

Editorial

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This is the tenth year of production of a regional newsletter on sea turtles out of India. In 1999, a new initiative, Operation Kachhapa, was launched in Orissa by the Wildlife Society of Orissa and the Wildlife Protection Society of India (WPSI), New Delhi. I had then just initiated work in Orissa on olive ridley turtle genetics and interacted fairly frequently with the project. I contacted Belinda Wright of WPSI, and we decided that a newsletter on sea turtles for the region would complement the programme well. Of course, at the time, we were not very clear on what region we wanted to cover – Orissa, India or south Asia? With an editorial team that included B.C. Choudhury, Jack Frazier, Biswajit Mohanty, Bivash Pandav and Nicolas Pilcher, we produced 9 issues of Kachhapa between 1999 and 2003, supported by WPSI. The newsletter grew to cover south Asia and included several articles from Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. It also included survey reports from most states in India, conducted during the Government of India – UNDP sea turtle project in 2000 - 2001. Kachhapa will soon be available online on the IOTN website.

In 2003, the newsletter parted ways with WPSI, and expanded to cover the Indian Ocean region. The inaugural editorial team of Sali Bache, Jack Frazier, Matthew Godfrey, Mark Hamann, Jeanne Mortimer, Nicolas Pilcher and Pankaj Sekhsaria decided, after some consideration, to give the new venture the uninventive name that it now bears. We also introduced the concept of country representatives to help the newsletter reach further afield in the region, which we are seeking to expand in the near future. Most importantly, however, IOTN has carried in its pages articles from around south Asia and southeast Asia, and content from the Indian Ocean and east Africa are planned. IOTN also carries reports and announcements of the International Sea Turtle Society (ISTS) and the Marine Turtle Specialist

Group. Currently, about 1500 hard copies are distributed largely within the region, particularly to government and non-government agencies with limited access to the internet. Online, PDF and HTML files are available for each article, in addition to the PDF files of each issue.

We are deeply grateful to our outgoing editors, Sali Bache, Jack Frazier, and Pankaj Sekhsaria. Jack has been with the team from Kachhapa days and has been a pillar of support. IOTN must acknowledge its donors and supporters, principally the ISTS over the last two years, and ATREE, who have provided infrastructural support since inception. Michael Coyne has generously hosted IOTN on seaturtle.org. We have also been ably served by a long stream of editorial assistants, mostly from the Coastal and Marine Programme, ATREE. Shiv Subramaniam, our webman, and Aarthi Sridhar, policy analyst and proof reader extraordinaire have been constants through this time.

IOTN starts a new chapter in 2008 with a new editor, Chloe Schäuble. We also bring on board Kirstin Dobbs, Pamela Plotkin, Sue Ranger, and Jeffrey Seminoff. The new editorial team hopes to bring a range of new content, while continuing with the earlier content such as the popular research summaries that Matthew and Mark put together in alternate issues. We also hope to bring in more content from under-represented parts of the region, and invite you to be adventurous in sending material to us. Chloe and I welcome any and all inputs with regard to content and style, and would deeply appreciate your assistance in reaching out to all those working on marine turtles and their habitats in the Indian Ocean and southeast Asia.