survival.

Our work focuses on strategic locations with large or otherwise important populations – such as breeding areas – of threatened marine species. We work to develop effective conservation solutions that minimize human threats to marine life, we work with communities to create sustainable livelihoods so they benefit from a healthy marine environment, and we build national science capacity to help ensure long-lasting monitoring and management.
38 community leaders have been trained to promote education and awareness of marine conservation solutions.

283 hectares of ocean now included in Barra’s new Locally Managed Marine Area, through a permanent net-fishing ban and a 6-month trial closure of other fisheries.

Co-Management Committee was formed for community-based fisheries in Tofo/Barra/Rocha region, and legal recognition achieved for the Barra Fisheries Council.

120 households with improved livelihoods overall, and 18 alternative careers created through business assistance and apprenticeship programs to reduce dependance on fishing.

MOZAMBIQUE CONSERVATION STRATEGY developed for the proposed marine protected area expansion of the Pomene Special Reserve.

EXPANDING MARINE PROTECTION

FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

IMPROVED LIVELIHOODS

OCEAN AMBASSADORS

MOZAMBIQUE CONSERVATION
MMF RESEARCHERS, LED BY DR. ANDREA MARSHALL (SHOWN HERE), HAVE STARTED A MAJOR NEW RESEARCH PROJECT ON CRITICALLY ENDANGERED RHINO RAYS IN MOZAMBIQUE.
MMF RESEARCHERS PUBLISHED THE FIRST STUDY ON ZEBRA SHARKS IN AFRICA IN 2021, AND ARE NOW TRACKING THEIR MOVEMENTS ALONG THE COAST.
MOZAMBIQUE RESEARCH

NEW RESEARCH STATIONS
Two new satellite field stations in place along the Inhambane coast, and a new dedicated research vessel in Vilanculos.

MANTA SPYCAMS
600 hrs of footage from our remote underwater cameras installed on manta ray cleaning stations.

TRACKING MOVEMENTS
Tags deployed on 5 shark and ray species along the Inhambane coast (see overleaf).

REEF MONITORING
205 Remote Underwater Video surveys on 31 different reefs, and 69 eDNA samples collected.

RESEARCH TRAINING
Three new Mozambican divers trained and qualified for scientific surveys.
EXPANDED THE MOZAMBIQUE TRACKING NETWORK

WE TAGGED

10 NEW ACOUSTIC RECEIVERS

2 ZEBRA SHARKS
5 BULL SHARKS
6 RHINO RAYS
4 SMALL EYE STINGRAYS

VILANKULOS
BAZARUTO SEASCAPE
POMENE
MORRUMBENE
TOFO
ZAVORA

0 50 km
LUKAS MUELLER AND TEAM
IMPLANTING A 10-YR ACOUSTIC
TRACKING TAG IN A MOZAMBIкан
BULL SHARK.

Photo by Uli Kunz
THE POORLY-KNOWN SMALLEYE STINGRAY IS NOW THE FOCUS OF A NEW RESEARCH STUDY BY MMF IN MOZAMBIQUE, INCLUDING THE FIRST ACOUSTIC AND SATELLITE-LINKED TAGS TO EVER BE DEPLOYED ON THIS UNIQUE SEMI-PELAGIC SPECIES.
I am part of the Coral Reef Club program because it provides learning opportunities for young people like me, helping us to think out of the box to solve problems and actively participate in decision-making in our communities. I am passionate about the program because it is very innovative and we learn how to conserve the environment and, at the same time, we receive vocational training. This really motivates me to stay in the program.

Palmira, Coral Reef Club Graduate
THE CORAL REEF CLUB DECORATING MMF’S NEW MARINE EDUCATION CENTER IN TOFO.
A GRADUATING CLASS OF SWIMMERS FROM MMF’S PROGRAM IN TOFO, MOZAMBIQUE.
NEW SHARKS valued at US$1.5 million during the 3-month whale shark season, providing a strong economic rationale for species and habitat protection.

423 NEW SHARKS identified from 2015 to 2021 near Nosy Be in NW Madagascar.

SHARK ECOTOURISM valued at US$1.5 million during the 3-month whale shark season, providing a strong economic rationale for species and habitat protection.

NOSY BE
FOUNDER OF THE MADAGASCAR WHALE SHARK PROJECT, STELLA DIAMANT, LASER-MEASURING A TAGGED SHARK OFF NOSY BE.
collected from Tanzanian whale sharks show they are closely-related to Red Sea whale sharks.

identified from 2012 to 2021 at Mafia Island, which is a small, highly-resident, but stable population.
KENYA HIGHLIGHTS

BLACK MARLIN
tracked up to 11,944 km over 5.5 months.

STRIPED MARLIN
tracked up to 9,187 km over 6 months.

2 SCIENTIFIC PAPERS PUBLISHED

PHOTO BY HENLEY SPIERS
MANTA RAYS now identified by MMF Indonesia from four areas through the country.

in manta and turtle feeding areas around Nusa Penida, for the 6th consecutive year of monitoring.

FULBRIGHT SCHOLAR

MMF researcher Janis Argeswara (left) is off to the US for her MSc degree on manta reproduction, thanks to the American Indonesian Exchange Foundation.

INDONESIAN RESEARCHERS trained in marine science techniques from Udayana University, Padjajaran University and Bandung Institute of Technology.

128 LASER MEASURED manta rays in Nusa Penida.

6 PLASTIC SURVEYS in manta and turtle feeding areas around Nusa Penida, for the 6th consecutive year of monitoring.

INDONESIA HIGHLIGHTS
MMF researchers have begun a new sea turtle photo-identification project at Nusa Penida, near Bali.
MMF SENIOR SCIENTIST, DR. ELITZA GERMANOV, PUBLISHED TWO NEW SCIENTIFIC STUDIES ON THE INSIDIOUS THREAT OF PLASTIC POLLUTION.
MANTA RAYS now identified by the MMF Florida team.

24 AERIAL SURVEYS of manta rays around the Florida coastline.

2,000 VIEWS of our conservation videos aimed at boaters, fishers, and divers.

10 TAGGED MANTA RAYS with acoustic and satellite tags, in collaboration with NOAA.

7 LESSON PLANS designed by the Florida Manta Project to educate the next generation of ocean conservationists.
FOUNDER OF THE FLORIDA MANTA PROJECT, JESSICA PATE FROM MMF, HAS DISCOVERED THAT THE FLORIDA COAST IS A NURSERY AREA FOR YOUNG MANTA RAYS.

Rhincodon typus (Green Status assessment). Pierce SJ, Grace MK, & G Araujo. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.


Economic value and public perceptions of whale shark tourism in Nosy Be, Madagascar. Ziegler J, Diamant S, Pierce SJ, Bennett R, and J Kuska. Tourism in Marine Environments.


WHALE SHARKS: BIOLOGY, ECOLOGY, & CONSERVATION.
Dove ADM and SJ Pierce (eds). CRC Press.


Chapter 8. Whole shark foraging, feeding, and diet. Rohner CA, and CEM Prebble.


We created a portal to share exclusive members-only MMF content, with over 140 Founding Members signing up in the first weeks.

We launched a new high-end quarterly magazine to help showcase marine research, conservation, and education to over 6,000 subscribers.

We created a portal to share exclusive members-only MMF content, with over 140 Founding Members signing up in the first weeks.

LAUNCHED OUR MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM

We created a portal to share exclusive members-only MMF content, with over 140 Founding Members signing up in the first weeks.

GREW OUR SOCIAL MEDIA

29,000+ 21,000+

WATERBEAR QUEEN OF MANTAS

was released, showcasing MMF founder Dr. Andrea Marshall’s pioneering manta conservation work.

2021 MEDIA FEATURES

OUTREACH

HIGHLIGHTING
DR STEPHANIE VENABLES CONDUCTING AN ELASMOBRANCH SURVEY IN MOZAMBIQUE.
FINANCIAL SUMMARY 2021

REVENUE

- Institutional grants $272,198 | 35%
- Corporate donations $55,356 | 9%
- Grants from governmental bodies $4,040 | 0.5%
- Private contributions $448,264 | 57.5%

Total: $779,858

EXPENDITURE

- Governance, management and overheads $164,365 | 26%
- Fundraising and communications $12,435 | 2%
- Research, education and conservation activities $449,182 | 72%

Total: $626,002
THANKS

Your help and support enables us to protect the world’s most endangered ocean wildlife, train the next generation of conservationists, and conserve marine ecosystems. These discoveries and successes would not be possible without you. Thank you, so much.

Alan Parker
Angel Protocol
Art Blocks
Aqua-Firma
Blue Action Fund
Blue Corner Dive
Big Fish Diving
Conservation, Food & Health Foundation
David & Carol Myers Foundation
Disney Conservation Fund
DSZ - International Giving Foundation For Mozambique
Fondation Ensemble
Fortuna Foundation
Georgia Aquarium
Help For Mozambique
Izele Small Grant Scheme
Jim Artindale & Ann Rooney
Mantahari Oceancare
Margo Marshall
Mark & Caroline Hackney
Milkywire
Mohamed Bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund
Ocean Wildlife Project
Our Children’s Earth Foundation
Peri-Peri Divers
Planterra
Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation
ScubaPro
Shark Conservation Fund
Shark Foundation
Sustainable Ocean Alliance
Swiss Friends Of Galapagos
The Barlow Family
The Wondrous Trust
Turing Foundation
Ultralight Control Systems
UNESCO Green Citizens
US Ambassador’s Special Self-Help Fund
Waterlust
Windrush Trust
Zoomarine
If you want to help our oceans, now is the time. Join us in saving Earth’s most iconic marine wildlife.

DR. ANDREA MARSHALL
Co-founder, MMF

BECOME AN MMF MEMBER

The Constellation is our MMF member community of ocean lovers, just like you, investing in the recovery of endangered marine wildlife. Includes exclusive members-only content.

LEARN MORE

MMF FOUNDING MEMBERS

Suzanne Pierce
Mark Hackney
Josh Axford
Peter Rohner
Sandra Venables
Laura Weland
Pam Flam
Mo Flam
Claudia Haas
Vessela Brakalova
Stanislav Germanov
Tom & Mary Longfellow
Ivy Yin
Gabriela Beutler
Max Jones
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Tim Noack
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Peder Boms
Sam Drury
Joao Feliardo
Sondra Eger
Leonard Schokker
Frederick Smith
Reese Hanin
Noella Czalalis
Isele Mccalman
Merrell Hora
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Morgan Reid
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Lukas Meier
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Nadia McNeilly
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Lukas Phan-huy
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Milena Scott
Michael Ernestus
Godknows Hwata
Christopher Bie
Elizabeth Haag
Elizabeth Blackford
Julia Cano
Julie Corbin
Jesse Robbins

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Healthy ecosystems are more resilient to climate change.

We promote marine megafauna species as conservation flagships to preserve and rebuild healthy marine ecosystems.
EXPLORE MMF’s PIONEERING MARINE CONSERVATION WORK

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