

EAST AFRICAN MANGROVES

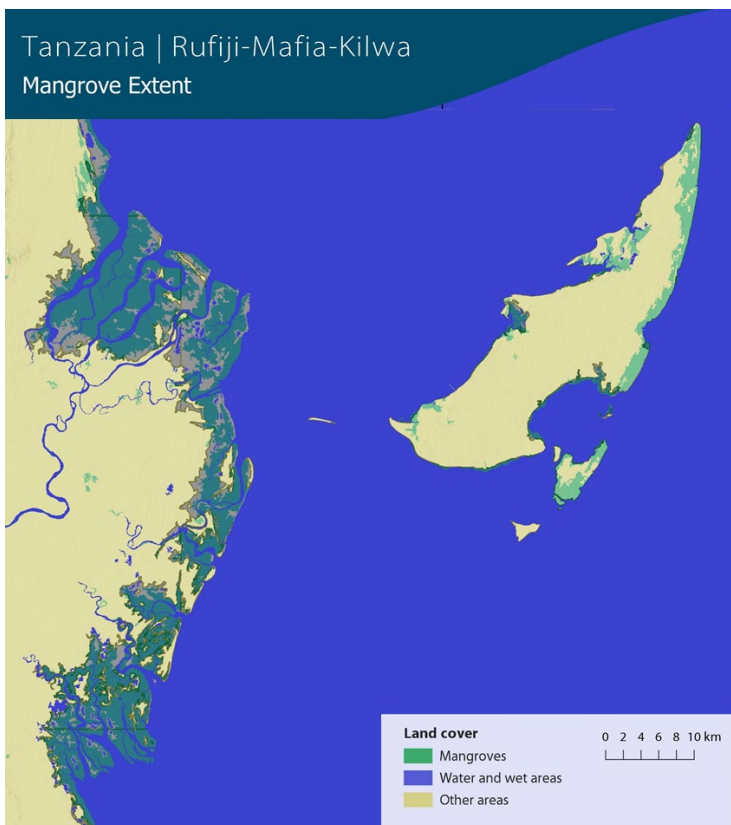
SPOTLIGHT

“Highly productive nurseries for fish and prawns, eastern African mangroves significantly enhance the biodiversity of surrounding marine habitats while providing vital habitat for migratory birds, marine turtles, dugongs and porpoises.”

| World Wildlife Fund¹ |

MANGROVE INVENTORY AND CHARACTERISATION

Tanzania | Rufiji-Mafia-Kilwa
Mangrove Extent



Description: The Rufiji-Mafia-Kilwa Marine Ramsar site represent a complex of coastal and marine habitats comprising the delta of the Rufiji River; the Mafia Island about 25km offshore and surrounding smaller islands, sandbars, and coral reefs.

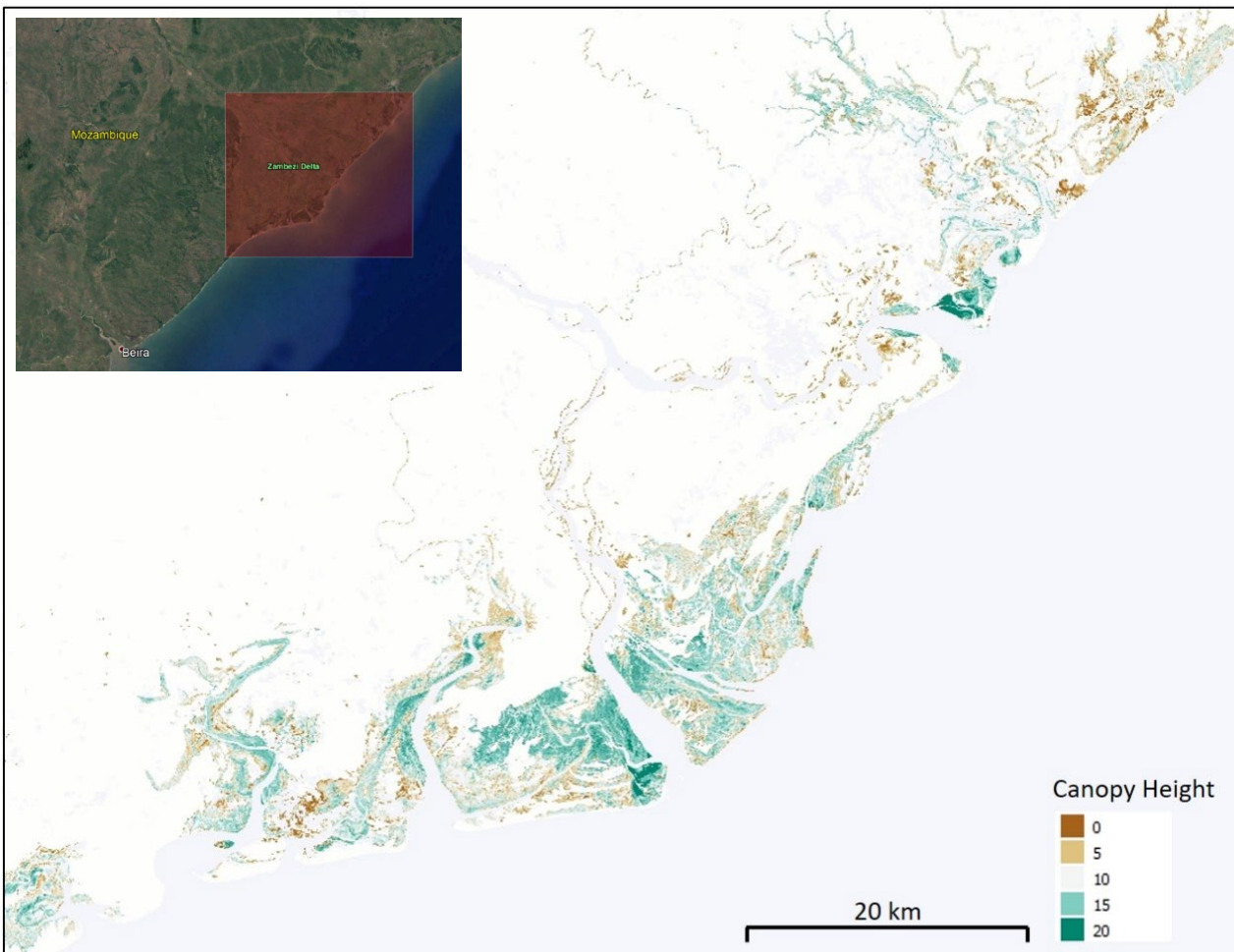
By using the GlobWetland Africa Toolbox national authorities and environmental and conservation organizations can get the full overview of the coastal wetlands within this complex; A large part is composed of mangrove forests (an estimated 55,000 ha) as well as extensive intertidal flats, seagrass beds, and sandbars, all thought to be ecologically interlinked with the flow of the river.

FAST FACTS

- The Eastern African mangrove ecoregion includes the two largest stands of mangrove on the East African coast (Zambezi and Rufiji Delta systems).
- These two sites, in addition to many smaller mangrove areas are of greatest importance for migratory birds, feeding and breeding sea turtles, small remnant populations of dugong, and for their vital role as nursery areas for marine animals (especially shrimps).
- The extensive coastal mangroves and estuaries in the Zambezi delta nourish the prawn fishery on the Sofala bank, one of Mozambique's most important sources of export revenue.
- Fishing and extraction of other coastal and mangrove resources, as well as cultivation (especially rice), seaweed farming, and tourism are the major activities within the the Rufiji Delta which has a population of about 12000 people directly depending on the deltas Mangrove ecosystem for their daily sustenance.
- The Marromeu Complex of the Zambezi Delta and the Rufiji-Mafia-Kilwa Complex in Rufiji Delta are both designated Ramsar sites.



Location map of the Rufiji Delta in Tanzania



Description: Like many other Mangrove sites the Zambezi Delta is rich in biodiversity values. In addition, the site provides a wealth of ecosystem services which are vital to food security and socio-economic development in Mozambique. It also provides hydrological functions including coastal protection, flood control and carbon sequestration. The ability to provide those ecosystem services is tightly coupled to the physical state of the Mangroves, which is again being influenced by the communities living of the Mangroves.

The GlobWetland Africa toolbox allow users to integrate local reference information into the processing workflows to estimate and extrapolate Mangrove structural properties (e.g. tree height/density or biomass) at the landscape level. Such information is critical for site managers to better understand how Mangroves are being used by local communities and where interventions may be needed to protect Mangroves. It can also help researches to better understand the role of mangroves in the carbon cycle of tropical coastal systems.

References

[1] Olson, D. M., Dinerstein, E., Wikramanayake, E. D., Burgess, N. D., Powell, G. V. N., Underwood, E. C., D'Amico, J. A., Itoua, I., Strand, H. E., Morrison, J. C., Loucks, C. J., Allnutt, T. F., Ricketts, T. H., Kura, Y., Lamoreux, J. F., Wettengel, W. W., Hedao, P., Kassem, K. R. 2001. Terrestrial ecoregions of the world: a new map of life on Earth. *Bioscience* 51(11):933-938.

<https://www.worldwildlife.org/ecoregions/at1402>

Acknowledgement and Authors

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