

BLUE & GREEN LAAMU

The Marine Conservation & Sustainability
Newsletter by the Maldives Underwater Initiative
MAY 2023



SIX SENSES
LAAMU



MUI

MALDIVES UNDERWATER INITIATIVE by Six Senses Laamu

Credit: Andy Ball







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THE BIG STUFF

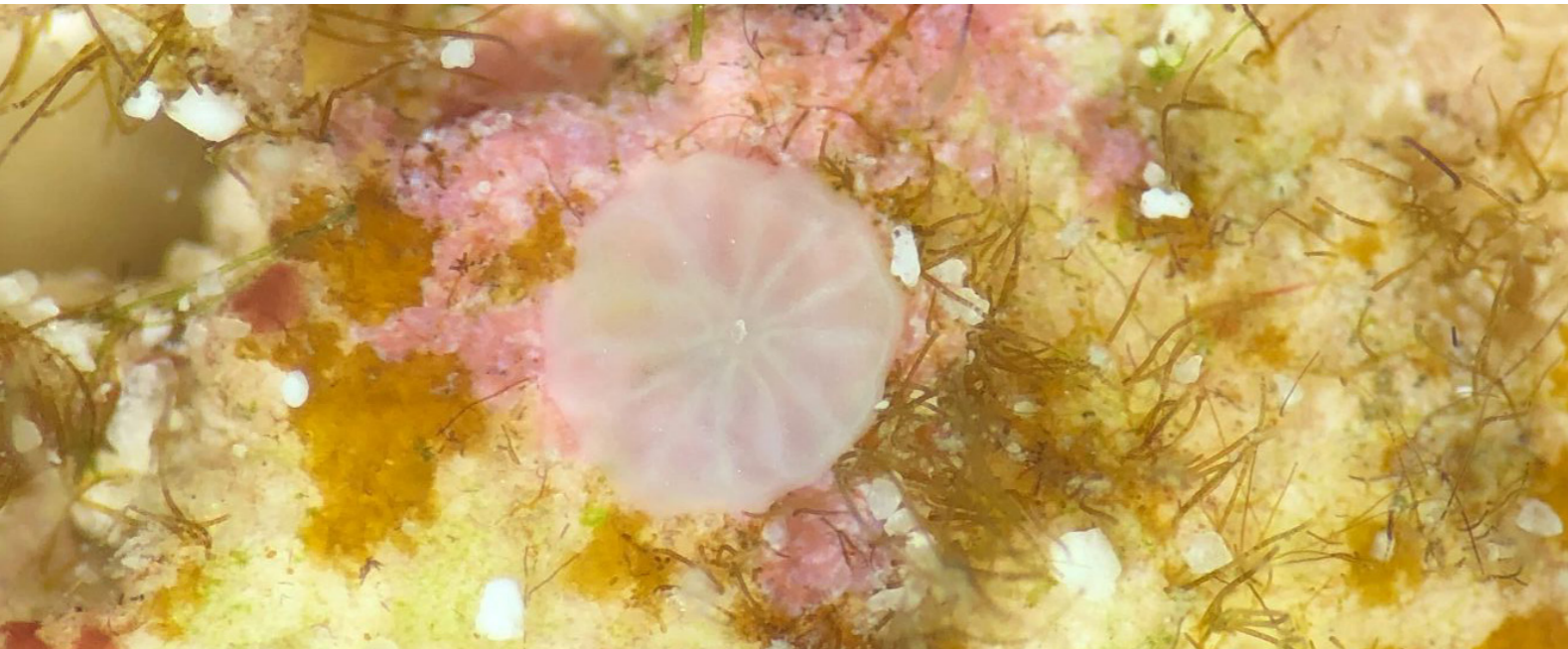
-  **510** sharks were sighted
-  **247** rays were sighted
-  **300** turtles were sighted
-  **105** Guests joined on megafauna surveys

OUR EDUCATION

-  **1307** moments of education were shared with guests
-  **190** moments of education were shared with hosts
-  **178** moments of education were shared with the community

SIX SENSES CONSERVATION

CORAL BABIES GROWING UP!



In March MUI started the Collaborative for Reefs in Laamu (CRL) and collected the bundles of eggs and sperm released from adult coral colonies during spawning. After they developed into larvae, the team released ~95% of them onto degraded parts of the house reef and ~5% were kept in the Coral Rearing system. The MUI team are monitoring these babies, which are growing on limestone tiles, and have been fascinated to watch their transformation from larvae to coral polyp. Almost all of them have grown out their tentacles, taken in their symbiotic algae and some have even started to clone themselves to form new polyps! They are still too small to see with the naked eye, so the team uses microscopes and powerful cameras in telescopic mode to monitor them. The babies will be kept in the rearing tank until they have grown bigger and stronger, then they will be planted out to areas of degraded reef nearby. The MUI team have chosen this method of larval replenishment because it increases the chances of recruitment and survival compared to wild spawning and helps to increase genetic diversity compared to other methods of restoration. This increased genetic diversity gives them a better chance of surviving future marine heat waves. There is still hope for the reefs in Laamu!



EXPLORING THE POSSIBILITIES OF THE HYDRO MOTH FOR DOLPHIN ACOUSTICS

Following a successful collaboration with Professor Steve Simpson from Bristol University during our Collaborative for Reefs in Laamu project (please see [Blue & Green March 2023](#)), we have had the chance to use some of the research equipment used during this project for alternative research projects while they are not needed for the main project. One of which was the Hydromoth. A Hydromoth is a variant of the audio moth which is an open-source, full-spectrum acoustic logger, specifically made for underwater recordings. The MUI team has been brainstorming various ways in which to make the most of this new equipment to enhance their pre-existing research while also venturing into the new possibilities that were previously unavailable. Given the regular presence of Bottlenose and Spinner dolphins in the Laamu Atoll, and nearby the resort, dolphin acoustics is an exciting area to explore. Previously, MUI has primarily focused on observational dolphin data, but now can expand our understanding with sound recordings. This data can strengthen the pre-existing observational data if trends support the information we already believe to be true. For example, from observation we believe that pods of spinner dolphins generally leave the inner-atoll area around sunset and will stay out in the open ocean until around sunrise the following day. This was supported by the first attempt at sound recording, as there were no dolphin sounds from 8:00 pm until 8:00 am the next day. This research is still in the very early stages, and the team is still understanding the possibilities of the Hydromoth for dolphin research, and are very excited to continue exploring this path.



 **24** hours of audio recordings collected

MUI REPRESENTS MALDIVES SUSTAINABILITY AT ATM

At the start of May, MUI was invited to the Arabian Travel Market exhibition (ATM), the largest travel exhibition in this part of the world, by the Maldives Marketing and PR Corporation (MMPRC) to represent sustainable initiatives in the Maldives. This opportunity is more evidence of the great work that MUI is doing, and that it is being recognized outside of Laamu. MUI's Base Leader and Guest Education Coordinator, Greg attended the exhibition. During the conference, Greg sat on a panel discussion with the CEO of the MMPRC and UAE's Maldives ambassador, as well as giving a 5-minute presentation summarizing the work that MUI and Six Senses do on the island and around the atoll to help protect the environment. The Maldives conference was attended by over 40 leading travel agents and tourism specialists. Hopefully this will help inspire people to support sustainable tourism and show that sustainable tourism doesn't have to come at the sacrifice of quality.



 **40** travel agents and tourism specialists attended the Maldives conference

MUI DELIGHTED TO WELCOME BACK GOASKERIN AND NEWMEDIASOUP

Long-term supporters and contributors to MUI, GoAskErin and NewMediaSoup, two multimedia companies, came to the resort over the month of May, running the exciting 'May in the Maldives' underwater photography workshop. During their stay, Erin from GoAskErin kindly ran numerous workshops on Lightroom skills for the team, which are of huge value.

During their time in Laamu, Erin, Joel and Jen, all collected large amounts of vital footage for MUI from many of the dive sites around Laamu. This beautiful footage is important for the team to be able to communicate and share their research and work with people around the world, since now, more than ever, storytelling has become a visual art. The MUI team would like to thank Erin, from GoAskErin, and Joel and Jen, from NewMediaSoup, for their unwavering support for MUI's works and their kind donations of equipment and funding for the projects and the local community.



 **4** Lightroom Workshops run

MUI WELCOMES SAFFRON TO THE TEAM


Since graduating with a BSc in Theoretical Physics from the University of Edinburgh, Saffron has spent the last year traveling South America and parts of South East Asia. After spending six weeks in the Atlantic Forest of Brazil, helping to make a positive impact in forest restoration and conservation efforts, she was inspired to further understand how scientific techniques can help accelerate positive environmental change. She will soon begin a MSc in Environmental Data Science and Machine Learning at Imperial College of London this autumn. Since completing her Bubble Maker course on her 8th birthday, she has always sought to study and promote scientific learning about the environment.



She will be in Laamu for the next two months as an Intern, assisting on a wide range of research projects such as seagrass surveys and coral spawning dives. During her time here, she hopes to find inspiration for her MSc thesis through which artificial intelligence and data science tools could help analyze data to make fast and exciting progress in the world of marine biology.

NEW EXPERIENCES WITH MUI

In May, the MUI team launched a new kind of guest activity. The new themed 'Experiences' will be held once a week and will be utilizing all of the facilities of the SHELL to enhance and create truly unique learning experiences for guests. The one-hour experiences will have different activities or 'experiences' in each of the rooms of the SHELL, from videos playing in the Theatre and interactive and fun games set up in the Blue Discovery room, to science on show in the lab and immersive and unique shows in the Glass Bottom Boat. These new experiences are sure to wow guests while also teaching them about many of the interesting and impactful projects MUI has going on, inspiring them to continue to learn about the marine world and what each person can do to protect it.

 **4** rooms utilized in the SHELL for each experience

 **6** guests attended World Turtle Day Experience in the SHELL



BLUE MARINE FOUNDATION



BOAT CREW TRAINING FOR GUEST RECREATIONAL FISHING

Blue Marine Foundation and Maldives Resilient Reefs (MRR) are responsible for monitoring the recreational fishing trips which go out from the resort. The team uses every opportunity they get to collect data from the sunset and sunrise fishing trips. Data collected includes fish species, their total length along with fishing location. So far this year data have been collected from 71 fishing trips involving 132 guests in the citizen science data collection.

To maintain the accuracy of the data collected, the team organized a refresher training session for the boat crew. The seven crew who attended received training on proper fish measurement technique, guest briefing protocols and safe procedures for releasing hooked sharks. By implementing this training, Blue Marine and MRR aim to obtain reliable data from the guest citizen science initiative while also improving the overall experience for the resort guests.



71 fishing trips



132 guests involved in citizen science



7 boat crew trained

RESTARTING THE CONVERSATION OF THE SUSTAINABLE TOURISM COALITION (STC)

Last month Blue Marine Foundation and Maldives Resilient Reefs team resumed the meetings with Laamu tourism operators to kickstart the Sustainable Tourism Coalition. The team met with Ismail, the General Manager of the nearby resort, Rahaa, to discuss their plan to establish the STC consisting of all the tourism operators in Laamu Atoll. The aim of this meeting was to explain the purpose and the importance of the coalition to Rahaa Resort and to see their willingness to become more sustainable. The STC stipulates sustainable tourism standards and code of conducts varying from snorkeling guidelines, reducing single use plastic, megafauna data collection, sustainable reef fishing practices and conserving different marine habitats.

The meeting was very successful as Ismail is willing to participate in the coalition, and committed to making the resort more sustainable. The aim of the coalition is to establish sustainable standards and CoCs for existing and future resort establishments so that their operations do not impact the health of the atoll's marine ecosystems and its residents. As more islands in the atoll are proposed to be developed into resort businesses, it's vital that the coalition is well established. The next steps for the tourism coalition would be to have similar meetings with the remaining operators in Laamu Gan.



FISH OF THE MONTH – GIANT TREVALLY

The giant trevally, a remarkable and highly prized predatory fish, inhabits the warm waters of the Indo-Pacific region. With its sleek, streamlined body and shimmering silver-blue hues, this species commands admiration from both anglers and divers. Renowned for its incredible strength and aggressive behaviour, the giant trevallies can grow to astonishing sizes, reaching up to 1.7 meters in length and weighing over 60 kilograms. Its exceptional speed and agility enable it to swiftly pursue prey, often propelling itself out of the water in breath-taking displays of power. It is no wonder that the giant trevally is a popular catch on sunrise guest fishing trips. Whether encountered during fishing, snorkeling diving adventures, or on a dinner plate, this majestic creature is guaranteed to leave a profound and enduring impression as one of the ocean's most magnificent and awe-inspiring inhabitants.



6 Giant Trevally landings

THE MANTA TRUST



MEGA MANTA MONTH MAY

With 134 confirmed manta ray sightings, May has been the most successful month for manta ray sightings in almost five years! The last time this many individual manta rays were identified was in 2018! As this year's Remote Camera data isn't processed yet, these sighting numbers solely represent sighting numbers from dive observations and a few sightings from short-term Remote Underwater Video footage. Across May 2023, 47 individuals have been identified. To compare: across the whole of 2021, the team identified 81 individuals! For the first time, the team also deployed a 360° camera in combination with MUI's hydromoth acoustic listening devices on two manta cleaning stations and the data collected from these devices is very exciting! The manta observations for this month are incredibly encouraging, and the Manta Trust team couldn't be more excited for what's to come this year, hoping that the numbers continue to be high in June.



OCEANICS IN LAAMU

This month has provided nothing but manta surprises. In May, the rarer species of Oceanic Manta Rays (*Mobula birostris*) was sighted several times at Maavah Kandhu, a channel site on the western edge of Laamu Atoll. The last time a photo-ID was collected of an Oceanic Manta in Laamu Atoll, was in 2019. This month, MUI were incredibly lucky that a team of photographers and videographers was present on all these dives – and managed to obtain three photo-IDs of three different Oceanic Mantas – all of which turned out to be new individuals to the Maldives wide database! This is fantastic news and incredibly exciting, considering how rare these sightings are in Laamu Atoll. Our photographers named all three of the mantas with the names: "Hila Thari" (which means Rock Star in Dhivehi), "Tina Turner" and "Miri", named by guests Bruce and Lisa, after the Manta Trust Project Manager Miri. Joel and Jen from NewMediaSoup donated two of their GoPros to the Manta Trust team and Erin of GoAskErin helped the whole MUI team with her incredible photography classes and her generous donation. MUI would like to sincerely thank Erin, Joel and Jen, and Lisa and Bruce for their great support in manta ray research and their enthusiasm in naming the new manta rays. As far as the team know so far, none of these mantas have ever been photographed before and the team is looking forward to whether these individuals will be sighted again elsewhere. Still very little is known about the migrations of these gentle giants, so any photo of their bellies is giving great insights into their movements around the world's oceans.



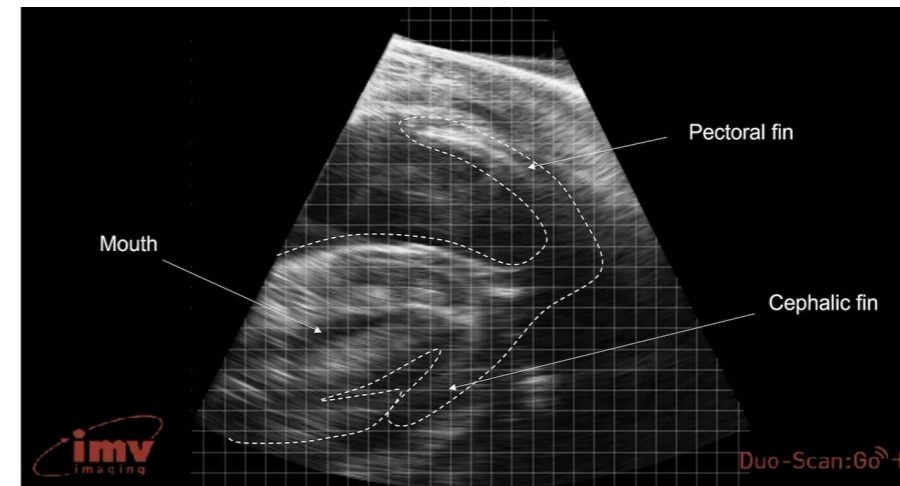
Credit: Erin Quigley

 **3** oceanic mantas identified

ULTRASOUND PAPER ON SCANNING MANTA RAYS PUBLISHED

This month, the Manta Trust published an incredibly exciting paper, titled "Use of underwater contactless ultrasonography to elucidate the internal anatomy and reproductive activity of manta and devil rays (family: Mobulidae)" led by Manta Trust researcher Niv Froman and co-authors Marie-Aude Genain, Guy M. W. Stevens and Gareth P. Pearce. They explored the applications of underwater ultrasonography as a non-invasive method to study the reproductive organs without physical contact. The study showed that ultrasonography is a reliable method of determining sexual maturity and gestational status in free-swimming manta rays. Interestingly, the results of the study suggest that we have been potentially underestimating the maturity status of reef manta rays, i.e., that we have more mature females than previously assumed, and that the average rate at which mature females reproduce is actually lower.

Much of the data was collected here in Laamu and the team is excited that 11 of our Laamu mantas have "made it" into the paper by getting a mention of their identification number when delivering a successful scan. Mother Goose, Reggae, Ummedhu, Pina Colada, Hiyala, Trident, Schmetterling, Gorgon, Blue Star, Baby Maya and Tsarina Tusina are all Laamu manta rays that have been scanned for this research project. As Reggae and Ummedhu have their own life-sized models at Six Senses Laamu' SHELL and almost all these mantas are still regularly sighted by divers in Laamu, the published results now give the team on site even more information to include when showing guests these beautiful ocean giants. Six Senses Laamu and the MUI team were proud to participate in this project since the beginning and continue to contribute to this essential data collection. The Laamu Manta Trust team would like to thank General Manager Marteyne, who supported the project from the beginning, as well as Ray Rochester, founder of Vetsonic, who was pivotal to the development of the device. We would like to thank Ray, Marie-Aude Genain and IMV Imaging to who continue to support the team with training and more whenever needed



By taking images without touching the animal, the new ultrasound technology reduces stress to manta rays.

PHOTOGRAPH BY NIV FROMAN, MANTA TRUST, CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC LOGIN Newsletter SUBSCRIBE



1 paper published by Manta Trust and University of Cambridge



11 Laamu mantas scanned for the paper

LAAMU MANTAS ARE PREGNANT!



Laamu's reef manta rays are finally pregnant again! After several years of no reported sightings of pregnant manta rays in Laamu Atoll, the Manta Trust team has found that not just one, but five of the Laamu mantas are currently pregnant. This is an encouraging sign for the health and sustainability of the manta population and suggests that the ecosystem and conditions necessary for successful reproduction are provided. These gentle giants are known for their slow reproductive rate, with females giving birth to only one pup every two to five years. As such, monitoring and studying pregnant individuals is vital to understand their reproductive patterns, migratory behaviors, and to ensure the long-term survival of these magnificent creatures.

The discovery of five pregnant manta rays in Laamu has sparked optimism and excitement among MUI and Deep Blue Divers, who get to observe the big females with their pregnancy bellies during their dives. The Manta Trust immediately began collecting comprehensive data on each pregnant individual, carefully documenting their size, behavior, mating scars and gestation period. This information will help shed light on the reproductive cycles of manta rays and contribute to future conservation strategies.

MEET OUR REMOTE STUDENT TESS

Tess is an MSc Marine Environmental Management student from the University of Exeter. Tess is working remotely with the Laamu Manta Trust team to collect data for her master's thesis, investigating the species diversity and ecological role of cleaning stations in Laamu Atoll. She will use data collected by Remote Underwater Video surveys (RUVs) to gain insight into the species interactions occurring at cleaning stations across the atoll. As the Manta Trust has observed a shift in habitat preference around Laamu Atoll, Tess's project will be incredibly helpful in establishing methods to classify cleaning stations and understanding what makes them well functioning. So far, Tess has already worked through 16 hours of recorded remote data (analyzing one hour of footage roughly takes 3 hours!), having identified over 100 species near cleaning stations already. Tess will analyze species richness, interactions between species and cleaning station utilization. The team can't wait to see what else she finds out!



OLIVE RIDLEY PROJECT

THE OLIVE RIDLEY PROJECT

THIRD LARGEST IN THE MALDIVES!

We are excited to announce that Laamu Atoll has grown to become the third largest database of identified turtles in the Maldives! This milestone has been achieved thanks to all the help of the past and present ORP staff, MUI team, Deep Blue Divers team, as well as Six Senses hosts and guests.

Over the course of the past decade, we have received submissions from more than 50 different dive and snorkel sites across the atoll, resulting in a remarkable total of over 7,700 submissions. Currently, the Laamu database proudly documents 922 individual turtles. Among them, 348 are green sea turtles and 574 are hawksbill turtles.

While the team takes pride in this achievement, they continue to expand their efforts by exploring new sites within the atoll. Recognizing the strong fidelity sea turtles have to their resting and foraging grounds, we emphasize the importance of surveying



less-explored areas. The continued study of Laamu's sea turtles will help us gain a more comprehensive understanding of their population dynamics, distribution, and the state of their habitats within the atoll.

MAAVAH STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

The ORP is working to establish a project under the Sea Turtle Beach Guardian Programme on Maavah, to deter poaching on the north-western wall of the atoll. This project would involve hiring a Sea Turtle Community Officer from the local community, to conduct educational and awareness sessions on sea turtle biology and conservation, while working with the police to deter poaching in the surrounding areas through drone monitoring.

In May, the ORP held the first scoping meetings in Maavah with the Maavah council, Women's Development Committee, Maavah Police, and the senior management of Maavah school.

During the meetings, the team introduced ORP's work and the project, and gathered feedback from each stakeholder group to identify potential challenges when implementing the project. Overall, they expressed their support and provided valuable feedback on the best way to approach the subject of turtle meat consumption in the community. We will continue to work on developing the project, and aim to start it in the third quarter of the year.



922 turtles in Laamu

KEY PARTNERSHIP FOR GAADHOO'S NESTING BEACH PROTECTION SIGNED!

The ORP and Environmental Protection Agency of Maldives (EPA) have signed into a partnership with Laamu Atoll Council, Laamu Fonadhoo Council, and AgroNational Cooperation (AgroNat) for the monitoring and protection of Gaadhoo's nesting beach. This MoU represents a commitment by all parties to safeguard one of the most significant nesting sites in the Maldives.

Under the MoU, ORP and EPA will co-supervise Gaadhoo's Sea Turtle Ranger, Ibrahim Inaan, to conduct regular beach patrol surveys on the island to record nesting and poaching frequency on the southwestern beach. The Sea Turtle Ranger will also lead an Educational Task-force to increase community awareness about sea turtles in Gan and Fonadhoo, which are supported by the councils and local NGOs. In tandem, the EPA will be leading a Response Task-force with ORP, police and relevant stakeholders to work towards deterring and reducing poaching in the area.

Additionally, the ORP and EPA are conducting cultural surveys to understand the historical conservation practices for sea turtles on Gaadhoo by its former residents. The findings from the survey will also inform the creation of the management plan for L. Gaadhoo's nesting beach, which was declared a Marine Protected Area by the Maldives government in December 2021.


The MoU will also support the drone monitoring program on the south-eastern wall - focused on the lagoon areas of Gaadhoo, Fonadhoo, and Gan - expected to start in the third quarter of the year. With technical support and training from drone



experts, the Sea Turtle Ranger will begin monitoring for poaching activity in and around high poaching hotspots, and work closely with police and EPA to respond to situations.

This project is funded by the Maldives government, Six Senses Laamu, GEF Small Grants Programme, UNDP Maldives, and is part of ORP's Sea Turtle Beach Guardian Programme for the wider Laamu Atoll. The signing of this MoU marks a pivotal step in establishing a community-led framework for the protection of the most significant nesting beach in the Maldives.

The team would like to thank their partners for all their support in making this project happen, and look forward to watching it expand in the coming months!

 **88** guests at hatching and excavation events

 **4** nests hatched

 **139** hatchlings counted

 **70** ID submissions

 **119** hours of nest watch

LET'S SHELL-EBRATE WORLD TURTLE DAY!

In May 23, ORP and the MUI team celebrated World Turtle Day at Six Senses Laamu in a turtle-y awesome way with guests, hosts, and students from Maamendhoo school.

With the new facilities provided by the Sea Hub of Environmental Learning in Laamu (SHELL), the team organized a Sea Turtle experience for both guests and hosts. The participants were introduced to ORP's photo-ID and nesting research through an exhibition of sea turtle anatomy in the lab and an interactive turtle ID game in the Glass Bottom Boat room.

At the same time, our team took a group of 22 students from Maamendhoo school on a sea turtle snorkel safari to Laama Faru Haa, one of our most popular turtle sites (see Community section).

The day was finished off with a sea turtle-themed cocktail in front of the SHELL, with turtle-related activities, such as our famous Tilt-a-turtle table, being run on the beach for both guests and hosts to experience.



 **35** guest interactions on World Turtle Day

 **5** new turtle activities in the SHELL

TURTLE IN THE SPOTLIGHT!

Say hello to Bill (GR1286)!

Bill was first sighted at Hithadhoo Corner in June 2021. This female green sea turtle is regularly found resting in the same area.

Bill has a distinguishing feature at the back of her carapace - a bite scar. This injury has healed but it is likely that Bill had been previously attacked. Although adult sea turtles have very few predators in the ocean, tiger sharks have been witnessed attacking turtles and which might be because of Bill's injury. In occasions where this has been witnessed, the sea turtles often swim with their backs facing the shark, using their carapace (shell) as a form of defense.

Bill has been encountered 43 times since her first sighting, and this month guests and hosts have come across her eight times on research dives to Hithadhoo Corner.



 **348** Green turtles

 **574** Hawksbill turtles

OUR COMMUNITY

INTRODUCING THE SPACE FOR ISLAND NATION CONFERENCE 2023

The team are thrilled to announce that the Space for Island Nation Conference (SINC) 2023 took place in the Maldives, marking a significant milestone as the first-ever event of its kind in the country. This conference brought together government agencies, industry leaders, climate scientists, environmental experts, and global space sector professionals. Their collective aim was to explore the immense opportunities available for island nations in the sector, exchange knowledge and technical approaches to protect better and preserve the environment, and unlock strategic potential.

Organized by the Maldives Space Research Organization (MSRO), a local NGO dedicated to harnessing Outer Space technologies, science, and education for the benefit of the Maldives, this conference aimed to create a thriving space sector that contributes to climate resilience, maritime domain protection, economic diversification, and local empowerment through science and education.

The three-day conference had an impressive lineup of speakers, including renowned scientists, international space agencies, and organizations. The program featured keynote speeches and interactive panel discussions, fostering a vibrant environment for exchanging ideas and innovative solutions.

SINC 2023 welcomed 97 delegates from 15 different countries. In a collaborative effort to engage Maldivian youth in this important dialogue, the United Nations partnered with MSRO to bring UN youth delegates from the Maldives to the conference. Representatives from various government ministries and agencies, including the Ministry of Tourism, Noo Raajje, Urbanco, Environment Ministry, Legal Government Authority, and local NGOs, were also in attendance.

The event was sponsored by Six Senses Laamu. At the event, Ali Shareef, MUI's Community Outreach Coordinator, gave a brief presentation about MUI's conservation work and participated as a panelist in the discussion on "Digitizing conservation – space-based biodiversity monitoring in an era of mass extinction."

The culmination of SINC 2023 was marked by the creation of "The Crossroads Declaration." This declaration outlines a set of policy recommendations tailored to the unique needs of island nations, aiming to establish a robust space ecosystem in the Maldives.

The Space for Island Nation Conference 2023 paved the way for innovative space solutions that address the existential threats faced by island nations like the Maldives. The team is excited about the potential collaborations and initiatives that will emerge from this historic event, contributing to the sustainable development and prosperity of island nations around the world.



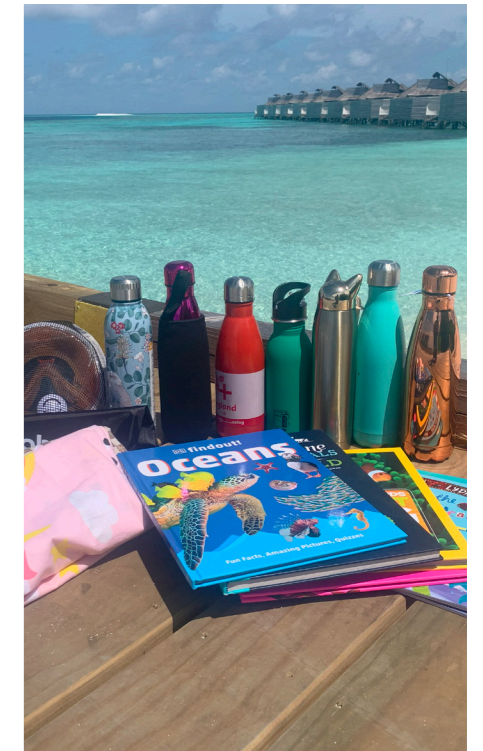
EXPRESSING GRATITUDE FOR GUEST DONATIONS

Six Senses Laamu believes in the power of collective action to create positive change. The MUI team is incredibly grateful to guests who have embraced the commitment to a plastic-free community and have generously contributed to the initiatives. As part of ongoing efforts, the team provides packing tips to guests, highlighting the option to donate reusable items to schools in Laamu for community plastic-free initiatives.

So far in 2023, Six Senses Laamu guests have donated 159 items, each contributing to the resort's mission of reducing plastic waste and creating a more sustainable future. These donations demonstrate the guests' dedication to environmental preservation and willingness to actively participate in the community's well-being.

The Earth Lab team is thrilled to share that 83 donated items have been sent to Dhanbidhoo, Kunahandhoo, and Hamad School in Gan. These guest donations allow the team to extend their commitment further, beyond the boundaries of community focus projects and positively impact the local community. By providing these donations, guests have directly contributed to the education and well-being of the students, nurturing a culture to drive single-use, plastic-free living in the communities.

Six Senses Laamu hosts extend their gratitude to every guest who donated to the community to make a tangible difference and empower students to take action against the growing plastic problem.



CELEBRATING INTERNATIONAL NURSE DAY

In honor of International Nurse Day, Six Senses Laamu extended its appreciation to the healthcare staff of the Hithadhoo Center by hosting a lunch at the resort. The Hithadhoo Health Center is pivotal as it is the primary healthcare facility for the neighboring communities of Hithadhoo, Kunahandhoo, and Maamendhoo.

Fifteen dedicated and passionate nurses were welcomed to the resort for lunch to acknowledge their invaluable contributions to the local community's well-being. This special occasion allowed Six Senses Laamu to express gratitude for the nurses' unwavering commitment and selfless service.

Following the lunch, the nurses were given an exclusive educational tour of the Sea Hub of Environmental Learning in Laamu (SHELL). The tour allowed the nurses to immerse themselves in the ocean's wonders and gain insights into MUI's marine conservation efforts.

Six Senses Laamu recognizes nurses' vital role in the healthcare system and their immeasurable impact on individuals and communities. The resort aimed to honor their dedication, professionalism, and compassion through this celebration.



It also served as a reminder of our profound gratitude to all healthcare professionals for their tireless efforts, particularly during the challenging times.

COLLABORATING ON BUILDING CLIMATE RESILIENT SAFER ISLANDS

Six Senses Laamu had the privilege of hosting a team of researchers from the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and Green Climate Fund (GCF) project, 'Building Climate Resilient Safer Islands in the Maldives'. This collaborative initiative aims to establish coastal protection measures at four islands in Laamu Atoll: Fonadhoo, Gan, Maamendhoo, and Isdhoo. The visit to Six Senses Laamu was to facilitate the sharing of ongoing research between both parties and conduct a comprehensive roaming survey of Six Senses Laamu's reef, validating specific areas against satellite images.

The meeting gave the researchers and the MUI team the opportunity to exchange insights, knowledge, and findings regarding the ongoing efforts to build climate resilience and create safer island communities. By working together and leveraging the expertise, the project aims to develop effective strategies and measures to safeguard these vulnerable islands and the surrounding ecosystems. Protecting the environment and ensuring the well-being of both local communities and marine ecosystems are fundamental priorities for Six Senses Laamu.

By collaborating with experts in the field, Six Senses Laamu aims to drive meaningful change and positively impact the future of the Maldivian islands.



GEF DELEGATES AND MINISTRY REPRESENTATIVES VISIT

In May, Six Senses Laamu hosted two senior environment specialists from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) alongside representatives from the Maldives Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, and Technology. Their visit aimed to engage with and observe the conservation and sustainable practices implemented by MUI.

With sustainability as its core value, Six Senses Laamu has long committed to implement innovative solutions and practices and the visit by the GEF delegates and ministry representatives provided for valuable dialogue and collaboration and the opportunity to showcase these efforts.

During their visit, the guests had the chance to interact with the team behind MUI and learn about the various initiatives undertaken to protect and preserve the local marine ecosystem. From coral reef restoration projects to responsible and sustainable initiatives, the delegates gained insights into the comprehensive approach employed by the resort to ensure the long-term health and resilience of the underwater ecosystems and surrounding communities.

The visit also facilitated fruitful discussions and knowledge exchange, allowing the GEF delegates and ministry representatives to understand the challenges and successes encountered by Six Senses Laamu in implementing sustainable practices.

The recognition and support from organizations like GEF further motivate the team to continue pioneering sustainable



initiatives and setting new benchmarks in the industry. By sharing its conservation and sustainable practices, Six Senses Laamu hopes to inspire and contribute to the broader mission of protecting the natural heritage of the Maldives and fostering a more sustainable future for all. Six Senses Laamu is grateful for the recognition and will continue striving towards its vision of a more sustainable and harmonious relationship between humans and nature.

CHILDREN'S DAY FESTIVAL: MUI ENGAGES IN MANGROVE FUN AND EDUCATION

On May 10, MUI participated in the Children's Day celebrations held in Hithadhoo. The event took place in Hithadhoo Mangrove, where the MUI team set up an engaging stall to educate students about the Maldives' vital mangrove ecosystems. Furthermore, the MUI team actively participated in the various entertaining activities organized during the festival. Children's Day serves as a special occasion to honor and celebrate the happiness and well-being of children.

Through educational materials and interactive discussions, the students gained a deeper understanding of the vital ecosystem services offered by mangroves and seagrass, such as coastal protection, biodiversity support, and carbon sequestration. Six Senses Laamu appreciates, Hithadhoo School, for organizing the event and for providing a platform to share knowledge and celebrate with students

MUI remains committed to raising awareness and fostering a sense of environmental stewardship among young minds. By engaging with students during events like the Children's Day Festival, the MUI team aims to inspire the next generation to appreciate and protect the unique natural treasures of the Maldives.

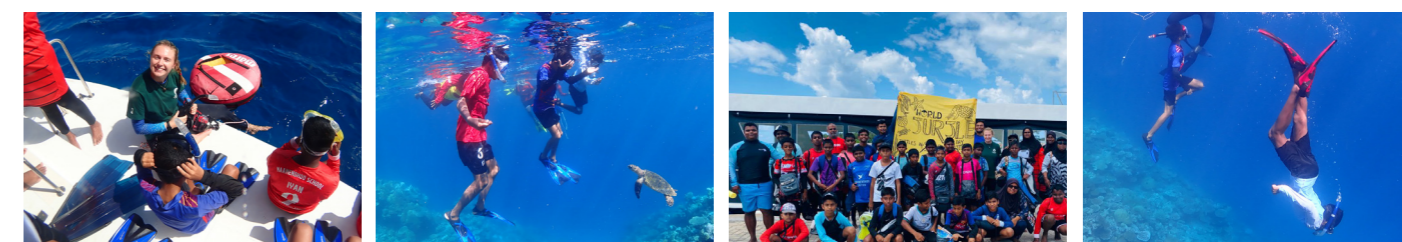


INSPIRING TURTLE CONSERVATION

On May 23, Six Senses Laamu, in collaboration with partner NGOs, celebrated World Turtle Day by organizing a snorkel boat adventure for 22 students from Maamendhoo School. This excursion aimed to provide a deeper understanding and appreciation of turtle conservation among the students. The snorkel site, Laamafaru Haa, is an ecologically significant reef renowned for its beauty and biodiversity. It is a favorite snorkeling site among Six Senses Laamu guests.

The MUI team shared insights about turtle conservation and protecting these magnificent creatures. The students had the incredible opportunity to encounter four critically endangered Hawksbill turtles in their natural habitat. This encounter left an indelible impression on the young minds, underscoring the significance of conserving these remarkable species.

World Turtle Day serves as a global platform to raise awareness about the challenges faced by sea turtles and the critical need to safeguard their habitats.



OUR HOME

LAAMU MANGO SEASON



Laamu Atoll is arguably the mango capital of the Maldives. The month of May marked the end of another delightful mango season in Laamu. This seasonal abundance presented an excellent opportunity for Six Senses Laamu, to showcase its commitment to offering guests the freshest local produce. As part of this initiative, the resort delighted its guests by serving delicious mangos at breakfast, showcasing the unique flavors of Laamu's mangos.

As a sustainable resort, Six Senses Laamu embraces the ethos of supporting local communities and promoting sustainable practices. By incorporating seasonal fruits like mangos into its culinary offerings, the resort not only enhances the dining experience for its guests but also supports local farmers and reduces the carbon footprint associated with importing produce. The Six Senses Laamu team eagerly anticipates the next mango season in Laamu, looking forward to delighting guests again with this tropical treat.

ROOSTER EXCHANGE PROGRAM: STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY BONDS

Six Senses Laamu's Kukulhu Village boasts a thriving poultry community, consisting of 97 chickens and two noble roosters. Thanks to the incredible capabilities of an incubator, the team has recently welcomed 10 new hatchlings into their feathered family.

One of the key aspects that sets the Kukulhu village apart is the strong bond the resort has fostered with the local community. In collaboration with Kukulhufarm, individuals from their household chicken farms, we have initiated an innovative Rooster Exchange Program. This program enables the community members to exchange their surplus roosters for hens from the resort's farm, ensuring a more balanced and harmonious flock distribution. In May, the dedicated team facilitated the exchange of four roosters, with 2 remaining roosters, Hashim & Samsam, both now take charge of overseeing the farm. This mutually beneficial program not only helps maintain a suitable rooster-to-hen ratio but also strengthens the ties between our village and the neighboring community.



To learn more about marine conservation and sustainability initiatives at Six Senses Laamu please contact:

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To stay up to date with the latest news, events and visiting experts follow the Maldives Underwater Initiative and Six Senses Laamu on social media.

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