



ATOLL  
MARINE  
CONSERVATION  
CENTRE  
NAIFARU.MALDIVES

# 2023 ANNUAL REPORT



PREPARED BY ATOLL MARINE CONSERVATION CENTRE

# Table of Contents

AMC 2023 Overview	03
About Atoll Marine Centre	04
Meet The AMC team	05
Highlights	06
Turtles	13
Current Patients	17
Talks and Events	20
Community Outreach	23
Resorts	30
Adoption	32
Acknowledgements	33

# AMC 2023 OVERVIEW

## A BRIEF GLANCE AT 2023:

**54**

7 Adults (Including one sub adult) 2 boat strikes, majority ghost net victims  
47 Hatchlings (17 requiring salt water therapy)

**TURTLES  
ADMITTED**



**83%**

**RELEASE RATE**

**PARLEY BAGS  
SENT**



**85+**

Continuing our partnership with Parley, over 10,000 KG of plastics were sent for recycling from Naifaru

**1,700+**

**RESORT GUEST  
VISITORS**

To our rehabilitation Centre on Naifaru



**INTERNATIONAL  
VOLUNTEERS**

**90+**

Hosted  
From 20  
Countries



**FUNDING SECURED  
2 GRANTS**

From The Asia Foundation & Allied Insurance Ltd. Community Fund for projects in 2024 focused on Climate Change Awareness and Plastic Pollution Respectively



**SUCCESSFULLY INSTALLED THE MALDIVES  
FIRST EVER FLOATING MARINE CENTRE**

**1ST**



# ABOUT ATOLL MARINE CENTRE

Atoll Marine Conservation Centre is a non-governmental organization founded by a locally run NGO named Naifaru Juvenile in Lh.Naifaru. The centre was opened as a solution to the massive number of hatchlings being kept at local homes as pets.

Since then, our goals and focus have changed from rehabilitating hatchlings to rescuing and rehabilitating adult turtles and hatchlings found stranded or caught in ghost nets.

We collaborate with local NGO's, marine biologists, local fishermen, schools and resorts to make sure that Lhaviyani Atoll is knowledgeable of the threats of plastic and ghost nets. We offer a place for injured sea turtles to overcome their injuries then be released back into their ocean home.



## OUR GOALS



1

**SEA TURTLE RESCUE & REHABILITATION**

2

**COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

3

**PROTECTION OF NAIFARU & SURROUNDINGS**

4

**CORAL RESTORATION PROGRAMME**



# Meet The 2023 AMC Team

The year 2023 saw the recruitment of 12 staff members including 3 Veterinary Surgeons, 5 Marine Biologists, 3 Local Maldivian Interns and 2 Volunteer Coordinators. We thank all of our staffs who worked with us contributing their time to our centre patients throughout the year. Below are some of the incredible staff members we would like to recognise.



**Mohamed  
Ahmed Fulhu**  
Co-founder



**Alisa Slawinski**  
Marine Biologist



**Gabriella  
Boka**  
Veterinarian



**Dhuaa Abdullah**  
MB Assistant Intern



**Audha Ibrahim**  
Intern



**Janneke De  
Hollander**  
Volunteer  
Coordinator



**Rasheedhath  
Anum**  
Intern



**Noemie  
Hoffman**  
Veterinarian

**Additional staff members who worked throughout the year with us:**

**Kathryn Skazick - Marine Biologist**

**Barbara Lainz - Marine Biologist**

**Joanna Ditzel - Vet**

**Caitlin Rentell - Volunteer Coordinator**

We would like to thank each and every staff member for their remarkable hard work during their time at Atoll Marine Conservation Centre.



# HIGHLIGHTS OF 2023

## Prestige Award Recipient Community Support NPO Asia 2022/23

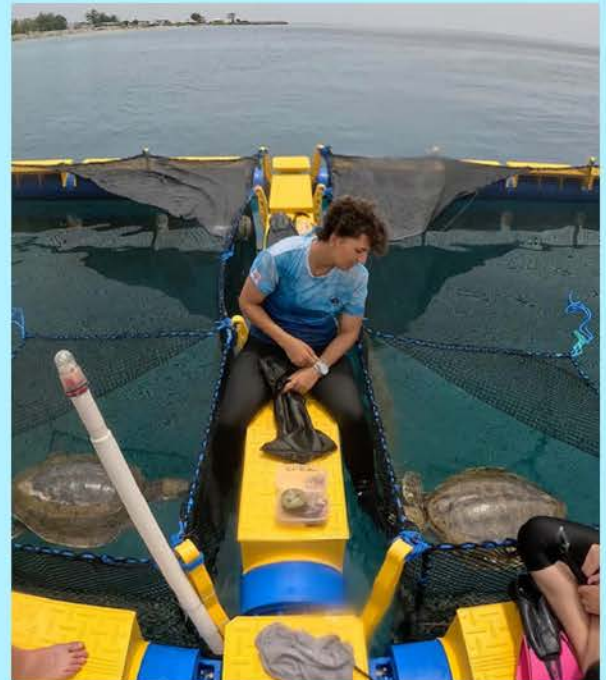


ASIA  
PRESTIGE AWARDS  
2022/23 WINNER

We are delighted to share with you that we are the winners of the Asia Prestige Award 2022/23 for the Community Support NPO category. This award will give us new international visibility and the possibility to reach more environmental actors.

## Floating Marine Centre

With the help of a grant from the UNDP we set up a new Floating Marine Centre (FMC) in 2023. It has five compartments which allow us to rehabilitate our turtles in a more natural environment. The FMC has shown to be a valuable last step in our turtles rehabilitation journeys. Primarily our FMC is being used as a final sea trial stage before we release a sea turtle back into the ocean. Our non-releasable patients have been trialed in the FMC, with various results. We have found that turtles with a buoyancy disorder did not benefit from long term stays in the FMC facing weight loss and minor sun damage. We have however found it a beneficial tool for short term enrichment for non-releasable buoyant patients. Once a releasable turtle is diving well, hunting, and resting on the bottom of the FMC they are ready for release. We release the turtles directly from the FMC.





# HIGHLIGHTS OF 2023

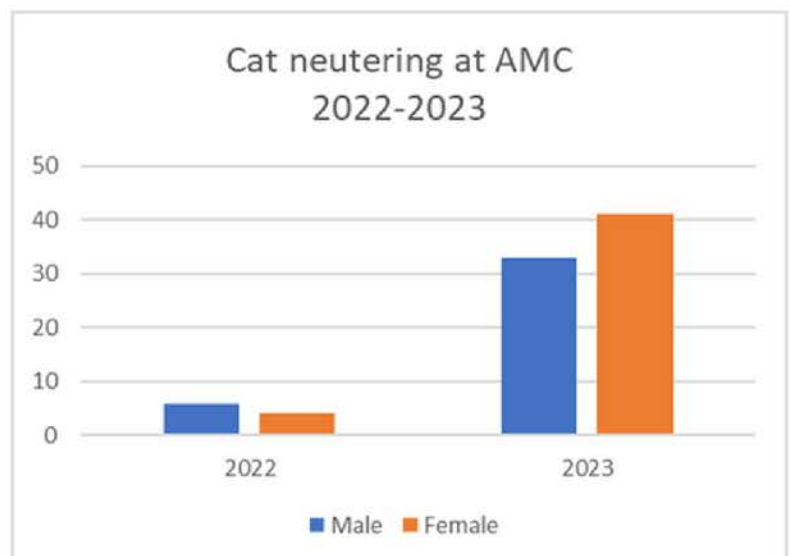
## Expanding Veterinary Clinic

In 2023 we expanded our veterinary clinic adding new equipment and a new room that serves as a lab area and office for the marine biologists and interns. We added the following new veterinary equipment during the year: portable ultrasound, sterilization machine for the surgery kits, blood biochemistry machine, centrifuge and a new surgery kit (suitable for soft tissue surgeries). Our plan is to separate the lab area from the surgical theatre so we are able to place an X-ray machine next to the surgery room in the future.



## Cat Neutering Programme

During 2023 we completed 77 cat sterilization surgeries. Five were stray cats from the area around AMC in Naifaru . The other cats are owned by locals from different islands, mostly Malé, but we received cats from as far away as Kaashidhoo and Addu. Some were even stray cats from Malé.



# HIGHLIGHTS OF 2023

## Veterinary Student Programme

In September we started to run our veterinary volunteer program. We usually only accept a maximum of 2 students at the same time so they all have an opportunity to participate. We also allow students from all university years. The volunteers can choose to stay with us from 2 to 12 weeks. They can participate in our program, get hands on experience in sea turtle husbandry, animal handling, sea turtle first aid and medical intervention. In September we hosted 4 students from Italy, for 4 weeks. They were friends and wanted to come at the same time so we allowed it. Our next student came from Australia and stayed with us for 2 weeks in November. Then another student came from the Netherlands for 2 weeks in December.



"ATTENDING CLINICAL PLACEMENTS AS A FINAL YEAR VET STUDENT AT ATOLL MARINE CENTRE WAS A TRULY UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCE. WITH LOTS OF HANDS ON CLINICAL WORK IN SEA TURTLE REHABILITATION FROM USING TARGETED EXTERNAL WEIGHT THERAPY TO ROUTINE BLOODWORK. THE OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP SURGICAL SKILLS THROUGH THE TNR PROGRAM SPAYING STRAY CATS ON THE ISLAND WAS INCREDIBLY REWARDING.

THROUGH OUR DAYS WE ATTENDED LECTURES BY MARINE BIOLOGISTS AND PARTICIPATED IN CORAL GARDENING ALLOWING US TO EXPAND OUR BREADTH OF KNOWLEDGE OF MARINE LIFE. I WAS LUCKY ENOUGH TO OBTAIN MY ADVANCED OPEN WATER DIVER DURING MY STAY WHICH WAS LEFT ME AWE-STRUCK AND INSPIRED TO SAY THE LEAST!

THE AMC TEAM IS FILLED WITH THE MOST WARM AND WELCOMING PEOPLE. THIS PROGRAM HAS LED ME TO MEET AND FIND FRIENDS FROM ALL AROUND THE WORLD WHO SHARE THE SAME PASSIONS FOR ANIMAL WELFARE AND CONSERVATION. ✨  
🌍 I COULDN'T HAVE ASKED FOR A BETTER EXPERIENCE."

***December vet student volunteer,  
Natasha***



# HIGHLIGHTS OF 2023

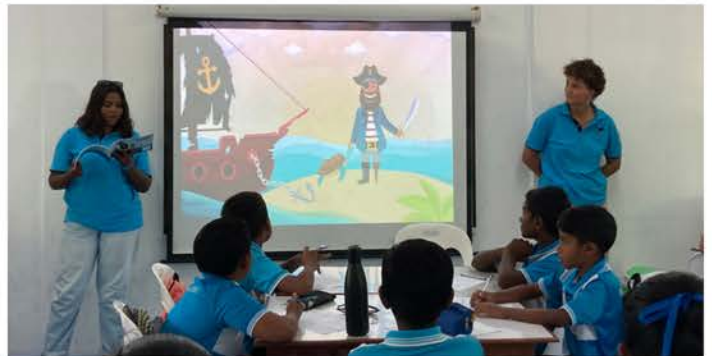
## Coral Restoration Project

This year we continued our coral reef restoration project focusing on monitoring and maintenance of the artificial reef site “Velaa Garden” located on Naifaru House Reef. In 2023 we organized 3 deployments of new artificial reef structures. AMC Volunteers and Naifaru Community members joined in collecting Corals of Opportunity (fragments that have already been broken due to waves) and planting fragments on the frames. We also continued the monitoring of hard coral coverage and coral bleaching impact on the artificial reef site and two reference sites - Naifaru House Reef and Veyvah Reef.



## Plastic Pirate Module

We have partnered with SoapBox South Africa to present Captain Fanplastic, a plastic pollution awareness campaign in the local schools. We presented this to 7 schools across Lhaviyani Atoll, Raa Atoll, and Noonu Atoll. The session comprises the telling of a story that introduces the idea of plastic pollution, and how it can be damaging to the marine environment. We follow the story with an upcycling activity, making eye patches from bottle tops, and a clean up.





# HIGHLIGHTS OF 2023

## Parley Plastic Recycling

In October 2022 we began a partnership with Parley to recycle plastics labeled 1, 2 and 5. In 2023 we have sent 86 jumbo Parley bags to their facility in Malé. The plastic bottles are processed and shipped overseas to be recycled into clothing materials.

We conducted community beach cleans on Naifaru as well as uninhabited islands Veyvah and Dhidhdhoo. We even ran a week long competition to see which team would bring in the most plastic bottles. We were blown away by the efforts of the teams who conducted daily beach cleans to bring in plastic. The winning team collected 8460 bottles, and altogether we received 22,800 bottles 1 TON of plastic! Whilst the efforts to collect the bottles is admirable, we still need to address the root of the issue resulting in so much plastic on our beaches in the first place.





# HIGHLIGHTS OF 2023

## Atoll Volunteers

This year we hosted a total of 93 volunteers from several European countries as well as Ukraine, Australia, Japan, Brazil, Canada, and the US. International volunteers are vital to the centre. They not only volunteer their time but their volunteering fee is hugely important for daily running costs of the centre. The volunteering programme gives volunteers the chance to learn more about turtle rehabilitation and gain experience in this field. We are extremely grateful for our volunteers, who also contribute heavily to our funding, alleviating the financial stress on the centre.



93  
Volunteers  
This Year



"VOLUNTEERING WITH THE ATOLL MARINE CENTER IS SUCH AN AMAZING EXPERIENCE! IN MY SEVEN WEEKS IN NAIFARU I'VE LEARNED SO MANY DIFFERENT THINGS ABOUT THE MARINE LIFE, THE MALDIVIAN CULTURE, THE PROBLEMS THERE AND OF COURSE A LOT ABOUT TURTLES.

YOU CAN FEEL THE POSITIVE AND RELAXED ATMOSPHERE ON NAIFARU AS SOON AS YOU ARRIVE. AND I REALLY ENJOYED GETTING TO KNOW THE LOCAL LIFE IN THE MALDIVES.

DURING MY STAY I MET AMAZING PEOPLE FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD AND EXPERIENCED SO MANY LITTLE MAGICAL MOMENTS!

JUST THANKS!"  
CORINA WILLI



# HIGHLIGHTS OF 2023

## Atoll Volunteers



In November we welcomed Flinders University from Adelaide, south of Australia to AMC for two weeks. During this period, the university studied a number of habitats, such as coral reef and sea grass beds, while working with our marine biologist from our centre to find out more about sea turtles rescue and rehabilitation in Maldives. Getting to work with these students and professors, while exchanging knowledge, was a pleasure. A small feeding enrichment study was also being done by one of the student groups. We also did a lot of beach clean ups, waste surveys, snorkel trips and also showed the students what's it like in a day at a sea turtle rescue centre in a local Maldivian island.

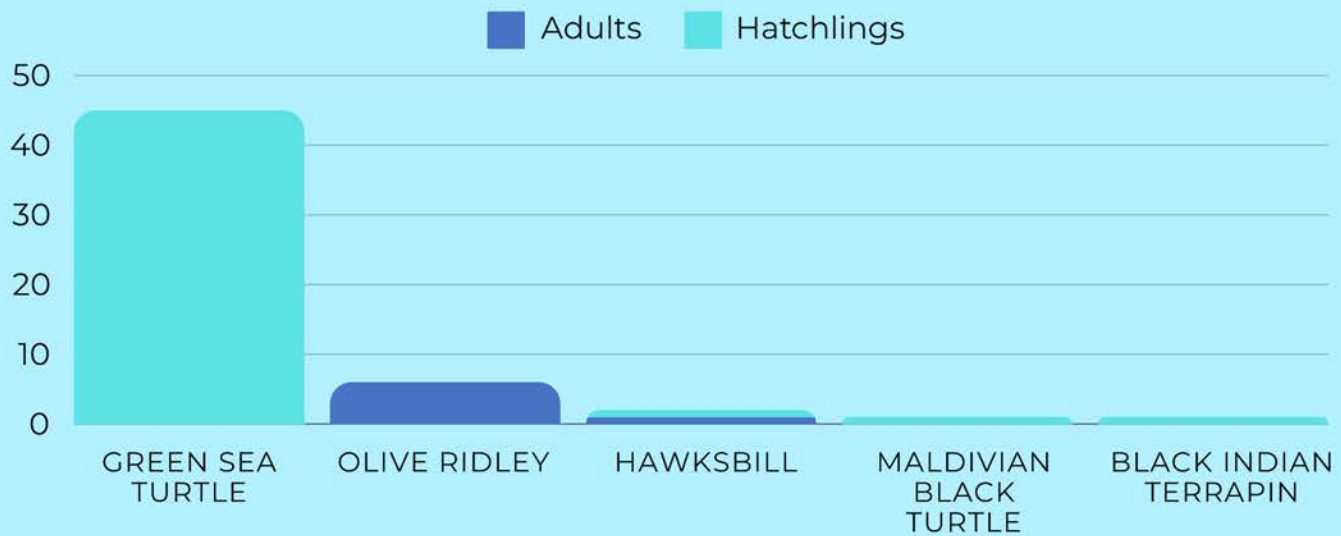
Our staff members give presentations to the volunteers about various topics such as sea turtle anatomy, buoyancy disorder, sea turtle biology, fish identification, Maldivian culture, and coral biology.





# TURTLES

## ADMISSION DATA



In 2023, our centre admitted a total of 54 turtles, comprising a diverse range of age groups and species. Among them were 7 adults, including 1 sub-adult hawksbill and 6 adult olive ridleys. The majority of our admissions, totalling 47, were hatchlings.

## Reasons for Admission

We received two olive ridleys suspected to have been struck by boats or jet skis. Turtles, being reptiles, are particularly vulnerable to boat and jet ski strikes because they must surface regularly to breathe.

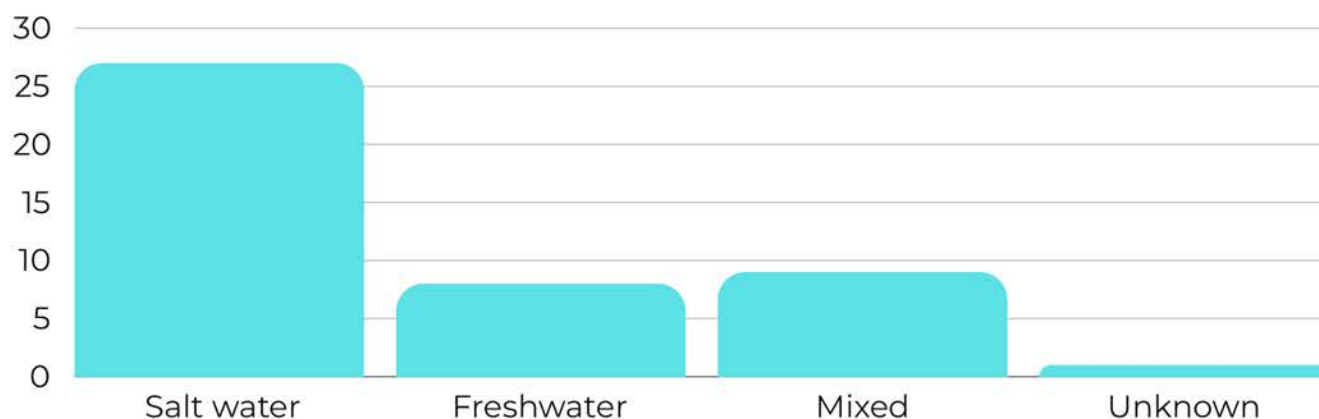
Sadly, the majority of turtles we rescue are victims of ghost nets, despite these types of nets not being commonly used in the Maldives and despite the ban on fishing gear abandonment at sea in the Maldives. This year three olive ridleys were admitted that were entangled in ghost nets. These nets often drift in during changes in currents, with the peak of admissions occurring from late December to March. One of our olive ridleys was found floating by a fisherman unable to dive. Then finally, we received one lethargic hawksbill.



# TURTLES

## Hatchlings Admissions

In 2023, a total of 47 hatchlings were admitted to our centre. All hatchling Admissions were linked to illegal pet trade. Sometimes they are illegally collected by fishermen who share them with their families and friends but usually they are illegally collected from nests on beaches and sold to locals.



Healthy hatchlings are generally released the same day but if they were kept in freshwater we must acclimate them to saltwater before releasing them. Among our admissions 27 were housed in saltwater environments, while 8 were kept in freshwater habitats. Interestingly, 9 of the hatchlings experienced both freshwater and saltwater conditions.

Remarkably, we recieved 44 green sea turtle hatchlings, 1 hawksbill hatchling, 1 Maldivian black turtle, and 1 black Indian terrapin. Giving us a diverse array of species under our care.





# Turtles

## Releases

Out of the 54 turtles admitted in 2023, an impressive 45 (83.33%) were successfully rehabilitated and released back into the wild. This included one olive ridley and 44 green sea turtle hatchlings.

Among the success stories was Argo, an adult olive ridley turtle brought to our centre on March 19th, 2023, after being found entangled in a ghost net by a concerned local. Argo suffered from a deep ligature wound on his left front flipper and initially struggled with buoyancy issues. However, after receiving dedicated care and rehabilitation, including learning how to dive and remain submerged, Argo made a full recovery. We joyfully released him back into his natural habitat on April 2nd, 2023.



## Transfers

Dhontha, an olive ridley sea turtle was transferred to the Atoll Marine Centre on November 30, 2023. She ingested a hook and needed specialized surgery with ORP however their vet was on leave. Until she returned Dhontha remained under our care. Subsequently, Dhontha was sent to the ORP Centre at Coco Palm in Baa Atoll on December 7, 2023.





# Turtles

## Deaths

Sadly, this year we saw the loss of 7 turtles. We lost 4 adult sea turtles and 3 hatchlings. Two of the adults came in during 2023 but were so sick that they did not survive. The other two were long term non-releasable patients.



### Donatello

We are heartbroken to announce that our beloved Donatello, a juvenile green sea turtle, passed away May 29th. He had been a resident since June 14, 2016. He had a severe lordosis which eventually led to his death due to a gastrointestinal blockage. He was surrendered to us by a local at just one week old after being kept as a pet. Lordosis is a condition causing an extreme bend in the shell which is likely a result of mishandling by humans and malnutrition due to being kept as a pet. Donatello has touched the hearts of many of our staff members, volunteers, and visitors. Let him be a reminder that keeping hatchlings as pets and handling them can cause life altering and devastating deformities.

### Raskan

Raskan was an adult female olive ridley who came to the center April 26, 2022. She suffered from buoyancy syndrome and was a double amputee so was not releasable. She was in general bad health through her entire rehabilitation and had some good days but mostly failed to thrive. Sadly she passed in February.





# Current Patients

At the end of 2023 we have eight sea turtles we are caring for at our centre. Three of them arrived in 2023. Kamana, Redhan and Hiccup are adult olive ridley sea turtles and are good candidates for release. The other five are not releasable due to their conditions. Three of them, Tom, Cora and Olga are adult olive ridley sea turtles, one, Biscuit, is a juvenile olive ridley and one, Hope, is a juvenile green sea turtle. You can read more about each of their journeys below.

## Kamana

Kamana which means “lady” in Dhivehi is an adult female olive ridley sea turtle. She was admitted to the center December 15, 2023. She was found floating on the surface and although she was active and could swim she could not dive. She is exhibiting a buoyancy issue and has ligature wounds to her front flippers. We believe that she was entangled in a fishing net/ghost net and got lucky enough to save herself before the situation got worse. She is a good candidate for release and should be released back into ocean where she really belongs.



## Redhan

Redhan which means bioluminescence or sea sparkle in Dhivehi is a female adult olive ridley sea turtle. She was admitted to the centre December 16, 2023. She was found floating and struggling to dive. She had several carapace wounds including a huge crack which she most likely got from a boat strike. We suspect she also developed buoyancy because of this boat strike. She is now at our centre receiving all the medical therapy she needs.



# Current Patients

## Olga

Olga is one of our longest residents. She is an adult olive ridley sea turtle and has been at the centre since July 26, 2019. She continues to have buoyancy issues even with regular removal of air from her carapace. It is suspected that she has chronic lung disease and will not be a candidate for release. She eats well and is very active enjoying her enrichment toys.



## Tom

Tom is an adult male olive ridley sea turtle that arrived in our facility June 5, 2018 as a well healed double amputee. He is a suspected ghost net entanglement. He has exhibited buoyancy syndrome from the start and has unfortunately never recovered from that issue. He is non releasable due to having no front flippers so he cannot propel himself properly against current. He is the longest resident at the centre and enjoys his enrichment feedings and sea swims.

## Hope

Hope has been in our centre since May 3rd 2020. She is a juvenile green sea turtle and has a severe lordosis, curved spine. She charms each and every visitor and remains an ambassador and constant reminder as to why hatchlings should not be kept as pets. She dives well, rests on the bottom and enjoys eating sea grass and fresh seafood. She is non releasable due to her deformity which was likely caused by mishandling as a pet. Hope is wonderful at solving enrichment puzzles during her mealtimes! She continues to grow and thrive despite her curved carapace.





# Current Patients



## Biscuit

Biscuit has been at the centre since February 14, 2022 and is capturing everyone's heart. As a juvenile olive ridley sea turtle with only one flipper Biscuit dives without difficulty and has been observed frequently resting on the bottom of his tank. In the coming year, Biscuit is due to be transported to the Dubai aquarium. We are overjoyed for Biscuit since he will now have more space and an opportunity to engage with other marine wildlife.

## Hiccup

Hiccup, an adult olive ridley sea turtle, was admitted to our facility February 3rd 2023. He was the victim of a boat strike causing severe injuries to his head and nuchal scute. He has come a long way in his rehabilitation but not without many set backs. His injuries have healed but he continues to have a buoyancy issue. He is able to dive and spend 2-3 minutes under water but cannot stay down to rest. He is receiving targeted weight therapy to help with his buoyancy issue and remains a candidate for release.



## Cora

Cora, an adult olive ridley sea turtle, has been at the centre since August 11, 2022. He is non releasable due to being a double amputee from a ghost net entanglement. He also exhibits buoyancy syndrome which doesn't allow him to dive. We have been attempting to increase his level of activity through enrichment feeding because he is currently a little overweight. He gets a lot of physical activity from this method. Next year we plan to begin targeted weight therapy to give him a better quality of life.



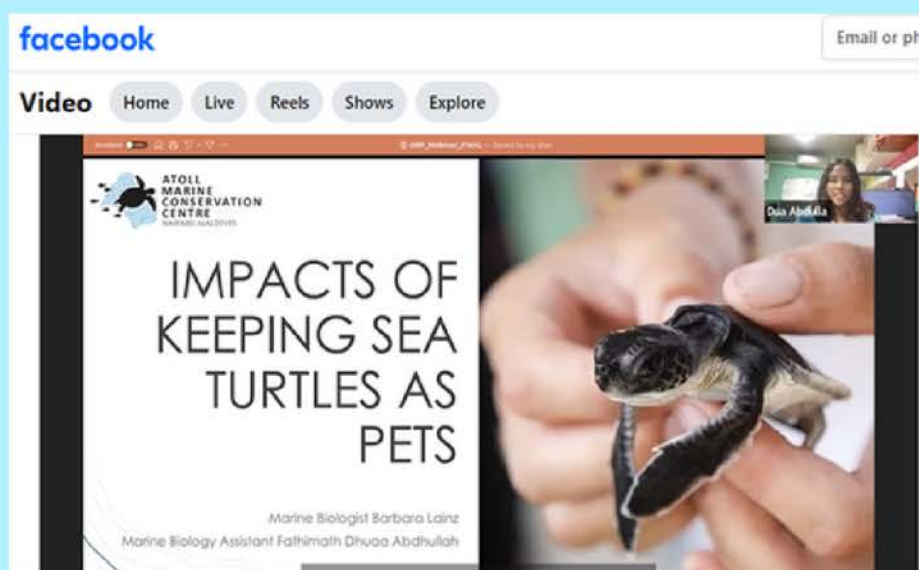
# Talks and Events

## World Turtle Day in Raa Atoll

We had the pleasure of visiting Ungoofaaruu School in Raa Atoll with our partner, Cora Cora Resort, in honour of World Turtle Day in 2023. We discussed the importance of marine turtles with the students. After our talk on sea turtles and why it's inappropriate to keep them as pets, Cora Cora was able to organize a morning of activities with the children where we could engage with them further.



On World Sea Turtle Day we were invited by Olive Ridley Project to co-host a webinar on sea turtle conservation. During the webinar, our Marine Biologist Assistant Intern, Dua Abdullah presented on the different impacts that keeping sea turtles as pets at home can cause. This is a very common practice in the Maldives. We are working very hard to change this. Usually, people keep sea turtle hatchlings in a plastic bottle or in the bathtub, sometimes in fresh water instead of seawater. This has a direct impact on the osmosis of their body causing deadly consequences.





# Talks and Events

## Coral Festival in Addu Atoll



On April 2023, our team received an invitation to take part in the Coral Festival in Addu, Hithadhoo. This event was hosted by Maldives Coral Institute and brought together scientists, NGOs, politicians, environmentalists, and members of the public to celebrate the Maldives' coral reefs and marine ecosystems.



Co-founder Mohamed Ahmed, Marine Biologist Barbara Lainz, and Marine Biology Intern Rasheedhath Anum presented our work on both sea turtle rehabilitation and coral restoration. The main focus of this festival was discussing different coral restoration techniques and how to improve them. We explained to the public our simple methodology and how easy it would be for schools or other organisations recreate.

## Little Big Festival in Noonu Atoll

Our team received an invitation to the Little Big Festival on Noonu Atoll Kudafari in June. Marine biologist Alisa and Barbara had the opportunity to speak to festival attendees about the importance of sea turtles in a marine ecosystem. Additionally, our group had a stall with educational activities about sea turtles and information about our non-profit organization.





# Talks and Events

## South Asian Climate Conference in Nepal

Our Marine Biologist Assistant Dua was fortunate enough to get the opportunity to discuss the present climate change issues in the Maldives during the South Asian Climate Action conference that took place in Kathmandu, Nepal in June 2023. Dua outlined the primary effects of climate change on the Maldives, as well as the effects it is having on the Maldivian economy and nature.





# Community Outreach & Education

## Lhavitani Turtle Festival



THE ROYAL EMBASSY OF  
**SAUDI ARABIA**  
MALE', REPUBLIC OF MALDIVES

This year we were excited to host our 6th Annual Lhaviyani Turtle Festival! Due to its past success we decided to spread it over two days. We added a marine symposium on the first day. There were over 3,000 people in attendance. This event focuses on spreading awareness about the importance of the marine environment, and how common practices are affecting its health. We bring together NGO's, schools, guests, and locals to connect with conservation work in Lhaviyani. The festival is a testament to our ability to work closely with multiple other conservation organizations and our strength in educating local communities in issues surrounding conservation. This year, our title sponsor was the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia.



**"OUR OCEAN, THEIR HOME, YOUR FUTURE"**





# Community Outreach & Education

## Lhavitani Turtle Festival Marine Symposium

This year we hosted the first Lhaviyani Turtle Festival Marine Symposium . The aim of this event is to build bridges with other NGOs allowing greater collaboration in our shared goal of protecting the Maldives marine environment. We welcomed NGOs from around Maldives and even some from India and South Africa. At the end of the event, we gathered all of the participants to make a pledge to do better for the marine environment by working together to find solutions to the problems we are all trying to manage. With our combined efforts, hopefully we can begin the chain of change.





# Community Outreach & Education

## PADI AWARE Week

In collaboration with Aqua Dive & Water Sports and Naifaru Scuba Centre we organized celebrations of the 6th Annual PADI AWARE Week. The event was a call to action for all divers and Ocean enthusiasts to join local conservation initiatives. We hosted open days at AMC, with presentations and workshops for the Naifaru community and Atoll Volunteers. Participants learned about sea turtle conservation, coral reef restoration, and ocean activism. Together with local dive centres we organized three underwater clean-ups, picnic island clean-up on World Coastal Clean-up Day and deployment of new artificial reef structure in our Coral Garden.





# Community Outreach & Education

## School Holiday Program

Every school holiday, we organize a program for children from ages 6 to 12 years old to learn about the marine environment. We emphasize the importance of conservation in the marine environment and sea turtles. This is the perfect moment for us to raise awareness on sea turtle conservation and allows us to emphasize the importance of why sea turtles cannot and should not be kept as pets. Our educational efforts are focused on the children because we have seen that they care and are willing to make changes. They also encourage their families and friends not to keep sea turtles as pets and not to eat them. Activities we do with the children include: going for a snorkel, crafts, beach cleans, and planting trees.





# Community Outreach & Education

## Madhrasathul Ifthithaah

This year we continued our collaboration with Naifaru's Madhrasathul Ifthithaah's marine science program. We worked with 17 students with a goal to expand to other Lhaviyani Atoll schools to reach a wider group of students. We incorporate important topics such as conservation issues within the marine environment and marine career guidance.



## Lh. Atoll Education Centre in Hinnavaru

Our marine biologist team and volunteers visited Hinnavaru and gave an educational session for scouts from Lh. Atoll Education Centre. The session examined the issue of improper waste management in Maldives and the rules and regulations we have to follow when disposing garbage properly. We also talked about the most common types of waste we produce in our everyday lives and taught the students a few alternatives. The students also learnt how they help protect the marine environment by doing the most simplest things.





# Community Outreach & Education

## Council Cooperation



## Maldives Independence Day

Naifaru Island Council holds several events throughout the year in order to gather the community. We had the opportunity to join in some of their events. Maldives Independence Day celebrates their independence from the United Kingdom. We joined this event to raise awareness about sea turtle conservation and play games with the children of the community.

## Children's Day

This month we were invited to participate in the Children's Day event that the Naifaru Council hosted. This event was aimed to gather the community. We used this event to educate the community, connect with the locals, and play conservation based games with the children. We had so much fun at this event and are always happy to engage with our local community. Educating the future generations on the importance of the marine environment is key to the success of our work here.





# Community Outreach & Education

## Council Cooperation

### World Ocean's Day

Naifaru's council helped us organize a beach clean-up of our island. As you may know, the Maldives has a huge plastic pollution issue, which can be seen on our beaches. Beach clean-ups are an important way we can get the locals involved in our conservation efforts here.

We also joined our local dive shops, Aqua Dive & Water Sports and Naifaru Scuba Centre for an ocean clean-up of our reef. PADI project aware addresses the key threats facing the marine environment. Dive against debris is an event we hope to host more often to encourage locals to keep our beaches and reefs clean to help protect the amazing marine environment we have around us.





# Resorts

## Resort Guests

Resorts such as Atmosphere Kanifushi Maldives, Kuredu Island Resort and Spa and Komandoo Maldives, regularly bring their guests to the marine centre. Throughout their visit, our marine biology team conducts a presentation detailing the threats that sea turtles face, the importance of sea turtles to the marine environment, how people can reduce their environmental footprint and sea turtle rehabilitation efforts in the Maldives. The presentation is followed by a tour of the centre, to meet our turtle patients where guests get the chance to see first hand how humans are impacting the lives of sea turtles in the Maldives. This awareness broadcasts marine biodiversity and protected species awareness to a global audience as resort guests visit from countries all over the world.



Over 1300  
Resort Guests





# Resorts

## Sea Turtle Response Training

Our Marine biologists, Barbara and Kathryn, along with our Marine Biology Assistant, Dua, visited resorts in the area to conduct training for their staff. Finding an injured sea turtle at sea can be overwhelming, and if handled incorrectly can result in worsening the condition. The aim of the session was to make sure the captains and crew were confident knowing what to do in these scenarios to retrieve and secure the sea turtle safely. We also cover correct briefings which should be given before snorkelling tours and what to do in the case of a sea turtle nest on the resort.





# Adoptions



As Atoll Marine Centre is a locally run NGO, we require funding from outside sources, one of our primary sources of income comes from adoption packages of the turtles in our care. Currently, seven of our turtle patients are up for adoption. The yearly adoption package, costs \$65 and the adoptive parent receives an adoption certificate with the story of their turtle, a sea turtle species fact sheet, our monthly newsletter, photos and videos of the turtle they adopt. This year we received a total of 57 adoptions, raising \$3650 for our centre that will go towards supporting the turtles wellbeing. Most of our turtle adoptions come from resort guests that visit the centre, which just goes to show how important these visits are for the maintenance and support of our centre.





# Acknowledgements

## And just like that, 2023 is over...

We want to thank everyone for their hard work and donations of time and money. It takes a lot of dedicated individuals to make this centre successful. We are proud of the accomplishments of our team, volunteers, partners and community. We would not be able to achieve this level of caring without all of your support!

We hope that our time, efforts, and data will be of use to local and international sea turtle conservation interests. Our release statistics have continued to grow and show that with the right support we can make a difference in the sea turtle population in the Maldives. As we are a small locally managed NGO we rely on the dedication, passion, and financial contribution of everyone interested in conserving the marine environment.

In the next year we hope to continue with the expansion of our centre and vet clinic by adding more equipment and tanks so we may increase our patient carrying capacity. With your help and the help of others like you we may continue to grow and provide the quality care that we are known for.

