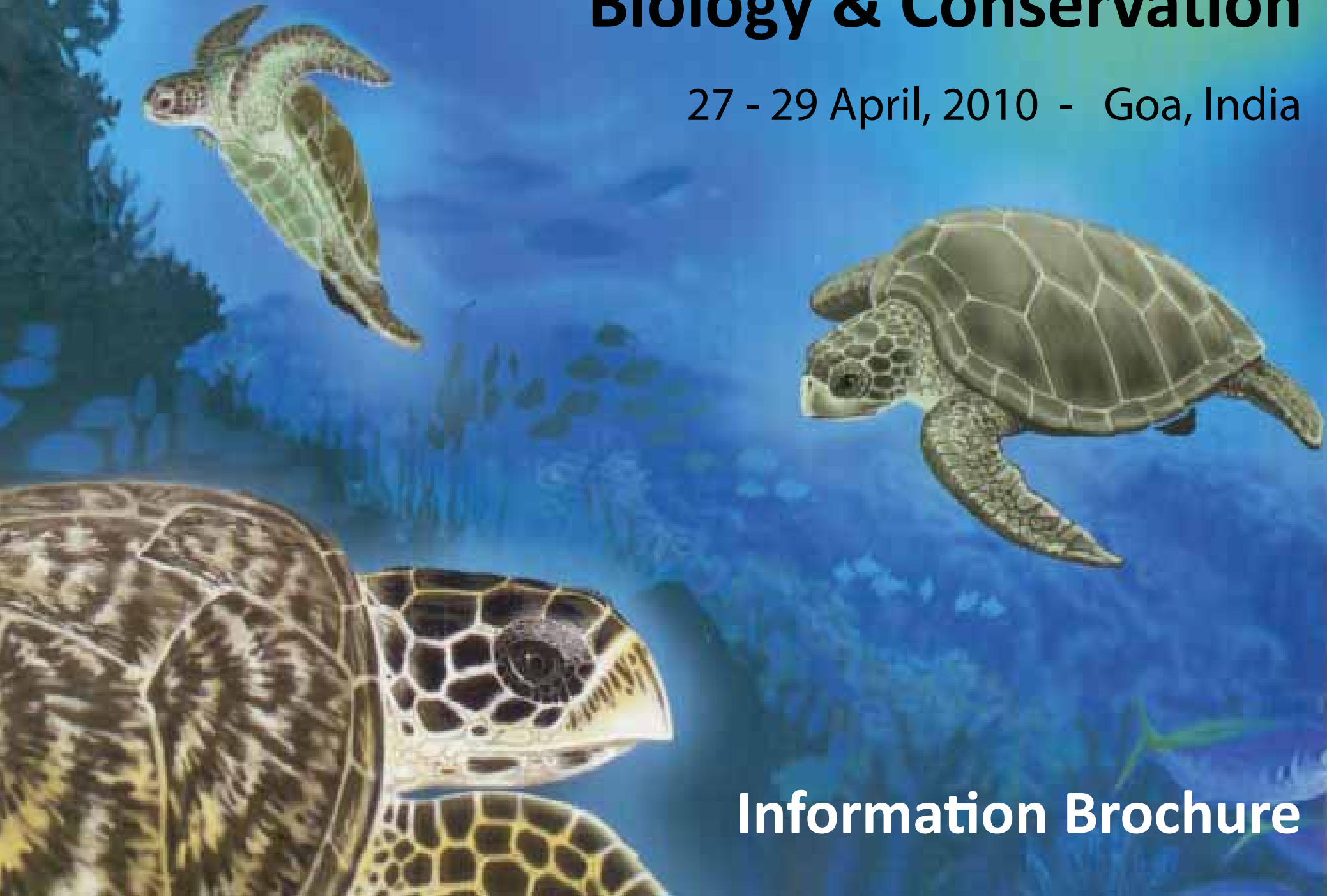


# **30th Annual Symposium on Sea Turtle Biology & Conservation**

27 - 29 April, 2010 - Goa, India



**Information Brochure**

## President's note

I welcome your participation in the *30th Annual Symposium on Sea Turtle Biology & Conservation*, to be held in Goa in April, 2010. We hope to make this event a success through the participation of a wide diversity of organizations, institutions and individuals across India and South Asia.

This symposium information brochure, apart from providing details about the 2010 symposium, also gives you a glimpse into the world of turtles and why we need to conserve these magnificent creatures and their habitats.

I look forward to seeing you in Goa next year!

*Kartik Shanker*  
*President, ISTS*

## International Sea Turtle Society

### **President**

President-Elect

Past President

Secretary

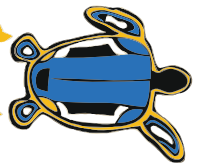
### **Kartik Shanker**

Jeffrey Seminoff

Colin J. Limpus

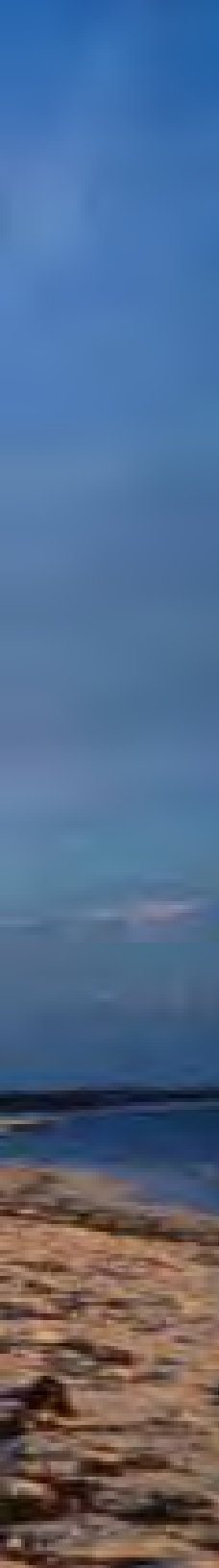
Manjula Tiwari

INTERNATIONAL SEA TURTLE SOCIETY









The International Sea Turtle Society convenes an annual symposium on 'Sea Turtle Biology and Conservation'. This annual symposium brings together academics, policy makers, researchers, biologists, conservationists, students and volunteers to promote the exchange of information that advances the global knowledge of sea turtle biology and conservation. Over the years, it has drawn an increasing number of participants from different parts of the globe and with them, an increasing diversity of cultures and lessons in conservation.

While a majority of these symposia have been held in the United States of America, a few have been held in other parts of the world, including Mexico, Greece, Malaysia and recently, in Australia in February, 2009. And for the first time in 30 years, the symposium will be coming to India. We are proud to host the event and see this as a great opportunity to include our neighbours in South Asia to jointly host the event with us.

India has long been of particular interest to sea turtle conservationists and biologists from around the world; the coastline of Orissa hosts one of the largest mass nesting sites for olive ridley turtles and nesting of other turtles occurs on the islands of the Lakshadweep and Andaman & Nicobar. While the symposium will give participants from around the world a chance to explore and learn about our unique marine habitats, it will give us an opportunity to learn from an experienced group of experts and key decision makers to enhance our own efforts at managing and conserving our marine biodiversity.

# Sea turtles in India

Five of the seven known species of sea turtles are found in Indian waters.

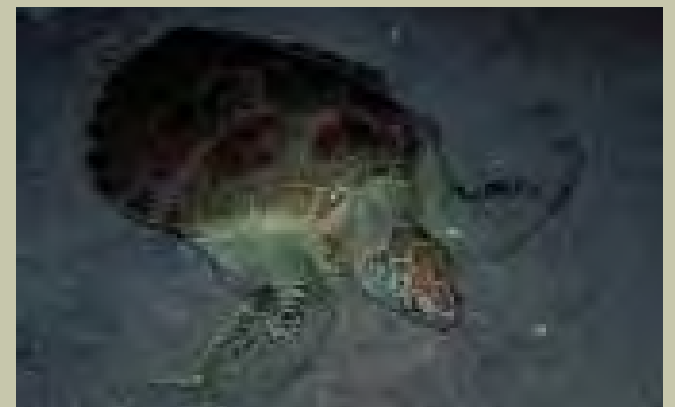
## Olive ridley turtle

The olive ridley is the most abundant of sea turtle species found in Indian waters. Gahirmatha, in Bhitarkanika Wildlife Sanctuary, and Rushikulya, both in Orissa on the east coast of India, supports one of the largest nesting populations with over 100,000 females nesting in a given year. This population continues to be threatened by near shore trawl fisheries and accelerating development of the coastline.



## Green turtle

These turtles are found throughout the world in tropical waters. Like other sea turtles, green turtles are known to migrate long distances between their feeding grounds and the beaches they hatched from. This species nests on island beaches, in the Lakshadweep Islands and Andaman and Nicobar Islands in India.



## Hawksbill turtle

One of the smaller of the sea turtle species, hawksbill turtles are found throughout tropical waters and use a wide range of habitats. It gets its name from its beak-like mouth. The hawksbill turtle has been exploited for its shell, to make 'tortoiseshell products'; it is listed as 'critically endangered' in the IUCN's Red List.



## Leatherback turtle

The leatherback turtle is the largest of all living sea turtles, and gets its name from its slightly flexible and rubbery textured carapace. This turtle nests in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands; some of the best nesting beaches were destroyed during the December 2004 tsunami.



## Loggerhead turtle

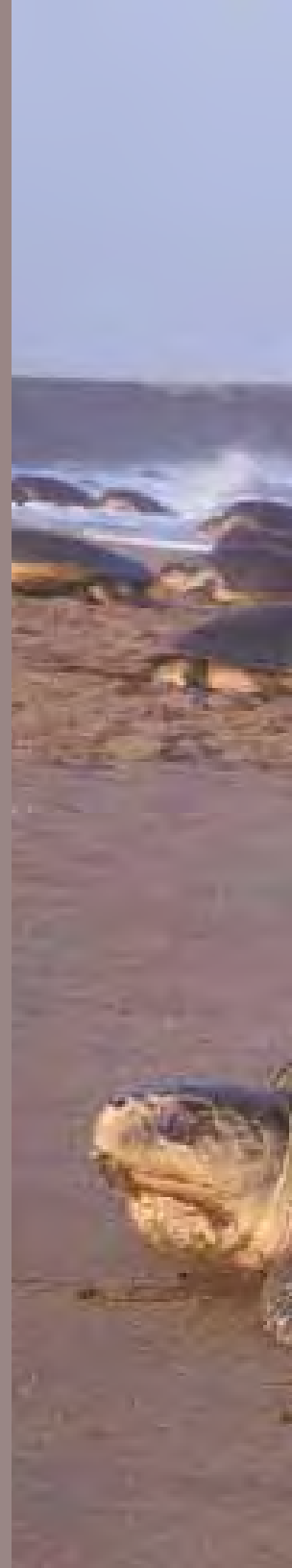
The loggerhead sea turtle occurs throughout the temperate and tropical regions of the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian Oceans. It gets its name from its large head. Loggerheads are not known to nest in India, but nests have been recorded in Sri Lanka and it has been found in the Gulf of Mannar.



There are several important sites and populations in India and other parts of South Asia, including the mass nesting beaches for olive ridleys in Orissa, feeding and nesting grounds for green and hawksbill turtles in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and the Lakshadweep Islands, and a significant nesting population of leatherbacks in the Little Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The subcontinent has several serious conservation issues that need to be addressed urgently.

Sea turtles have also been part of legend and culture in the region for more than a thousand years, including perhaps some of the oldest historical references to sea turtles. Some of the oldest conservation movements were started in the subcontinent. Current models of community based and participatory conservation in many states in India and Sri Lanka serve as excellent models for conservation, which can be replicated elsewhere.

Tens of thousands of olive ridley turtles come to nest on the coast of Orissa during their annual *arribadas*







# Sea Turtles :



## Ambassadors of the oceans

Sea turtles have long fascinated both biologists and conservationists. Over millions of years of their existence, these reptiles have evolved a variety of remarkable strategies for survival. They use a wide range of habitats and form unique components of complex ecological systems. They therefore play a critical role as ‘flagship species’ for the conservation of the ocean’s ecosystems and diversity.

Sea turtles are also excellent indicators of the health of coastal and marine environments. A healthy marine environment ensures us the use of exploitable marine products as well as benefits of ecosystem services that we directly, and indirectly, depend on.

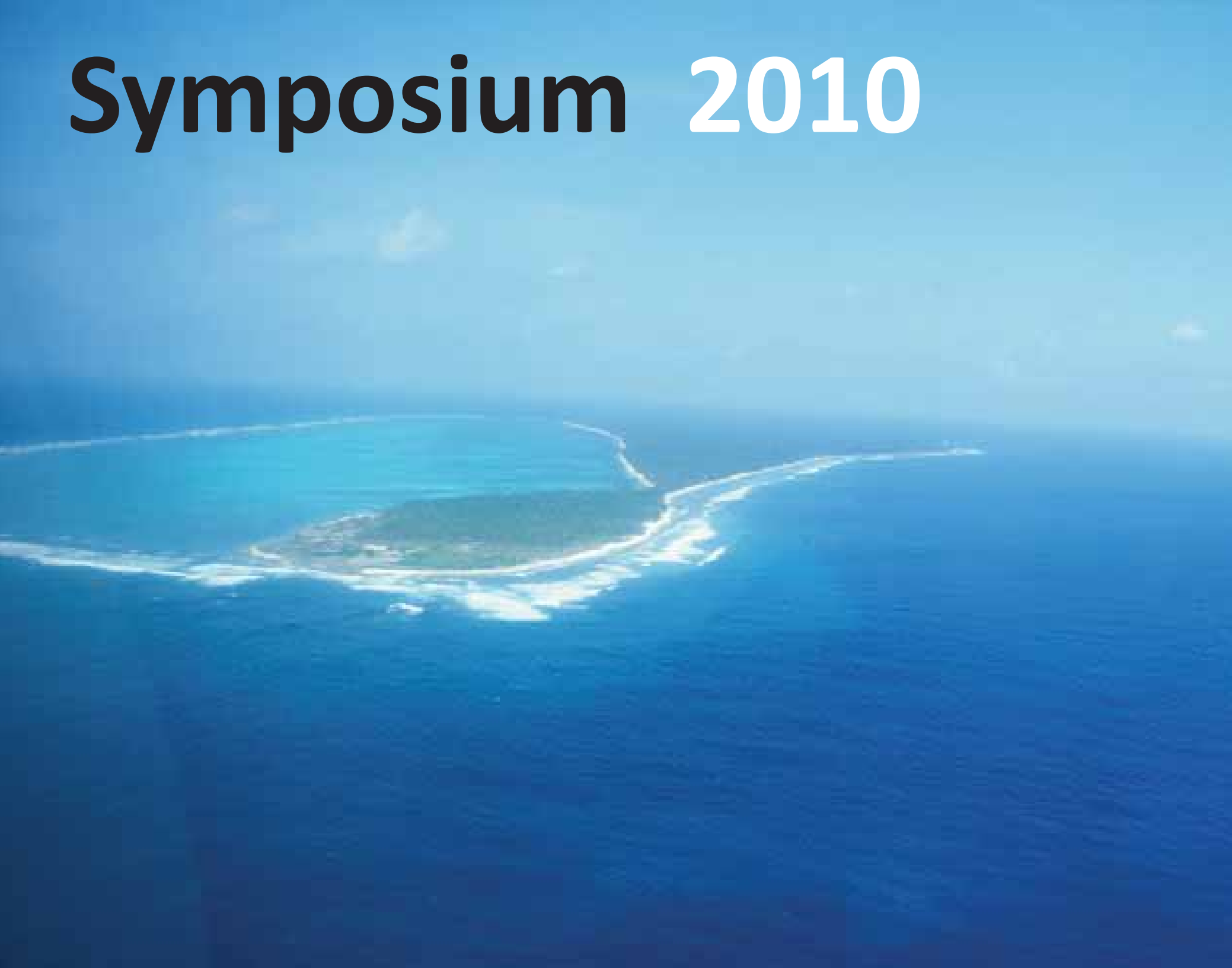
# why they deserve our attention


Sea turtles around the world face a variety of threats ranging from habitat loss, fisheries related mortality, predation of eggs and hatchlings by predators and humans and poaching. The more recent and perhaps most imminent threat the turtles face today is unplanned and unsustainable coastal development which has impacted their nesting, feeding and breeding grounds.

By protecting these animals and their habitats, we ensure protection for our seas and coastal areas, the flora and fauna that are components of these systems, and in turn protect the livelihoods of millions of fisherfolk who depend on these very resources.

Six of the seven species of sea turtles that inhabit the world's oceans are globally threatened.

# Symposium 2010





The sea turtle symposium in 2010 will offer the opportunity to a large number of government officials, local conservation groups and students from across India, and South Asia, to participate in this event for the first time. It will also provide a unique insight about India to international delegates, many of whom have expressed overwhelming support to host the event in India.

Theme

*The World of Turtles*

Sea turtles inhabit the land and the sea. They connect the shallow nearshore waters to the open sea, cold temperate to warm tropical waters. They migrate across ocean basins. And through several thousands of years, they have connected us ecologically and culturally to the sea. The symposium will therefore seek to explore these connections and focus on the world they live in. The world of coral reefs, seagrass meadows, open seas and sandy beaches. The world of people, living and working on the coast or at sea; of fishing cultures and livelihoods. All connected by sea turtles and by us.

# Programme

Date	Programme	Venue
24 Apr	Workshop: Marine Invasives	Taj Vivanta, Panaji
	Workshop: Stable Isotopes	
	Regional meeting: Latin America	The Kala Academy, Panaji
25 Apr	Fisheries Forum	The Kala Academy, Panaji
	Regional meeting: Africa	
	Regional meeting: Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia	
26 Apr	South Asia Mini-Symposium	The Kala Academy, Panaji
27 Apr	Symposium	The Kala Academy, Panaji
28 Apr		
29 Apr		
30 Apr	Meeting: IUCN/MTSG Meeting	The Kala Academy, Panaji
	Workshop: Turtle Rehabilitation	
	Workshop: Satellite Telemetry	Taj Vivanta, Panaji

Between the 24th and 26th and on the 30th of April 2010, regional and other associated meetings and workshops will be held, including a South Asia mini-symposium on the 26th and a Fisheries Forum between the 25th.

The main symposium (27th - 29th April) will comprise of key note presentations and oral, speed and poster presentations by participants. In keeping with the theme of the symposium, in addition to regular sessions, special sessions include: Ecosystems, Environmental Impacts on Habitats, Population & Behaviour and Resource-dependent Livelihoods, among others.

### **Social & Cultural events:**

Also planned along with the symposium sessions are associated social and cultural events. This is an opportunity for symposium delegates to interact with each other in a less formal atmosphere and to showcase the unique and culturally significant aspects of Goa, India and South Asia to a global audience.







# Fisheries Forum

The 30th Annual Sea Turtle Symposium and its partners will host a special Fisheries Forum to focus on various dimensions of the interaction between fisheries and sea turtle conservation and research.

The discourse on turtle-fisheries interactions is not limited to the question of 'bycatch' alone. The Fisheries Forum endeavours to foster greater interaction at the symposium between those with a primary interest in sea turtles and those with a primary interest in fisheries. These interests may and indeed do converge in many areas, and there are substantial gains from an interface of both these 'cultures'.

The problems to the survival of several populations of sea turtles posed by fisheries is a deeply political one and earlier attempts to fix these using technical fixes alone have not proved fruitful. The same

can also be said of the implications on fishing communities from conservation restrictions. The Forum will provide an opportunity for participants to learn and share information on the nature, culture and organisation of fisher communities, the challenges and politics of fisheries management and marine conservation.

## **Organising Committee on Fisheries**

Aarthi Sridhar, Dakshin Foundation

Ashish Kothari, Kalpavriksh

Chandrika Sharma, International

Collective in Support of Fishworkers

Lisa Campbell, Duke University Marine  
Labs

Muralidharan C.M, Consultant FAO,  
Chennai

Neema Pathak, Kalpavriksh

Ravi Bhalla, FERAL

V. Vivekanandan, Fisheries Management  
Resource Centre



Unique to the 2010 Symposium is a special mini-symposium convening turtle conservation groups and others from within the region. Sea turtle conservation in the region has come a long way and there are many individuals and organisations working in the region, towards turtle conservation. Now there is a need to initiate integrated and coordinated conservation actions, and an opportunity to share and learn from each other. It is most apt that sea turtles, which transcend all political and cultural boundaries, unite us all.

The objective of the South Asia regional symposium is to provide a platform for sea turtle biologists and conservationists from South Asia to meet, share and network. The symposium will also explore possibilities towards a collaborative response for the conservation of the turtles.

**Date:** 26th April 2010

**Venue:** The Kala Academy, Panaji, Goa

### **South Asia Mini-Symposium Organising Committee**

Thushan Kapurusinghe, Turtle Conservation Project - Sri Lanka

Ahmad Khan, WWF-Pakistan - Pakistan

Hussein Zahir, Marine Research Centre - Maldives

Zahirul Islam, Marine Life Alliance - Bangladesh

Naveen Namboothri, Dakshin Foundation - India

# **South Asia Mini-Symposium**





# Location: Goa

Goa was chosen as the ideal location for hosting the symposium for a variety of reasons. It has long been a favoured destination for tourists from around the world and has the necessary facilities and infrastructure to cater to a very diverse group of visitors. Further, Mumbai, the primary port of entry to a large number of travelers to India, is situated close to Goa and offers a variety of transportation options.

Being on the coast, Goa offers symposium participants the opportunity to explore its unique shores. Turtle nesting beaches along some stretches of the Goan coast also have hatcheries established by the Goa Forest Department.

A wide range of accommodation and other facilities that will be required by the participants is also available in Goa, in close proximity to the venue. Goa has a dedicated team of volunteers, venue managers, hotel staff and event managers to help host the event.



An event of this magnitude requires the support and participation of many key partners and sponsors. In the past, these symposia have garnered support from a wide range of organizations from government ministries and departments and international conservation organizations, to local government bodies, community based groups and corporate sponsors. The roles that they play have varied from providing funds for the event, sponsoring specific events on the agenda and contributing time and effort towards organizing the event.

Support for the 2010 symposium is solicited from all quarters; while we see this as an excellent opportunity for government organizations to demonstrate their support towards the cause and form partnerships with their counterparts who are representatives of countries across the globe, we also encourage local, community based groups, students and volunteers to contribute their time and ideas into making this an inclusive and beneficial event.

# Support

## Benefits to sponsors

Sponsorship contributes to the promotion, planning and operation of the symposium. Sponsoring this event can benefit the sponsor in the following ways:

- It will be an opportunity for the organization to demonstrate positive environmental and social values,
- There is great potential to promote the organization to local and international delegates who will include decision makers, scientists, students and conservation organizations,
- Media exposure and publicity through online forums and email broadcasts of the event before, leading up to, and during the event will provide adequate exposure to the organization.

## Benefits to partners

Our official partners of the symposium will find benefits in:

- An opportunity to interact with, and be recognized by key resource personnel, international organizations, academic institutions and government agencies as an official partner in the organization of the 2010 symposium,
- Strengthening partnerships with other organizations that are key representatives of various regions of South Asia,
- An opportunity to demonstrate support to the international community towards sea turtle conservation,
- To find an international platform for highlighting problems and challenges in sea turtle/other related coastal and marine conservation issues that are of relevance to the organization's aims and objectives.

## Local Organizers



Centre for Ecological Sciences  
Indian Institute of Science  
India



Dakshin  
Foundation  
India



Foundation for Ecological  
Research, Advocacy and  
Learning  
India



Madras Crocodile  
Bank Trust  
India



National Centre for  
Biological Sciences  
India

## South Asia Partners



Centre for Advanced Research in  
Natural Resources & Management  
(CARINAM), Bangladesh



Marine Life  
Alliance  
Bangladesh



Marine Research Centre  
Maldives



WWF-Pakistan  
Pakistan



South Asia Cooperative  
Environment Programme  
Sri Lanka



Turtle Conservation  
Project  
Sri Lanka



## India Partners



Bombay Natural  
History Society  
India



C.P.R. Environmental  
Education Centre  
India



Fisheries Management  
Resource Centre  
India



Greenpeace - India  
India



Gujarat Institute of Desert  
Ecology (GuIDE)  
India



International Collective in  
Support of Fishworkers  
India



Kalpavriksh  
Environment Action Group  
India



Ministry of Environment  
and Forests  
Govt. of India



Nature Conservation  
Foundation  
India



Orissa Marine Resources  
Conservation Consortium  
(OMRCC)  
India



Salim Ali Centre  
for Ornithology and  
Natural History  
India



TREE Foundation  
India

**TAG**  
Turtle Action Group - India



Turtle Action Group  
(TAG)  
India



Wildlife Information Liaison  
Development (WILD)  
India



भारतीय वन्यजीव संस्थान  
Wildlife Institute of India

Wildlife Institute of India  
India



W P S I

Wildlife Protection  
Society of India  
India



WWF-India  
India



Zoo Outreach Organisation  
(ZOO)  
India

Event Management Partner



**HOSTINDIA**  
EVENTS | MARKETING SERVICES | EVENT JOBS

Host India Events  
India

Travel & Accommodation Partner



integrated  
conference and  
event management

ICE India

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### **Programme Coordinator**

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### **Regional Partners Coordinator &**

### **Programme Coordinator (India)**

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Vijitha Pereira (Host India Events)

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### **Travel & Accommodation Partner - ICE India**

Contact: Nilesh Surve

Email: seaturtle@iceindia.in

For more information visit <http://india.seaturtle.org/symposium2010>

Cover illustration by Maya Ramaswamy, adapted from *Turtle Story*, Pratham Books, 2006.

