

Plans for the year 2008 – 2009

Our current plans are:

- To establish Vulture Conservation Centres
- To extend activities of the marine turtle conservation along the entire coastline of Maharashtra and specific protection activities to a minimum of 50 locations.
- To carry out *in situ* conservation of marine turtles at 10 locations.

- To establish a ‘Student Nature Club’ to increase awareness and encourage participation of school students in the area.
- To carry out awareness programmes for mangrove conservation.

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Conservation of sea turtles in Kachchh on the western coast of Gujarat

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In continuation of the earlier note (see Meena *et al.*, 2007) on sea turtle hatcheries in Kachchh, Gujarat (Figure 1), the efforts made thereafter have been geared primarily towards increasing public awareness for the conservation of sea turtles (Figure 2). A flag hoisting ceremony conducted on Republic Day, 26th January 2007 at Mandvi-Kutch attracted considerable attention. The theme of the ceremony was that sea turtles are our guests and they should be welcome on Mandvi coast. Such awareness

programmes have encouraged support to forest officials by the local community in conservation activities, for example, conserving turtle eggs along the coast. The Hon’ble Chief Minister Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated the newly constructed sea turtle hatchery at Mandvi on 20th September 2007 and applauded the conservation efforts that were being carried out. Such encouragement has boosted the enthusiasm of the local community and field foresters to conserve this endangered species.



Figure 1: Sea turtle hatchery in Kachchh, Gujarat.



Figure 2: Sea turtle conservation public awareness campaigns.

The details of the collection of turtle eggs and hatching during the year 2007-08 is given below in Table 1.

Table 1: Egg collection and hatching success at Mandvi

Note: Survival depends on handling by the field staff during collection.

Collection of eggs		Survival of hatchlings		Survival percentage
Date	Number	Date	Number	
15.07.07	130	05.09.07	89	68
28.07.07	129	17.09.07	78	60
29.07.07	97	25.09.07	74	76
30.07.07	99	29.09.07	79	80
07.08.07	104	08.10.07	83	80
18.08.07	125	08.10.07	105	84
23.08.07	120	23.10.07	88	73
24.08.07	103	19.10.07	82	80
06.09.07	99	31.10.07	76	77
10.09.07	56	03.11.07	47	84
12.09.07	89	06.11.07	73	82
18.09.07	103	16.11.07	87	84
16.03.08	113	-	-	-
Total	1369			

The results above clearly show that the hatching success is good. In order to minimise mortality during collection, an *in situ* removable hatchery will be set up this year on site.

Our experience has shown that the coordinated efforts of the local community and field staff can ensure the conservation and survival of sea turtles.

Literature cited

Meena, R.L., J.V. Vyas & R.S. Jadeja. 2007. Sea turtle hatcheries in Kachchh, Gujarat. *Indian Ocean Turtle Newsletter* 5: 19-20.