

Editorial

Worldwide, it is acknowledged that effective sea turtle conservation requires collaboration. Since sea turtles migrate across political boundaries and use habitats in many different countries, cooperation between different nations and peoples becomes critical in ensuring the long term survival of these species and the habitats they represent. Their interactions with humans occur in various habitats and in different social and ecological contexts, through which they encounter a range of stakeholders.

While the role of State agencies and large conservation or research organisations is known and often acclaimed, on site sea turtle conservation often involves small local organisations and conservationists. The numerous small and medium

sized organisations that work along various stretches of the Indian coastline often work in isolation. Their efforts usually do not get the recognition they deserve, and the successes of their interventions and challenges they face are not shared with others that might benefit from this knowledge. The diversity of contexts and threats that sea turtles face necessitates a larger engagement within this conservation community and between these groups and other stakeholders such as the State.

In this special issue of the Indian Ocean Turtle Newsletter, we profile thirteen active members of the Turtle Action Group in India. Profiles of other TAG member organisations will be included in subsequent issues of the newsletter.

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Editors

The Turtle Action Group

A network of NGOs dedicated to the conservation of sea turtles and their habitats in India

Members of TAG:

Members of TAG include community based organisations, environmental groups and non-governmental organisations in India. Some of these organisations hold a wealth of knowledge and understanding of locally effective conservation methods and there is a need to facilitate the exchange and flow of such experiential knowledge systems.

A core committee of representatives carries out the task of coordinating activities and communicating with members and an advisory board constituted of various individuals from diverse backgrounds and fields of expertise provide advice and inputs.

Objectives of TAG:

The main objective of the network is to promote effective conservation of sea turtles and their habitats through collective and collaborative action. The network also seeks to establish appropriate channels of communication amongst member groups and engage with government agencies at the local and national level. In addition, in the near future, TAG will also network with international networks and organisations.

Activities of TAG:

Members of TAG meet annually to take the activities of the network forward, to review activities carried

out over the past year, and to introduce new members to the network. Above all, these annual workshops provide platforms for members from across the country to meet with one another and share experiences. They also serve as venues to discuss and create action plans for collaborative and collective action that can be undertaken by TAG members. TAG also uses these opportunities to invite experts in the field to conduct training programmes that are beneficial to members as individual organisations and as a collective. After the initiation workshop in January 2009 in Chennai, the second workshop was held in Bhubaneswar, Orissa in February 2010, and the third at Kumta, Karnataka in November 2010.

Activities carried out by TAG include the enhancing of research and monitoring capacities in collecting uniform and reliable data being developed through

monitoring protocols, training programmes and workshop sessions. As the network expands, it seeks to promote collaboration not just between member organisations but with various stakeholders including local fishing communities, coastal community leaders and researchers of various disciplines. As a network, TAG draws its strength from the diverse range of expertise and experience that the members bring to it.

The activities of TAG are currently being supported through a grant from the Marine Turtle Conservation Act Fund of the US Fish & Wildlife Service. The current project is being executed through the Dakshin Foundation, Bangalore and the Madras Crocodile Bank Trust, Mamallapuram.

More information about TAG is available at www.seaturtlesofindia.org/tag.

