

with its drilling, and announced that it had discovered gas in block NEC-25 in June 2004. This has been brought to the attention of the CEC and a hearing is expected in January, 2005.

OpK's future plans

OpK is carrying on its planned activities though the scale is much lower this year due to a reduced budget. Awareness and education for the local fishermen by the wandering minstrels is being conducted. OpK is also supporting local initiatives by turtle protection clubs and youth groups at Devi and Rushikulya River mouth nesting beaches. Such groups provide much needed data on turtle casualties and fishing activity in the prohibited areas so that these issues can be brought to the attention of the enforcement authorities. Their members also assist the forest department in nest protection and hatchling rescue. Such groups shall be empowered to carry on turtle conservation activities in the future. OpK is in touch with forest, fisheries and coast guard officials to ensure that patrolling is carried out in the prohibited areas to protect the congregating sea turtles.

OpK has joined the recently formed Orissa Marine Resources Conservation Consortium (OMRCC) which is a coalition of turtle scientists, local fishermen unions and conservation groups. This new group has been formed with the initiative of the Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment, Bangalore and is a first step towards forging a partnership and common platform among different groups who are interested in turtle conservation. OpK is also closely monitoring the implementation of the Supreme Court's orders passed for turtle protection on the Orissa coast. OpK has been made a member of the monitoring committee to be set up by the state government for monitoring the implementation of the Court's orders. Sadly, this committee is yet to be formed. Prodded by the Supreme Court of India in 2003, the government shook off its languor and finally decided to be serious. Last year, due to increased enforcement, the casualties plunged to a level of 7,000, which is half of the average casualties noticed a few years earlier. Though it sounds good, the figures are clearly unacceptably high and OpK is determined to ensure that the number of casualties are brought down.

Profile of NGOS working on sea turtle conservation and fisheries in Orissa

RUSHIKULYA SEA TURTLE PROTECTION COMMITTEE

The Rushikulya Sea Turtle Protection Committee (RSTPC) plays a pivotal role in saving the sea turtles of the Rushikulya rookery. A group of motivated village boys of Purunabandha village, Ganjam, near the Rushikulya sea turtle rookery have formed this group which is a non-government non-profit organisation registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860. The group was initiated in 1998 and has a total membership of 50, mostly from fishing communities. The RSTPC works with technical support from many sea turtle biologists including Dr. Bivash Pandav, Dr. S.K. Dutta, Mr. B. C. Choudhury and Mr. Basudev Tripathy.

Over the years, RSTPC and its members have done considerable work on the protection and

conservation of olive ridley turtles at the Rushikulya rookery with minimal funding support. Many of these village boys were actively involved with the Wildlife Institute of India's sea turtle project along the Orissa coast during 1994 – 1999.

Projects undertaken by the RSTPC and supporting agencies:

- Conservation of olive ridley sea turtles along the Orissa coast – supported by *Operation Kachhapa* & *WSSO*, Orissa.
- Rescue operation for olive ridley hatchlings at Rushikulya Rookery – Supported by *Wild Orissa*, Bhubaneswar (2003-2004).

- Sea turtles and their habitat protection at Rushikulya Rookery – *Wildlife Trust of India, New Delhi* (Basudev Tripathy, Investigator of the above project supported through the Wildlife Trust of India) (2003-2004).
- Sea turtle interpretation centre at Rushikulya rookery – *Vasant V. Sheth Memorial Trust, Mumbai (Eastern Shipping Corporation)* (2003-2004).

CONTACT INFORMATION

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E-Mail	:	turtle_rushikulya@yahoo.co.in
Organisational Affiliation	:	Non-profit, Non-Governmental Organisation; Registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860, established in 1998; Regd. No. GJM 7285-107/2003-04
Total members	:	~ 50
Area of operation	:	Ganjam District, Orissa
Contact Person	:	Mr. Rabindranath Sahu

MAA GANGA DEVI SANTI MAITRI YUVAK SANGA

Over the years, Rushikulya has emerged as one of the most important sea turtle nesting beaches in India. However, this area is subject to severe natural as well as human-related disturbances. A multitude of problems ranging from artificial illumination to extensive beach erosion exist in this area. The olive ridleys and their nesting beaches need more protection and involvement of local communities. With this in mind and with a vision of community development, the Maa Ganga Devi Santi Maitri Juvak Sangha (MDSMFS) started functioning in Purunabandha in

2001. The MDSMJS has a total membership of 25 and the youth from this NGO are supported by Operation Kachhapa's conservation programme. They also work in close association with the Orissa Forest Department. This organisation comprising of village members is also involved in social activities such as cleanliness campaigns and other small environmental programmes with larger organisations such as the Nehru Yuva Kendra – a national youth organisation.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Mailing Address	:	Purunabandha, PO – Palibandha, Via/Dist – Ganjam - 761 021 (Orissa)
Organisational Affiliation	:	Non-profit, Non-Governmental Organisation Registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860, established in 1998.
Total members	:	~ 25
Area of operation	:	Ganjam District, Orissa
Contact person	:	Mr. Budhhimantha Rao President

ORISSA TRADITIONAL FISH WORKERS' UNION

Since 1989, the leaders from the fishing community have worked toward uniting the various marine fishworker groups across the six districts of Orissa. Finally, in 1995, the 'Orissa Traditional Fishworkers Union (OTFWU)' took birth with the representation of fisher leaders from all six districts. For better coordination and effective functioning, the OTFWU formed district level unions and has linked up with 'Samudram', an active federation of women fishworkers working towards the welfare of fisher women and children since 1992 in the districts of Ganjam and Puri. Since 1995, the Union in association with the National Fishworkers Forum has been active along the coast of Orissa and acts as a pressure group to mobilise government resources for the benefit of traditional fishers.

The vision of the OTFWU is to foster harmony, fraternity and brotherhood among traditional fishworkers, preserve their cultural heritage and support needy fellows to lead a dignified life with self-reliance along with other communities in Orissa.

The objectives of the OTFWU include:

- Mobilising all traditional fishworkers and bringing them to the fold of OTFWU.
- Promoting unity among traditional fishworkers from the grassroots level to the State level.

- Strengthening affiliated district unions to exert pressure on the district administration and Panchayati Raj Institutions.
- Generating awareness among traditional fishers on education, health and environment.
- Developing capacity of district and state union leaders to identify common issues and strategise campaign techniques to address micro and macro issues that affect the lives and livelihoods of traditional fishers.
- Liaison and network with other like-minded groups and movements to fight for common causes.

The OTFWU has spearheaded advocacy efforts to ensure that the rights of the traditional fishworkers are not impacted by turtle conservation measures. They have negotiated on behalf of the traditional fishworkers with the state government and have petitioned the Supreme Court appointed Central Empowered Committee on this matter. The OTFWU has also highlighted their experiences on mitigating the adverse impacts of conservation on the livelihoods of traditional fishworkers to other national and international forums. At the same time, the OTFWU along with Samudram has expressed its interest in being part of turtle conservation measures and is pressing for conservation that does not impact the traditional sector of fishers.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Mailing Address	:	OTFWU, At: Sana Aryapali, PO: Bada Aryapali, Via: Ganjam, Orissa, India, Pin: 761 020
Telephone Number	:	+91-6811-262286
Fax Number	:	+ 91-6811- 254314
E-Mail	:	otfwu@hotmail.com
Members	:	Traditional fishworkers from all 6 districts of Orissa. This includes fisherfolk operating almost all categories of fishing crafts except trawlers.
Area of operation	:	Orissa
Contact person	:	K. Aleya, General Secretary, OTWFU

SAMUDRAM - THE WOMEN'S COLLECTIVE

Samudram is a state level federation of women fishworkers' organisations working in Orissa for the development of marine fisherfolk. The organisation started functioning in the year 1993 from the village of Sana Nolia Nuagam as a federation of women's organisations of Ganjam district and was registered in the year 1995-96 under Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860. The formation of Samudram was due to the intervention of the United Artists Association with support from Action Aid from 1993 to 2002 through a project named Marine Fisher Folk Development Project (MFFDP). However, both Samudram and its counterpart, the Orissa Traditional Fish Workers' Union now are independent functioning entities.

At present, the head quarters of the organisation is at Katuru village in Chatrapur Block of Ganjam district. The organisation is active in both Ganjam and Puri districts and has contacts in Balasore & Bhadrak districts of Orissa. Samudram aims at empowering traditional marine fisherwomen in all aspects of life and foster unity, solidarity, love, peace and mutual concern among them.

The objectives of the organisation include:

- Promoting self-esteem and dignity among the traditional marine women fishworkers.

- Enhancing the socio-economic, political and cultural status of traditional marine women fishworkers.
- Capacity building of traditional marine fisherwomen to counter confidently any law or system that is detrimental to their interest.
- To improve the quality of life by developing the living conditions of traditional marine fisherwomen through the spread of education and better health practices. These are promoted by member organisations in collaboration with like-minded organisations and the Government.
- To act as a nodal point for the collection, compilation & dissemination of relevant information.
- Promoting networking among other like-minded organisations working for a common cause.

Samudram has addressed issues at the micro level such as the sale of country liquor, illiteracy, child marriage, influence of moneylenders, gambling etc. At the macro level, the women have taken up issues related to marine resource conservation through activities such as stopping the illegal collection of prawn seeds, violations of fishing regulations by trawlers etc. In future they hope to take up issues such as procuring land titles, licensing of liquor shops in marine villages, etc.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Mailing Address	: Samudram, At: Katuru, P.O.: Bada Aryapalli, Dist: Ganjam – 761020
Organisational Affiliation	: Non-profit, Non-Governmental Organisation Registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860, established in 1998.Regd. No. GJM 7285-107/2003-04
Total members	: Exceeds 2000
Area of operation	: Ganjam District, Orissa
Contact person	: Smt. B. Chitamma, President

UNITED ARTISTS' ASSOCIATION, GANJAM

In 1965, different youth groups in Ganjam town came together to work under a single umbrella and raised funds through cultural programmes and drama to be used for welfare programmes, emergency relief and for the establishment of educational institutions. This united youth group became an organisation named the United Artists' Association (UAA) which has been functioning since then from Ganjam, Orissa. UAA is committed to the promotion of non-exploitative gender and human rights, a sensitive, environment friendly, hunger free and self-reliant society in Orissa. In 1995, the Government of Orissa and the UNICEF recognised the organisation as a nodal NGO and channeled their funds through UAA to develop the status of water and sanitation in the rural areas. Since then the organisation has been working with a network of grassroots NGO/CBOs and has played a catalytic role in developing capacities in managerial, and technical skills of its network members. UAA

has been nominated to the National Task Force on the Large Marine Ecosystem of the Bay of Bengal Program . Currently UAA provides support service to 22-block level NGOs.

Areas of work of the United Artists Association:

- Community organisation
- Promotion of voluntarism
- Education and development of appropriate teaching aids
- Health and sanitation
- Training, research and documentation
- Protection of the environment and development of social forestry
- Development and dissemination of low cost and eco/user friendly technology
- Emergency relief and rehabilitation.

Supporting agencies

- Government of India, Government of Orissa, Action Aid, UNICEF, SEEDS, AICF, CWS

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Organisational Affiliation	:	Non-profit, Non-Governmental Organisation Registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860, established in 1967
Total members	:	~ 100
Area of operation	:	Orissa
Contact person	:	Mangaraj Panda, Secretary

PROJECT SWARAJYA

Founded in August 1988, Project Swarajya (PS) is a non-profit Non-Government Organisation based at Cuttack, Orissa with branches and activities in other districts of the state and beyond. Right since its inception, the organisation has engaged itself in multifarious social welfare activities such as human rights, women's empowerment, child welfare and environment and biodiversity protection.

The following environment and biodiversity

protection activities have been undertaken by PS

- Study and campaign for prevention of water pollution in Taldanda Canal in 1993.
- Survey and conservation of mangrove forests on the Orissa coast in 1992-94.
- Survey and conservation of the Indian horse shoe crabs on the Orissa coast in 1992-94.
- Protection of olive ridley sea turtles on the Orissa coast: ongoing since 1996

- Presently engaged in popularising the Trawl Guard as a bycatch reduction device among the trawling community.
 - Installation of Fish Aggregating Devices along Orissa coast in 1993-95.
 - Integrated paddy-cum-fish farming in waterlogged areas in Orissa coast in 1994-95.
 - Running of Eco-Clubs in Cuttack from 1997-99.
 - PIL in Orissa High Court against pollution by PPL (admitted in 1995 and disposed off in 2002) and litigation against Oswal Fertilisers at Paradip (admitted in 2002).
- Supporting agencies
- Government of India, Government of Orissa
 - DANIDA, SIDA, NORAD, CEBEMO, UNDP, WORLD BANK

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Website : <http://www.projectswarajya.com>

Organisational Affiliation : Non-profit, Non-Governmental Organisation; Registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860, established in 1988.

Area of operation : Orissa

Contact person : Mrs. Dolli Dash, Secretary

WILD ORISSA

Wild Orissa, an organisation registered under the Societies Registration Act as well as the Income Tax Act, has been actively involved in the conservation of wildlife and nature in the country since 1997. Wild Orissa was set up with an objective to create awareness among the general public and youth about the importance of conserving nature and the natural environment and its bearing on all life and life support systems. This includes participation in activities towards the improvement of the environment of urban and semi-urban areas, arresting the decline of major wildlife forms, field studies, workshops, camps etc. in an effort to study the status of our wild flora and fauna. Important activities include:

- Monitoring of wildlife sanctuaries, national parks, forests and protected areas
- Carrying out surveys, studies and research on wild floral and faunal species
- Associating and assisting the Government and other organisations in matters related to enumeration of tigers, leopards, elephants etc. during census.
- Conducting annual waterfowl/bird census in the state of Orissa and adjoining areas
- Undertaking conservation programmes including campaigns for the preservation of species like the tiger, elephant, mouse deer, olive ridley, chowsingha etc.
- Organising inter school competitions on wildlife and nature to inculcate love for our wild heritage.
- Creating public awareness on issues relating to wildlife and their habitat through mass media.
- Organising meetings, symposiums, seminars, workshops to address issues relating to wildlife.
- Ensuring community participation in conservation and preservation of wildlife and their habitats by interacting with and motivating local communities.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Organisational Affiliation : Non-profit, Non-Governmental Organisation
Registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860, established in 1998.

Contact person : Mrs. Monalisa Bhujbal, Secretary

GREENPEACE

In November 2004, “Rainbow Warrior II”, the legendary flagship of Greenpeace, was on a tour of the eastern coast of India to raise the profile of the rich marine ecosystems, fragile habitats and endangered creatures of the world’s oceans. Her third voyage to India, the Rainbow Warrior docked at Chennai and Paradip, witnessing a surging spirit of participation from different groups and coastal communities. Through the tour, the focus increasingly rested on the Gulf of Mannar and the Bhitarkanika Sanctuary, highlighting the biodiversity and the threats these iconic marine hotspots face. The mainstay of the tour was the series of dialogues on the management of a network of marine reserves and an introduction to seamounts – the submerged mountains of our seas.

The Rainbow Warrior provided a unique platform for the convergence of a cross-section of groups and communities directly involved in the protection of our seas. Given the importance of awareness building and outreach, the tour made it possible to reach out to more than 2500 people inclusive of students from schools, colleges and academic institutions, eco-clubs and interested and concerned public. The “Save our Seas” tour of November 2004 was Greenpeace India’s first step to network, research and further it’s understanding of marine issues (coastal and high seas) pertinent to India. It was also an opportunity to build upon the prevailing community work and their persistent labour in protecting the seas.

At Orissa, the Rainbow Warrior and Greenpeace were involved in: -

- Meeting on the CEC directives – In a well-attended meeting with representatives from concerned constituents such as environmental groups, enforcement and regulatory bodies and fishermen’s collectives, the problems and potential solutions with respect to Orissa and the olive ridley turtles were discussed.
- Fact-finding – The most immediate threat to the Gahirmatha Sanctuary- the proposed Dhamra port was highlighted. In a cyber-petition coordinated by Greenpeace, more than 1000 people endorsed their support, calling for the concerned corporations and the Government to reconsider the project.
- World Fisheries Day – Greenpeace joined the deliberation and celebrations in an event coordinated by the Orissa Traditional Fishworkers’ Union at Bhubaneswar. Given Greenpeace’s global experience with respect to marine reserves, the team was invited to make a presentation on a community based approach to marine reserves and conservation.

In the coming year, Greenpeace will look forward to coordinating with local communities and groups in Orissa. Greenpeace also looks forward to continuing the documentation of turtles through the nesting and hatching season, and hopes to identify areas of work to add synergistic value to the ongoing campaign to champion the cause of the turtles and local communities.

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Contact person : Sanjiv Gopal, Oceans Campaigner

WORLD WIDE FUND FOR NATURE INDIA

The World Wide Fund for Nature India (WWF-India) has been working to promote harmony between humankind and nature for almost three decades. Today, it is recognised as the premier conservation NGO in the country dealing with conservation and development issues. At a time when the web of life has come under increasing threats, WWF-India's attempts have been to find and implement solutions so that human beings can live in harmony with nature, and leave for future generations, a world rich in natural resources and natural wonders.

WWF -India (formerly known as World Wildlife Fund) was established as a Charitable Trust in 1969. With its network of State/Divisional and Field Offices spread across the country to implement its programme, WWF-India is the largest and one of the most experienced conservation organisations in the country. WWF-India articulated its mission statement to suit India's specific ecological and socio-cultural circumstances:

"The promotion of nature conservation and environmental protection as the basis for sustainable development"

The WWF India has five broad programme components:

- Promoting India's ecological security – restoring the ecological balance
- Conserving biological diversity
- Ensuring sustainable use of the natural resource base
- Minimising pollution and wasteful consumption
- Promoting sustainable life-styles.

Marine turtles are flagship species for WWF world over. WWF-India engages with multiple stakeholders and partners like government agencies, NGOs, research institutes, coastal communities and the private sector for an integrated approach to conservation.

WWF-India initiated its marine turtle conservation programme in 2003 at the Rushikulya rookery with the collection of disoriented hatchlings and release as a programme with the communities. WWF's marine turtle conservation initiative aims to minimise/reduce threats to the marine turtles from unsustainable fishing practices and coastal development through community participation. WWF hopes to facilitate a consultative mechanism between trawler operators, other fishing communities, government agencies and other NGOs to adopt by-catch reduction devices. Other programme objectives include reducing turtle mortality; building the capacities of the fishing communities to manage turtle nesting areas and the conservation of the marine eco-system by adopting friendly fishing practices. Finally, WWF hopes to promote the Rushikulya rookery as a community conserved area. The private sector such as the tourism and hotel industry will be engaged as part of WWF's conservation programme. WWF-India also seeks to facilitate the Government of India (GOI) policy initiatives to conserve marine turtle habitats and populations.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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