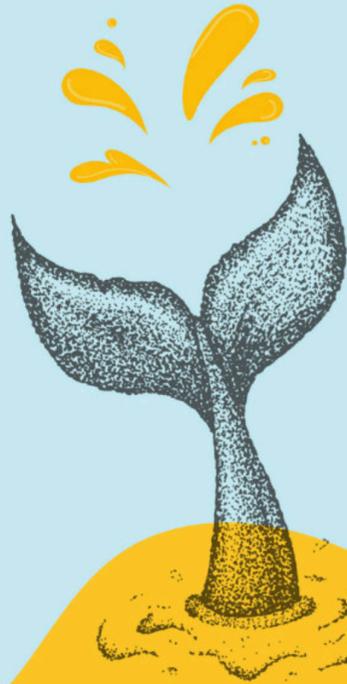
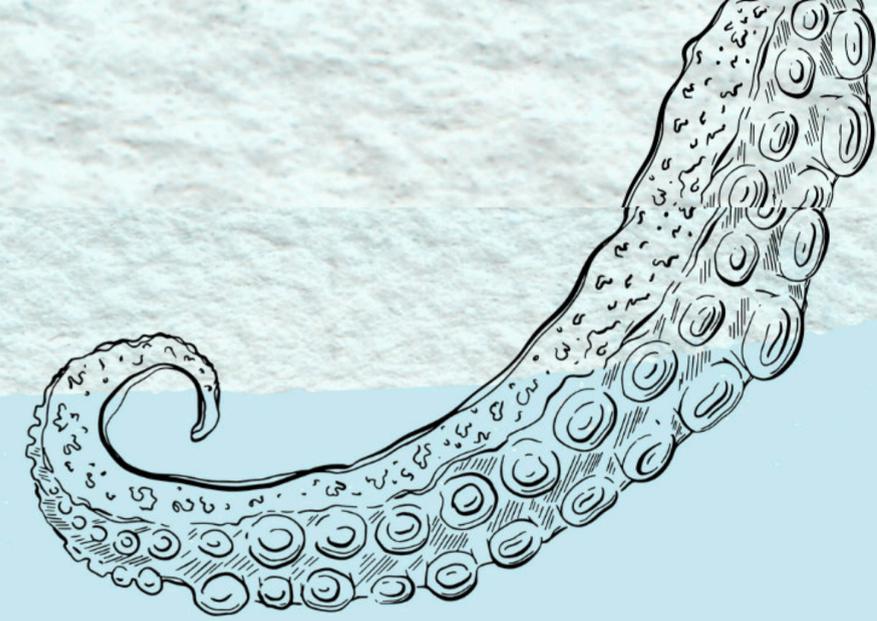
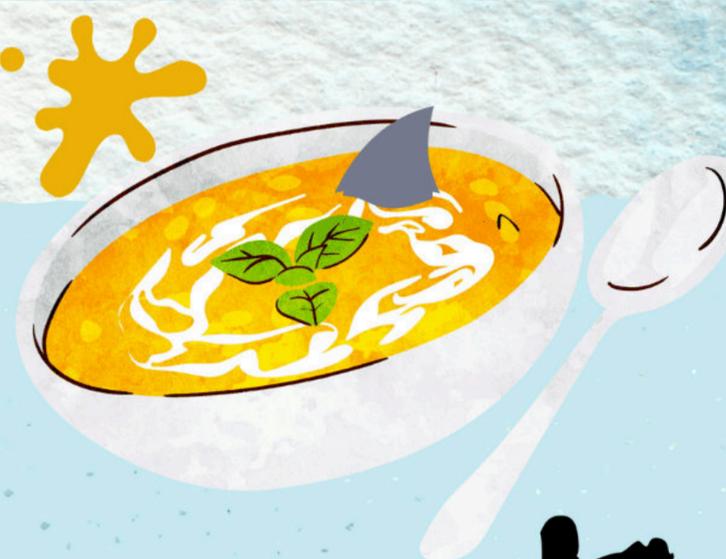


March 2025

# not just soup

shark stories,  
turtle tales  
& more...

Issue 7



Dear Reader,

Have you found yourself in the tides of today's fast and furious world of dating? Have you 'lovebombed' someone or constantly fear getting 'ghosted'? Maybe you need to be cautious about someone 'breadcrumbing' you. I hope you've never fallen prey to 'wokefishing', or realised that you're a 'groundhogger'! Alas, by the time I learned about 'cushioning' (and unfortunately for the planets), 'orbiting' and 'eclipsing', I zoned out of this New Age rom-com reality. I would much rather prefer a simple game of snakes and ladders, snuggled up on my sofa with a hot steaming mug of hibiscus tea, thank you very much.

While the changing world of human romance may make some dizzy (*and not in love*) and others run in the opposite direction, some are held hostage by their passive-aggressive Spotify playlist. But what's it like with the ocean-folks? There are no couples therapy or dating apps in the sea. There is instinct and survival; there is genetic code, and there are pheromones. Breakups don't hurt, and there is no such thing as fear of commitment. It is Fast and Furious meets Love Actually.

If we were to watch a live reality show on underwater dating where participants would be marine folks, I have a feeling we would be rooting for the humpback whale. Why? Well, the male adopts a Bollywood-style approach to woo the female by cranking up the bass! Only male humpbacks can sing, and gosh, they do make every note count. The manta ray would be a clear winner of speed dating in the sea (*you know, the modern version of a Swayamvar*). The female manta decides to challenge the interested males to a dazzling display of dance aerobics (*a clever way to check stamina*). The last one standing wins!

The Japanese puffer fish reminds us that nothing beats grand gestures as he attempts to woo his potential mate by creating elaborate circular patterned designs in the sand, complete with strange noises (*which might be fishy songs*). If a female is impressed by this very public display of affection, she will go to the centre of the circle (*and lay eggs for him to fertilise*).

While we humans are stuck with (*like thirty*) seven stages of heartbreak, the male anglerfish decides to get that risk out of his way by physically fusing himself with the female. *Ahem, red flag alert!* After reading endless tales of tragic love by Shakespeare, it doesn't surprise me that the giant Pacific octopus loses its mind and dies immediately after mating.

But hey, all is fair in love and water (*I presume*). This issue touches upon a few marine relationships happening across the deep blue sea as understood through human eyes. Dive right in while I go slumber and reminisce about the time of simplicity and old-school romance...



*Once you choose your partner-in-crime  
You lose track of all sense and time  
Entering into an alternate reality of sorts  
You end up promising them the sun, moon  
and stars*

*~Debangini*

# Seahorses



excellent eyesight

*I mean, glasses would have slid off that pipe of a nose anyway*

long, thin snouts that point down, allowing them to suck food up

*When I say sustainable straws, I mean this*

no stomach. can't chew food.

*upside is they can binge-eat after a heart-break without gaining weight (I'm envious)*

poor swimmers. swim upright

*Imagine meeting an ex and not being able to swim away fast enough.*

*let's not make this complicated, there are two groups of seahorses*

spiny

smooth

*Can you believe these dainty sea fairies also face threats?*

- habitat loss
- climate change
- illegal wildlife trade for Chinese traditional medicines and curio trade

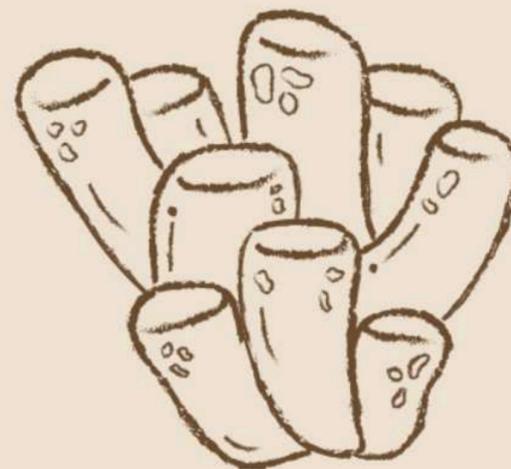
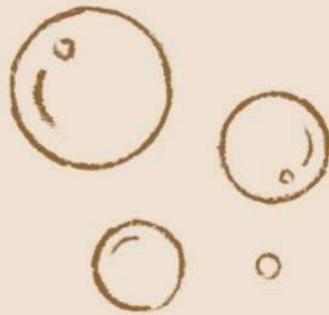
*look at this beauty!*

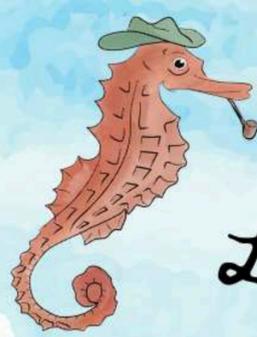
because of presence of chromatophores in their skins, they're masters of camouflage

*excellent spies, run underwater detective agencies*

only males have a brood pouch and get pregnant

*fatherhood for the win*





# The Seahorse Serenade

*Let's meet the power couples of the sea*

~Debangini



Imagine this scene.

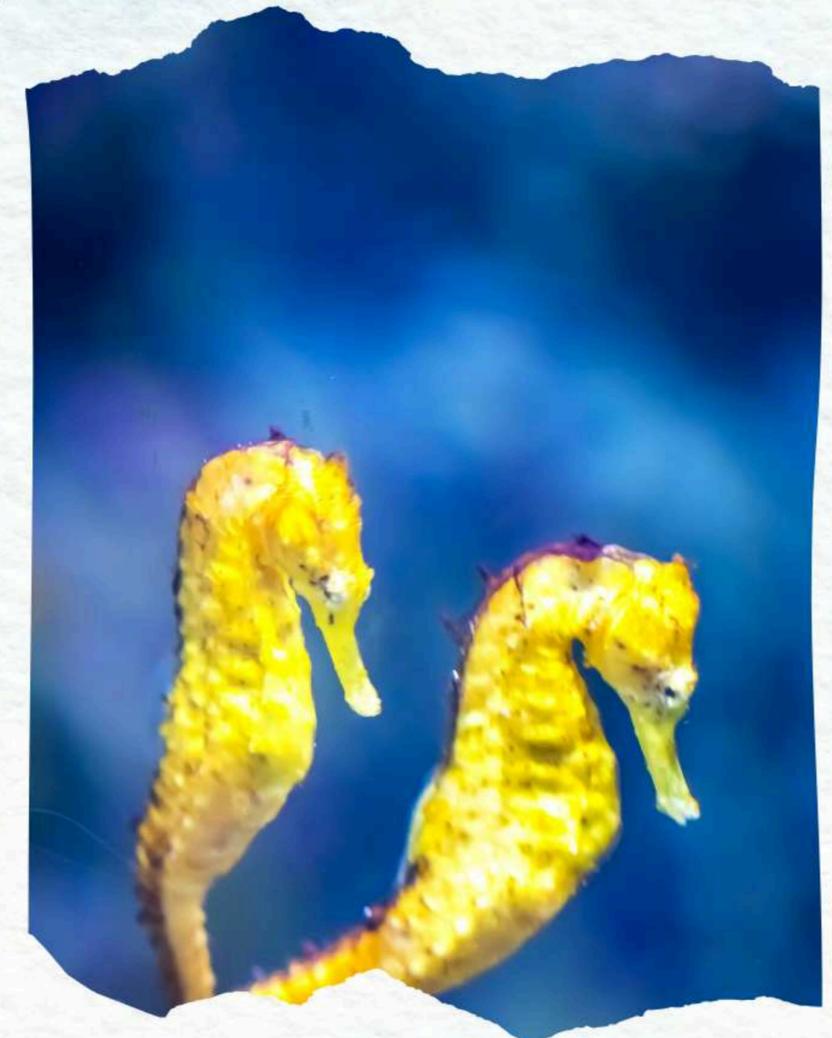
As the sun sets and the waters glow golden, a male and a female seahorse begin slowly circling each other, like the prelude to a ballroom dance. As they draw closer, they start rubbing noses like a sort of intimate greeting, proceeding to make clicking noises (*like R2D2 from Star Wars*). After this slightly amusing yet adorable etiquette, they begin dancing to the rhythm of the water, dreamily bobbing, twisting their tails together and mirroring each other for what feels like an eternity. Blink, and you might miss seeing them sometimes change colours during the dance. Straight out of a fairy tale!

This isn't just a romantic dance. I just gave you a glimpse into a seahorse courtship ritual.

If things go well and the female decides that *'he is the one'*, she finally swims up towards the water's surface, pointing her snout towards the sky and signalling to the male that she is ready. What happens after that makes this couple the talk of the sea town! The female transfers her eggs through a tubular ovipositor that appears in the middle of her belly to the male's brood pouch, while her partner fertilises them with his sperm. In other words, *she gets him pregnant*. Then they part ways, like a romantic science-fiction drama.

In the second half of this profound biological role reversal drama, the expectant dad becomes the protagonist, and everyone asks: will he be a good single dad? (*Just kidding, nobody asks that*). Two weeks later, the male with a balloon of a belly, puffs up as he swims out from his nook to an open expanse of sea, expelling hundreds of tiny curly specks into the water after several muscular contractions. *Baby seahorses!*

Now, let's dig a bit deeper into the science behind this fairy tale romance.

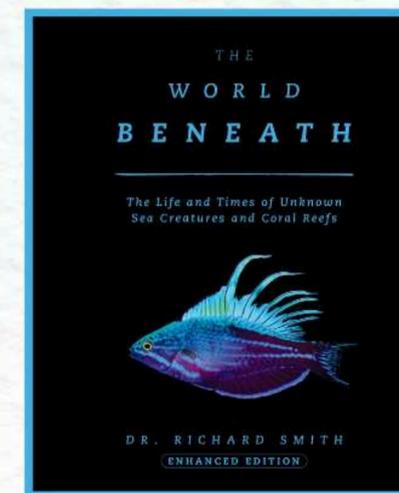
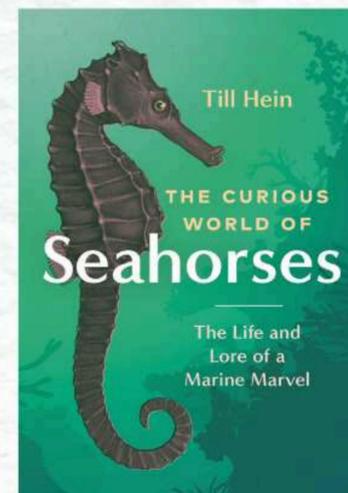
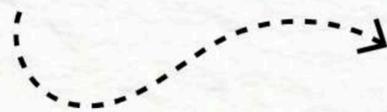


If this is monogamy, then it appears to be a more sustainable and stable option for seahorses in the long run. These long-lasting courtship rituals or 'wedding dances' allow the bonded or 'married' seahorse couples to synchronise their reproductive cycles, which are driven by sexual hormones. This process provides the females with the assurance they need to hydrate their clutch of eggs before they transfer them to their chosen mates. *How can you start a family with someone you can't trust, right?* This is all the more critical because once egg hydration has begun, it is an irreversible process. If she does not transfer the clutch at the end of the few days' hydration process, the eggs can foul and damage her reproductive organs. Even without sickness, the waste of such large amounts of scarce resources can take its toll. This synchronisation also ensures *technically precise delivery* of the female's eggs into the male's pouch. Scientists even noted that in laboratory experiments where pairs have been forced to switch mates, they have produced far fewer young over the next couple of broods.

Now, for the male, he gets to be 100% sure that each of the offspring he carries is his own, and there is no risk of cuckoldry. Since there is full transparency and no scope of suspicion, he goes to extreme lengths to raise his young, for he definitely may want to pass his genes on to as many young of the next generation as possible. Males also shut their brood pouch after mating, since eggs would be damaged if saltwater found a way in. This may prevent males from accepting eggs from multiple females (*which might look like loyalty, monogamy, etc.*).

Sometimes, science and maths combine to produce a whirlwind love story in the sea, as in the case of seahorses.

Sources (and my  
recommendations)





# Researcher's Isle



## Tete-a-tete with Imran Samad



### **Tell us about your current work.**

I am a PhD scholar at the Centre for Ecological Sciences, IISc, Bengaluru, working with Professor Kartik Shanker to study how fisheries and tourism can impact marine megafauna and what such interactions mean for their survival. Marine megafauna are large-bodied, charismatic sea creatures like dolphins, whales, and sharks, but unfortunately, we know very little about them in India. So, a large part of my work is mapping where different dolphins and whales (*cetaceans*) are found. Once we know where they occur most, it will be easier to understand the human impact on them. To do so, I blend modern tools and techniques with large-scale datasets and answer questions relevant to their conservation in India. For example, I use ocean current datasets to map where in the ocean the dead dolphins we sometimes see on beaches may be coming from.

### **What has your journey been like till this point?**

I started my PhD immediately after completing my Master's degree in 2021, for which I studied river dolphins in West Bengal. So far, it has been an exciting journey filled with adventures, mishaps, joys, and sorrows. Conducting research on marine systems is challenging, but it has its perks. I raised my grants, which were supplemented by the Marine Flagships programme at Dakshin, but the things I discovered were novel and of great interest and importance to people at the global level. I presented my work at several conferences, made many friends working in a similar field and learned much more than I had anticipated.

### **What are some of the challenges you have faced along the way or continue to face?**

Marine systems are not viewed like their terrestrial counterparts. Endangered species co-occur with humans, and the sea – for the most part – is of open access. Therefore, conserving such systems requires the synchrony of several government departments, fishers, the navy, researchers, tourists, etc., at both small and large scales. I have found this difficult to achieve

and constantly struggle to think of simple, palatable, science-based solutions to conserving species. In terms of research, funding is the biggest challenge; marine research requires plenty of funds – the costs of hiring boats for surveys are colossal, and there are only a few institutes in the country where you can study marine wildlife.

### **Advice you would want to give to those who want a career in marine research and conservation...**

In the face of a collapsing world, it is more important than ever to study ecological processes in the ocean and develop solutions to conserving them. With scarce information, every new research provides fascinating insights into how interconnected we are with the oceans. We are lucky to live in a time when so much data and resources are publicly available for researchers and practitioners. We should learn to incorporate these with traditional research methods, which can help us understand things at a scale we probably wouldn't have imagined 20 years ago. In the case of conservation, the challenge is to bring together the diverse ocean stakeholders and speak in a common tongue; the key here is to work with people from different backgrounds - researchers, science communicators, vloggers, etc.- who bring in diverse experiences.



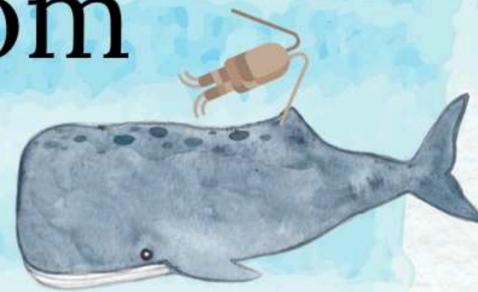
*You can reach out to Imran at [imransamad7@gmail.com](mailto:imransamad7@gmail.com), check out his work and experiences on his [website](#) and follow him on Instagram and X [@imran\\_samad](#)*



# Pearls of Fishdom

## Clingy Copepods

~Garima Bora



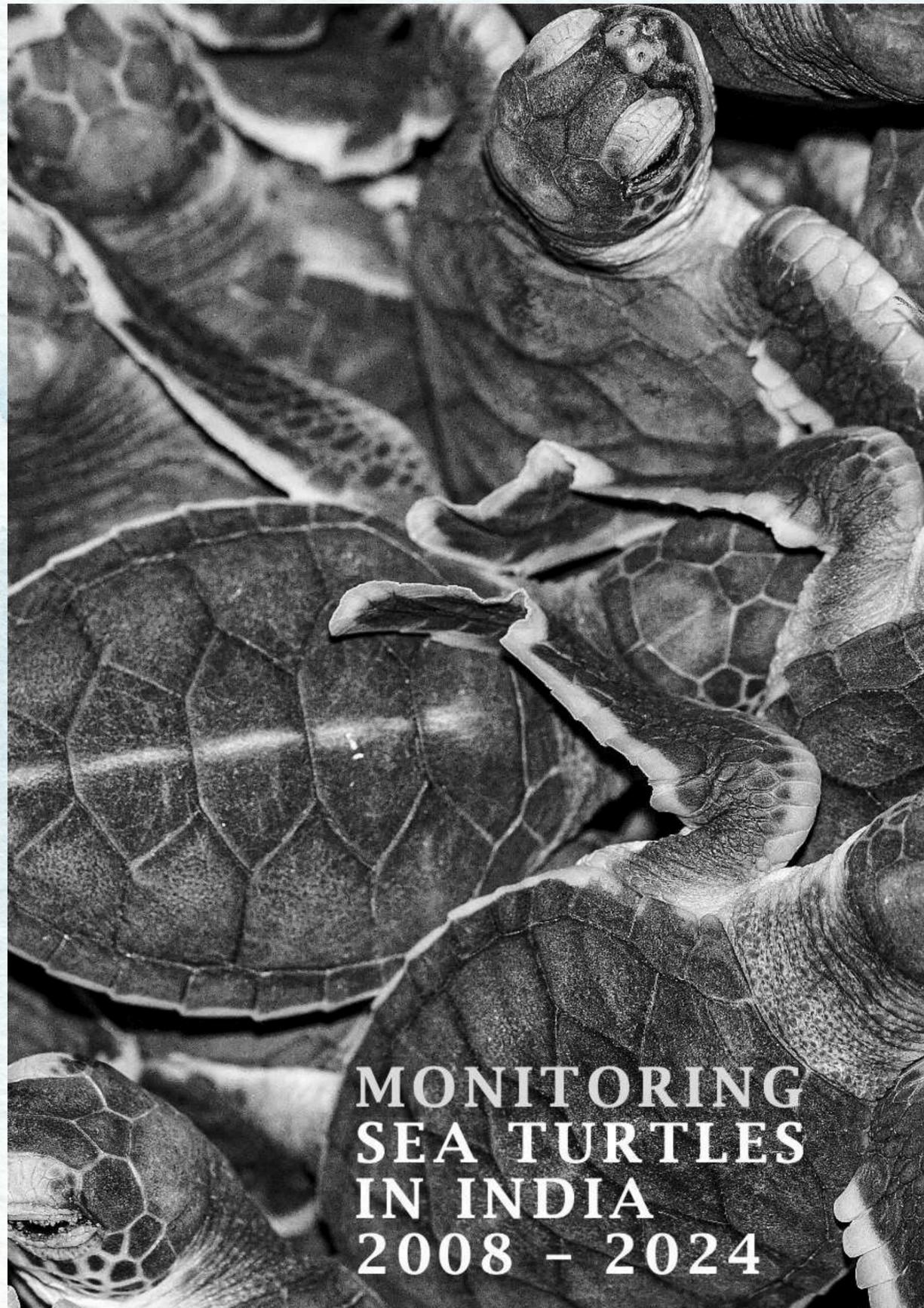
While visiting a beach in southern Sindhudurg, we stopped to watch a pair of fishermen unload their catch—a mix of mackerels and spadenose sharks (*Scoliodon laticaudus*). As they laid the sharks on the damp sand, something caught our eyes—tiny, dark specks clinging near the gill slits and pectoral fins of one shark. A closer look confirmed that they were parasitic copepods, still attached to the shark's skin.

In the vast ocean, sharks are rarely alone. Among their lesser-known companions are these tiny crustaceans, which have mastered the art of attachment—both literally and figuratively. These copepods, likely siphonostomatous (“siphono-”- tube or pipe; “-stomatous”- “mouth”) ectoparasites, feed on mucus and soft tissue and are commonly found on sharks. But in most cases, they go unnoticed—fishermen clean their catch almost immediately after landing, scraping off anything unusual before the sharks reach the market. Within minutes, these parasites were cleaned, leaving no visible sign they were ever there.

Parasitic copepods can cause skin irritation, lesions, and even secondary infections in sharks. Since they rely on a host to survive, their life cycle involves multiple developmental stages. They often start as free-swimming larvae before attaching to a suitable shark. There's still a lot we don't know about which parasites prefer which shark species— plenty of unanswered questions remain, making observations like this a small but valuable piece of the puzzle.



Image by Garima Bora



We are happy to share  
our comprehensive  
report on monitoring sea  
turtles in India from  
2008 to 2024

**[Click here to  
download the report](#)**

# From the Galley

## *Sura puttlu (scrambled shark) from coastal Andhra Pradesh*



~ shared by Tejaswi Abhiram

When most people think of dishes made from sharks, shark fin soup first comes to mind. But did you know we Indians have many delicious shark recipes from various regions? One such recipe comes from the picturesque beaches of coastal Andhra Pradesh, where we enjoy our weekly fix of scrambled shark, which we call *sura puttlu* locally. While the cooking process produces a notoriously strong odour, the demand for this dish remains astonishingly high.

### *ingredients*

- ½ kg shark
- Rock salt
- 2 tsp turmeric powder
- Dried straw/grass
- 1 cup water
- Salt (to taste)
- 1 tbsp ginger garlic paste
- 2 tbsp chilli powder
- ½ tbsp cumin powder (jeera)
- 1 tbsp coriander powder (dhania)
- 1 tbsp garam masala
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- 50ml oil
- 1 tbsp vaminata or mustard seeds
- 1 twig of curry leaves
- 3 dried chillies
- 10 cloves of garlic
- 2 onions
- 5 green chillies
- 1 bunch of coriander leaves





### *Step 1: Clean the shark*

Thoroughly clean ½ kg of shark and coat with rock salt and turmeric. Remove and discard the fins and innards. Cut the shark into even pieces.



### *Step 2: Prepare the cooking vessel*

In a flat-bottomed mud vessel, create a base using dried grass (any grass used as fodder such as rice or wheat straw) rolled up into a layer at the bottom.



### *Step 3: Steam the shark*

Add water, salt, and turmeric to the vessel. Arrange the shark pieces on the grass bed, cover and steam until the fish is fully cooked (~10 minutes) and the skin peels off at the slightest touch.



### *Step 4: Cool, peel, and drain*

Remove the shark from the vessel and let it cool. Once cooled, peel off the skin, remove the bones, and mash the meat. Squeeze the mashed shark thoroughly to drain all excess water.



### *Step 5: Marinate the shark*

Crumble the drained shark meat and marinate it with ginger-garlic paste, chilli powder, turmeric powder, jeera powder, dhania powder, garam masala, lemon juice, and salt to taste.



### *Step 6: Prepare the tempering*

Heat 50 ml of oil in a kadai (wok). Once hot, add mustard/vaminta seeds, curry leaves, dried chillies and garlic cloves.



### *Step 7: Cook the shark*

Add chopped onions and green chillies, followed by the marinated shark and cook on low flame, stirring continuously until the strong fishy smell reduces and the curry retains some moisture.



### *Step 8: Serve the dish*

Remove the prepared scrambled shark to a serving bowl, garnish with chopped coriander, and serve with rice or rotis for a mouth-watering, delectable meal.



# Straight from the Field

*It's a wonderful time  
to be in ganjam!* ~Rahul MS



66



## **The case of the mysterious pug marks!**

As we were walking along the riverside of Spit Island one fine January morning, our field staff and I saw a bunch of unusual-looking pugmarks, the likes of which we had never seen before. We immediately stopped to check which animal it could belong to as it was way larger than a stray dog's pug mark, which is a common beach inhabitant. We took some photos and continued our work, but couldn't take our minds off pugmarks. We proceeded to ask friends and colleagues if it belonged to a hyena, as there are previous records of striped hyenas from that area, but unfortunately, we received no confirmation. What could have appeared as a harmless pair of pugmarks on the sand became a source of mystery for us for a month! Finally, our friend Imran Samad, a PhD scholar from IISc, confirmed that these belong to a smooth-coated otter! Now, palpable excitement replaced the shroud of mystery. I have never spotted one of these adorable animals in Ganjam before. But Bipro, our field staff member, has heard many tales from the fisherfolk about a family of smooth-coated otters sneakily visiting the beach late at night to sometimes steal fish. Fingers crossed that I spot one soon!

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## *It was that time of the year again!*



Every time we went offshore for transects, I carried my camera, hoping to capture olive ridley mating pairs. But I could never click an image of a mating pair, either because I got busy with the surveys or the turtles disappeared into the sea before I could get a clear shot.

During this time of the year, we generally see large congregations of olive ridley turtles nearshore. I was out with Bipro and Sudarshan Shaw recently on a leisurely boat ride, scanning the sunlit waters. We spotted several pairs, but as we approached, they dove deep, vanishing below the surface or drifting apart, their wariness overriding our quiet presence. It was frustrating yet mesmerising to observe how easily they disappeared into the depths of the sea.

Then, suddenly, we found them, a mating pair floating undisturbed. The male's flipper claws were hooked onto the female's shell and held firm as they drifted together. The water was calm, the light perfect. For once, the moment held.

I steadied my camera and pressed the shutter.

It became one of my best photographs, an intimate glimpse into the life of the species that I study, captured in a rare, fleeting stillness.

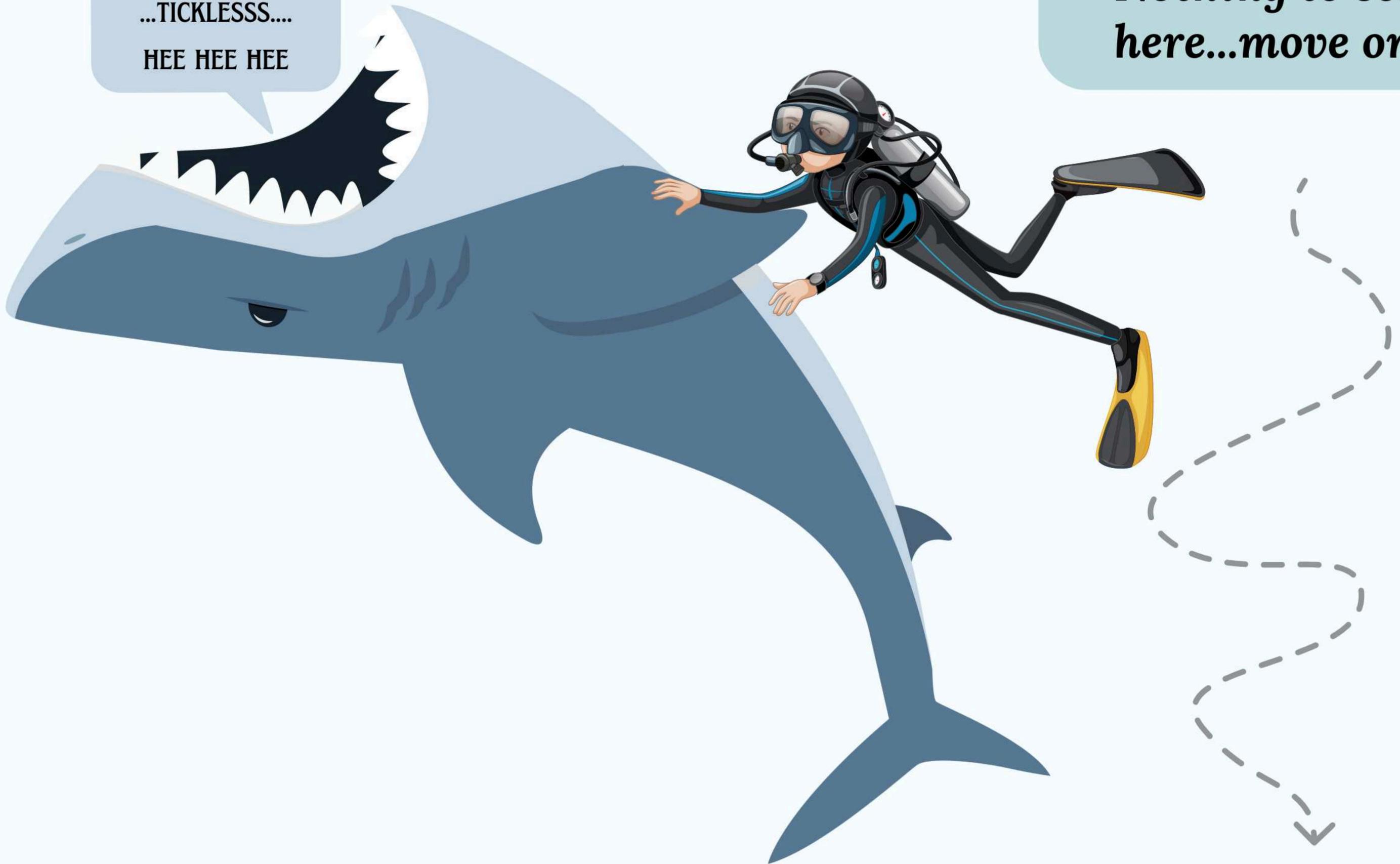


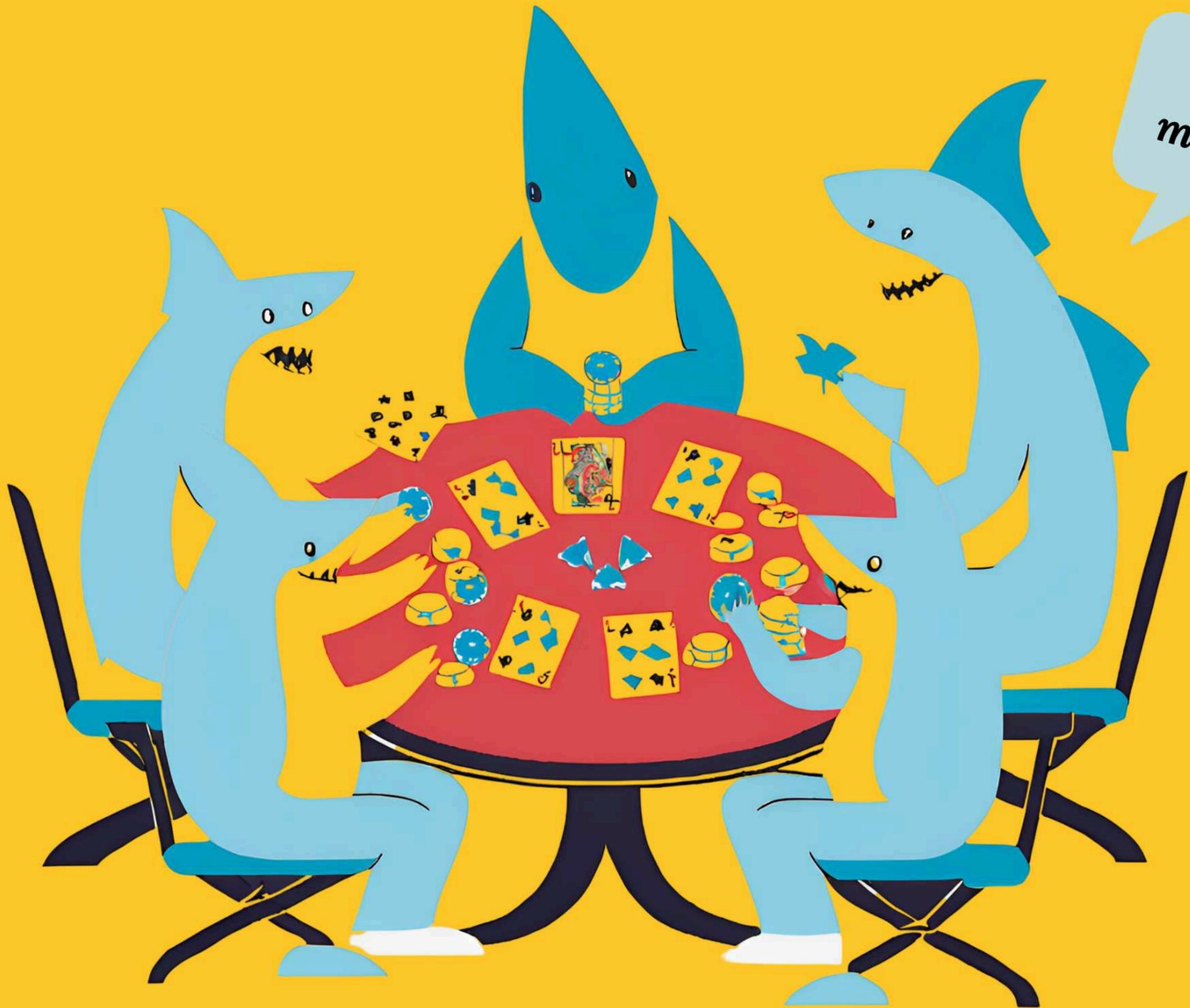
## **Spiralling sea snakes!**

In another exciting offshore transect survey, approximately 5 km from the shore, we encountered an extraordinary sight: a mating pair of *Hydrophis spiralis*, commonly known as the yellow sea snake. Floating on the calm ocean surface, the entwined snakes were engaged in a rarely observed moment of courtship. *H.spiralis* is one of the longest sea snakes, identifiable by its striking yellow and black banding. These snakes are highly adapted to a marine lifestyle, rarely venturing onto land and spending their entire lives at sea.

TEE HEE  
...TICKLESSS...  
HEE HEE HEE

*Nothing to see  
here...move on*





Wrong room  
mate, scroll down

# FISH AND CHIPS SESSION



# Sea Board



## *A glimpse into arribada 2025*



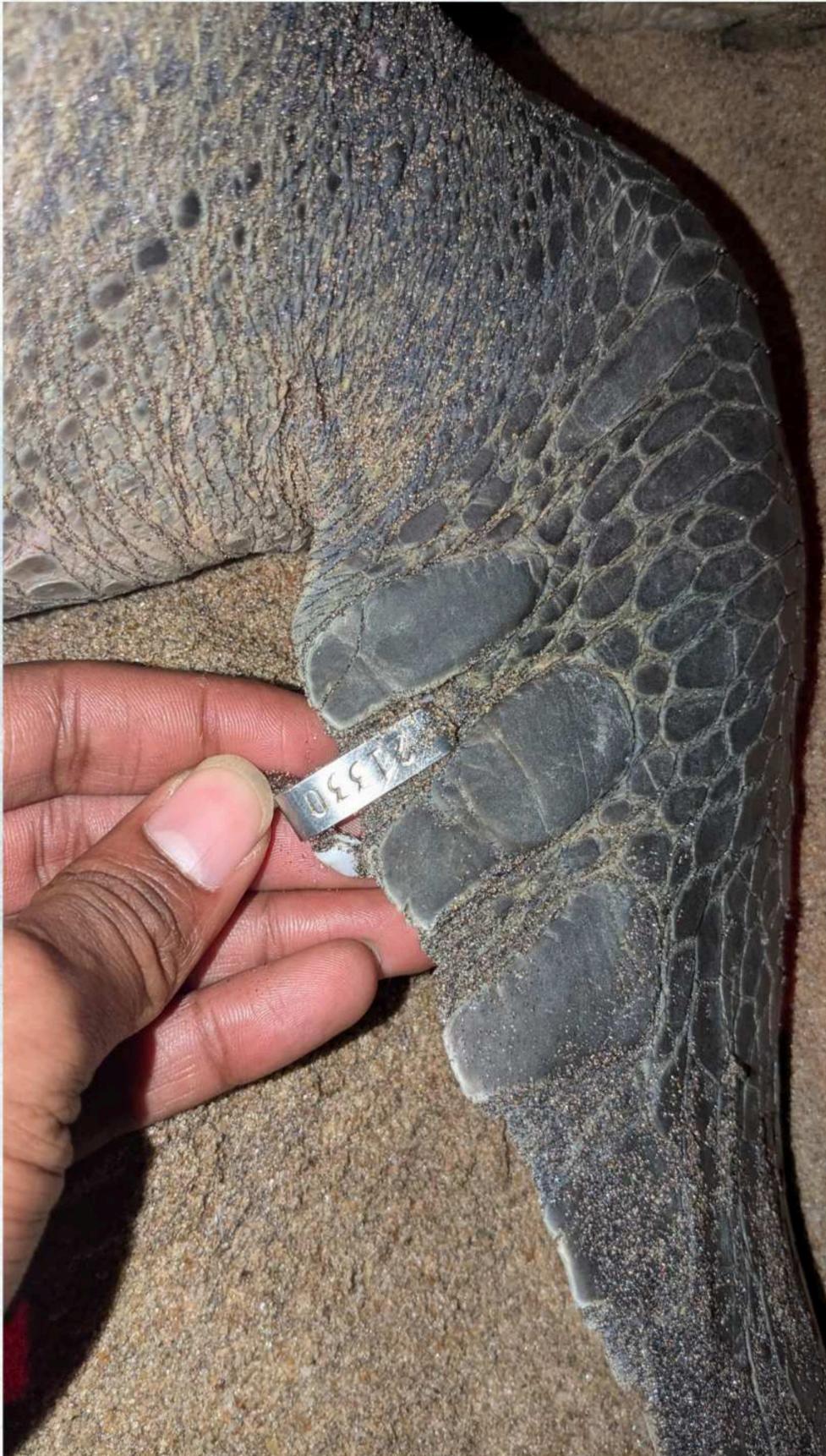
**Arribada 2025** lasted for a week! Tens of thousands of female olive ridley turtles arrived on the beaches of Rushikulya, Odisha, for their annual mass nesting event. Starting late in the afternoon and continuing through the night, these turtles dig 2-foot-deep nests and lay about 100 to 150 eggs in each clutch. There are so many that they often dig each other's nests up, covering the beach with broken eggs. Yet, this phenomenon has helped them survive and thrive over millions of years.

Our team of ~25 staff, researchers and volunteers worked 12 to 14-hour shifts to cover 3 km of nesting beach each night while monitoring turtle nesting activity. A total of about 1500 person-hours of work, no less. As the olive ridley turtles crawled ashore in staggering numbers to lay eggs, our researchers enumerated the turtles, which involved walking transects placed every 100 meters along the beach. Only turtles that are actually laying eggs are counted to prevent double counting. This crucial data helps estimate the number of nesting turtles during the mass nesting event.



In the words of **Kartik Shanker, Programme Head, Marine Flagships programme at Dakshin,**

*“Our team at Dakshin Foundation and IISc Bangalore has been monitoring this population since 2007 with the support of the Odisha Forest Department. A shout-out to the ~20 field staff, researchers and volunteers who are out there counting turtles hour after hour, night after night. Thanks to their effort, we know that this is one of the biggest arribadas we have recorded at Rushikulya over the last 20 years. Though arribadas may not occur in some years, the overall trends suggest that this population is healthy and increasing.”*



Other organisations have also been carrying out important research at the Rushikulya rookery. Over the last couple of years of monitoring by the Zoological Survey of India, they have found 800 recaptures from the 12,000 tagged turtles along the Odisha coast. They plan to continue the massive tagging of turtles to reveal more about the biology of these animals.

In the words of **Dr Basudev Tripathy, Officer-in-Charge, Western Regional Station of ZSI,**

*"It was probably the largest arribada of olive ridleys ever since Rushikulya rookery in Odisha was discovered. During my doctoral work, I have witnessed arribadas, but the size of the arribada this year is incredibly large, including the fact that nesting turtles are nesting from the middle of the day, which is not common. The question remains whether in situ conservation in the past has increased the turtle population or whether turtles are committing all their energy and resources to a single site. Nevertheless, it is overwhelming to see such large numbers at Rushikulya, and there is a need to monitor them in the long term."*

Images: Bipro Behera and Rahul MS



## Healthy oceans and thriving communities

In February, the Department of Environment and Forest organised a productive regional awareness program at Kadmat Island, Lakshadweep, led by the Conservation of Marine Mammals (CMM) team. Dakshin Foundation joined the initiative in collaboration with the department and conducted a session on sustainable fisheries and elasmobranch conservation. The program engaged local fishers in important discussions on marine conservation and sustainable fishing practices.

The CMM team conducted an awareness session on marine mammal conservation, focusing on dolphins found in the region, and a workshop on species identification for fishermen. From Dakshin Foundation, Mahaboob Khan CP, Senior Programme Associate from the Sustainable Fisheries team, spoke on the importance of pole-and-line tuna fishing and concerns over unsustainable baitfish fishing.

Mohammed Serfas Khan, Programme Associate from the Marine Flagships team, introduced the participants to the newly launched field guide, '**Sharks and Rays of Lakshadweep**' (which you can [download here](#)).

This initiative played a vital role in promoting sustainable fishing, marine biodiversity conservation, and effective fisheries management. It empowered local fishers with scientific knowledge and conservation tools for the long-term sustainability of Lakshadweep's marine resources.



xy S23

Images: Abdul Wasih

## Identifying sharks and rays

We recently conducted a '**Sharks And Rays: Species Identification**' workshop for ocean stewards working with the Marine Flagships programme at Rameshwaram. The workshop led by our Programme Associate Abisha C, aimed to give a basic understanding of shark and ray species identification and its importance, morphometric measurements, differentiating between male and female in the species, conducting shark and ray sampling, as well as general surveys on the locally available species.

This initiative was designed to enhance their understanding of identifying elasmobranch species in the field and ensure that data is collected scientifically.



Image by Arjun



Image by Meghana Teerthala

## DNA barcoding workshop for ocean stewards

In the Marine Flagships programme, we aim to collect tissue samples for molecular biology studies. We organised a workshop recently for our ocean stewards, Dakshin staff and community resource persons at Thangachimadam, Rameshwaram, led by our Programme Associate Abisha. The workshop aimed to provide a basic understanding of DNA, the significance of DNA barcoding in species conservation, and sample collection and preservation protocols. It further highlighted the role of DNA in areas that are relevant to our field staff, like species identification, phylogenetics and phylogeography studies, illegal catch, and mislabelled fish product identification.

## **APOWA workshop**

A one-day workshop titled “**Technical Training of Turtle Guards and Volunteers for In-situ and Ex-situ Protection of Sea Turtles**” was organised by Action for Protection of Wild Animals (APOWA) Puri recently.

Our Programme Associate, Rahul MS, and field staff member Mahendra Nayak attended the event. Rahul also conducted the training session for forest guards and ground staff from the Puri and Rajnagar ranges. The training included solitary nest monitoring, nest relocation, hatchery management, and basic data collection.



Image by Mahendra Nayak

## **Heritage Walk at Wandoor**

To celebrate the biodiversity of the Mahatma Gandhi Marine National Park in Wandoor, the INTACH Andaman & Nicobar Chapter, in collaboration with Dakshin Foundation and ANET, organised a boot camp last month with support from the Forest Department. Around 60 children from various villages within the Wandoor panchayat participated in the event, where our Programme Associate Irfan K. Ali, had a wonderful time interacting with them about different sea turtle species, crocodiles, sea snakes and marine ecosystems, to raise awareness about the region’s unique biodiversity and foster a deeper connection to the natural environment.



Image by Ria Philip

## Exploring India's marine wonders

Samar Ahmad from our Marine Flagships team recently visited Arivu Vidya Samsthe, Mysuru, to inspire 80 grade 7–10 students with an engaging session on India's incredible marine life.

She delved into some fascinating insights about the diverse species found in India's oceans and shared Dakshin Foundation's conservation efforts in regions like the Andaman Islands, Odisha, Lakshadweep, and Maharashtra. The students were in for a treat when she showcased several photographs and videos from her work on coral reef ecology, offering a glimpse into the underwater world. For many students, it was their first-ever introduction to marine ecosystems, and their excitement was palpable!

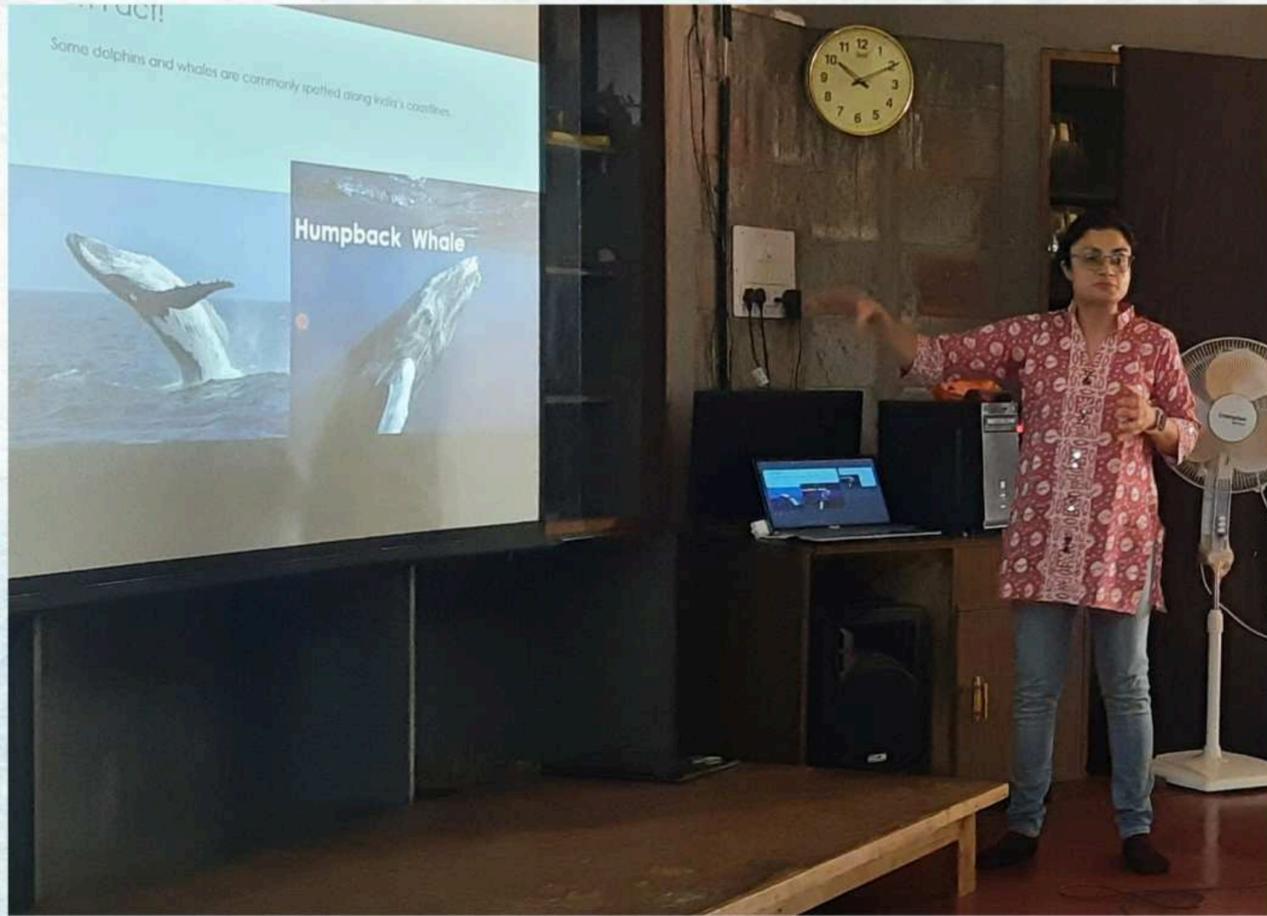


Image by Sahana M

## Bangalore Literature Festival 2024

We had an amazing time at the Bangalore Literature Festival 2024, where our Marine Flagships team brought the marine ecosystems of Lakshadweep Island to life!

As part of the Children | Literature | Fun series, the session explored the enchanting world of "Moonlight in the Sea" through storytelling and a short reading. It was heart-warming to see young readers, aged 4 and up, dive into a world of stories, laughter, and creativity.



Image by BLF Team

## Coast Fest in Odisha

The Marine Flagships team was ecstatic to participate in the Coast Fest, which was organised last month by OPSA Trust in collaboration with the Puri Wildlife Division and a few local NGOs in the region at the Pir Jahania Beach in Astaranga, Odisha.

The fest aimed to engage with the local communities about the importance of coastal biodiversity, preservation of marine ecosystems, and olive ridley turtle conservation. We hosted a stall featuring interactive games for children to highlight the significance of clean beaches, healthy ecosystems and associated wildlife. Our team also distributed outreach materials to the visitors, including guidelines on Do's and Don'ts when encountering turtles.



Image by Soumya Ranjan Behera

Before  
you go...



Check out **this paper** titled 'A megafauna in distress: Unsustainable exploitation of tiger sharks in the Arabian Sea and implications for conservation' by Abisha C, Muralikrishna Gurugubelli, T.A Arundhathy, K.Ranjeet, Neelesh Dahanukar and Rajeev Raghavan, that throws light on the fishery and population dynamics of tiger sharks and their exploitation status.

Megafauna in distress: Unsustainable exploitation of tiger sharks in the Arabian Sea and implications for conservation

Muralikrishna Gurugubelli<sup>a</sup>, C. Abisha<sup>a</sup>, T.A. Arundhathy<sup>b</sup>, K. Ranjeet<sup>c</sup>, Neelesh Dahanukar<sup>a</sup>, Rajeev Raghavan<sup>a</sup>

Mendeley Share Cite

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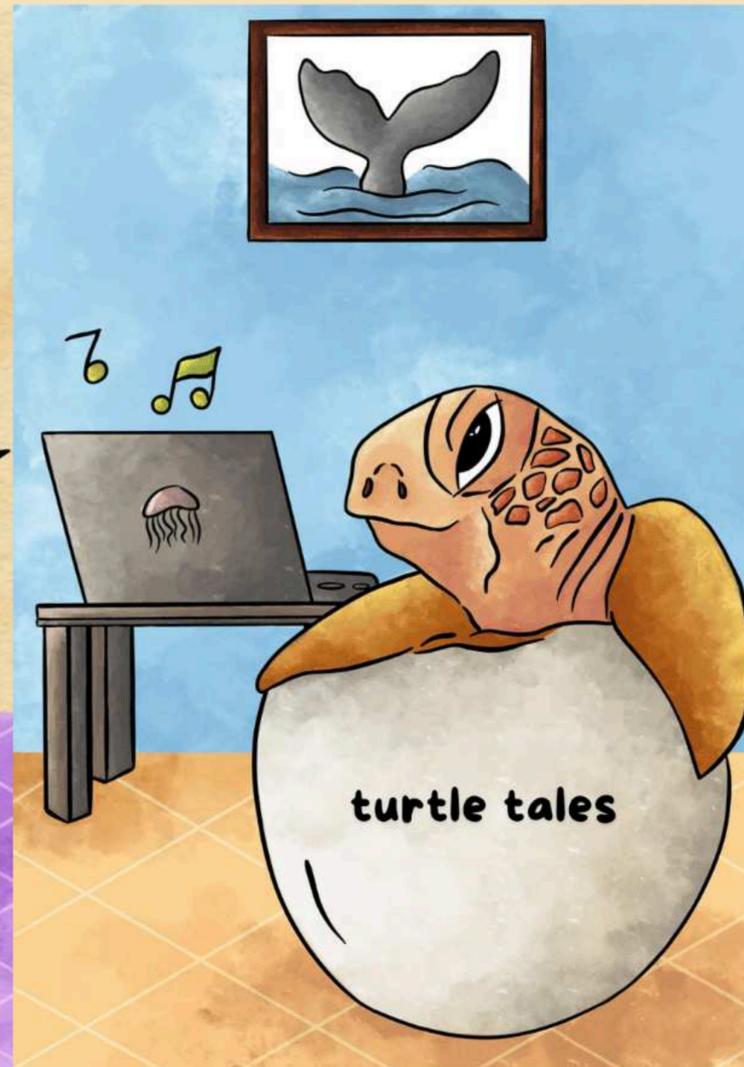
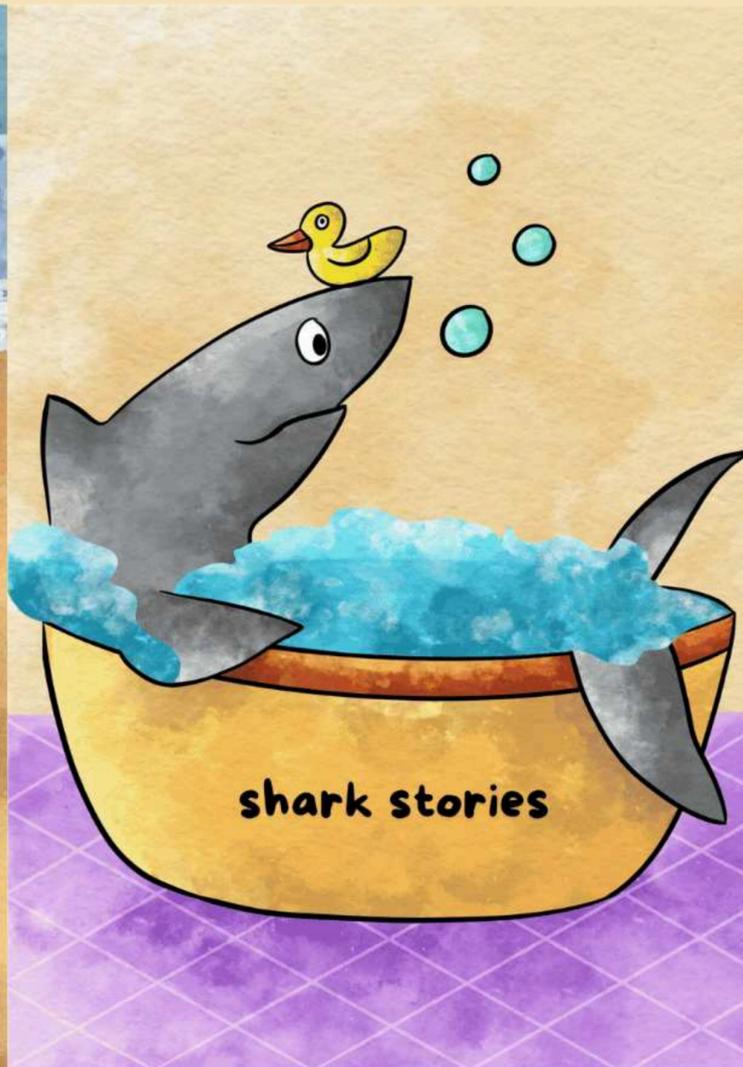
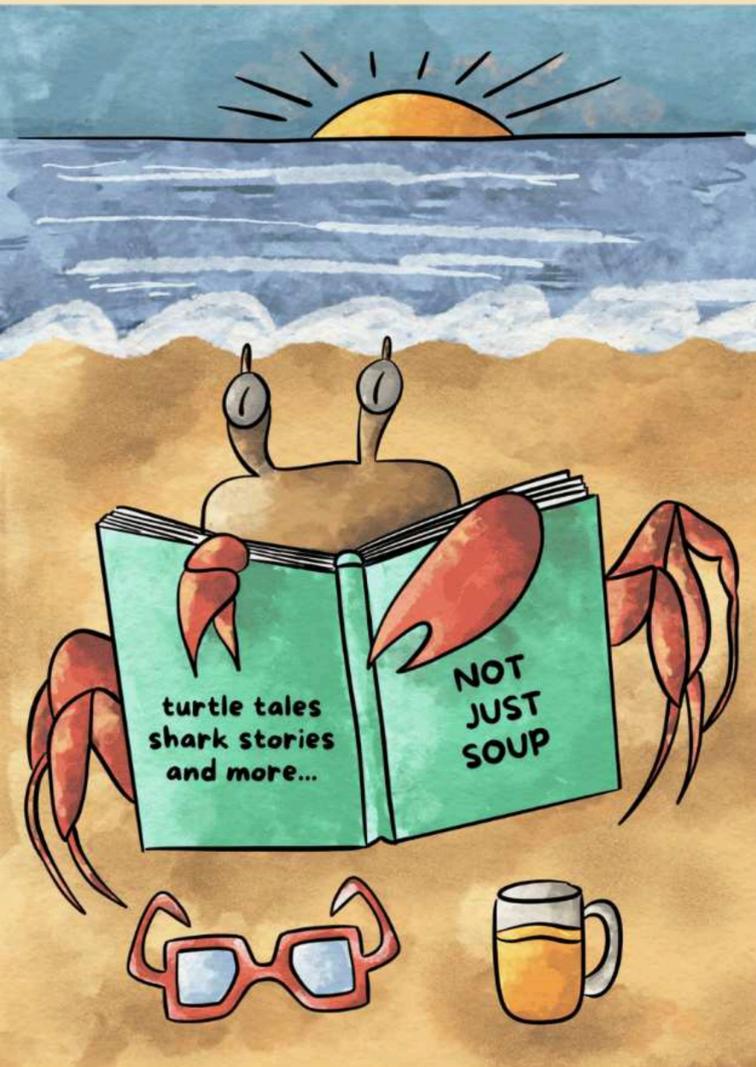
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**Abstract**

Populations of the iconic tiger shark, *Galeocerdo cuvier*, are in a state of global decline, with the species assessed as 'Near Threatened' on the IUCN Red List. Despite this, there is a lack of fundamental information required for regional management, such as those related to life history and ecology. We bridge this knowledge gap by generating the first empirical data on the population dynamics of *G. cuvier* from the Arabian Sea – one of the world's most important shark fishing regions. Length-frequency data of 629 *G. cuvier* collected at Cochin (Southwest coast of India) over 16 months in 2023–2024, revealed the presence of a dominant length class of 180–240 cm, with the largest individual measuring 405 cm

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Our mailing address is:

Dakshin Foundation

2203, 8th Main, MCECHS Layout, D Block

Sahakar Nagar, Bengaluru, Karnataka 560092



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