महाराष्ट्र वन विभाग
Mangrove Cell

MANGROVE FOUNDATION



SONNERATIA

Vol.4 Issue 2

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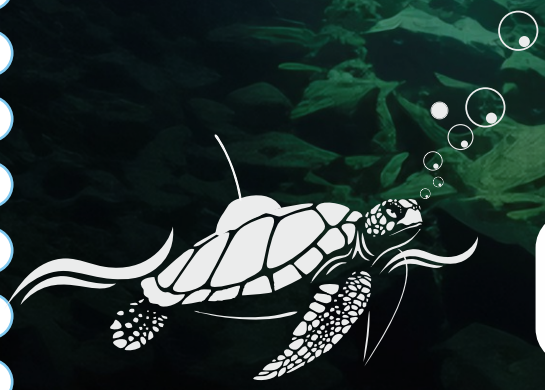


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EDITORIAL



Dear Readers,

Coastal ecosystems along Maharashtra's shoreline support rich marine biodiversity and are vital for sustaining threatened species such as sea turtles. Recognising this responsibility, the Mangrove Foundation has been implementing focused conservation, research, and awareness initiatives to ensure the long-term protection of these habitats. A key milestone in this journey was the satellite tagging of the first rescued Olive Ridley Sea Turtle on the west coast of India. Named *Dhaval Lakshmi,* the turtle inspires this issue, which highlights this landmark initiative through a special feature article.

In collaboration with WII–Dehradun, the Foundation has been flipper-tagging sea turtles in Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg since 2024. The return of four tagged females to the same nesting beaches has provided valuable insights into sea turtle migration along the Maharashtra coast. To strengthen nest protection efforts, turtle nest managers have been appointed across the state, with one being felicitated by the Hon'ble Forest Minister of Maharashtra at the Vanopaj Exhibition.

I sincerely thank Dr. Hemali Joshi for her contribution to the Readers' Corner, highlighting the threat of plastic pollution to sea turtles. The Foundation continues to promote safer coastlines through regular beach clean-ups, including a mega drive on Coastal Clean-up Day that collected 29,500 kg of waste with the support of 7,223 volunteers.

This issue also features awareness initiatives such as Wildlife Week, Bird Week, and the Vanyawani Festival, along with the Marathi field guide on *Birds of Thane Creek,* showcased on the back cover and available at the Coastal and Marine Biodiversity Centre, Airoli.

With the continued support of coastal communities and the general public, we remain hopeful of making our coast a safe haven for sea turtles.

Smt. Madhumitha S.
Deputy Conservator of Forests, Mangrove Cell &
Joint Director Mangrove Foundation

ACHIEVEMENTS

1. First Satellite-Tagged Stranded Olive Ridley Sea Turtle on the West Coast of India



In a significant step for marine conservation along the Maharashtra coast, the Dahanu Forest Division and the Mangrove Cell of the Maharashtra Forest Department, in collaboration with the Wildlife Institute of India (WII), successfully satellite-tagged an Olive Ridley female sea turtle at Dahanu in Palghar district on 20th November 2025.

The turtle, later named 'Dhaval Lakshmi', has a story of survival that reflects the importance of timely intervention and community support. On 10th August 2025, she was found entangled in a fishing net off the Dahanu coast. Local fishermen carefully freed the turtle and, noticing injuries on both her front flippers, immediately handed her over to the Turtle Treatment Centre (TTC), Dahanu, which is operated by the Dahanu Forest Division.

At the Turtle Treatment Centre, Dhaval Lakshmi received medical treatment and rehabilitation under expert care. Over time, she made a full recovery. After assessing her health and fitness, marine experts decided to fit her with a satellite transmitter to help track her movements after release.

This effort marks several important milestones for marine conservation in Maharashtra. It is the first time an injured and rehabilitated sea turtle has been satellite-tagged on the west coast of India. It is also the first satellite-tagged turtle from Palghar district and the eighth Olive Ridley turtle to be satellite-tagged along the Maharashtra coastline.



Following the tagging, Dhaval Lakshmi was safely released back into the sea off the coast of Dahanu. The satellite tag will now help forest officials, scientists, and researchers study her movement patterns and long-distance migration routes, providing valuable information about Olive Ridley turtles that originate from the northern Maharashtra coast.

This initiative highlights how community participation, scientific collaboration, and dedicated conservation efforts can come together to protect marine wildlife. From the quick action of local fishermen to the coordinated efforts of forest officials and researchers, Dhaval Lakshmi's journey stands as a hopeful example of conservation in action along Maharashtra's coastline.

2. SHG's felicitated by Hon'ble Forest Minister



The Vanopaj exhibition held at CIDCO, Vashi on 17th September 2025 was organised by the Maharashtra Forest Department. SHG groups under the Mangrove Conservation and Livelihood Generation Scheme and Turtle nest managers were felicitated by the Hon'ble Forest Minister of Maharashtra.

The Navlai Kandalvan Ecotourism Group from Nachane village, Ratnagiri district, received the Best Eco-tourism Group award for their outstanding efforts in sustainable eco-tourism, while the Navlai Pavanai Ornamental Fish Farming Group from Mirya village, Ratnagiri district was also honored for its outstanding contribution to livelihood generation.

Additionally, Shri Sanjay Bhosale was recognized for his dedicated work in turtle conservation from Malgund village, Guhagar taluka in Ratnagiri district, where he serves as a Turtle Nest Manager. These awards highlight the significant role of community-based initiatives in conservation and sustainable livelihood in mangroves and marine ecosystems.

2. Birds of Thane Creek field guide released



A Marathi field guide titled Birds of Thane Creek was released by the Hon'ble Forest Minister, Shri Ganeshji Naik, on 11th February 2026. The guide comprises photographs and descriptions of 75 commonly found waterbird species recorded from Thane Creek. It has been developed as an awareness and reference resource for bird enthusiasts, students, and conservationists and is available at the Coastal and Marine Biodiversity Centre, Airoli

ARTICLE

TRACKING THE OCEAN'S ANCIENT NAVIGATOR



Ms. Sweety Khirari,

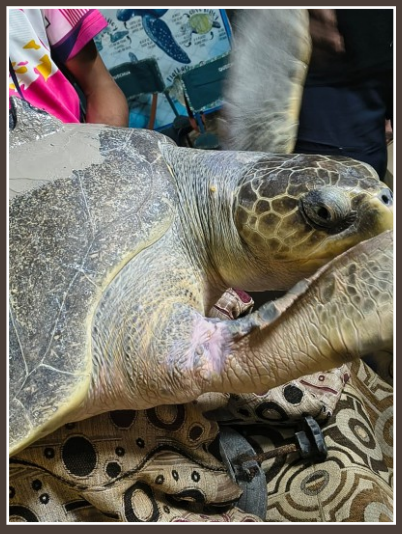
Officer-Capacity Building at Mangrove Foundation coordinates the capacity-building, awareness and outreach programmes of the foundation.



Sea turtles are among the most ancient and fascinating marine reptiles on Earth. There are seven species of sea turtles found worldwide—Olive Ridley, Kemp's Ridley, Loggerhead, Green, Hawksbill, Flatback, and Leatherback. Although I had heard about sea turtles before, I did not know much about their size, colours, species diversity, life cycle, or unique characteristics. Until recently, I had only seen freshwater turtles, and the only thing I knew about them was that they could live for a very long time—sometimes up to 100 years.

This year, I had the privilege of attending the sea turtle tagging programme of Maharashtra Forest Department (Mangrove Foundation) and it became one of the most enriching experiences of my life.

A female Olive Ridley Sea Turtle was found injured after getting entangled in a fishing net in the Arabian Sea near Dahanu along the west coast of India. The fishermen promptly informed the Forest Department, and the rescue team safely brought her to the Turtle Treatment Centre (TTC), Dahanu.



At TTC, Dr. Vinherkar and his team performed surgery on her injuries. After the operation, she was kept under special care for nearly three months. Gradually, she recovered well. During this period, a few other stranded sea turtles from different coastal areas of Maharashtra were also rescued and treated at TTC.

Once they were declared fit for release, it was decided that this Olive Ridley turtle would be satellite-tagged and flipper-tagged before being released back into her natural habitat. The objective was to study her migration route, movement patterns, and behavioural aspects.

Experts from the Wildlife Institute of India (WII), Dehradun Mr. Mohit Mudliar and Ms. Nidhi Mhatre were invited for the tagging process. The team included Deputy Conservator of Forests (Mangrove Cell) Ms. Madhumitha S., Dr. Manas Manjrekar, Mr. Hrishikesh Rane, Ms. Kshitija Parkar, Mr. Mohan Upadhyay, and myself from the Mangrove Foundation.



On 19th November 2025, we reached Dahanu late at night. After dinner, we visited the treatment centre. For the first time in my life, I saw a fully grown Olive Ridley Sea Turtle. I was completely amazed by her size and felt a deep sense of excitement and gratitude. I also saw other species, including the Hawksbill Sea Turtle and the Green Sea Turtle, along with taxidermy models of Olive Ridley and Loggerhead Sea Turtles.

The satellite-tagging process began at 11:30 PM. Her weight was recorded as 28 kg, and detailed carapace measurements were taken. When she was gently lifted from the tank, her hind legs folded into a posture that resembled a Namaskar. That moment felt very special to me.

The upper shell (carapace) was cleaned thoroughly multiple times using polish paper, cloth tissues, ethanol, and spirit to ensure a smooth surface. An epoxy mixture of resin and hardener was then applied to fix the satellite tag securely. The total weight of the tag and materials was kept below 5% of her body weight, following scientific guidelines. A plastic mesh was placed over the tag and sealed with epoxy, leaving the antenna and sensor exposed. After the process, she was kept in a dry tank for about three hours to allow the epoxy to set properly.



Throughout the night, we monitored her condition carefully, kept her moist with wet cloths, and ensured her comfort. The next morning, antifouling paint was applied over the epoxy to prevent algae and barnacle growth. Flipper tags were then attached to both front flippers for identification. Her right flipper tag number was IND11012 and her left flipper tag number was IND11013. Three other Olive Ridley turtles that were to be released on the same day were also flipper-tagged.

Before her release, we named her “Dhaval Lakshmi.” The name “Dhaval” was chosen in honour of Late Mr. Dhaval Kansara, founder of the Wildlife Conservation and Animal Welfare Association (WCAWA), and “Lakshmi” was inspired by Goddess Mahalakshmi, whose temple is located at Dahanu.

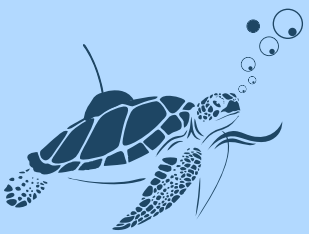


The turtles were transported by ambulance to Dhakti Dahanu Jetty. From there, we travelled nearly 4 to 6 nautical miles into the open sea by boat. The three flipper-tagged turtles were released first. Finally, Dhaval Lakshmi was gently released into the vast Arabian Sea.

As she touched the water and swam towards freedom, I felt an overwhelming sense of happiness and fulfillment. Watching her disappear into the endless blue was an unforgettable moment. It was not just a release—it was the continuation of her ancient journey.

Since her release, Dhaval Lakshmi is heading towards Oman continuously and currently approximately 400 KM from the coast of Oman. Tracking her journey fills me with immense pride and joy. Knowing that our collective efforts helped her return safely to the ocean gives me deep professional satisfaction.

This experience was more than just fieldwork for me—it was a powerful lesson in conservation, teamwork, and resilience. Watching Dhaval Lakshmi swim back into the open sea reminded me that even small efforts can create meaningful impact. Her journey continues, and with it, our responsibility to protect these ancient navigators of the ocean.



STAFF'S CORNER

1. Ghostbusters in the Mangroves: Unsung Heroes of Maharashtra's Forest Department



अमलताश

August 2025 — The Voice of Plants.. — Volume 1 | Issue 3

Thoughtscape

Ghostbusters in the Mangroves: Unsung Heroes of Maharashtra's Forest Department

Mangrove forests may seem calm and serene from a distance, but within their twisted roots and murky waters lie daily battles fought against invisible threats —illegal encroachments, plastic pollution, habitat destruction, etc. At the heart of this ongoing fight is a dedicated group of real-life "Ghostbusters"—the Mangrove Cell, Forest Department of Maharashtra.

Guardians of the Green Coast

Maharashtra is home to one of the richest mangrove ecosystems in India, spanning over 31,500+ Ha. along its coastlines. These mangroves are not just vital ecological buffers; they are biodiversity hotspots, carbon sinks, and natural storm shields. Recognizing their critical importance, the Mangrove Cell, has emerged as a proactive and innovative force in conserving these fragile habitats. The designation of mangroves as Protected Forest under the Indian Forest Act, 1972 has provided legal muscle to the conservation efforts.

Battling the Invisible Foes

Just as ghostbusters track down elusive spirits, Forest Officials must contend with threats that are not always easy to see or stop. Illegal dumping of construction debris, silent encroachments, and the creeping spread of invasive species threaten mangrove health.

Forest guards, often working in difficult terrain and adverse weather, patrol these areas on foot and by boat. They respond swiftly to reports of tree felling or land grabbing and use satellite surveillance and mapping to detect changes in forest cover.

Technology Meets Tradition

In recent years, the Department has incorporated cutting-edge tools into its conservation toolkit. GIS mapping & MRSAC helps track mangrove growth and degradation and at the same time, forest staff rely on traditional knowledge and on-ground vigilance to detect early signs of damage. The Mangrove Suraksha App acts as a digital ally in the fight against threats—streamlining public complaints and ensuring swift, transparent action by the Forest Department.

Contd...

The article was published in the Amaltash magazine in the August 2025 issue published by Botany dept. at D. G. Ruparel College. The article highlights the work of the Forest Department for protection and conservation of mangroves in Maharashtra. These forests act as natural storm barriers, carbon sinks, and biodiversity hotspots. The Mangrove Cell has strengthened conservation efforts with legal, technological, and community-driven approaches.

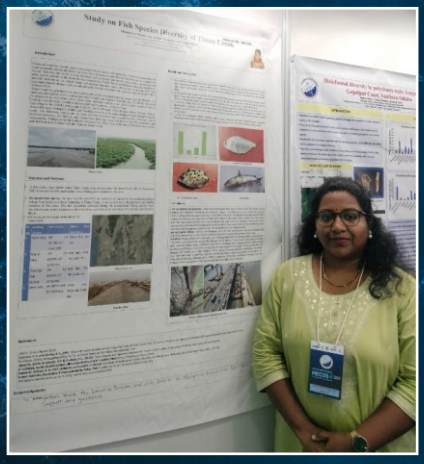
Read the full article here



Hrishikesh Rane,
Assistant Director-Research and Capacity Building at Mangrove Foundation coordinates the capacity-building, awareness and outreach programmes of the foundation

2. Study on fish species diversity of Thane Creek

The study on fish species diversity in Thane Creek was presented at International symposium MECOS-4 by Ms. Dhanashree Bagade, Marine Biologist in Mangrove Foundation. The said symposium was organised by Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) from 04th-06th November 2025, and the abstract of the study was published in the MECOS 4 abstract book. The study documented the diversity and distribution of finfishes and shellfishes in Thane Creek through jetty surveys and experimental fishing using gill nets and shore seines from April to October 2021. A total of 49 fish species from 29 families were recorded. Fishing activity was highest during the pre-monsoon season (February–May), particularly during high tides, and was influenced by the lunar cycle.



Read the full article here



Ms. Dhanashree Bagade,
Marine Biologist at Mangrove Foundation manages the marine animal rescue compensation scheme, sea turtle conservation project and other marine research projects

SAMACHAR

1. Awareness activity at Abhinav College

The Mangrove Foundation in collaboration with For Future India conducted an awareness session at Abhinav College of Arts, Commerce & Science at Bhayandar on 25th September celebrating 5 years of declaring 'Sonneratia alba' as the State Mangrove Tree of Maharashtra. The NSS students of Abhinav College attended the session learning about the significance of mangroves and its conservation efforts by the Forest Department.

Read the full article here



ePaper
नवभारत Mumbai | 25 September 2025 | Page 2

सत्र : भाईंदर के अभिनव कॉलेज में विशेष संगोष्ठी

'आओ बात करते हैं मैंग्रोज वन की'

■ भाईंदर, (सं.) फॉर फ्यूचर इंडिया, मैंग्रोव फाउंडेशन और राष्ट्रीय सेवा योजना (एनएसएस) के संयुक्त प्रयास से भाईंदर पूर्व के गोडदेव गांव स्थित अभिनव कॉलेज में 'आओ बात करते हैं मैंग्रोज वन की' विषय पर विशेष संगोष्ठी और जागरूकता सत्र का आयोजन किया गया. संगोष्ठी में मैंग्रोव फाउंडेशन के ऋषिकेश राणे ने मैंग्रोव वन के पारिस्थितिक महत्व पर प्रकाश डाला. मुख्य वक्ता पर्यावरणविद् धीरज परब ने कहा कि "मैंग्रोज वन केवल वृक्ष नहीं हैं, बल्कि तटीय पारिस्थितिकी तंत्र की रक्षा करने वाले हरित कवच हैं. युवा पीढ़ी को इनके संरक्षण की ज़िम्मेदारी लेनी चाहिए. उन्होंने मैंग्रोज वन संरक्षण से जुड़े कानून, जैव विविधता और छात्रों की भागीदारी की अहमियत पर विस्तार से चर्चा की. इस अवसर पर कॉलेज के प्रा. डॉ. एल्विन मेनेजेस, फॉर फ्यूचर इंडिया के अध्यक्ष हर्षद ढगे, एनएसएस की अरुणा गुजर व अन्य उपस्थित थे. समापन पर्यावरण संरक्षण की शपथ के साथ हुआ. साथ ही मैंग्रोव वन संरक्षण अभियान, प्रकृति भ्रमण और स्वच्छता गतिविधियों की योजना भी प्रस्तुत की गई.



अभिनव महाविद्यालयात कांदळवनावर बोलू काही

भाईंदर : भाईंदर पूर्वेच्या अभिनव महाविद्यालयात वन विभागाच्या मँग्रोव्ह फाऊंडेशन व फॉर फ्युचर इंडिया यांच्या संयुक्त विद्यमाने, तसेच राष्ट्रीय सेवा योजना (एनएसएस) यांच्या सहकार्याने 'कांदळवनावर बोलू काही' या विशेष परिसंवादाचे आयोजन करण्यात आले. या कार्यक्रमाला विद्यार्थ्यांचा मोठ्या प्रमाणावर सहभाग लाभला आहे. तसेच त्यांच्यामध्ये पर्यावरणाविषयी जनजागृती करण्यात आली आहे.अभिनव महाविद्यालयात या विशेष व्याख्यानात मँग्रोव्ह फाऊंडेशनचे हृषिकेश राणे यांनी 'कांदळवन म्हणजे काय आणि त्यांचे पर्यावरणीय महत्त्व' याबाबत सविस्तर माहिती दिली. प्रमुख वक्ते पर्यावरणप्रेमी व वरिष्ठ पत्रकार धीरज परब यांनी 'कांदळवन संवर्धनासाठीचे कायदे, जैवविविधतेचे रक्षण आणि विद्यार्थ्यांचा सहभाग का अत्यंत महत्त्वाचा आहे' हे मुद्दे स्पष्ट केले. सदरील कार्यक्रमाला उपस्थित मान्यवरांमध्ये अभिनव कॉलेजचे प्राचार्य डॉ. अल्विन मेनेझेस, फॉर फ्युचर इंडियाचे अध्यक्ष हर्षद ढगे, राष्ट्रीय सेवा योजनेच्या अरुणा गुजर, तसेच फॉर फ्युचर इंडियाचे प्रतिनिधी अब्राहम मुरुगन व सनय मिश्रा उपस्थित होते.

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2. Mega Clean-up on International Coastal Clean-up day

On 21st September 2025, the Mangrove Foundation in collaboration with For Future India NGO conducted a Mega-Cleanup at Uttan Beach, Bhayandar on the occasion of International Coastal Clean-up day. More than 4,000 volunteers participated in the clean-up drive, during which approximately seven tonnes of waste were collected from Uttan Beach.

Read the full article here



नवभारत
www.navbharatlive.com

सफाई अभियान : अंतरराष्ट्रीय तटीय सफाई दिवस पर आयोजन

उत्तन बीच पर मेगा क्लीनअप ड्राइव

फॉर फ्यूचर इंडिया ने अंतर्राष्ट्रीय तटीय सफाई दिवस के अवसर पर मीरा-भाईंदर मनपा (MBMC) एवं महाराष्ट्र वन विभाग-मैंग्रोव फाउंडेशन के संयुक्त तत्वावधान में, CO2 और डेकाथलॉन के सहयोग से भाईंदर (पश्चिम) के उत्तन बीच पर एक विशाल सफाई अभियान आयोजित किया गया. इस अभियान में 4000 से अधिक स्वयंसेवकों ने भाग लिया. एनएसएस, एनसीसी के छात्र, कॉलेज व स्कूलों के विद्यार्थी, सामाजिक संगठन व नागरिक बड़ी संख्या में शामिल हुए.सभी के संयुक्त प्रयासों से 7 टन से अधिक प्लास्टिक व मिश्रित कडा तट से हटाया गया.इस दौरान मनपा आयुक्त राधाबिनोद शर्मा, अतिरिक्त आयुक्त प्रियंका राजपूत, उपायुक्त कल्पिता पिंपले, उपायुक्त डॉ. सचिन बांगर, मनीष पवार आदि उपस्थित रहे.

Mumbai plus Edition
Sep 21, 2025 Page No. 2
Powered by: navbharatlive.com

3. Ratnagiri Creek Safari becomes attraction point for tourist

Ratnagiri's network of creeks and backwaters — especially around the Kajali creek and coastal villages like Nachane, Narayanmali — has become a growing eco-tourism attraction similar in appeal to mangrove safaris in Kerala and Goa. Tourists enjoy scenic boat safaris through dense mangrove forests, observing wildlife, birds, and the unique mangrove ecosystem. These safaris also help raise awareness about mangrove conservation and support local livelihoods.

Read the full article here


पुढारी

रत्नागिरीतील खाडी सफारी ठरतेय पर्यटकांच्या आकर्षणाचा केंद्रबिंदू!

पर्यटकांची वाढती पसंती; नाचणे-नारायणमळी येथे वन विभाग-कांदळवन कक्षाच्या योजनेमुळे पर्यटनाची संधी

Ratnagiri Edition
Dec 29, 2025 Page No. 01

4. Female Sea Turtles Return to Guhagar Coast after a Year


'माहेरवाशिणी' वर्षभरानंतर गुहागरच्या किनारी

फ्लिपर टॅग केलेल्या समुद्री कासवांच्या माद्या वर्षभरानंतर अंडी घालण्यासाठी परतल्या

During the 2024-25 sea turtle nesting season, Mangrove Foundation in collaboration with Wildlife Institute of India flipper tags 62 female sea turtles on the Guhagar coast. Amongst them 04 have returned to the same coastline after one year for nesting. This observation provides scientific evidence that sea turtles return to the same beach for nesting.

Read the full article here

5. First record of male green sea turtle along the coast of Raigad district.

A male green sea turtle was stranded for the first time on the Shrivardhan coast in Raigad district. The turtle was spotted on Sunday (04th January 2025) in Bagmandla village, on the shore near the newly constructed ferry jetty, and it was released back safely into its natural habitat the same day.

Read the full article here



6. Nesting Season for Olive Ridley Turtle across Maharashtra coastline.


It's nesting season for Olive Ridley turtles across Maharashtra coastline; 407 nests recorded so far

Previously tagged Olive Ridleys return

•Eggs laid & hatchlings in Maharashtra over the past decade

NESTING SEASON	NUMBER OF NESTS	NUMBER OF EGGS LAID	NUMBER OF HATCHLINGS	HATCHLING SUCCESS RATE
2014-15	75	8,456	4,681	55.35%
2015-16	118	12,668	7,048	55.63%
2016-17	125	13,139	7,736	58.87
2017-18	331	32,468	13,535	35.54%
2018-19	233	23,191	12,661	54.30%
2019-20	228	27,254	12,149	44.80%
2020-21	475	50,799	23,706	46.70%
2021-22	NA	70,271	24,583	NA
2022-23	1,447	1,57,847	84,521	53.6%
2023-24	2,587	2,50,327	168,702	67.39%
2024-25	2,929	2,74,842	1,71,245	62.31%
2025-26 (ongoing)	407 (ongoing)	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing

Smallest, most abundant sea turtle

•Smallest and most abundant of all sea turtle species (Some other sea turtle species in India include Green sea turtle, Hawksbill, Leatherback turtle, Loggerhead turtles)
•Size: 3.2-5 ft (60-70 cm)
•Weight: 35-50 kg
•FOOD They feed on shrimp, snails, crabs, jellyfish, other varieties of fish and their eggs
•THREATS Fishing, exploitation of nesting beaches, illegal poaching for meat, eggs, shells, leather etc, natural predators

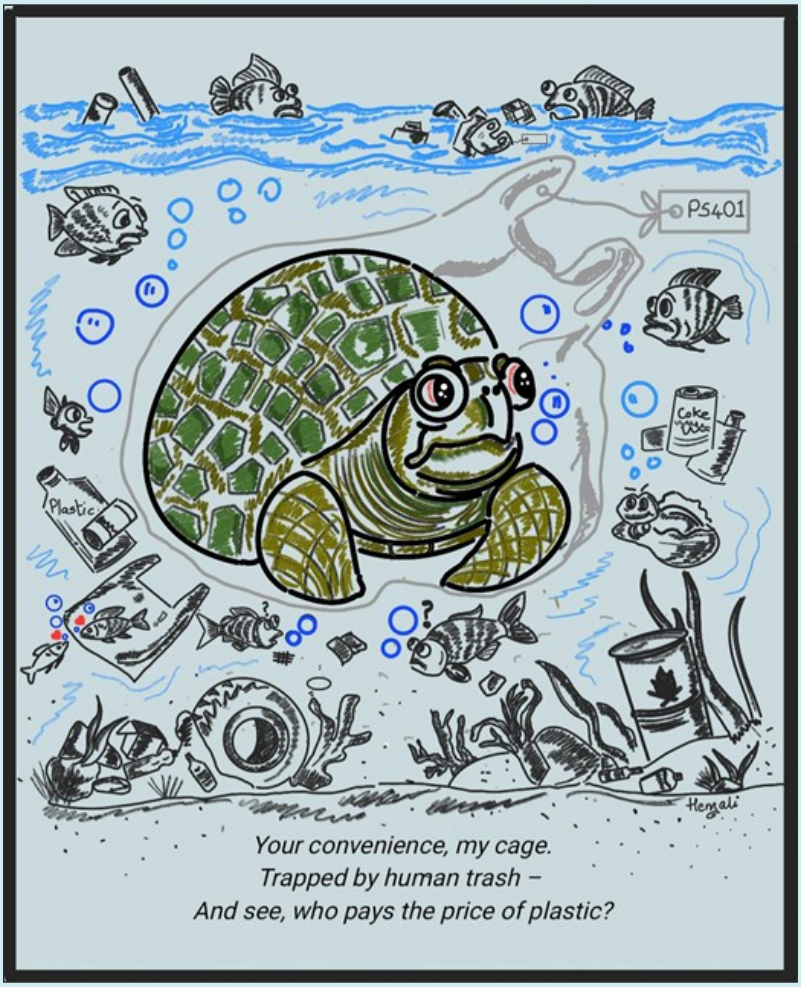
Left) A flipper tagged Olive Ridley.

The Indian EXPRESS

Maharashtra's coastline is witnessing a thriving Olive Ridley turtle nesting season, with 407 nests already recorded across 57 beaches in the Raigad, Ratnagiri, and Sindhudurg districts. A major highlight this year is the documented return of flipper-tagged turtles to the same nesting sites, a phenomenon known as "nesting site fidelity" that underscores the success of ongoing conservation efforts by the Maharashtra state Mangrove Cell and the Wildlife Institute of India. While these vulnerable sea turtles—protected under Schedule I of India's Wildlife Protection Act—continue to face threats from poaching and habitat exploitation, the steady rise in nest counts over the last decade offers a hopeful outlook for marine biodiversity along the western coast.

Read the full article here

YOUR CONVENIENCE IS MY CAGE



The Arabian Sea once shimmered like a living jewel. Sunlight danced on gentle waves, corals whispered ancient stories, and shoals of fish moved like silver poetry. But now, beneath the same waves, the sea was hurting—and it knew why.

Olive, the sea turtle, remembered the days when swimming felt like flying. Today, his flippers trembled. A transparent plastic bag clung tightly around his shell and neck, wrapping him like an invisible prison. The bag floated lightly, but its weight crushed his freedom. Every attempt to move only tightened the grip. Olive's eyes searched the blue vastness for hope, but all he saw were floating wrappers, torn rubber tyres, and rusted cold drink cans sinking slowly like silent enemies.

Hunger gnawed at him. The jellyfish he loved were nowhere to be found—only plastic sheets that looked deceptively similar. He dared not bite. He had already seen what plastic could do.

Nearby, a school of fishes circled anxiously. Tiny bubbles escaped their mouths, carrying fear instead of air. Every time they tried to eat, colorful plastic bits slipped in—red, blue, shiny fragments that tasted of death. Their bellies felt heavy, stuffed with junk instead of life. One fish whispered, "We are full... but we are starving."

At one corner of the reef, two fishes hovered close, their fins reaching out, almost touching. They had grown together, swam together, dreamed together. But now, a cruel plastic bag separated them. One was trapped, tangled, fighting every second to breathe. The other stayed beside it, refusing to leave, tears dissolving into the salty water. Love was present, but closeness was stolen.

Olive watched all this, his heart aching more than his body. With great effort, he spoke—not just to the fishes, but to the world beyond the waves.

"Your convenience is my cage," Olive said, his voice trembling but strong. "I am trapped by human trash. See what you did to me? See who is paying the price of plastic?"

His words echoed through the sea, brushing against corals and sinking into the sand. The fishes listened in silence. Even the waves seemed to pause.

A rusted metal can rolled along the seabed, clanking softly like a warning bell. Rubber pieces lay like scars on the ocean floor. This was not an accident—it was neglect, repeated every day.

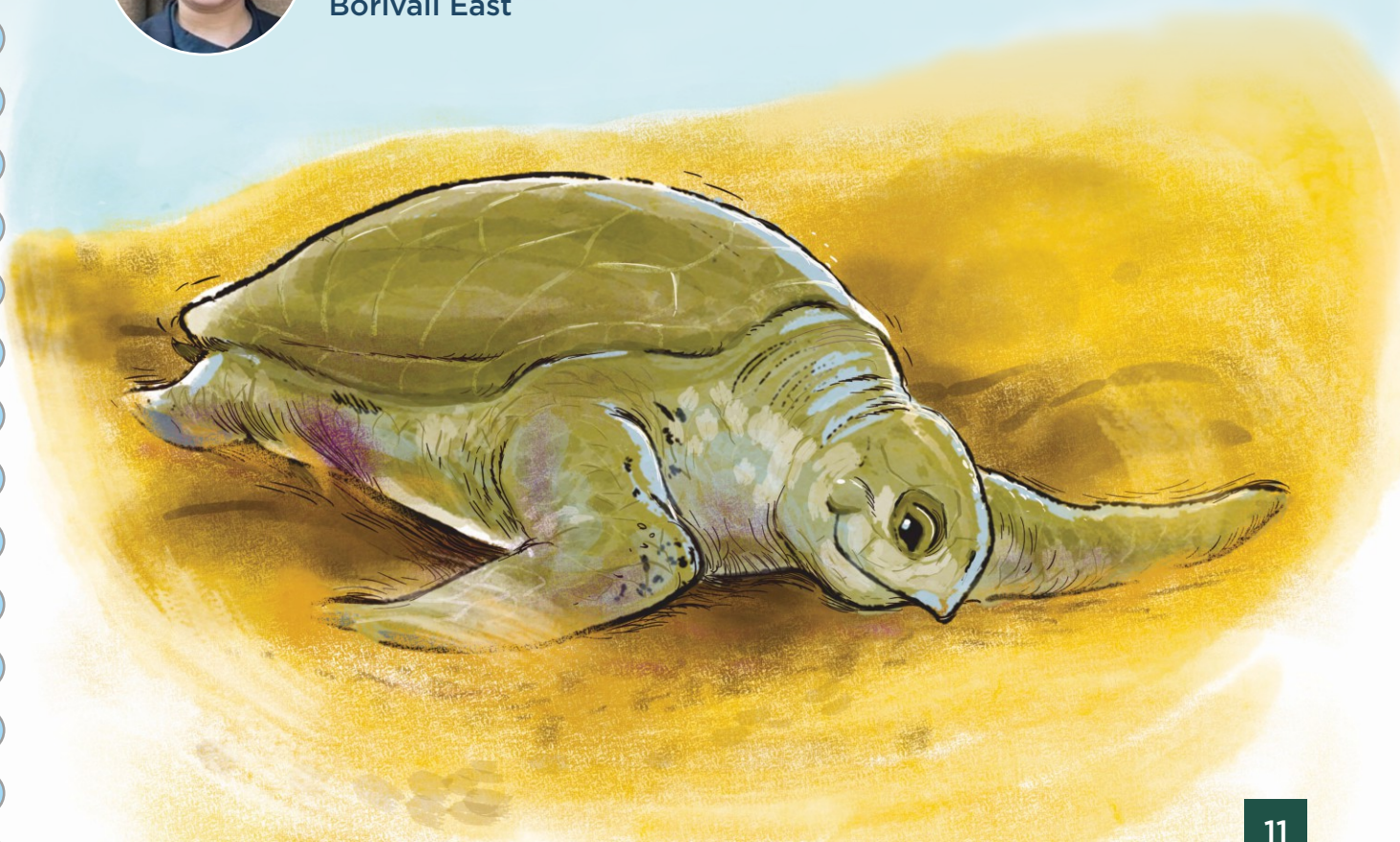
Olive closed his eyes, gathering the last of his strength. He did not know if he would escape. But he hoped—hoped that someone, somewhere, would hear his story. That a child would refuse a plastic straw. That a hand would choose a dustbin instead of the sea. That the ocean would be loved again, not used.

Above the surface, the sea still sparkled. But below, it waited—for responsibility, for kindness, for change.

And Olive waited too.



Dr. Hemali Joshi, Principal
Sheth G. H. High School and Junior College,
Borivali East



OTHER ACTIVITIES

1. Celebration of Bird Week 2025






The Mangrove Foundation in collaboration with the Veermata Jijabai Bhosale Botanical Udyan & Zoo, Bombay Natural History Society and For Future India NGO had organised various awareness programmes between 05th-12th November to celebrate Bird Week 2025. This programme included Bird Photography Competition, Bird Photography Exhibitions, Bird Taxidermy workshop and Birdwatching Trails along the coast of Maharashtra. About 300 individuals participated in various programmes. Additionally Mr. Jayesh Vishwakarma (Assistant Director - Ecotourism) conducted an awareness programme at Sanjay Gandhi National Park.

2. Organisation of Vanyavani Festival on the occasion of National Wildlife Week 2025

The Mangrove Foundation in collaboration with the Vanyavani Foundation had organised the Vanyavani Festival from 01st to 07th October to celebrate Wildlife week 2025. This programme included a series of interactive lectures, informative presentations, engaging dramas and guided marine walks, all designed to raise awareness among the general public about mangrove ecosystems and the importance of coastal and marine biodiversity conservation.






3. Eco-friendly Ganesha Idol making workshop




The Mangrove Foundation, along with Sprout's NGO and Paryavaran Dakshata Mandal, organised eco-friendly Ganesha Idol-making workshops for schools in Mumbai and Thane region. The aim of the initiative was to spread awareness about protecting the environment and celebrating festivals in a nature-friendly way. 223 students and 12 teachers participated in these workshops.

4. Nature trail and Awareness initiatives supported by CSR funding






The Mangrove Foundation, in collaboration with CMA CGM Agencies India Pvt. Ltd. and CRY Foundation, organized an engaging nature trail and awareness visit at the Coastal & Marine Biodiversity Centre (CMBC), Airoli on 22nd & 23rd November 2025. This programme was supported through CSR funding by CMA CGM Agencies India Pvt. Ltd., under which the Mangrove Foundation conducted the awareness initiative. Around 500 students and 25 teachers from CRY Foundation participated in this enriching experience. The sessions were facilitated by Mangrove Foundation staff, along with designated resource persons, to educate students on mangrove and marine biodiversity conservation.

5. MMCOI- The Marine Mammal Consortium of India (MMCOI)



MMCOI- The Marine Mammal Consortium of India (MMCOI) workshop was organised on 09th and 10th January 2026 by the Nature Conservation Foundation. Around 100 researchers, representatives from government institutions, non-governmental organisations, academicians, and marine conservation professionals attended the consortium. The consortium aimed to foster collaboration, facilitate knowledge sharing, and promote training programmes in the field of marine mammal research and conservation. Ms. Madhumitha S. Joint Director, Mangrove Foundation was part of a panel discussion. Dr. Manas Manjrekar, Deputy Director- Research and Capacity Building presented the work of Mangrove Foundation for protection, research and conservation of marine mammals in Maharashtra.

6. Series of awareness programmes by Paryavaran Dakshata Mandal






A series of mangrove awareness initiatives were successfully conducted in Kalyan and Dombivli to promote understanding and conservation of mangrove ecosystems. Mangrove awareness sessions were organized in 18 schools and colleges, engaging a total of 2,100 students and teachers. Two Mangrove Awareness Training Programs for teachers were conducted one each in Kalyan and Dombivli with participation of 125 teachers. A mangrove clean-up drive was carried out at the Satpool Jetty mangrove site, with 175 participants from Dombivli. 17 mangrove trails were organized across six different mangrove sites in Dombivli for schools, colleges, and citizens, involving 428 participants. Two mangrove exhibitions were held during Nisarg Mela in Dombivli and Kalyan, attracting 730 students and visitors from various schools.

7. Mega Cleanup Drives on the occasion of International Coastal Cleanup Day



During the mega cleanup drive on the occasion of international Coastal Cleanup Day in September 2025 mangrove and beach cleanup programmes were conducted across multiple locations in Mumbai Metropolitan Region. The event saw active participation from Forest Department personnel, NGO partners, school & college students, members of Municipal Corporations and various other Stakeholders committed to environmental conservation. A total of 29,500 kg of waste was collected with the support of 7,223 volunteers across eight locations in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region.

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8. MoU signed with Rotary Club of Deonar Charity Trust

The Mangrove Foundation has signed a MoU with the Rotary Club of Deonar Charity Trust to undertake mangrove plantation on 4.4 hectares of degraded land at Sewri, Mumbai under their CSR initiative. This collaboration aims to restore mangrove ecosystems, strengthen coastal resilience, create awareness, and promote sustainable environmental conservation.



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9. Forest Guards Training by the Mangrove Cell

Around 180 Forest Guard trainees from the Chandrapur, Kundal, and Pal (Jalgaon) Training Institutes participated in awareness and training sessions conducted by the Mangrove Cell and Mangrove Foundation on 12th November 2025, 21st November 2025, and 14th January 2026, respectively. The sessions covered the mangrove ecosystem, sea turtle conservation, mangrove plantation at Aare Beat, and the Mangrove Protection and Livelihood Generation Schemes implemented by the Mangrove Cell. The trainees also visited the Aare mangrove area during the said visit.



10. Asian Waterbird Census at Thane Creek and Vengurla Rocks





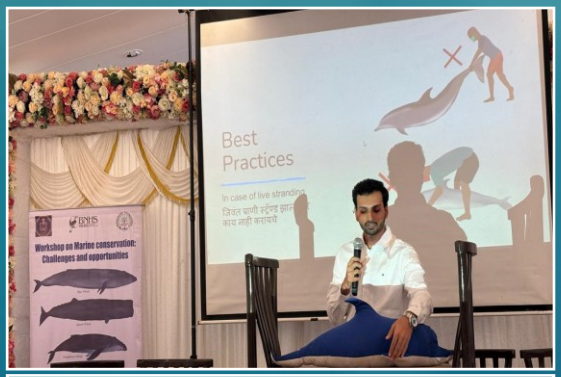

The Asian Waterbird Census (AWC) was conducted on 27th January at four satellite wetlands of Thane Creek, namely Thane Creek Flamingo Sanctuary, Bhandup Pumping Station, NRI Pond, and T. S. Chanakya Wetland. During the census, 47 species of waterbirds were recorded, with participation from 86 volunteers.

Similarly, on 28th February, the Asian Waterbird Census was conducted at Burnt Island and Vengurla Rocks in Sindhudurg district. A boat-based survey recorded seven waterbird species and five associated species, with the participation of 15 individuals comprising citizen volunteers and Forest Department staff.

GLIMPSE OF OUR ACTIVITIES



Children Colouring Book released on the occasion of Vanopaj Exhibition 2025 at CIDCO, Vashi



Workshop regarding Marine Mammal Stranding response at Malvan, Sindhudurg District



A dedicated page to spread awareness about mangrove forest in Apale Paryavaran Calendar 2026



One day Fish Value Addition workshop for beneficiaries from Ratnagiri district



One day Fish Value Addition workshop for beneficiaries from Palghar district



Green Theatre Festival 2026 at Ratnagiri

GLIMPSE OF OUR ACTIVITIES



Series of Sea turtle awareness programmes for school students in Pune



One day International Conference in Biological Sciences on Coastal Community and Conservation at K J Somaiya College of Science and Commerce



Four-day Capacity Building Programme and National Workshop on Ecological Services for a Sustainable and Healthy Future at Dr. Balasaheb Khardekar College, Vengurla.



National security Guards visit to Coastal Marine Biodiversity Centre, Airoli



Mangrove Foundation collaborated with Chatak Nature Conservation Society for fifth North Maharashtra Pakshi Mitra Sanmelan



India Norway Marine Pollution and Plastic Waste Forum 2025, organised by Norwegian consulate

GLIMPSE OF OUR ACTIVITIES



Ecotourism training conducted for Janshi village SHG's in Ratnagiri district by Mangrove Foundation team



An informative stall set-up during Eco Fest 2026 at SIES College of Arts, Science and Commerce at Sion



Workshop for Turtle Nest Managers on turtle conservation in Raigad, Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg district



Training on Camera trap setup at Kolthare, Dabhol & Guhaghar in Ratnagiri district



Awareness programmes for 250 NMMC school students at Coastal Marine Biodiversity Centre, Airoli



25 participants from Nyass Trust visited the Thane Creek Flamingo Sanctuary, Airoli on World Wetland Day 2026

GLIMPSE OF OUR ACTIVITIES



300 NMMC school students visited the Coastal Marine Biodiversity Centre, Airoli on the occasion of World Wetlands Day



Awareness programmes for 100 school students at Sarsole Jetty on the occasion of World Wetlands Day



Workshop on Protected Elasmobranchs under WLPA,1972 for Forest Officials & field staff of Mangrove Cell in Sindhudurg and Ratnagiri districts.



Awareness stall at Global Konkan Festival on Mangrove conservation and livelihood initiatives at Shirgaon beach.



Carbon Sequestration Assessment of mangroves in Dahanu Taluka Palghar district with TERI



Conference on wetlands under the 'Clean Creek Movement' (CCM2026) by Paryavaran Dakshata Mandal

BIRD WEEK 2025
PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION RESULTS

CATEGORY: PORTRAIT



1st Prize
Shreyash Patil



2nd Prize
Hrishikesh Goghare



3rd Prize
Avijit Ghorai

CATEGORY: BEHAVIOUR



1st Prize
Avijit Ghorai



2nd Prize
Ankit Bakade



3rd Prize
Karan Dabholkar

BIRD WEEK 2025
PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION RESULTS

CATEGORY: HABITAT



1st Prize
Vaibhav Haldipur



2nd Prize
Karan Solanki



3rd Prize
Emmanual Karbhari

CATEGORY: ANTHROPOGENIC IMPACT



1st Prize
Krishnandu Sarkar



2nd Prize
Hemant Karkhanis

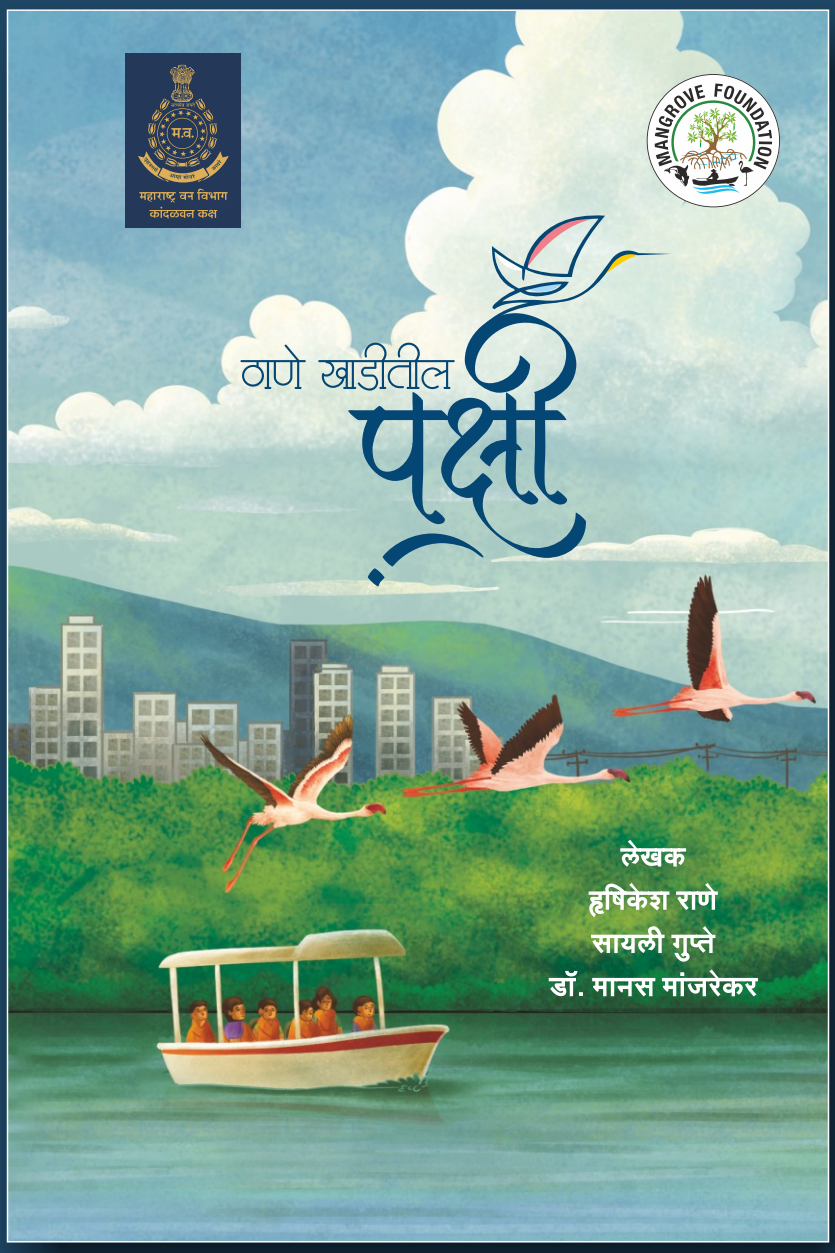


3rd Prize
Umesh Avadootha

Participate in our work

Readers can participate in our conservation work by contributing their mangroves and marine biodiversity related photos, articles, poems, etc. by sharing them on

submissions.mfn@gmail.com



The price of the above book is 200/-
and the above book is available at Airoli Centre

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Ballard Estate, Fort, Mumbai 400 001.
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