



The name
"manta ray"
comes from the
Latin *mantum*
meaning **cloak or shawl**
and in the
maldivian language
mantas are known as
"EN MADI"

Scientific Name

Manta alfredi

Lower classifications

Giant Oceanic manta ray

Higher classification

Eagle ray

Rank

Genus

Reproduction

Dependent
upon size rather than age.

Life Expectancy

At least 40 years

Threats

Commercial Fisheries,
Bycatch,
Habitat degradation,
Boat accidents.

Habitat

Tropical and
subtropical coasts.
Coastal Reefs.
Atolls.
Bays.

Conservation Status

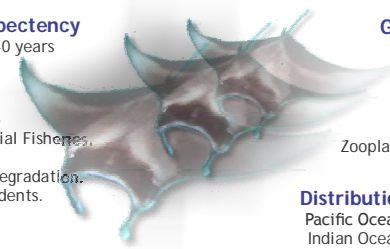
"Vulnerable" on the IUCN Red List.

Diet

Zooplankton.

Distribution

Pacific Ocean.
Indian Ocean.
Atlantic Ocean.



Manta rays are large eagle rays
belonging to the genus *Manta*.

The larger species,
Manta birostris, reaches
7 m (23 ft) in width
while the smaller,
Manta alfredi,
reaches 5.5 m (18 ft 1 in)

As we welcome you to the Second Edition of the BR Newsletter 2015, the mantas are back in numbers at Hanifaru Bay delighting us all with their underwater dances. It is indeed great news for all manta lovers and truly Hanifaru Manta Season 2015 has indeed kicked off in style with the numbers of mantas observed at the bay. One new feature we have observed in Hanifaru Season 2015 is that Guest House Tourism is on the rise in Baa Atoll and visitors from these newly opened Guest Houses are visiting Hanifaru thus adding a new resource user to the area.

Please keep sending your feedback to info@broffice.gov.mv in making the Newsletter more productive as you have been doing so.

ANNUAL HANIFARU CLEANUP UNDERTAKEN

The annual Hanifaru Marine Protected Area cleanup and maintenance program work of mooring bouys was undertaken on 23 May. Participants included those from Eydhafushi government institutions, companies, interested parties from the general public, resort participation especially from Amillafushi, Kihaad Maldives and Reethi Beach Resort.

This is the third year running of the cleanup and maintenance program undertaken to date and we wish to thank all those involved in making this event a huge success.



WED 2015 CELEBRATIONS

As part of celebrating World Environment Day 2015 in Baa Atoll, three major activities was undertaken in Baa Atoll.

These activities included Tree Planting in Thulhaadhoo, Cleanup of Goidhoo Koaru Area and inauguration of Maalhos Waste Management Services. The activities in Goidhoo and Thulhaadhoo was undertaken on 5 June while inauguration of Maalhos Waste Management Services was held on 6 June.

MEETING WITH BAARU



The Director General of Baa Atoll Biosphere Reserve Office Mr. Ibrahim Naem together with Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Environment and Energy Mr. Abdulla Mohamed Didi attended a meeting held with BAARU on 23 June. The agenda items discussed in the meeting included those of holding a Baa Atoll Festival in the middle of 2016, issues relating to Baa Atoll Biosphere Reserve and coming up with guidelines for the other protected areas of Baa Atoll.

The meeting was attended by 22 participants from 12 organizations and was hosted by Sonevafushi.



World Environment Day 2015
Seven Billion Dreams.
One Planet.
Consume with Care.
June 5

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY 2015 CELEBRATIONS

Numerous programmes were held to mark World Environment Day 2015 (WED2015) across the country. The events held at a national level included a Photography Competition, Awarding of President's Green Leaf Award, Tree Planting in Hulhumale', activities related to Saafu Raajje' (Clean Maldives Initiative), one nation coral revival programme and a campaign on environmental awareness on national television by technical experts from the Environment Ministry.

In Baa Atoll three major activities were undertaken namely tree planting in Thulhaadhoo, Cleanup of the Mangrove protected area (Goidhoo Koaru) in Goidhoo and the inauguration of the Waste Management Services in Maalhos.

GOIDHOO MANGROVE AREA CLEANUP

Baa Atoll Goidhoo Mangrove Area cleanup was undertaken on 5 June 2015 as part of the work to be undertaken in preparation for implementation of the management plan for the area. The management plan is being drawn up to better manage the area with the participation of the community.

Goidhoo Council, Baa Atoll Council, BR Office, NGOs, school children, Women's Development Committee and the general public took part in the cleanup event.

THULHAADHOO TREE PLANTING

Planting of trees in the reclaimed area on Thulhaadhoo was carried out on 5 June 2015. This activity was undertaken, under the initiative "make the land green" and to encourage vegetation in the area.

The event was participated by Thulhaadhoo Council, Baa Atoll Council, NGOs, school children, Women's Development Committee, Cocopalm Resort and the general public. Under the program the guardianship of the trees that planted were handed over to school children by the Island Council.

INAUGURATION OF WASTE MANAGEMENT CENTRE IN MAALHOS

The inauguration of Waste Management Facility on Maalhos was held at a special function on the island on 6 June. The President of Baa Atoll Council Mr. Mohamed Adil, Deputy Minister of Environment Mr. Abdulla Mohamed Didi, President of the Women's Development Committee of Maalhos Mrs. Sameera Ibrahim, representatives from Baa Atoll Conservation Fund, World Bank Maldives Environmental Management Project, BR Office and members from the public were present at this function.



GREEN LEAF AWARD

The President's Green Leaf Award, the most prestigious award in recognition to the outstanding work undertaken towards protection and preservation of environment will be awarded once again in 2015. Those eligible for the Green Leaf Award are individuals, CSOs, businesses, government agencies and academic institutions.

First awarded in 1995, this is an annual award by the President for Environmental Excellence and has over 45 recipients to date and aims to widen participation of the people and strengthening the environment partnership.

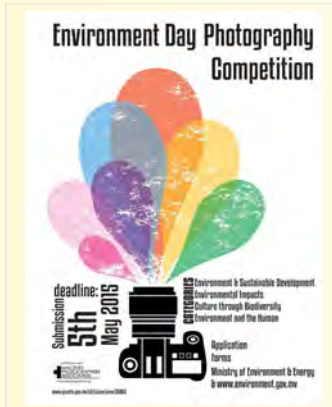
PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION

As part of World Environment Day celebrations (WED2015), Ministry of Environment and Energy launched its second Environment Photography Competition. The themes for 2015 competition is centered on Environment and Sustainable Development, Environmental Impacts, Culture through biodiversity and Environment and Human.

CLEAN MALDIVES INITIATIVE

The Clean Maldives Initiative "Saafe Raajje" was launched in May by the Environment Minister Mr, Thoriq Ibrahim. A number of senior ranking officials from the government and various other stakeholders participated in the event.

Speaking at the ceremony, Minister Mr. Thoriq Ibrahim highlighted the importance of the campaign and urged every citizen to take individual and collective responsibility for the reduction and proper management of waste and he also noted the significant role of individuals in making the country a cleaner place.



ONE NATION CORAL REVIVAL



"ONE NATION CORAL REVIVAL" was hosted as a first of its kind Environment Festival in Viligili on 5 and 6 June. Different environmental organizations together with local artists and musicians converged at one point to interact with and generate public awareness towards the importance and vulnerability of our reefs.

What makes this event special is that the coral nursery started with coral colonies rescued from reclamation site in Hulhumale' will be planted in the Viligili reef during the event. "ONE NATION CORAL REVIVAL" is an initiation of Save the Beach Viligili on reviving the coral reefs of Viligili and the NGO hopes that the project would add spark to the momentum of reviving the delicate environment by inspiring community ownership, engagement and responsibility towards our coral reefs.

Environment Minister Mr. Thoriq Ibrahim and Tourism Minister Mr. Ahmed Adheeb were present at this event.



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WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY 2015 CELEBRATIONS
INAUGURATION OF ISLAND WASTE MANAGEMENT SERVICE on BAA MAALHOS

The inauguration of Waste Management Facility on Maalhos was held at a special function on the island on 6 June. The President of Baa Atoll Council Mr. Mohamed Adil, Deputy Minister of Environment Mr. Abdulla Mohamed Didi, President of the Women’s Development Committee of Maalhos Mrs. Sameera Ibrahim, representatives from Baa Atoll Conservation Fund, World Bank Maldives Environmental Management Project and Biosphere Reserve Office were present at this function.



The Deputy Minister of Environment Mr. Abdulla Mohamed Didi, while addressing the gathering highlighted that the initiation of Maalhos Women’s Development Committee and the commitment shown by Maalhos Council in paving the way for this to become a reality.

He also spoke of the commitment of Maalhos residents in making the island clean over the period of time and wished the very best on the tasks undertaken jointly by Maalhos Women’s Development Committee and Maalhos Island Council.



Also speaking at the function the President of Baa Atoll Council Mr. Mohamed Adil looked on the need for successful completion of projects under the BACF grants programmes. He went on to say that all reporting should be carried out on time and timely delivery should always be the first priority. He also congratulated Maalhos Women’s Development Committee on winning grants from Baa Atoll Conservation Fund and showing the required output required working together with all necessary stakeholders.



Under the programme initiated on Maalhos waste will be collected from all households and transported to the Waste Management Center where waste segregation would be undertaken. Also at the Center organic composting will be done and environment friendly fertilizers will be produced. A user fee is levied on each household for this service and all households in Maalhos have joined this programme. This is the first of its kind initiative in Baa Atoll and we are hopeful that the lessons learned will be replicated elsewhere in the atoll.



Maalhos Waste Management Centre is a joint effort by Maalhos Women’s Development Committee and Maalhos Island Council funded under the Baa Atoll Conservation Funds grants programme and supported by World Bank Maldives Environmental Management Project.

We wish to congratulate Maalhos Women’s Development Committee and Maalhos Island Council for taking this huge step forward in managing waste.





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WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY 2015 CELEBRATIONS

HANIFARU CLEANUP AND MAINTENANCE / 23 MAY 2015



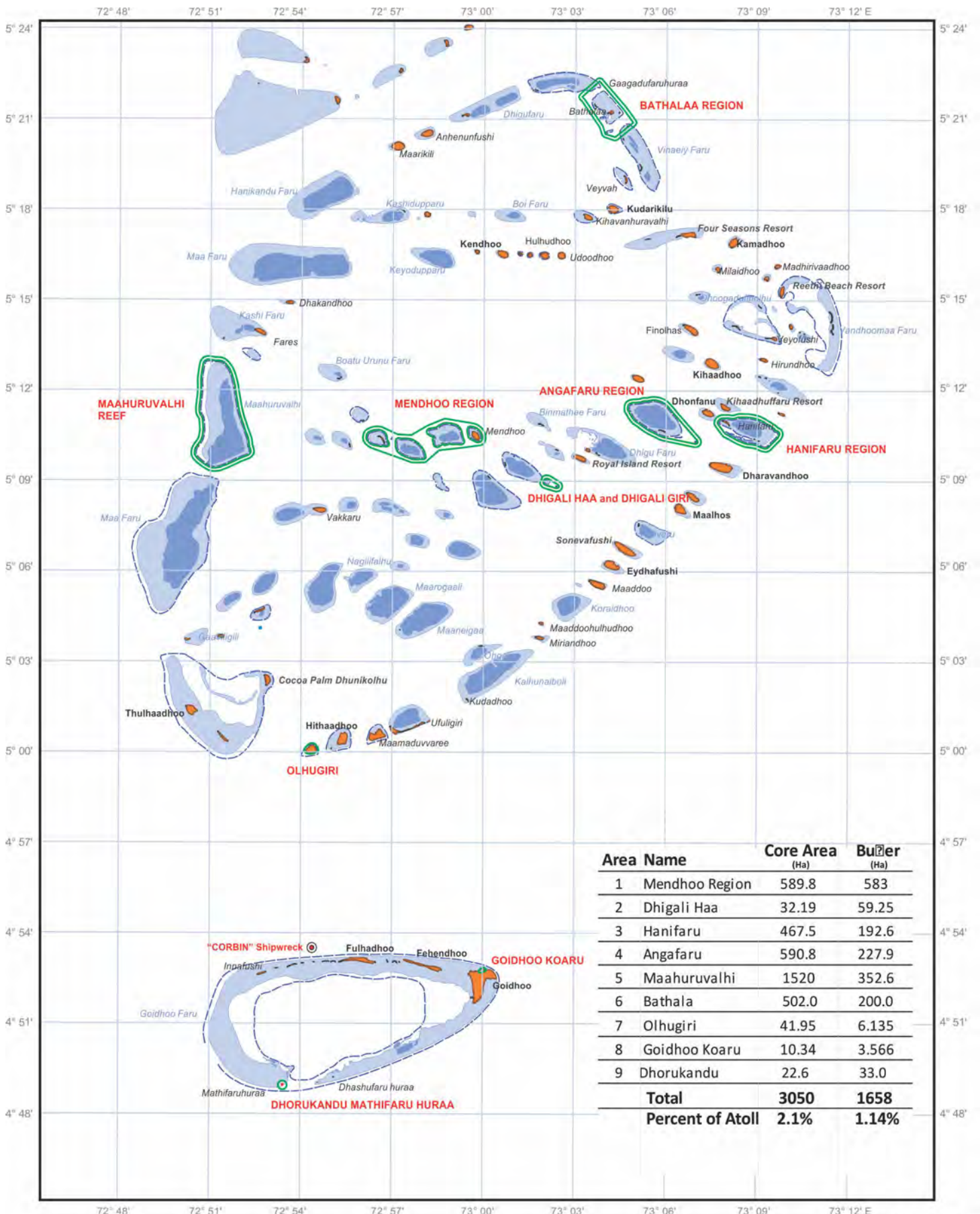


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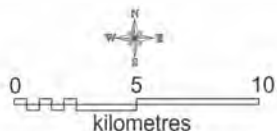
WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY 2015 CELEBRATIONS

TREE PLANTING ON BAA THULHAADHOO
05 JUNE 2015





Area Name	Core Area (Ha)	Buffer (Ha)
1 Mendhoo Region	589.8	583
2 Dhigali Haa	32.19	59.25
3 Hanifaru	467.5	192.6
4 Angafaru	590.8	227.9
5 Maahuruvalhi	1520	352.6
6 Bathala	502.0	200.0
7 Olhugiri	41.95	6.135
8 Goidhoo Koaru	10.34	3.566
9 Dhorukandu	22.6	33.0
Total	3050	1658
Percent of Atoll	2.1%	1.14%



PROJECTION: Longitude/Latitude
HORIZONTAL DATUM: WGS84
All features based satellite imagery 2003-2008
Prepared in May 2010

LEGEND

- Reef Flat
- Indicative Reef Boundary
- Island Vegetation
- Island Beach

Existing Protected Areas

Baa Atoll
UNESCO
World Biosphere Reserve
PROTECTED AREAS

WARNING THIS MAP IS INDICATIVE ONLY AND IS NOT INTENDED FOR NAVIGATIONAL PURPOSES.

GOIDHOO KOARU REGION

UNESCO Biosphere Reserve

Baa Atoll



Goidhoo Koaru is located in the north eastern corner of Goidhoo Island in Goidhoo Atoll (the southern most natural atoll in Baa Atoll), located directly adjacent to the largest community and on the largest land mass within Baa Atoll. It is roughly oval in shape, approximately 450 metres long and 300 metres wide with a water depth ranges of between 0.5 to 1.5 metres.

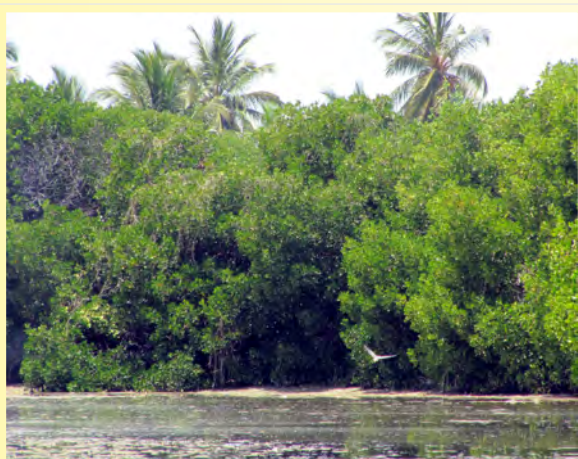
The Koaru is surrounded by mangrove trees with the densest forest located in the north east, bordered on the southern side by the community and open to the reef flat and water exchange via a number of channels on the northern side.

Water exchange is tidal however due to the build up of debris from natural storm events and direct man made interventions, water flow exchange rates have been significantly reduced. The reduction in water exchange has had a significant negative impact on the environment and biodiversity within this natural system.

In addition, the past activities of the community utilising the Koaru as a dumping ground for house hold rubbish and the removal of mangrove forest have greatly degraded its ecosystem functions and its aesthetic value to the community and tourist alike.

The biodiversity and environmental significance of this unique mangrove system and Koaru cannot be understated and when functioning normally, plays a significant positive role in providing a safe and suitable nursery habitat for a wide range of juvenile marine and coastal invertebrates and vertebrates.

The Goidhoo Koaru is an important roosting and breeding habitat for a number of shorebirds found in Baa as well as migratory winter visiting birds.



Name and alternatives: Goidhoo Koaru / Baa Atoll

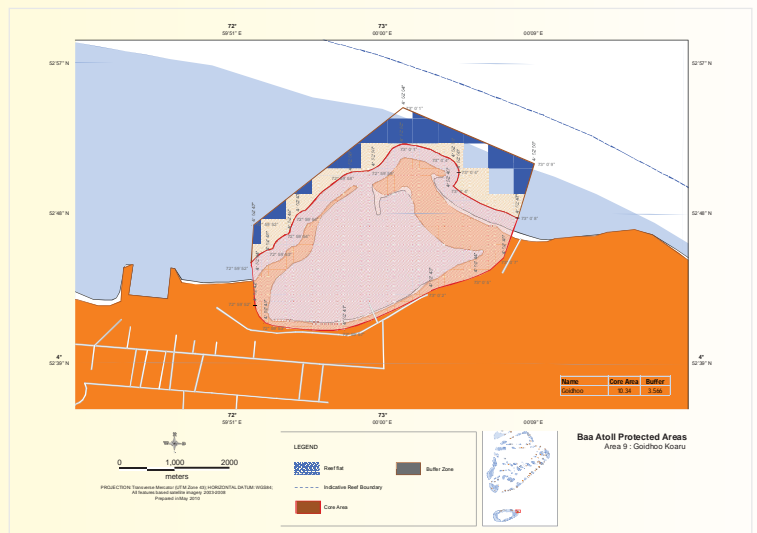
Area of site (ha): 13.90 ha

Administration Status: A protected area administered by the Ministry of Environment, Energy and Water / Environmental Protection Agency / Baa Atoll UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Office

Conservation status: Protected area since 5 June 2011 under the Environment Protection and Preservation Act (4/93)

Special Features: This area has the highest biodiversity and largest mangrove forest within Baa Atoll and one of the largest mangrove ecosystems within the nation and has a high biodiversity population of mangrove associated vertebrates and invertebrates. This site is also a popular roosting site for migratory birds such as the Ruddy Turnstone and Northern Shoveler. A number of other migratory birds are generally found as well during the north-east monsoon in this area.

Management actions: Management Plan for the site at draft stage, to be completed end 2015.





DIVE TRAINING FOR BR STAFF

Two members of the Biosphere Reserve Team in Eydhafushi has undergone dive training at the Seasplash Dive Centre in Dusit Thani Maldives.

Under the training program the 2 participants underwent open water and advanced open water dive training, enriched air diving, Emergency First Response and rescue diving.

BR Office wishes to thank the management of Seasplash and Dusit Thani Maldives for making this possible.

We are also pleased to inform that together working with our partners in Baa Atoll two more BR Team members is scheduled to undergo dive Training at Kihad Diving Center shortly.

BR OFFICE ATTENDS 2 CASES VIOLATION OF PROTECTED AREAS GUIDELINES



During the months of April, May and June there were 2 reported cases of violations on the use of protected areas in Baa Atoll and on these 2 occasions BR Office together with Maldives Police Services attended these two incidents.

Sand mining within the protected area of Angafaru by a vessel from Alif Dhaalu Atoll was the first reported case and BR office together with Maldives Police Services attended the scene and the perpetrators were informed of their actions.

The second case was that of fishing inside the marine protected area of Hanifaru by a vessel from Raa Atoll. BR Office and Maldives Police Services together visited the scene in this instance as well and information was provided to the captain and the crew of the vessel of their wrong doing. Both cases been sent to Environmental Protection Agency for further action.



BR OFFICE JOINS BAA ATOLL EDUCATION CENTER IN MARKING CAREER DAY

Baa Atoll Biosphere Reserve Office has taken part in the events organised by Baa Atoll Education Center (BAEC) in Eydhafushi to mark the Career Day for the students of BAEC.

Information was given to students on the BR Office, BR Workplan, the opportunities available at BR Office, work undertaken by the Rangers and the BR Team also clarified questions raised by the participants as well.

The event was participated by all government Institutions public/private Companies and those who took part provided information on their relative sectors.

The main aim of marking the Career Day by BAEC was to create awareness and to facilitate students to identify potential career opportunities which lies ahead in developing a sense of how to shape up their professional lives.

Numerous feedback by parents was received on the events held to mark the career day by BAEC and they highlighted that these events should be held more often so that the children would be more aware and ready to embark with their careers once they complete school.

"AMAANVESHI" AWARENESS PROGRAM

BR Outreach team has participated in the activities organized by Maldives Police Services under the slogan "Amaan Veshi" on two occasions during the second quarter of 2015.

The Team first visited neighbouring Raa Atoll and provided information to students studying in Grades 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 of Raa Atoll Education Centre in the capital Ungoofaaru.

The second session was held in Baa Thulhaadhoo for the students studying in Grades 8,9 and 10 and the third session was held for the students of Grades 2 and 3 of Baa Atoll Education Centre. During the first quarter of 2015 awareness sessions was held for the students studying in Grades 8,9,10 and 11 of Baa Atoll Education Centre under this programme.

"Amaan Veshi" is an initiation of Maldives Police Services to create awareness amongst the public of Baa Atoll focussing on different themes. The programme is designed to be undertaken throughout the atoll and in the neighbouring atolls as well.



DEPUTY MINISTER MEETS WITH NEW POLICE STATION COMMANDER

The Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Environment and Energy Mr. Abdulla Mohamed Didi attended a meeting held with new Station Commander of Maldives Police Services for Baa Atoll. The meeting which held on 6 June was also attended by staff from BR Office and Baa Atoll Conservation Fund.

The purpose of this meeting was to discuss issues relating to Baa Atoll Biosphere Reserve and the management the Reserve itself working together with Maldives Police.

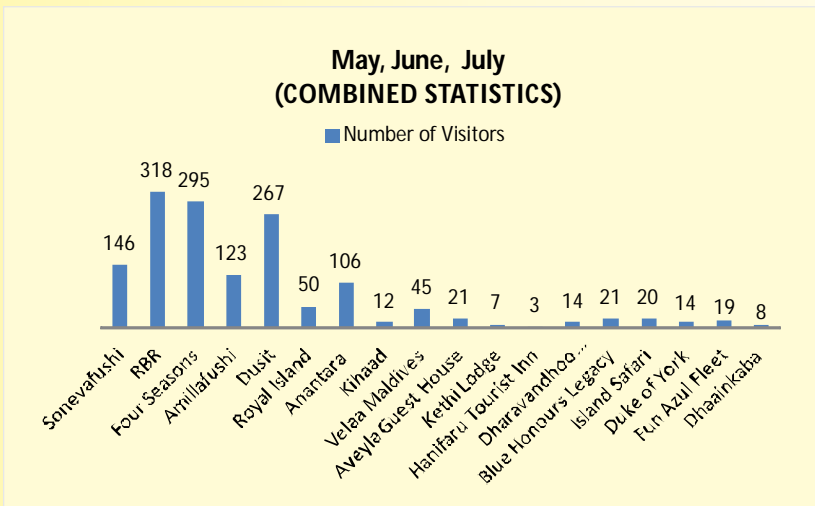
The Maldives Police Services gave the assurance that working together with the BR Office, Baa Atoll Council and Island Councils, they will be actively involved as they have been doing so in managing and monitoring of the Reserve.

HANIFARU MARINE PROTECTED AREA

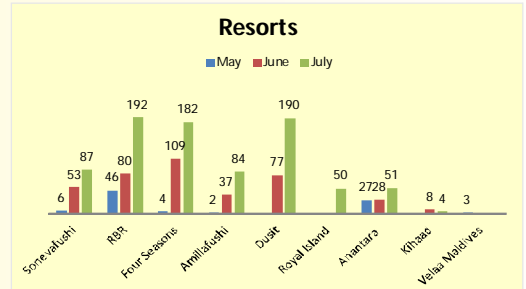
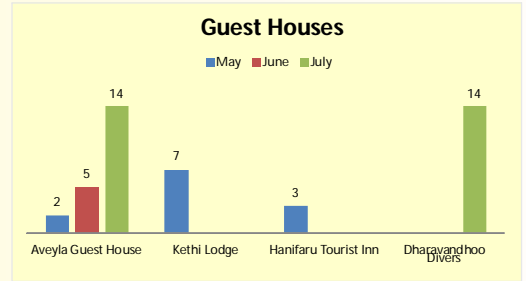
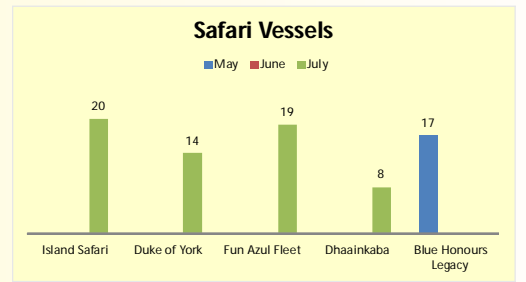
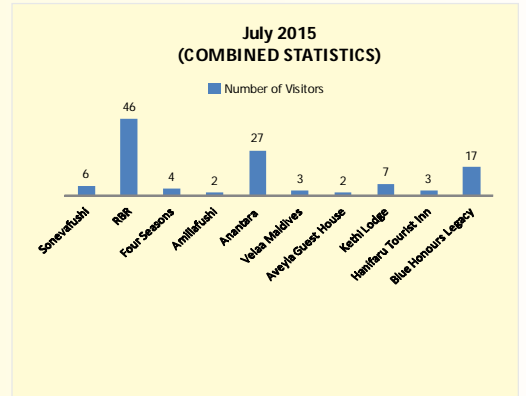
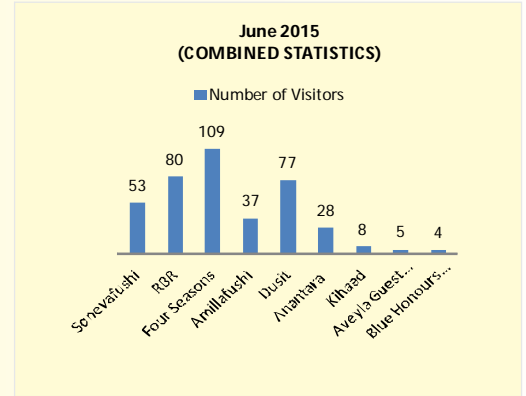
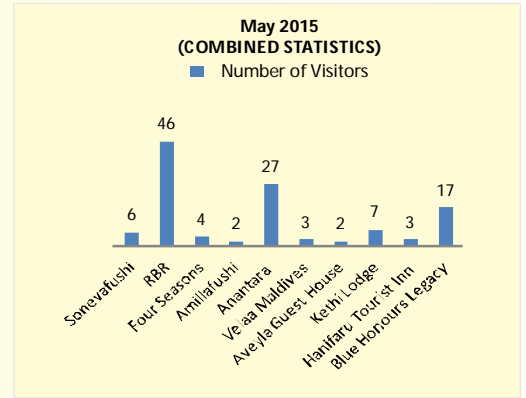
VISITOR STATISTICS / May to July 2015



In this segment we take a look at Hanifaru Marine Protected Area in numbers. Resorts, Dive Schools, Safari Vessels all are a common name when talking about visitors to Hanifaru Bay. One very important visitor to the area that we have observed compared to Hanifaru Season 2014 are visitors from Guest Houses operating in Baa Atoll.



Guest House Tourism is on the rise in Baa Atoll and visitors from these newly opened Guest Houses are visiting Hanifaru thus adding a new resource user of the area. The BR Office is in touch with all Guest House Operators in Baa Atoll making them all aware on the Hanifaru Management Plan. There will of course be lessons learned during Hanifaru Season 2015 with the new resource user and every effort will be taken ensure smooth running of operations.



Baa Atoll a UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve

Life, economic prosperity and social development in Maldives depend upon maintaining our atoll ecosystems in a healthy natural state. Our reefs, islands and surrounding seas and their component biodiversity are the natural assets on which the tourism and fishing industries depend, which provide us with land for development and materials for building, and which protect us from storms. More than almost any other country in the world, our future is inextricably linked to the quality of our environment.



There is widespread recognition that conventional approaches have not been effective in conserving our natural environment and biodiversity. We are losing charismatic species like sharks, several fisheries are in decline, the land and seas are increasingly polluted, and we are threatened with coastal erosion, storms and sea-level rise. There is an urgent need to plan and manage the country's natural resources in a more integrated and conservation-oriented manner that is appropriate to the country's unique geography and ecology, socio-economic development and patterns of resource use. Only by achieving this will future generations have the same rich natural resource base to support them that has sustained our development to date.



Recognising this challenge, the Government of Maldives established the Atoll Ecosystem Conservation Project (AEC Project) in 2004 (with support of United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) with the purpose of designing and demonstrating an effective management system for atoll ecosystem conservation and sustainable development on Baa Atoll, which could then be replicated throughout Maldives. Baa Atoll was selected as the demonstration atoll for this project on account of its globally significant biodiversity, the commitment and capacity of local communities, the potential to address threats to biodiversity and demonstrate sustainable use.



By working with the communities of Baa Atoll, the private sector and the all the other relevant stakeholders the AEC Project together with the Ministry of Environment was able to achieve the objectives for which the project was designed for during the course of the project's lifetime (2004 to 2012).

Work on declaring Baa Atoll as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve started in early 2009, a series of workshops and meetings were held right across the atoll which involved the participation of all relevant stakeholders.

Discussions were also held at national level as well, which included the environment, tourism and the fisheries ministers meeting to discuss the issue of declaring Baa Atoll as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. With the workshops and meetings completed and the conclusions of these pointing towards Baa Atoll to be declared as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, one final round of community consultation was undertaken in the same year. The outcome of the community consultations indicated that over 95% of the Baa Atoll community was in favour of declaring Baa Atoll as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.



Hence Baa Atoll was nominated to UNESCO by the Government of Maldives to be declared as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve on 28 September 2010 and in June 2011 at the 40th anniversary of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation's (UNESCO's) "Man and the Biosphere Reserve Program" in Dresden, Germany, the entirety of Baa Atoll in was declared a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.

UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) coordinates a world network of over 500 Biosphere Reserves in 105 countries. These are sites recognized under UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Programme, which innovate and demonstrate approaches to conservation and sustainable development.

World Biosphere Reserve are places where conservation, research and development successfully interconnect. They integrate biological and cultural diversity, combining core protected areas with zones where sustainable development - and innovative approaches to it - are fostered, tested and developed by locals and enterprises alike.

Upon the declaration by UNESCO, Baa Atoll joins an illustrious list of international Biosphere Reserves including: The Galapagos Islands, Ayer's Rock in Australia, the Pantanal wetlands of Brazil, the Niagara escarpment in Canada, the Sundarbans of India and the Amboseli National Park in Kenya.

Biosphere Reserves have three key functions: conservation, learning and research, and sustainable development. They are vehicles for knowledge-sharing, research and monitoring, education and training, and participatory decision-making. Biosphere Reserves are under national sovereign jurisdiction, yet share their experience and ideas regionally and internationally within the world network of Biosphere Reserves.

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Biosphere Reserves are "living laboratories" for testing and demonstrating sustainable development. They are therefore about the future, and how local people can conserve the things they value - local knowledge, culture and the environment - whilst ensuring

sustainable development. in other words the designation is about encouraging and facilitating people to work together, to live in and manage the whole area for a sustainable future.

Baa Atoll UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Office under the Ministry of Environment and Energy was opened in the capital of Baa Atoll, Eydhafushi by the government on 13 June 2012 to be responsible for leading and coordinating implementation of the Biosphere Reserve Strategy which comprises three programmes: Conservation Programme, Learning and Research Programme; Livelihoods and Sustainable Development Programme.





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GOIDHOO MANGROVE AREA CLEANUP 05 JUNE 2015

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY 2015 CELEBRATIONS





United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



Baa Atoll
Biosphere Reserve since 2011
Man and the Biosphere Programme

PROTECTED AREAS BAA ATOLL

1. ANGAFARU REGION
2. DHIGALIHAA AND
DHIGALI GIRI
3. MAAHURUVALHI REEF
4. GOEDHOO KOARU
5. HANIFARU
6. MENDHOO REGION
7. OLUHUGIRI
8. MATHIFARU HURAA REGION
9. BATHALA REGION
10. WRECK OF "CORBIN"

