

March 2007

# Mayumba National Park



Photo: Linda Schonknecht

## Outreach Program Update

### International Art Exchange in Full Swing

#### Inside this issue:

*Mayumba Outreach Program creates posters and brochures for nationwide turtle protection campaign*

*School clean-up and film show motivates students to care for their environment*

*Education Center vision unveiled*

Students at Saint Theresa School in Phoenix, Arizona scribbled and erased and colored their visions of their home environment with the greatest of diligence; these drawings were going to be seen by children on the other side of the world! Via their artwork, brown desert mountains, high-rise buildings, saguaro cacti, coyotes howling at the moon, rattlesnakes and scorpions somehow made it past customs and into Gabon.

whales and fisherfolk. These drawings will make their way back across international lines to the kids in Phoenix, or San Diego, or Bahia de los Angeles, Mexico. So far, over 500 elementary school students have participated in this exchange, which attempts expand children's concepts of the environment and demonstrate that they have friends around the world who value the environment just like they do, overcoming language barriers through the universal language of art.



*This drawing by Lucreche, a fourth grader at the school in Mayumba's fishing village, depicts the richness she sees in our marine environment.*



**Mayumba National Park would like to express our sincere gratitude to the Sea World/Busch Gardens Conservation Fund for their generous support of the Mayumba Outreach Program.**

### Puppet Shows Visit Mayumba Schools

The lagoon village kids and their parents weren't the only ones getting into the act...

Mayumba town's elementary schools also received a visit from our traveling puppet show.

The show, which demonstrates the various threats to sea turtles and explains the food web that turtles are a part of, visited

Mayumba's 6 elementary schools this month. As usual, there were giggles and shrieks as 'fish' were caught in nets, sharks chomped at turtles and colorful birds carried hatchlings away in their beaks. But underneath all the silliness, a serious message rang through: Sea turtles are in danger of disappearing forever, and it's our responsibility to help them!

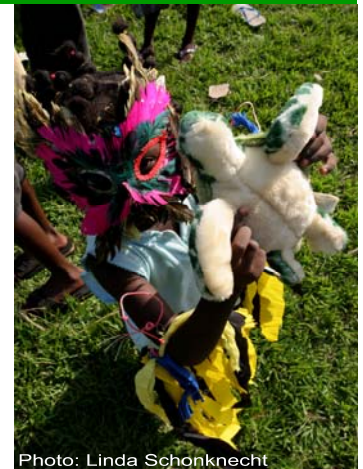


Photo: Linda Schonknecht

*A 'bird' preys upon a hatchling turtle.*

#### Special points of interest:

- Turtle puppet show brought to 824 students in Mayumba town schools
- 140 students participate in school clean-up



## New Mayumba Educational Materials Go Nationwide



Informational brochures and a poster created by the Mayumba Outreach Program Team have been chosen for use in a nationwide turtle protection awareness campaign. With the message: “For the future of

the earth and our children, let’s protect marine turtles!”, the poster features drawings created by art exchange participants and photographs of outreach program students in the lagoon villages near Mayumba

National Park. The brochure explains the primary threats to marine turtles in Gabon, and gives tips on how people can help to protect them, along with do’s and don’ts for behavior with sea turtles during ecotourism visits. The

materials will be printed and distributed in schools, on tour boats, and in fishing villages all along the Gabonese coast in an effort to raise awareness about endangered marine turtles.

## Mayumba Kids Have Fun While Cleaning Up Their School



*A student in Mayumba helps clean up his school.*

A line was drawn in the sand. Students at Public School C in Mayumba took their mark, grabbed rakes and trash bags, and started cleaning. Each class cleaned up a pre-determined section of the school’s playground, removing broken glass, discarded oyster shells, and plastic bags that can pose a danger not only to humans but wildlife as well. Students here are well aware that the leatherback turtle’s favorite food is jellyfish, and that plastic bags that end up in the ocean can be mis-

taken for a tasty treat by these gentle giants... with disastrous results. After the clean-up contest, students were treated to a double feature of locally produced environmental films, including a music video called “Everyone for Conservation” made by the IBONGA association in Gamba. At the end of the film, the clean-up winner was announced: The fourth grade class won a colorful turtle poster to decorate their classroom and remind them of one more reason to keep their school clean.

**Over 140 students participated in a school clean up competition this month. The winning class received a colorful poster to decorate their classroom.**



*Students at a Mayumba school watch a double feature.*



## New Vision: The Mayumba Environmental Education Center

Mayumba’s outreach program currently benefits over 1500 students per month, but imagine how many more class sessions these children could have if a dedicated Environmental Education Center was within walking distance of their school! By eliminating the time-consuming task of transporting materials from school to school, the outreach team estimates it could increase the number of environmental education sessions per month threefold!



**Illustrations: Aimee Sanders**