



IOSEA Marine Turtle MOU
5th Meeting of the Northern Indian Ocean Marine Turtle Task Force
online, 6-8 May 2025

IOSEA
Marine Turtle MOU

COUNTRY UPDATE: MALDIVES





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1. New research or conservation projects related to marine turtles and/or their habitats



**OLIVE RIDLEY
PROJECT**

Founded in 2013 by Dr. Martin Stelfox

Focus Areas: Conservation Medicine,
Research, Education & Outreach



**A T O L L
M A R I N E
C E N T R E**

Founded in 2012 by Naifaru Juvenile NGO

Focus Areas: Rescue & Rehab, Community
Engagement & Education Outreach



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Population Monitoring (In water and Nesting)

- Total number of identified turtles: 1759 greens, 5224 hawksbills (as per 30th March 2025)
- Total number of identified turtle encounters registered on IoT: 42,705





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Sea Turtle Expedition

- Addressing critical data needs in the country
- Establishing a baseline for population genetics baseline, sea turtle health parameters, epibionts, and benthic communities in turtle hotspots - holistic approach





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Social Studies

- Knowledge, attitude and perception towards sea turtle consumption and conservation (Baa & Laamu Atoll)
- Historical study looking at the role of indigenous conservation practices in L.Gaadhoo - the most significant turtle nesting hotspot
 - Documenting historical sea turtle conservation practices in the Maldives for the first time
 - Understanding the actual historical nesting percentage on Gaadhoo
 - Inform management plans for sea turtle nesting beaches based on indigenous knowledge





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Protected Area: L.Gaadhoo Turtle Nesting Beach Protection

- Monitoring the most significant sea turtle nesting beach with community participation
- Ranger conducts scientific data collection & coordinate with EPA on monitoring the site (poaching/maintenance)
- Increasing community participation in conservation science
- Aims to develop an effective monitoring plan for the protected area management plan

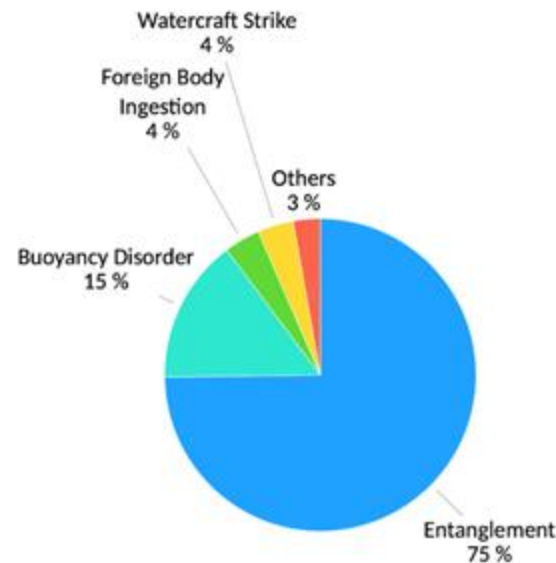


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Sea Turtle Health & Behaviour

- Blood analysis machines calibrated for turtles for proper chemical blood analysis.
- AMC has expanded on their clinical capacity. More diagnostics available – providing more targeted treatment.
- Majority of patients received are still olive ridleys.
- Both projects working on behavioral issues leading to buoyancy, and surgical solutions whenever necessary.





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Socio-Economic Research

- First estimate of the potential socioeconomic value of sea turtle tourism in the Maldives published
- Follow up more extensive study with post-pandemic in preparation for publication



Survey: Importance of sea turtles in Maldives tourism - 2022

We, at the Olive Ridley Project, are evaluating the socio-economic value of sea turtles to the Maldives' tourism industry.

3.1 Did your operator advertise excursions specifically to view sea turtles in 2022? *

Yes, sea turtle snorkel excursions

Yes, sea turtle dive trips

Yes, BOTH sea turtle dive and snorkel excursions

No we did not advertise sea turtle specific excursions

11.1 Please estimate on average how many ADVERTISED sea turtle dive trips you made per week in 2022 (If your operator did not advertise sea turtle dive trips in 2022 please skip to Question 13.)

Your answer _____

11.3 Please estimate the average number of divers on a sea turtle dive trip in 2022?

Your answer _____

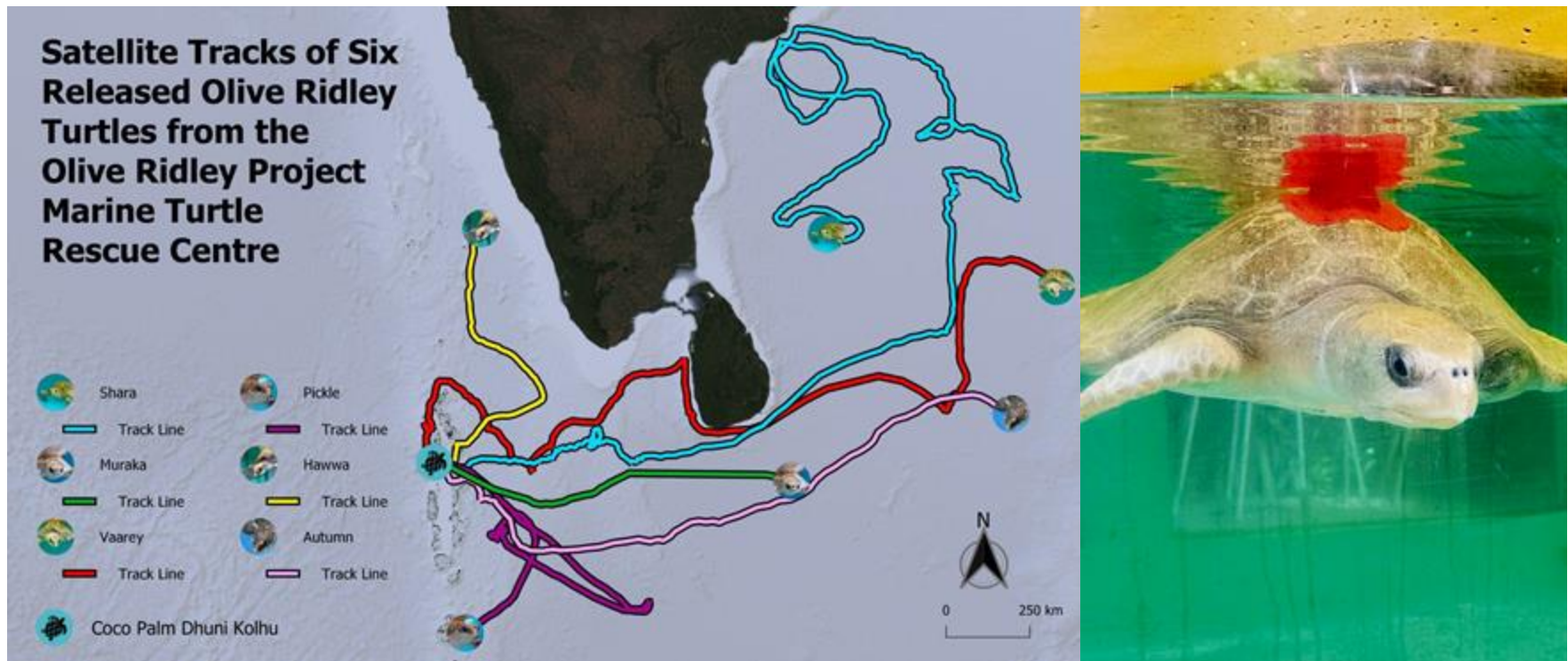


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Satellite Tagging

- Identify sea turtle migration, diving behaviour, foraging grounds and potential threats along the way.





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Education and Community Outreach

- 7th Lhaviyani Turtle Festival & 2nd Atoll Marine Symposium
- Vaavoshi Festival in N. Kendhikulhudhoo



Above: Panel discussion during the 2nd Atoll Marine Symposium.





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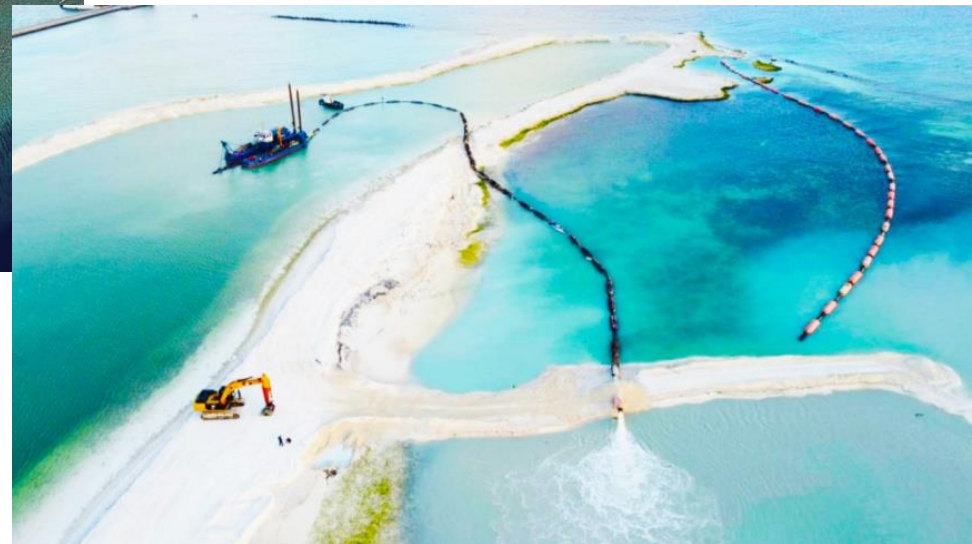
2. Large infrastructure developments affecting marine turtles and/or their habitats (proposed or underway)

Dredging and Reclamation



Coastal Modifications Seagrass removal

Photo: MTCC





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3. Changes in national policy, laws, or management frameworks affecting marine turtles and/or their habitats





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4. Emerging threats or challenges

- Difficulty in sustaining momentum of long-term projects due to remoteness
- Cultural differences between consumption and attitudes across atolls is understudied
- Geographic isolation of islands
- Limited resources in monitoring and enforcement
- Poaching & cultural sensitivities on hunting/harvesting turtle & eggs

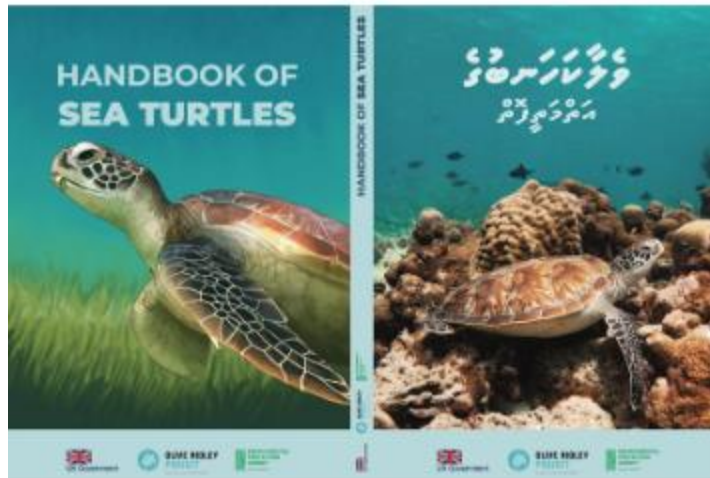




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5. Achievement/Success story

- More people getting into conservation
- Interns have successfully gone into other higher up positions in conservation
- Sea turtle handbook distributed across 6 atolls
- Multi-agency collaboration for sea turtle conservation a success in Laamu atoll
- More work being done to work collaboratively - ORP x AMC partnership





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5. Achievements / success story

Maldives Red List



National Red List

Green Sea Turtle
Chelonia mydas



Endangered EN

Extinction Risk

Extinct	EX
Extinct in the Wild	EW
Critically Endangered	CR
Endangered	EN
Vulnerable	VU
Near Threatened	NT
Least Concern	LC
Not Evaluated	EE
Not Listed	NE


Assessment Summary

National Distribution	Population
Significant numbers (1000) of green turtles were identified in Baa Lagoon and Uvaasaloo Island. Feeding has been recorded in many areas, and in significant numbers in Baa, Kaafu, Thaa and Laamu Atoll.	1700 individual green turtles, including juveniles, have been identified throughout the country as of November 2021.
Habitat and Ecology	Threats
Marine and Terrestrial (Feeding and nesting habitats)	In the ocean: Bycatch, marine pollution and debris. On land: habitat loss, photo pollution, poaching, pet trade.

Logos: USAID, ISEI, IOSEA

National Red List

Hawksbill Sea Turtle
Eretmochelys imbricata



Critically Endangered CR

Extinction Risk

Extinct	EX
Extinct in the Wild	EW
Critically Endangered	CR
Endangered	EN
Vulnerable	VU
Near Threatened	NT
Least Concern	LC
Not Evaluated	EE
Not Listed	NE

Assessment Summary

National Distribution	Population
Significant numbers (1500) were identified in Aa, Baa, Faa, Haa, Laamu and North Male. Feeding and nesting has been recorded in five atolls: Baa, Haa, Dhoo, Kaafu, Laamu and Uvaasaloo.	3500 individual Hawksbill turtles including juveniles, have been identified in the Maldives as of November 2021.
Habitat and Ecology	Threats
Marine and Terrestrial (Feeding and nesting habitats)	In the ocean: Long line fisheries, marine pollution, habitat loss and reef degradation. On land: habitat loss, beach erosion, photo pollution, poaching, pet trade.

Logos: USAID, ISEI, IOSEA

National Red List

Leatherback Sea Turtle *Dermochelys coriacea*



Assessment Summary

National Distribution	Population
2014 - 2015 2016 - 2017 2018 - 2019 2020 - 2021	2014 - 2015 2016 - 2017 2018 - 2019 2020 - 2021
Habitat and Ecology	Threats
2014 - 2015 2016 - 2017 2018 - 2019 2020 - 2021	2014 - 2015 2016 - 2017 2018 - 2019 2020 - 2021



National Red List

Loggerhead sea turtle *Caretta caretta*



Assessment Summary

National Distribution	Population
2014 - 2015 2016 - 2017 2018 - 2019 2020 - 2021	2014 - 2015 2016 - 2017 2018 - 2019 2020 - 2021
Habitat and Ecology	Threats
2014 - 2015 2016 - 2017 2018 - 2019 2020 - 2021	2014 - 2015 2016 - 2017 2018 - 2019 2020 - 2021



National Red List

Olive Ridley Turtle *Lepidochelys olivacea*



Assessment Summary

National Distribution	Population
2014 - 2015 2016 - 2017 2018 - 2019 2020 - 2021	2014 - 2015 2016 - 2017 2018 - 2019 2020 - 2021
Habitat and Ecology	Threats
2014 - 2015 2016 - 2017 2018 - 2019 2020 - 2021	2014 - 2015 2016 - 2017 2018 - 2019 2020 - 2021





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THANK YOU!

