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Creating a whale sanctuary in the Western Indian Ocean

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Creating a whale sanctuary in the Western Indian Ocean



Between local normative instruments and international cooperation for a network governance (case study with the “Whale Route”)

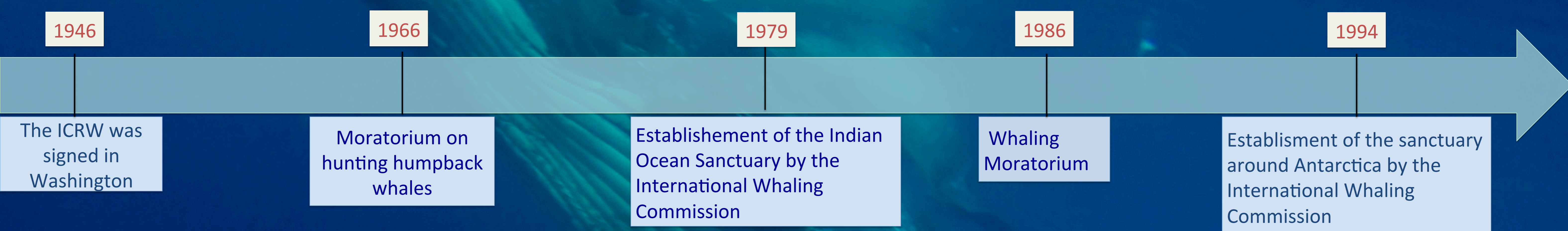
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Whales are highly mobile animals, crossing the water and jurisdictions of multiple nations as well as areas beyond national jurisdiction. As a result, their conservation and management require association between existing institutions and agreements at different level in order to enhance the consistency of the relevant law. As an emblematic migratory species, whales are part of many international agreements at the universal and regional level. However, indirect impacts also imply to consider other legal frameworks. Therefore, the project of the “whale route” led by Reunion should take into account this complex legal environment. To develop regional cooperation around this project, it is necessary to use current legal frameworks but above all to reveal links between them. These links may be considered from a top down approach (for example, implementation at the local level of multilateral agreements) but also from a bottom up dynamic (for example, replication of the whale watching charter applied to Reunion Island coastal area). Beside these normative interactions, the governance of the “whale route” will necessarily have to be analysed from a global perspective, emphasizing relationships between various actors, institutions, and networks.

Conservation efforts for whales with the International Convention for the regulation of Whaling (ICRW)



WHALE ROUTE AREA INSIGHTS

❖ Reducing stress and disturbances

- Sustainable marine activities
- Ecotourism, responsible whale-watching
- Development of pedagogical activities
- ➔ Extending the whale watching charter and the certification to the Whale Route area

❖ Reducing ship strikes risk

- Educate regional communities
- Collaboration between mariners
- Adjusting shipping traffic lanes
- Whale reporting system

❖ Reducing entanglement and bycatch

- Modifying fishing gear in the Whale Route area

Main threats in the Southwest Indian Ocean

- Pollution
- Ship strikes
- Stress and disturbances (direspectful whale watching)
- Climate change
- Whaling for scientific purposes in the sanctuary
- Entanglement in fishing gear (bycatch)

Protection of whales in the Southwest Indian Ocean

- Hard law:
 - Global law: Indian Ocean Sanctuary, moratorium, Convention on Migratory Species, CITES, Straddling Stock Agreement*
- Soft law:
 - Local law: Whale watching charter in Reunion, Certification for responsible whale watching in Reunion (Label)*

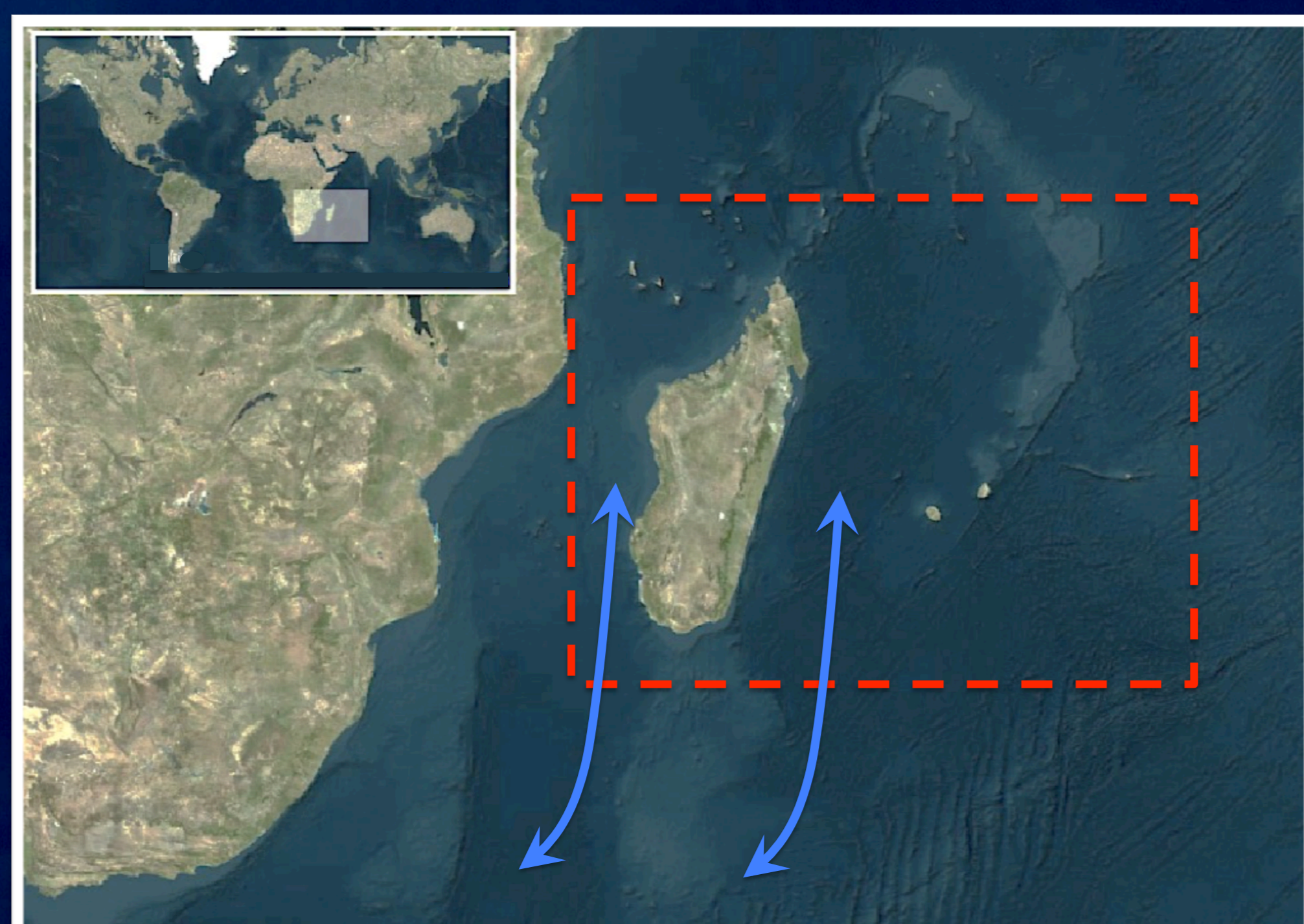
WHALE ROUTE AREA GOVERNANCE

❖ The Whale Route governance fora

- International convention and international organizations
 - The Nairobi Convention (1996)
 - The Indian Ocean Commission
 - UNESCO
- International associations and transnational networks
 - Humpback Whale World Congress, Vanilla Islands, IndoCet...

❖ Actors

- Public actors
 - Southwest Indian Ocean States
 - Decentralized territories units: Regional council, Departmental council
- Private actors
 - For-profit actors:*
 - Whale whatching companies
 - Not-for-profit actors:*
 - Experts, scientists, NGO: Cetamada, Globice, Abyss...



↔ Whale migration
 ▭ Whale Route area