VISAKHA SOCIETY FOR PROTECTION AND CARE OF ANIMALS



OLIVE RIDLEY SEA TURTLE REPORT FOR 2010-11

A Community Based Protection and Conservation Programme In Collaboration with the Andhra Pradesh Forest Department, Tree Foundation, Chennai and Winsome Constance Kindness Trust, Australia



Area covered: Coast of Visakhapatnam, Viziaganagaram and Srikakulum



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We are thankful to the Andhra Pradesh Forest Department, Tree Foundation, Chennai and the Winsome Constance Kindness Trust, Australia for their incredible support in the successful execution of the community based sea turtle protection and conservation programme.

Lastly and most importantly we are grateful to the mother Olive Ridleys for coming to our shores to lay eggs and thereby making this programme a reality.

Introduction:

Visakhapatnam is an important sporadic nesting ground where the turtle greatly shows interest in nestings because of reasons that are most conducive for nestings. Our protection efforts ended in the month of May.

VSPCA alongwith TREE Foundation jointly with AP Forest Department and ably supported by Winsome Constance Kindness Trust, Australia have been engaged in protecting the Seaturtles mostly Olive Ridleys along the coast of Visakhapatnam and Srikakulam.

In this regards, this year it was thought most prudent and practical to have a hatchery along the coasts and subsequently two were up one each at Visakhapatnam and Srikakulam. The reason for these hatcheries has been because of extreme disturbances to the coasts due to tourism developments, beach activities, heavy lightings, pollution and predators.

This year together more than 188 nestings have been sighted from naval coastal battery to Bheemili (184) and in Srikakulam (4).

2011

This year also 20 Seaturtles Protection Force have been in force to protect the Seaturtles along these coasts.

Based on the results of this year progress will be made in the following year after extensive awareness campaign along the fishing villages

Fortunately the success rate of the hatcheries is 84%, making Exsitu as an effective method in conservation of the Olive Ridleys.



Activities undertaken by VSPCA during this season's protection and conservation programme:

1. Education and Awareness Programmes:

We conducted Education and Awareness Programmes in schools, coastal and fishing communities to inform the direct stakeholders in the survival of the sea turtles about their plight. Thereby reducing turtle mortality as fisheries bycatch and poaching for direct consumption.

2. Lobbying and Legal Efforts:

Lobbying with the necessary government departments to help in the protection and conservation programme by putting a stop to sand mining, dredging, and construction along the coast which reduces the total beach area as well as reducing the levels of industrial pollution and sewage discharge into the sea.

3. Networking:

Networking with the other like-minded Animal Welfare Organisations to create a strong technical base for the programme.

VSPCA





2011

4. Setting up of Hatcheries:

Two hatcheries were built for the better protection and observation of the nests. We have built two successful hatcheries in Visakhapatnam and Srikakulam.



Visakhapatnam – Hatchery



Srikakulam – Hatchery

<u>5. Sea Turtle Protection Force (STPF)</u>:

This is a force comprising of local fishermen and volunteers who comb the beaches with the intention to-

- Protecting nests either in situ or by taking the eggs to the beach-hatchery.
- They rescue and safely release of disoriented hatchlings. As well as helping the weak ones past the ocean breakers.
- Informing people on the beach about the turtles during their beach patrol

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VSPCA Team and STPF Members

The Sea Turtle Protection Force (STPF) consisting of 14 members local fishermen volunteers have been selected to patrol the beaches. They were divided accordingly with two members for every four kilometres stretch. They have been provided extensive training that included theoretical as well as on the field. We also designated two hatcheries at the hatchery area.

<u>6. Workshops</u>: This year we conducted "State Marine Protected Species and Marine Turtle Conservation Initiation Workshop" organized by the A.P Forest Department, Tree Foundation and VSPCA at A.P Forest Department on 17.11.2011 and at Bheemili.





The main object for the workshop is to develop an action plan for the initiation of a State level Marine Prohibited Species Awareness and the Sea Turtle Conservation Programme.

2011

7. The Types of Protection and Conservations involved:-

The Olive Ridley Sea turtle can be conserved in two methods:-

- In-Situ Conservation.
- Ex-Situ Conservation.



Track of the Mother Sea Turtle



Hatchery at Visakhapatnam



Placing of Eggs in the Hatchery

Our protection and conservation community based project has so far included activities such as the nesting that were clearly vulnerable were shifted to hatcheries only.

- 1. In-situ conservation efforts
 - monitoring of nesting turtles along the coastline
 - Including protecting nesting beaches
 - Protecting nesting females from predatory hazards, such as jackals, crabs, birds, dogs.
 - Protecting from human poachers and human interferences.
- 2. Ex situ conservation efforts
 - Protection and Conservation through hatcheries.
 - Awareness and education programmes are the basic significance that we adhere to in order to get the desired results effectively whether by any conservations methods.

8. Outline of our STPF Work Detail:

- Type of Conservation:
- Field work.
- Noting the datas which are sited.
- Steps taken to find the turtles.
- Steps taken to protect them.
- Statistics involved.
- Duration

Field work undertaken by us:-

After due planning and permissions acquired from the Forest Department and after the workshop / meeting with all stakeholders our protection along the coasts began from January first week 2011.

The preliminary steps that was undertaken to proceed for the protection of the turtles were:-

- We started for patrolling with a group of 2 to 3 members in the survey areas of coast.
- We surveyed areas in and near by coast of Visakhapatnam are Costal Battle to Rushi Konda and Rushi Konda to Bhimili.
- Early morning by 4.30 A.M our walk started and ended by 8.30 A.M till the areas allotted to each us for each group. Same as in the evening times also from evening 7 'O' clock till night 10.30 or 11.00. Besides these specified timings our boys are all alert to attend at anytime during emergencies.
- Observing the tracks and considering the tracks as the turtle visiting the shore.
- Soon after identifying the nest location we used the GPS system to find the latitude longitude, temperature, etc., to relocate the eggs in the hatchery in the same arrangement as the mother turtle has laid.
- The eggs were shifted to the hatchery within six hours after the mother turtle laid the eggs. And the time calculation of shifting eggs depended on the assumptions of mother turtle laying eggs.
- The eggs shifted in the early hours only because the mother turtle lays the eggs in the morning hours or in mid nights.
- The eggs developed into baby hatchlings after 45 to 60 days. So till that time the nests were kept under our protection.
- In Exsitu protection the nests were shifted by the Sea Turtle Protection Force to the hatchery.



Counting of Empty Shells



STPF Members at work during the Night Time

9. Success rate by Insitu and Exsitu:-

This year we were involved in both In-situ and Ex-situ Conservation which includes the data of both hatchery and the nesting beach. In the year 2010-2011 the areas covered by our STPF were:-

- Naval Coastal Battery to Vuda Park
- Vuda Park to Rushi Konda
- Rushi Konda to Bheemili to pedanagayapalam.

Insitu Protection - Visakhapatnam							
Zones	Areas		No of Nests	No of Eggs	No of Hatchlings Released	No of Undevelo Eggs	oped No of dead
Zone - 1	Naval Coastal Battle to Vud Park	la	<u>69</u>	7501	5935	422	1144
Zone - 2	Vuda Park to Rushi Konda		45	5078	4101	233	744
Zone - 3	Rushikonda To Bheemili (Annavaram)		16	1555	1261	205	89
	Total:	_	130	14134	11297	860	1977
	nmary:	(T - 4-	-1		FormulaTotalFormulaPercentagesed/Total No of Eggs) x 10080%		
	of released % =	(10ta	al no of K	eleased/10	otal No of Egg	s) x 100	80%
No	No of Dead % = (Total)			Dead/Tota	14%		
No	of Undeveloped % =	(Total no of Undeveloped/Total No of Eggs) x 100 6%			6%		

TOTAL

100%

Exsitu Protection - Visakhapatnam							
Zones	Areas	No of Nests	No of Eggs	No of Hatchlings Released	No of Undeveloped Eggs	No of dead Hatchlings	
Zone - 1	Naval Coastal Battle to Vuda Park	16	1735	1429	288	18	
Zone - 2	Vuda Park to Rushi Konda	38	4097	3457	565	75	
	Total:	54	5832	4886	853	93	
	Summerv.	<u> </u>					

Summary:		
No of released % =	(Total no of Released/Total No of Eggs) x 100	84%
No of Dead %=	(Total no of Dead/Total No of Eggs) x 100	2%
No of Undeveloped % = TOTAL	(Total no of Undeveloped/Total No of Eggs) x 100 100%	14%

ANNEXURE I

VSPCA

Exsitu at Srikakulam:

This year our Conservation and Protection of Olive Ridley Sea Turtles have extended till Srikakulam. A hatchery was kept in Jeedupalam. We could protect only four nests in the surrounding areas of jeedupalam which was setup rather late but except any early preparation at Srikakulam for 2011-2012.

		No Of
Zones	Areas	Deaths
	Naval Coastal Battle to Vuda	
Zone - 1	Park	12
Zone - 2	Vuda Park to Rushi Konda	6
Zone - 3	Rushi Konda to Bheemili	2
	Total:	20

Dead Report of Mother Turtles:

ANNEXURE II

Olive Ridley first batch hatchlings released- 17/04/201:

The first batch of Sea Turtle hatchlings were released into the Bay of Bengal by Chief Conservator of Forest N.Prateep Kumar I.F.S. on 17/04/2011 at 5.30 am.

Fortunately the success rate of the hatcheries is 84 per cent, making Exsitu as an effective method in conservation of the Olive Ridleys.





VSPCA

2010-2011:-

It is imperative that Exsitu method of protection and conservation by community based process in very disturbed areas as Visakha urban is to be considered as most important. With every passing day the beaches are occupied with more humans, huge lightings, continuous beach entertainment, sewage discharges, pollutions, sand mining --- the beaches are no more safe for the mother turtle, eggs and hatchlings.

However, the biggest predator continuous to be the huge number of deaths by adult turtles chocked in the trawling nets. This needs to be now made mandatory implementation that will enforce the use of Turtle Excluder Device (TEDs) to the trawling nets. Presently it is now mandatory the use of TEDs for exporting of shrimps to USA. We insist and request that this should be extended to all the trawlers and mechanised boats.

However, on the beaches we would request the Forest Department, A.P. to consider setting up more hatcheries along the coasts of Visakhapatnam, Vizianagaram and Srikakulam.

Our heartful thanks to A.P. Forest Department for their warm cooperation and helping us with STPFs and hatcheries.

We are grateful and obliged to Winsome Constance Kindness Trust for guidance and constant support.

Extremely thankful to Tree Foundation, Chennai for their expertise and for a much practical method of protection.

