BLUE & GREEN LAAMU

SIX SENSES
LAAMU

The Marine Conservation & Sustainability Newsletter by the Maldives Underwater Initiative

OCTOBER 2022

This shot by Andy Ball, depicts a little turtle hatching making its way to the ocean for the very first time.

MUI
MALDIVES UNDERWATER INITIATIVE by Six Senses Laamu

This shot by Miriam Staiger, Manta Trust Project Manager, was taken at Kurethi dive site.

WHAT'S INSIDE?

THE BIG STUFF

92 megafauna surveys were conducted by the MUI and DBD teams

361 sharks were sighted

207 rays were sighted

361 turtles were sighted

OUR EDUCATION

1530 moments of education were shared with guests

229 moments of education were shared with hosts

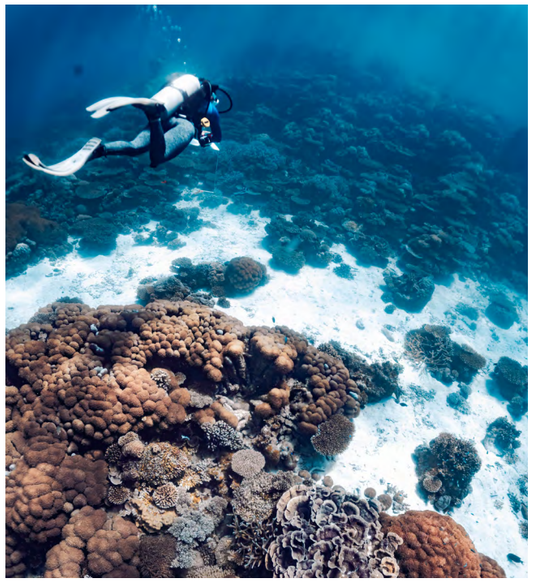
167 moments of education were shared with the community

SIX SENSES
CONSERVATION

CORAL RECRUITMENT
SURVEYS COMPLETE!

Rhiannon, a PhD student from Exeter University in the UK, has completed her data collection! Rhiannon has been with MUI for the past 3 months in which time she has been conducting surveys all around Laamu Atoll. The purpose of her study is to investigate the differences in coral recruitment (new corals on the reef) at different reef locations, reef types, and depths. It is important to understand if the reefs around Laamu have a healthy level of recruitment to regenerate reefs impacted by previous bleaching events, and also further human impacts. This is what supports the coral populations to continue to grow, enhance genetic diversity and build resilience against future climatic events. A healthy coral population builds the foundation and the structure of the reef that all the fish, invertebrates, megafauna, and even humans, rely on. Therefore, Rhiannon's research has implications beyond the corals themselves, but for the whole ecosystem.

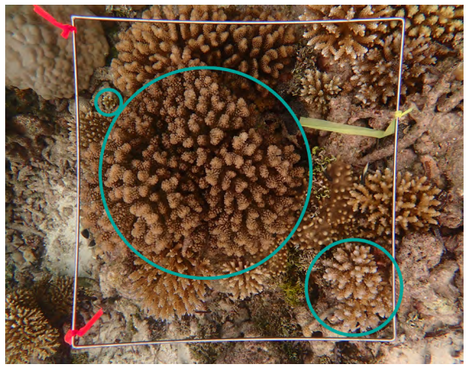
Rhiannon has now analyzed 700 different quadrats across 13 sites in which she counts the number of corals in three different size classes: below 5cm (recruits), 5-15cm (juveniles) and 15+cm (adults). Rhiannon also assesses the overall coral cover of the reef. This is a huge achievement for just 3 months of research.



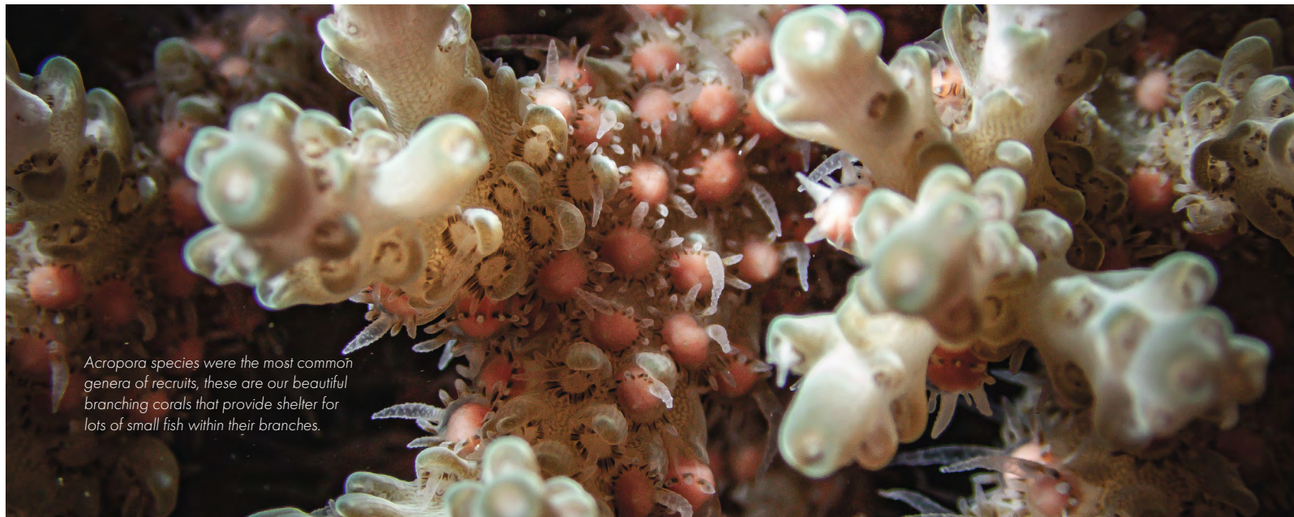
13 sites surveyed

Early results are suggesting that channel reefs have a higher recruit density (number of recruits per quadrat) than other reef types. These channel sites are where water flows into and out of the atoll, this makes them important for lots of different animals, such as manta rays, groupers and Napoleon wrasse. This finding might highlight even further the need to protect these highly productive and vital areas.

It is important to know the natural recruitment level of sites before assessing if coral restoration is required. The results from Rhiannon's study will reveal which reef sites are able to replenish their populations naturally and if any might need more focused assistance. Overall, the early results are suggesting that there is a healthy level of recruitment on lots of the reef locations around Laamu, but that some sites may benefit from restoration.



This quadrat displays the different size classes that Rhiannon has been assessing; recruit, juvenile & adult colonies.



Acropora species were the most common genera of recruits, these are our beautiful branching corals that provide shelter for lots of small fish within their branches.

WELCOMING NEW TEAM MEMBERS

October has been a time for change within the MUI team! We have said farewell to some team members, welcomed others, and some just changed their uniform! This brings the team total to 11 full time marine biologists, including our interns, each working within their different specialty areas.

These fresh faces will bring new knowledge and experience to the team, and hopefully learn something along the way too!

Kiah Williams

Kiah is a marine biologist and PADI divemaster from Switzerland, with a BSc in Marine Biology from Newcastle University. She has occupied a variety of roles as marine biologist including working on a cetacean research vessel in Spain and a coral monitoring project in the Mauritius. Her journey in the Maldives started at the Atoll Marine Center working on turtle rescue and rehabilitation as well as community outreach and education. Durign this time she was based at Kanuhura, Six Senses' second Maldives resort forecast to open in July 2023. Whilst anticipating the grand opening, Kiah will be spending the next few months with the team in Laamu learnng all things MUI ready to launch exciting marine programs at Six Senses Laamu's sister property.

Kiah and Jess conducting research on the housereef.

Mahil Ahmed (Coco)

Meet Mahil (Coco), our new marine biology intern. He was born in Male and has always loved the ocean. After finishing school at 16 years old, he joined a 2-year divemaster internship.

In 2016, while working as a divemaster at K. Maasfushi he witnesses his first coral bleaching event and was devasted to see his favorite dive sites starting to collapse. In response, Mahil and his colleagues Eco Dive Club Maafushi created a coral nursery and started Renees Coral Garden in order to spread awareness within the community. He would invite his diving groups and locals at Maafushi for an island clean up and to teach them how important coral reefs are in the Maldives and what is happening to the corals reefs due to global warming. Afterwards, he would teach them about coral planting and let them plant corals on the frame under supervision.

Later on, Mahil studied at the Noo Raajie education program in partnership with the University of San Diego. He learned about coral surveys, the blue economy, and methods for wider community reach and education.

As my instructor would say, "we need the ocean more than the ocean needs us", so it's our duty to make a difference!

Jess Hodge

Jess grew up in the UK where she has been surrounded by the ocean from a young age, as a sailor, SCUBA diver and freediver. Her passion for the underwater world drove her to study for her BSc in Biology at the University of Leeds, with a project focussing on changing coral demographics in response to bleaching. Following this she completed her MSc in Ecology, Evolution & Conservation at Imperial College London. Her MSc project focussed on species co-existence and how ecology & evolution interact with each other.

Prior to joining the MUI team she was working in the Seychelles on a variety of different projects including experiments to improve coral restoration techniques, studying shark distributions using BRUVs and she led the analysis and write-up of the long-term biannual reef monitoring surveys. At MUI she will be joining at Six Senses Lamau Research Coordinator, taking over projects including coral spawning research, seagrass monitoring, megafauna citizen science and blue carbon research, to name a few! She is excited to be joining such an inspiring team and hopes to contribute to the understanding of marine ecosystems and promote cutting edge research in Laamu.

Miriam Staiger

Miriam is the new Manta Trust Laamu Project Manager working here at Six Senses Laamu. She has been working as MUI research coordinator for the last year where she managed a variety of projects, from coral reproduction and reef health monitoring to seagrass and megafauna.

Despite changing her role , she is incredibly happy to be staying in the MUI team. Coming from a shark ecology background having studied shark migrations and recreational fishing pressure of pregnant Spotted Ragged-tooth sharks in South Africa, she always had a love for elasmobranchs and is now very excited to work with manta rays in Laamu Atoll.

Laamu has a small but very resident reef manta ray population which make the encounters in Laamu so special to Miri - "You really get to know the individuals" – she can't wait to dive into the data and support studies such as the ultrasound project where we try and better understand manta ray pregnancies, development and more.

Julian Gervolino

Julian is MUIs Sea Turtle Biologist and Guest Educator from the Olive Ridley Project (ORP). His research involves studying the population dynamics of sea turtles in Laamu Atoll through photo identification and nest surveys, while also carrying out educational and outreach initiatives with guests and the local community.

Despite growing up in metropolitan cities such as Kuala Lumpur, Singapore and Shanghai, Julian has always had a fascination for wildlife and the natural s that he truly fostered a passion for marine conservation and the diversity of life under our oceans.

after finishing his batchelors degree in 2019, Julian interned as a research assistant for a sea turtle project in Malaysia- his introduction tot he world of sea turtles. This led to work at other organisations including the Sea Turtle Conservancy in Costa rica and Archelon in Greece, where he gained experence monitoring green, hawksbill, loggerhead and leatherback turtles.

Julian has witnessed the detrimental impacts humans were having, not only on sea turtles, but on all marine biodiversity and ecosystems. This motivated him to return to university in 2021 to complete a masters in Marine Environmental Management from the University of Exeter, where he collaborated with the Seychelles Island Foundation (SIF) to research the spatio-temporal distribution of nesting green turtles on Aldabra Atoll. Through the research with ORP, he is hoping to improve our understanding of sea turtle ecology and behaviour in the Maldives with the long-term goal of informing better conservation plans in the region.

Photograph taken on a research dive at Fushi Kandu of a zebra shark resting on the reef.

JUNIOR MARINE BIOLOGY
BACK WITH A BANG

After a couple of months of few Junior Marine Biology (JMB) sessions due to very not many children being on island, October has brought children and JMB sessions back in boatloads (literally)! With many children on island over the school half-term break this month, JMB was in full swing with exciting classes almost every day over the two-week period. We were also super excited to welcome many JMB alumni back into the team, some even for the third time! With a mixture of experienced and new children joining JMB, our team brought all kinds of fun and exciting sessions into the classroom.

One of the best things that the team saw during these sessions, was not only the passion and excitement for the marine world, which is what JMB is all about, but also the friendships and bonds that were made during the classes that will hopefully last long after the children return home.

With so many children returning to Six Senses Laamu excited to get back into JMB, the MUI team makes sure there are always new and exciting sessions for the alumni, along with the new children, to get involved with. This month we ran two brand new sessions, one on our amazing coral reefs, led by our visiting PhD student, Rhiannon, who is currently studying the corals on Laamu, and also a creepy crawly session talking all about invertebrates in the ocean led by our new intern, Coco.

During our Studying the Sea session, Henry and Ellen investigated how much parrotfish poo and therefore sand is made across our house reef in one day.

5 returning students

NEW
JMB GRADUATES

Welcome to the Team: Henry, Ellen, Oli, Leo, Henry, Ned, Henry, Casper, Lilah, Connie, Kaia, Kaeo, Sean Og, Lauren & Charlie

Welcome back to the team: Lukas, Alba, James, Julia & William

2 brand new JMB Sessions introduced to the program

20 new students

In our How to Help session, students learn the different ways they can have a positive impact on the ocean, during this session Junior Marine Biologists Sean Og , Lauren and Charlie made a powerful stop motion video on the impacts of Overfishing!

One of our brand-new sessions this month looked in more detail at corals and their features. Here we can see some of our junior marine biologists using quadrats to investigate the different growth forms that occur across our house reef.

THE MANTA TRUST

ALL EYES ON THE "EYES ON THE REEF" SYSTEMS

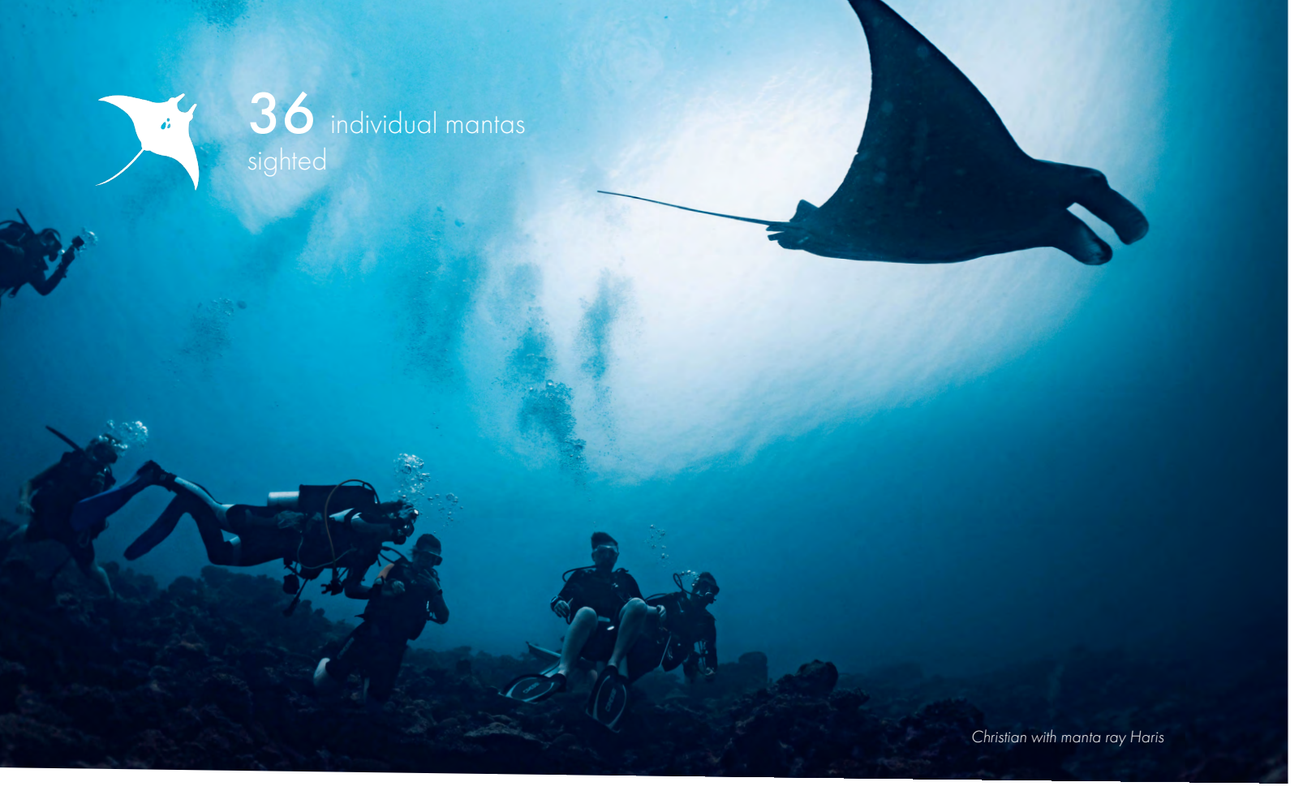
8 of 9 Dives at Fushi Kandu had manta rays

2 courtship trains observed

October was a very exciting month for the Manta Trust team and their remote underwater camera systems - the "Eyes on the Reef" (EOTR)! The EOTR systems let the team study mantas and other animals when no humans are around by continuously recording images over a period of one to two weeks. After recently sighting manta rays at Fonadhoo Beyru, a less studied and deeper outside reef, the team deployed another EOTR at this site and the results have not disappointed! Mantas were sighted on 9 of 10 days recorded, with sometimes three mantas using the cleaning station at the same time. Some mantas even stayed at this station for over 3 hours. This data is incredibly valuable to the team as it indicates the importance of even a very small reef area. Manta rays use cleaning stations not only for getting rid of parasites and dead skin, but also for initiating social interactions. Evidence of this was observed by divers this month, who were lucky enough to observe manta ray courtship behaviour both at Fonadhoo Beyru and Fushi Kandu! What is scientifically known as the 'courtship train' is a truly fascinating underwater spectacle, where a female manta ray travels at great speeds, twisting and turning, followed by often a number of males trying to keep up and impress the female before she makes her choice on whether or not to mate with one of them.

October also marked six months of EOTR deployments on Fushi Kandu, a manta aggregation site in the Northeast of the atoll which is also a new marine protected area. Since the first deployment in May this year, the Manta Trust team had EOTR systems deployed on over 85 days – and together with diver observational data have identified 30 different manta rays that visit Fushi Kandu. As a comparison, our long-term research site, Hithadhoo Corner, has had 53 different manta rays visiting within the same time frame - however it needs to be noted that the survey effort at Hithadhoo Corner is much higher than in Fushi Kandu due to the closeness to the resort. Hence the team is very excited for comparatively high numbers of manta ray sightings at Fushi Kandu and is looking forward to diving deeper into the data.

It is no surprise that Fushi Kandu is a popular dive site and together with the Six Senses Laamu dive team at Deep Blue Divers, the team have had a successful month of "Fushi Fridays". These dive trips to the further site have been so popular that this month, the team managed to even go there 9 times! And of these 9 dives, mantas were sighted on 8 of them - what a great success rate. We are very lucky to be able to show guests these magnificent animals.

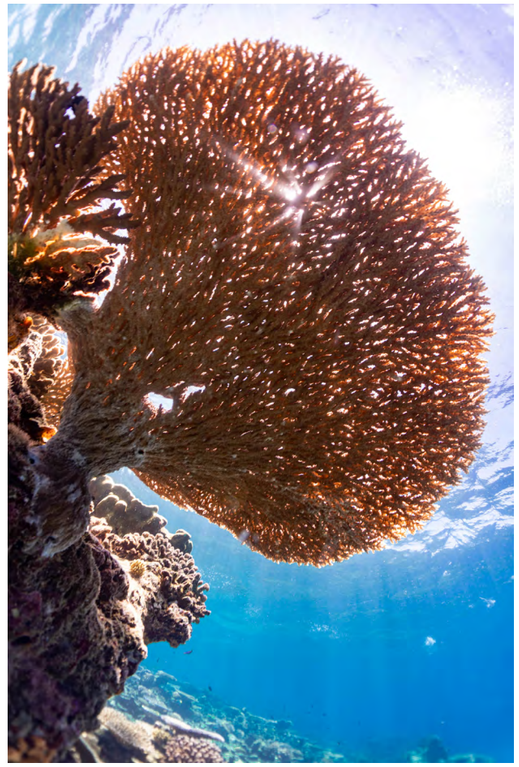


Christian with manta ray Haris

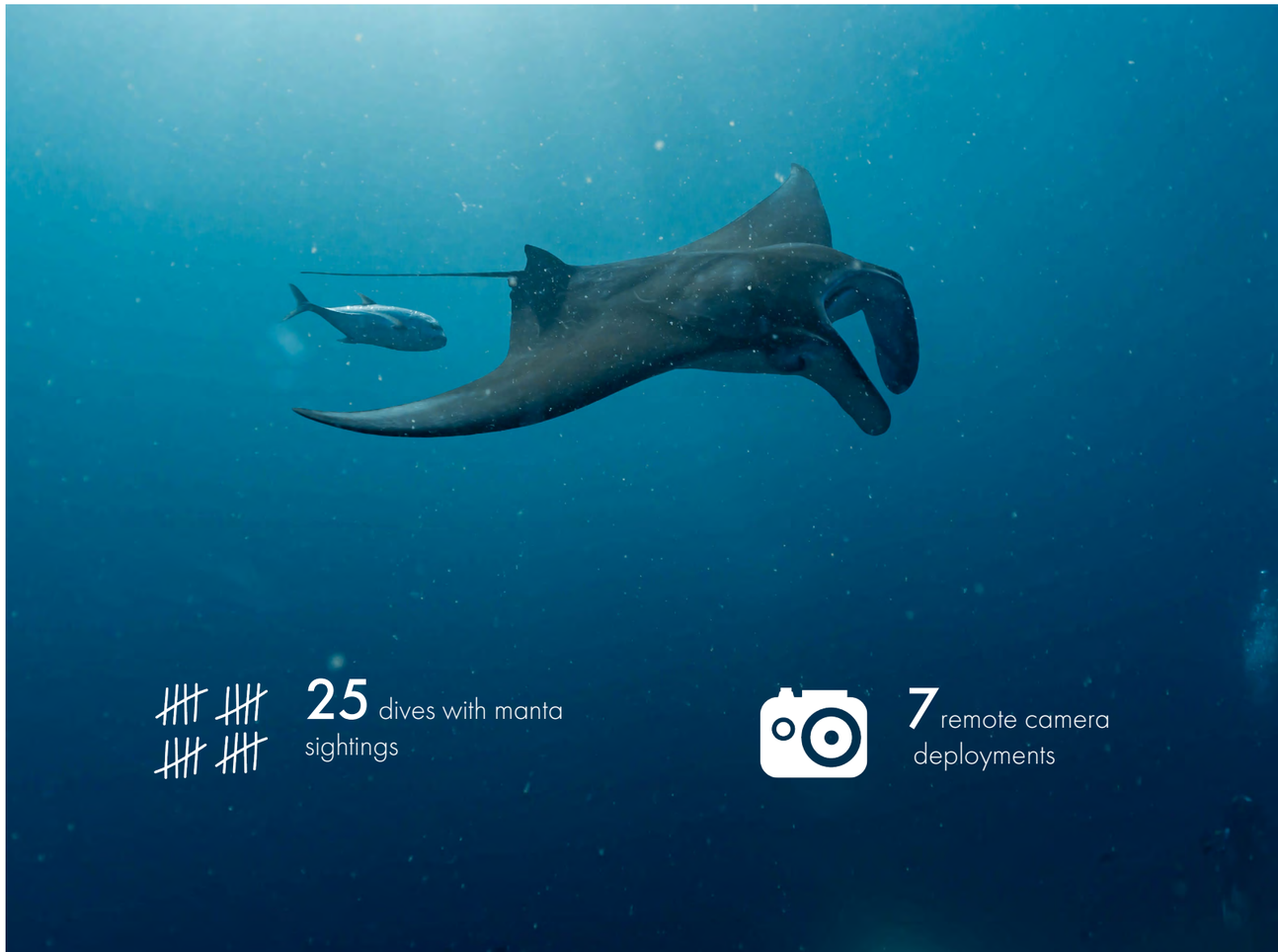

Photo taken with the Eyes on the Reef deployment at Fonadoo Outside

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR GUEST CHRISTIAN & FAMILY

The Manta Trust team would like to sincerely thank Christian, one of our visiting guests who donated a GoPro and extra equipment to the team this month. The camera will be used for more monitoring projects in the future to further expand our data collection efforts and therefore strengthen our understanding of the seasonality, habitat use and behavior of our local manta ray and megafauna populations here in Laamu. It was an absolute pleasure taking Christian on dives and showing him the Laamu mantas underwater. One of our local mantas, Haris, even changed his path to come and say hello (or thank you) to him!



1 GoPro donated to the Manta Trust



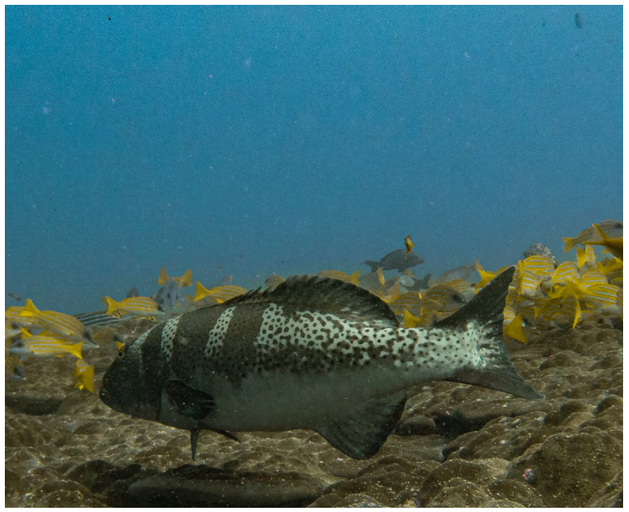
BLUE MARINE FOUNDATION

LET THE GROUPER SPAWNING SURVEYS BEGIN!

This month, the Blue Marine Foundation (Blue Marine) and Maldives Resilient Reefs (MRR) team conducted the first of three formal grouper surveys of the year. Surveys are planned to be conducted around the new moon across the months of October, November, and December. The team surveyed for eight consecutive days on a reef in Laamu where groupers are known to spawn. Like other reef fish, groupers are known to aggregate in large numbers to 'broadcast' spawn. This type of spawning aggregation occurs when many individuals migrate to the same place to reproduce all at the same time in a spectacle which can be regarded as one of nature's true wonders. In the days and hours leading up to the big event, groupers participate in courtship 'dances' and jostle for the best reef position before hastily releasing their eggs and sperm into the water.

Grouper spawning is a phenomenon observed across the globe and acts as an important event to provide food for a variety of large predators such as sharks. However, such aggregations have also been heavily exploited by fishers in Maldives for decades, resulting grouper numbers plummeting across the country. Groupers are protogynous hermaphrodites which means that they change sex from female to male as they grow up. Overexploitation of grouper aggregations has historically targeted large male individuals, as these species provide fishers the most profit when sold to overseas markets. Such hermaphroditic life histories make groupers vulnerable to skewed sex ratios, meaning the population will be left with more smaller females, and fewer males. Skewed sex ratios within grouper populations can inhibit the ability of groupers to recover from overexploitation, with many of the Maldives' commercially important grouper species now found are on the IUCN Red list of Threatened Species.

On the research dives the team focused on four species of grouper: 1) brown-marbled grouper; 2) camouflage grouper; 3) squaretailed coral grouper; and 4) black-saddled coral grouper. The team recorded the presence of each species and estimated the size of each individual observed. The data collected through these surveys will be compared to data collected in 2016 at the same location and enable researchers to assess any changes in grouper spawning numbers. These data will be crucial when informing the effective management of Laamu's grouper spawning sites and the preservation of these important species.



200+ groupers observed

7 hours of surveys

FISH OF THE MONTH

BLUEFIN TREVALLY

Many bluefin trevally were landed this month through the Laamaseelu Masveriyaa program making the bluefin trevally the champion of October's Fish of the Month. The Laamaseelu Masveriyaa program is an innovative initiative conducted by Blue Marine Foundation in partnership with Six Senses Laamu to ensure that the resort sources sustainably caught local seafood.

Bluefin trevally *(Caranx melampygus)* is also known as bluefin jack or spotted trevally due to the vibrant blue spots on the sides of their body and their distinctive electric blue fins. Juveniles usually inhabit shallow lagoons and seagrass meadows until they grow mature enough to move to deeper areas where they form huge groups. Reaching sexual maturity at 30-40cm, these fish are known to be grow to more than 100cm in length. Targeted by both recreational and commercial fishers for their tender flesh, bluefin trevally is a fish which guarantees a smile on the faces of Six Senses Laamu guests whenever they are selected as the catch of the day in the resorts restaurants.

80 Bluefin Trevally's landed

BLUE MARINE AND MRR SIGN LANDMARK AGREEMENT WITH L.HITHADHOO COUNCIL

In October, Blue Marine Foundation and Maldives Resilient Reefs team signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Island Council of Laamu Hithadhoo to support the council in conserving the marine ecosystems in the Hithadhoo Baaneykolhu Area. The Hithadhoo Baaneykolhu Area is one of the most ecologically significant sites in Laamu, with its effective protection vital in ensuring long-term health of this biodiverse region. Through this MoU, Blue Marine and MRR will work with Hithadhoo Council to conserve the area while supporting the economic and social wellbeing of the community. It will also build island-level capacity for marine management and engage youth in citizen science and marine research.

333 fish sustainably landed to Six Senses Laamu

969 kg of local seafood sustainably sourced by Six Senses Laamu

THE OLIVE RIDLEY PROJECT

LAAMU CONTINUES TO GROW

In October, Olive Ridley Project's (ORP) database of green and hawksbill turtles in Laamu surpassed 750 identified individuals! This represents an important milestone in establishing a significant presence of sea turtles in the region. On top of that, October was the month with the most photo ID submissions in 2022 so far, with a total of 164 submissions by the MUI team.

Since partnering with Six Senses Laamu in 2018, ORP has been building up this database of sea turtles through photo ID of individuals encountered in the reefs and seagrass beds around the atoll. This monumental effort by the MUI team and other contributors has helped maintain Laamu atoll as the fourth largest database of turtles in Maldives after Ari Atoll, North Malé Atoll, and Baa Atoll.

Photo taken by Joel and Jen, @newsoupmedia

The facial scale patterns of sea turtles are unique to each individual, similar to fingerprints for humans, and do not change throughout their entire lives. This provides a non-invasive method for ORP to "tag" individuals and track their movements over areas and time, as opposed to more conventional methods of metal or PIT (passive integrated transponder) tagging. This continued growth is promising, as it's an indication that there are still many unidentified individuals in the atoll, and there are also many new individuals, both juveniles and adults, being recruited into the Laamu's sea turtle population.

90 hours of Nestwatch

751 individual turtles identified

116 submissions by MUI

Photographed by Joel and Jen, @newsoupmedia

THE LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL

On the last week of October, the MUI team had their first successful hatching event in over 6 months! The nest had shown no signs of hatching for 63 days, which is later than average for green turtles in Laamu, and our team was beginning to expect the worst. After a series of storm surges in previous months, many of the nests on the island had experienced severe flooding and did not hatch very successfully. However, on day 64 our team had spotted a few little turtle heads popping out of the sand just before sunset and had coordinated with the resort staff to get all the guests on the beach in preparation for the big event.

Hatchlings usually emerge at night, when there is a drop in temperature after the sun sets, but they can take up to several hours before deciding to leave the nest. With fingers crossed, our team and the guests watched with anticipation as the hatchlings slowly inched their way up, and finally, after only an hour of waiting, 56 green turtle hatchlings burst out of the sand. This event was viewed by about 80 guests (almost the entire resort), and with the help of ORP's Sea Turtle Biologist and the rest of the MUI team, the hatchlings were able to make it safely to the water to begin their long journey.

This wouldn't have been possible without the dedication and determination of the volunteers in the Nestwatch team, who spent over 90 hours sitting by the nest in order for everyone, guests and staff, to enjoy this spectacle of life.

80 guests witnessed turtles hatching

56 turtle hatchlings begin their life

TURTLE ON THE SPOTLIGHT

Tom8

GR831

Meet Tom8 (G831), a large male green turtle who was first sighted in April 2016 and has since been spotted almost 120 times! Tom8 is usually found one of our most visited dive sites where it wouldn't be uncommon to encounter 8-10 turtles in a single dive! He is mostly seen resting on a specific part of the reef called Turtle Block, and is often accompanied by his best friend Maimiti (GR803), another large male green.

Just this month he was spotted 14 times!

Since his first encounter, sightings of Tom8 have been regular with some 2–3-month gaps between sightings, such as April 2022 to July 2022, which could suggest that Tom8 does move out of the reef for prolonged periods of time - perhaps migrating to mating grounds during nesting seasons. Unlike females who on average nest every 2-3 years, males will often migrate every year to nesting sites to mate with females before or during the nesting season. After which they will return to their foraging sites to feed and rest until the following season.

120 sightings of Tom8

October 26th- green turtle hatchlings reach the surface

OUR COMMUNITY

SIX SENSE LAAMU WELCOMES LOCAL SCHOOLS

Maldives is ranked as one of the top travel destinations in the world. Since the start of tourism in the Maldives in 1972, the industry has seen exponential growth. The idyllic islands of the Maldives draw millions of visitors annually. Tourism is the main industry in the Maldives, directly contributing over 21% to the country's Gross Domestic Product and around 60% of foreign exchange.

Over 27,000 Maldivians work in this ever-expanding industry. However, there are opportunities and a need for recruitment from the neighboring islands to make sure local communities benefit from tourism and resorts. Therefore, to introduce students to a career in tourism, Six Senses Laamu welcomed 5 schools to visit the resort on a field trip. The aim was to help participants discover the world of opportunities that the tourism industry can offer and show them how tourism can be sustainable and responsible. 123 students, teachers, and parents participated in the program, and the team delivered 31 hours of teaching and sharing knowledge.

123 participants

31 hours of practical knowledge

During the visit, students learned from different departments how each department works cohesively with others to provide an #OutOfOrdinary experience for guests.

FONADHOO SOLAR LIGHTS DONATION

Six Senses Laamu partnered with Fonadhoo Women Enhancement to install solar lights in the vicinity of the waste management center in the administrative capital of Laamu atoll, Fonadhoo. Through this partnership, 7 Solar lights were installed, making it easy and efficient for the residents of Fonadhoo to use the waste management center for longer hours.

Waste management is a 'burning' issue in the Maldives. With limited access to waste management facilities, strengthening the island-level waste management practices is pivotal in building environmentally sound and resilient communities.

7 solar lights donated

2810 community members benefits from the donation

TEACHERS DAY CELEBRATION

On 5th October, The MUI team welcomed teachers from our neighboring island, Maamendhoo, for lunch at the resort to celebrate World Teachers Day. Maamendhoo School had their best academic year in 2021, and the visit to Six Senses Laamu was to celebrate teachers' hard work and determination, which led to the accomplishment.

To add to the visit, the MUI team took the teachers on a tour around the organic Leaf garden and Earth lab, where teachers participated in a soap-making workshop. Not only this, but the MUI team also organized a team bonding activity for the teachers. The activity was coupled with a Marine Protected Area information game for teachers to engage in the discussion and get an insight into ongoing work to develop management plans for the six sites declared protected by the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Technology in December 2021.

The MUI team was honored to host Maamendhoo School at Six Senses Laamu for the day, and looks forward to working with all schools in Laamu to foster the next generation of marine stewards in Laamu Atoll.

40 teachers hosted

UNEP'S TRANSFORMING TOURISM WEBINAR

In October, Six Senses Laamu participated in one of a series of practical webinars under the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) Transforming Tourism Value Chain project: Climate Action Planning webinar.

Delivered by The Travel Foundation, an international sustainable tourism organization, the webinar aimed to provide practical guidance on climate action planning and implementation for accommodations providers, as well as sharing from other tourism operators already taking action to provide insight and inspiration.

At this live webinar, Ali Shareef, Community Outreach Coordinator, presented Six Senses Laamu's regenerative impacts through MUI. In addition, Ali shared the success story of the #ProtectMaldivesSeagrass campaign as a case study to emphasize how collaboration and partnerships could be used for maximum impact.

#ProtectMaldivesSeagrass is a campaign launched in collaboration with Blue Marine Foundation on World Seagrass Day, 1st March 2019. To learn more about the campaign, visit www.protectmaldivesseagrass.com.

NAMOONA WORKSHOP

In October, the Six Senses Laamu Community Outreach Coordinator attended the third Soneva Namoona workshop, which was aimed at formulating the action plan for strategically aligning with Maldives government targets on single-use plastic and sustainable waste management. The workshop brought together local government authorities, organizations, and other stakeholders in the country to discuss and understand the landscape of sustainable waste management efforts in the Maldives.

It was an excellent opportunity for MUI to attend the workshop and engage in discussions with many organizations working to bring innovative solutions to tackle waste management issues across the country.

OUR HOME

INTRODUCING ECO PRINTING

Although Maldives is mostly sunshine and blue skies, we do have rainy days! On rainy days, Six Senses Laamu likes to offer guests some different experiences to showcase that Six Senses Laamu is about more than relaxing on the beach, including offering freshly harvested and brewed hot tea, board games, cocktail classes, fudge and chocolate making workshop, movies with popcorn and much much more.

In October, our Earth Lab team introduced another new activity that can be conducted whatever the weather, and appeal to your crafty side- eco printing.

Eco printing is a form of natural dyeing where the colors of natural dyes from plant materials are transferred to another object such as paper or fabric.

Guests will learn a simple eco printing technique on a piece of fabric using fresh leaves from the resort landscape which they can take to display or use in their homes.

Equipment required: Wooden hammer, scrap paper, a leaf with a high tannin content (you can search online which ones you can find near you work best!)

1. Put a piece of fabric on a solid flat surface and ensure no wrinkles are on the fabric.

2. Put a leaf on the top of fabric. Ensure the underside of the leaf is pressed against the fabric. The tannin content (containing the natural dye) is highest on the underside of the leaves, not on the upper part!

3. Cover the leaf with a piece of scrap paper to prevent direct impact from hammer to the leaf, creating a more intact leaf pattern transferred to the fabric.

4. Using a wooden hammer, pound the area to bruise the leaf evenly, allowing the tannin color to be absorbed and pressed into the fabric.

5. Remove the scrap paper and leaf, and you will have a printed leaf on the fabric!

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

Alea Laidlaw
Content Creator
alea.laidlaw@sixsenses.com

Philippa Roe
Head Marine Biologist
philippa.roe@sixsenses.com

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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