

SEA TURTLE PROTECTION PROGRAMME 2015-2016



“20th Year of our Sea Turtle Protection at the Visakha Urban Coast”

Many, Many Thanks to

- 1) Andhra Pradesh Forest Department, Visakhapatnam,***
- 2) Mr. Philip Wollen & Ms. Trix Wollen, The Winsome Kindness Constance,***
- 3) Greater Good Organization,***
- 4) NetAP,***
- 5) The Madras Crocodile Bank Trust,***
- 6) Turtle Action Group,***
- 7) Late Ms. Olive Walker,***
- 8) Help Animals India &.....***

***And the Advisory Board Members, Members, The Sea Turtle Protection Force,
Volunteers, Individuals Donors, Our Dear Web Master Mr. Derek Hogue.***

Back Ground/ History

We are very delighted and profoundly satisfied over the measures now being put into place by the Andhra Pradesh Forest Department. What began as an all out effort by us to stop the horrendous trading, Slaughtering, Hunting, Misuse of the species due to myths and superstitions in the name of health..... All of the species , their Body parts, Eggs, and Hatchlings have been grossly used seriously affecting their very population in the ocean.

This can be easily evaluated by looking at the prospects and the results so far not only in India but all across the world. Every beach has the Sea Turtles coming to nest and probably arguably this species has the maximum numbers to help in their conservation efforts yet their population is only dwindling and the reasons are very clear for us to evaluate, monitor and take action.

As we go on season after season and observe the various traditions and as we take measures for each predation remedy, we come across new priorities that clearly says why these important species in the oceanic Bio- diversity is getting more critical. It is for us to take hard decision and allow this species their justified living, reasons to Exist and to help them by saving, protecting and conserving more for the benefit of the humans and the oceanic environment.

The Present Status of their Habitat

At the Visakha Urban Coast which is a significant sporadic nesting ground in this North Coastal Andhra Pradesh now seriously stands to lose the beach coast due to beach erosion. Among all the predations that is affecting the prospects of the Sea Turtles shrinking of the beach habitat is of the most serious concern because their habitat once gone is lost forever. Which means the turtle's place and efforts to raise their population is being seriously hampered. We seriously believe that the losing of habitat is not due to the Sea Erosion, not attributable towards any cyclonic pressures and occurrences but it is purely due to human interventions and for their entertainments and comforts of which tourism development is a critical element that does not provide any preference to protect the beaches Habitats once lost cannot be regained and these habitats must be protected at all cost for our sake and for everyone and take measures of applying our common sense towards this issue to stop the irreversible loss. We need to be selfless and think about the future aspects. It is time to act as we have identify the crucial reason hampering the progress in the Sea Turtle Protection.

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Our Efforts This Season

This year 2016-17 has seen record nestings with our efforts to save, protect and conserve the endangered species in particular Olive Ridleys that frequent our coasts. We have had stupendous results than any other season. We moved our hatchery ½ KM than last year towards West and the success rate was an average 83%.

During the later part of May ending that caused the last 15 Nests to be affected due to the late surge of sea waters due to sea erosion and natural phenomena combined the results would have been much higher. None the less we feel that there is an opportunity before us to do better and improve with every season. Our experience with determination and commitment have seen us dealing with every hindrances coming our path overcoming to help the cause.

This year largely we have given thrust to improve on our Awareness and Education efforts. We are thankful to the Andhra Pradesh Forest Department Visakhapatnam for having agreed to put up a special place adjacent to the hatchery. Special large sized cut outs that depicts all about the Sea Turtle, their habitats, Their Life Cycle, and our efforts. We have received very good response to educate the masses and this year we have had good number of children from various schools coming, watching and listening and learning all about the Sea Turtles. They were very happy that they were able to watch in live in front of their eyes and not in any television channels as National Geographic Channel.

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INSPIRE OF SEVERAL CHALLENGES

WE RECEIVED NESTING ABOVE OUR EXPECTATIONS AND RELEASED

***32,742** HATCHLINGS. BELOW IS THE DATA FROM THIS YEARS*

CONSERVATION RECORD

| Area Covered | Nest | Eggs Received | Un Developed Eggs | Dead Hatchlings | Hatchlings Released |
|--|------------|---------------|-------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| R.K. Beach --- Coastal Battery to Vuda Park | 183 | 20,935 | 2,378 | 1,551 | 17,006 |
| Jodugullupalem - Vuda Park to Rushikonda to upto Bheemli | 160 | 18,669 | 1,885 | 1,048 | 15,736 |
| TOTAL | 343 | 39,604 | 4,263 | 2,559 | 32,742 |

The Future

We are all aware of the many hindrances that are critically affecting the sea turtle population and the list is endless both on the shore and in the ocean. While there are significant progress in stopping of their consumption and preventing cruelties, they have earned their earned absolute respect from the traditional fishermen. But the most sad part is with the management of coastline from the Government with regards to various activities. From Street Lighting to Beach Lighting to Sand Mining to Beach Road Expansion, tourism development projects, Non-Treatment of sewage water, non treatment of toxic substances from industrial units, violations of Coastal Regulation Zones, Mechanical levelling of beach sand, Minor Ports, Restaurants dhabas Etc., along the Beaches, thousands of deaths by trawling activities - Non-Implementations of Teds, Sea/Beach erosion..... all of these play a big - role in the depletion of the Sea Turtle Population.

Most of these can be easily avoided and most of them are largely affected during the 4 Months of the Sea Turtle season. We are able to achieve with so much of hindrances that we are absolutely confirmed we can do 10 times much better if there is a wholehearted cooperation and co-ordination from the various Departments. There is a confirmed proposal of efforts by Andhra Pradesh Forest Department to extend the progress to all the beaches. We began 1996-97 with no body support and with no belief that Sea Turtles were frequenting to our beaches. Our contribution has proved with actual field presence that the Endangered Species do visit in all the beaches. We are happy that significant contributions from Andhra Pradesh Forest Department to now provide financial assistance as well as to work with all relevant stakeholders. There is ofcourse much to be done and much to be achieved but the way to positive support for the Sea Turtle conservations is on the way and the sooner we raise our efforts seriously the better it is for the ocean environment.

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Thank You