



2017, primarily to investigate the population of *Pouteria pseudoracemosa*, led to the discovery of a new shrubby species of *Pavetta*, *Pavetta* sp. J of Burrows et al. (2018), a potential new *Asparagus* species and an unusual tree species of Euphorbiaceae that is unknown and not yet placed to genus (J.E. Burrows, pers. obs.). This latter species has also been recorded from an inselberg near Nampula ca. 250 km to the south.

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## Habitat and geology

The gneissic inselbergs are of Paleoproterozoic to Neoproterozoic age. They vary greatly in size but rise to a maximum of over 700 m a.s.l. The region has a dry to sub-humid climate, with an average annual rainfall of 800 – 1,200 mm, with a short wet season mainly in December to March and a prolonged intervening dry season. The xerophytic flora of the rock faces and crevices is dominated by *Xerophyta pseudopinifolia* and *X. suaveolens*, together with a range of succulent species including several *Aloe* and *Euphorbia* spp. Other rock-loving plants including *Myrothamnus flabellifolia* and *Strophanthus hypoleucos* are also common. Some seasonal seepage areas with peaty soils are observed but these have not yet been surveyed for their plant diversity. The flora on these slopes is mainly herbaceous and shrubby but scattered trees of *Brachystegia* and *Ficus* spp. occur.

The vegetation of the Taratibu Concession, focusing on the southwest portion of the reserve in the vicinity of the inselbergs, has recently been characterised by Joaquim (2019) who documented five vegetation types: (1) mixed riverine fringing forest with frequent *Ancylobotrys petersiana*, *Pseudobersama mossambicensis* and *Rawsonia lucida*; (2) a semi-closed dry forest / thicket of *Oxytenanthera abyssinica* and *Milletia stuhlmannii*; (3) inselberg xerophytic habitat with abundant *Xerophyta* and *Euphorbia*; (4) miombo woodland dominated by *Julbernardia globiflora*, with *Brachystegia spiciformis* and *Diplorhynchus condylocarpon* amongst other miombo species; and (5) closed seasonally moist semi-deciduous forest with large trees of *Pouteria pseudoracemosa* and *Parkia filicoidea*, along with a mixed tree and shrub assemblage including *Engleropytum natalense*, *Rawsonia lucida* and *Rinorea arborea*. Based on a review of satellite imagery, these and similar habitats are believed to occur across the IPA, including some extensive areas of intact forest between the more remote inselbergs north of the Montepuez River. Much of the lowland plain is occupied by miombo woodland of varying density. The semi-deciduous forest and thicket appear to be largely confined to the foot of the inselbergs, being particularly well developed in intervening ravines and sheltered areas. Riverine forest is best developed along the Montepuez River and its tributaries and this would be worthy of further botanical exploration.

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## Conservation issues

The large majority of the IPA lies within the western extension of the Quirimbas National Park (QNP), although the northern-most and southern-most inselbergs lie outside the park boundary within the

buffer zone. The QNP was designated in 2002, primarily to protect a region of coastal forest, mangroves and coral reefs including the southern 11 islands of the Quirimbas Archipelago, but a large inland extension was included within the gazetted site, primarily to protect the inselbergs. Active conservation and management within the QNP are very limited at present. Taratibu, whilst within the QNP boundary, is managed as a private ecotourism concession.

Poaching of fauna is a major problem at this site and has led to the decimation of the local elephant population, which may result in significant ecological changes. However, the vegetation on and around the larger inselbergs appears to be largely intact and the human population is low in much of the central and southern portion of the IPA. The inselbergs in the vicinity of Meluco and highway 525 in the north of the site appear from Google Earth (2021) imagery to be more heavily impacted, with most woody vegetation appearing to have been removed and with intensive agriculture in the lowlands surrounding the peaks, with clearance aided by frequent burning. Elsewhere, miombo woodland in particular is being cleared for agricultural land and as a source of fuelwood. Population pressure is likely to increase within this IPA: Ancuabe and Meluco Districts have experienced over 80% and over 50% population increases respectively between 1997 and 2017 (Instituto Nacional de Estatística Moçambique).

The Taratibu portion of this IPA is included within the Key Biodiversity Areas network on the basis of containing an endemic frog, the Quirimbas Mongrel Frog (*Nothophryne unilurio*, CR) and the population of *Rytigynia torrei*. This IPA would also qualify as an Alliance for Zero Extinction site given that it contains the entire known global populations of both the frog species and *Euphorbia unicornis*.

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## Site assessor(s)

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## IPA criterion A species

SPECIES	QUALIFYING SUB-CRITERION	≥ 1% OF GLOBAL POPULATION	≥ 5% OF NATIONAL POPULATION	1 OF 5 BEST SITES NATIONALLY	ENTIRE GLOBAL POPULATION	SOCIO-ECONOMICALLY IMPORTANT	ABUNDANCE AT SITE
<i>Pouteria pseudoracemosa</i> (J.H.Hemsl.) L.Gaut.	A(i)	✓	✓	✓	—	—	Frequent
<i>Rytigynia torrei</i> Verdc.	A(i)	✓	✓	✓	—	—	Occasional
<i>Coffea zanguebariae</i> Lour.	A(i)	✓	✓	✓	—	✓	Occasional
<i>Euphorbia unicornis</i> R.A.Dyer	A(i)	✓	✓	✓	✓	—	Scarce
<i>Strophanthus hypoleucus</i> Stapf	A(i)	✓	✓	✓	—	—	Frequent
<i>Englerina triplinervia</i> (Baker & Sprague) Polhill & Wiens	A(i)	—	✓	✓	—	—	Unknown

## IPA criterion C qualifying habitats

HABITAT	QUALIFYING SUB-CRITERION	≥ 5% OF NATIONAL RESOURCE	≥ 10% OF NATIONAL RESOURCE	1 OF 5 BEST SITES NATIONALLY	AREAL COVERAGE AT SITE
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## General site habitats

GENERAL SITE HABITAT	PERCENT COVERAGE	IMPORTANCE
Forest - Subtropical/Tropical Moist Lowland Forest	—	Major
Savanna - Moist Savanna	—	Major
Wetlands (inland) - Permanent Rivers, Streams, Creeks [includes waterfalls]	—	Minor
Rocky Areas - Rocky Areas [e.g. inland cliffs, mountain peaks]	—	Major
Artificial - Terrestrial - Arable Land	—	Minor
Forest - Subtropical/Tropical Dry Forest	—	Major

## Land use types

LAND USE TYPE	PERCENT COVERAGE	IMPORTANCE
Nature conservation	—	Major

LAND USE TYPE	PERCENT COVERAGE	IMPORTANCE
Agriculture (arable)	–	Minor
Tourism / Recreation	–	Major

## Threats

THREAT	SEVERITY	TIMING
Agriculture & aquaculture - Annual & perennial non-timber crops - Small-holder farming	Low	Ongoing - trend unknown
Biological resource use - Hunting & collecting terrestrial animals	High	Ongoing - trend unknown
Natural system modifications - Fire & fire suppression - Increase in fire frequency/intensity	Unknown	Ongoing - trend unknown

## Protected areas

PROTECTED AREA NAME	PROTECTED AREA TYPE	RELATIONSHIP WITH IPA	AREAL OVERLAP
Quirimbas National Park	National Park	protected/conservation area overlaps with IPA	–
Quirimbas Biosphere Reserve	UNESCO Biosphere Reserve	protected/conservation area overlaps with IPA	–
Taratibu Reserve	Private nature reserve	IPA encompasses protected/conservation area	–

## Conservation designation

DESIGNATION NAME	PROTECTED AREA	RELATIONSHIP WITH IPA	AREAL OVERLAP
Taratibu	Key Biodiversity Area	IPA encompasses protected/conservation area	–

## Management type

MANAGEMENT TYPE	DESCRIPTION	YEAR STARTED	YEAR FINISHED
Protected Area management plan in place	Ministry of Tourism (2012). Parque Nacional das Quirimbas: Plano de Maneio 2013-22.	2013	2022

## Bibliography

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