Turtle conservation activities in Tambaldeg village, Sindhudurg district, Maharashtra

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Tambaldeg village in Devgad taluka is a famous tourist place in the Sindhudurg district. During a field visit to Tambaldeg beach on 24th April 2017, six carcasses of adult olive ridley turtle *Lepidochelys olivacea* and one of green turtle *Chelonia mydas* were observed in decomposed state. This beach is a turtle nesting site and the Forest department of Maharashtra with the support of local fishers is undertaking awareness programs for turtle conservation including hoardings displayed on conservation of turtles along the beach. Protection of nesting turtles and eggs is also undertaken by the local communities.

The Forest Department of Maharashtra gives an honorarium of ₹500 per person for locating a turtle nest. Turtles entangled in ghost fishing nets and incidental catch by trawlers and gillnetters was also observed. However, fishers are reluctant to release turtles entangled in fishing nets since it is difficult without damaging fishing nets. They are well aware of scheduled status of marine turtles and deny poaching. The plan by Maharashtra Government for introducing incentives for release of threatened and endangered species of turtles is therefore being welcomed by all stakeholders.

Dead Bryde’s whale washed ashore at Veraval, Gujarat

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Bryde’s Whale (*Balaenoptera edeni* Anderson, 1879) measuring 10.4 m in length and weighing about 7 tons was found washed ashore on the beach of Veraval on 4th August 2017. Locally called as “Machchh” it was found in dead condition with small injuries in the caudal peduncle and genital region. With the intervention and supervision of forest officials, it was towed ashore and a veterinary officer conducted post-mortem after which it was buried on the shore. Occurrence report and details were entered in the data base of Marine Mammal Conservation Network of India (MMCNI) and also published in local newspaper “Gujarat Samachar” on 6th August 2017. Morphometrics and other observations of the whale recorded were Head Length (2.22m), Length of flipper (1.36 m), Caudal fluke (tip to tip) Dorsal fin height (0.59m), Dorsal fin base 0.48m with body dark gray in color and whitish underneath. On the first day of observation, large quantity of blood was oozing out from the blowholes of the animal. On the second day it started decaying with foul smell emanating and baleen plates became detached from the mouth due to the high wave action.