

## **Project Update: August 2010**

### **1. Education and awareness**

#### **Community outreach programme**

Awareness meetings were held in six locations where over 120 fishermen were reached. In these meetings fishermen were informed of a) the importance of sea turtle conservation and the threats posed to in-water turtle populations due to mortality levels related to bycatch; and b) the threats posed to their livelihoods by continued unsustainable fishing effort and practices.

To build the capacity of the local fishermen on sea turtle handling, one day training was held where 18 fishermen attended. Fishermen present were drawn from different landing sites and they were taught about: a) nest mapping/location – this made to understand if a turtle nested or it was a false crawl; b) nest translocation – to make them know how to transfer a nest that may be under threat; and c) data recording – they were shown how to record the number of eggs hatched and unhatched eggs and hence calculate the success rate.

Awareness was also carried out in hotels through PowerPoint presentations and during turtle releases. They were informed of the threats posed by their activities in the marine environment and how they should help in promoting grass roots conservation.

Posters were distributed to different stakeholders and stickers were stacked in over 70 public vehicles thus reaching-out to a larger number of the public.

#### **School outreach programme**

All eight schools were reached through class presentation/lectures and games. Question and answer sessions were also carried out to evaluate if children were receptive and understand the various messages on conservation.

To bring the marine environment closer to the children, interactive educational materials such as posters and stickers were displayed in the eight schools and distributed to over 100 schools.

A turtle awareness day was also organized where all eight schools participated with 15 children from each school. The theme of this awareness day was 'turtles have a right to life'. Children presented songs, poems, short skits, art and drawings, models and essays bearing environmental themes. Over 200 children attended.

A total of 24 teachers including deputy head teachers attended a 1-day workshop where they were trained on marine ecology principles and on how to use the education materials developed such as the posters on marine sea turtles.

### **2. Habitat Restoration**

The project has been attending to a mangrove nursery that has 3000 seedlings. No planting took place because of the season/time.

One beach cleaning event was also held in Watamu that was attended by hoteliers, beach operators and school children from two nearby schools.

### 3. Sea turtle conservation

Nest protection training was held where 15 local fishermen attend and among these were four women from the larger beach management unit. This training will boost their knowledge in sea turtle conservation thus reducing the threats to turtle nests.

The project has also managed to release a total of 15 sea turtles in the months of July and August 2010 i.e. 3 and 12 turtles respectively. This has been attributed to an aggressive landing site to landing site awareness campaigns. This also led to a number of fishermen willing to release sea turtle caught in their nets.

