

Project Update: December 2013

1. Continued surveys of turtles, seagrasses and seagrass fishes in five islands of the Lakshadweep, and have some new data on turtle distribution and their impacts on seagrasses.
2. We held public consultations with local fisher groups in Agatti and Kadmat islands, which were the main centres of turtle conflict, through which strategies to ameliorate herbivory impacts and restore seagrasses were discussed.
3. In the first phase of lagoon fisheries monitoring, fishers from Agatti and Kadmat have been monitoring changes in their fish catch over the last year, through a voluntary logbook filling schedule. This is showing us changes in fish catches from the lagoons over time.
4. Networking with the fisheries department: we are trying to involve more actively, the fisheries department and environmental departments in the consultations about turtle-fisher conflict and declines in lagoon seagrass fisheries.
5. The last stage is ongoing - it involves setting up a training programme for developing a model monitoring programme of reef and lagoon habitats by local fishers and government officials in charge, this process is soon starting in Kadmat Island and will take to some other islands by January 2014. The Lakshadweep Administration is trying to develop integrated management plans for Islands, in which we plan to provide some inputs from our long-term turtle monitoring data.