



Marine Flagships

Understanding India's oceans and coasts



Artwork credits: Barkha Avinash, Ganima Bora

Environmental change is hard to understand without the long view

India's coastal and marine ecosystems are constantly changing, yet long-term data documenting these changes remains scarce and scattered. This makes it difficult to distinguish natural fluctuations from emerging threats, anticipate future challenges, or evaluate the effectiveness of conservation efforts.

Conservation approaches also often overlook the people who depend on these ecosystems for their livelihoods. Such strategies struggle to gain traction or last over time.

Dakshin Foundation's Marine Flagships Programme uses ecologically significant species to understand ecosystem change and inform conservation strategies that are grounded in local realities.



From field to policy

Observe

Monitor and study ecologically significant species and habitats, including sea turtles, sharks and rays, sea snakes, cetaceans, coral reefs and seagrass ecosystems.

Understand

Generate long-term ecological knowledge to understand how ecosystems respond to natural and human-driven change.

Collaborate

Partner with local communities, government departments, research institutions and conservation organisations to support long-term engagement, strengthen local capacity, exchange knowledge and sustain monitoring beyond individual projects.

Inform

Translate research into reports, articles, policy briefs and knowledge platforms that support conservation and management decisions.

Research, outreach and citizen science



● Research

We monitor sea turtle populations and study their movement, behaviour and foraging patterns. We also document the distribution and fisheries interactions of elasmobranchs and monitor long-term changes in coral reef ecosystems. These studies provide insights into how species, habitats and ecosystems respond to environmental and human-driven change.

● Outreach

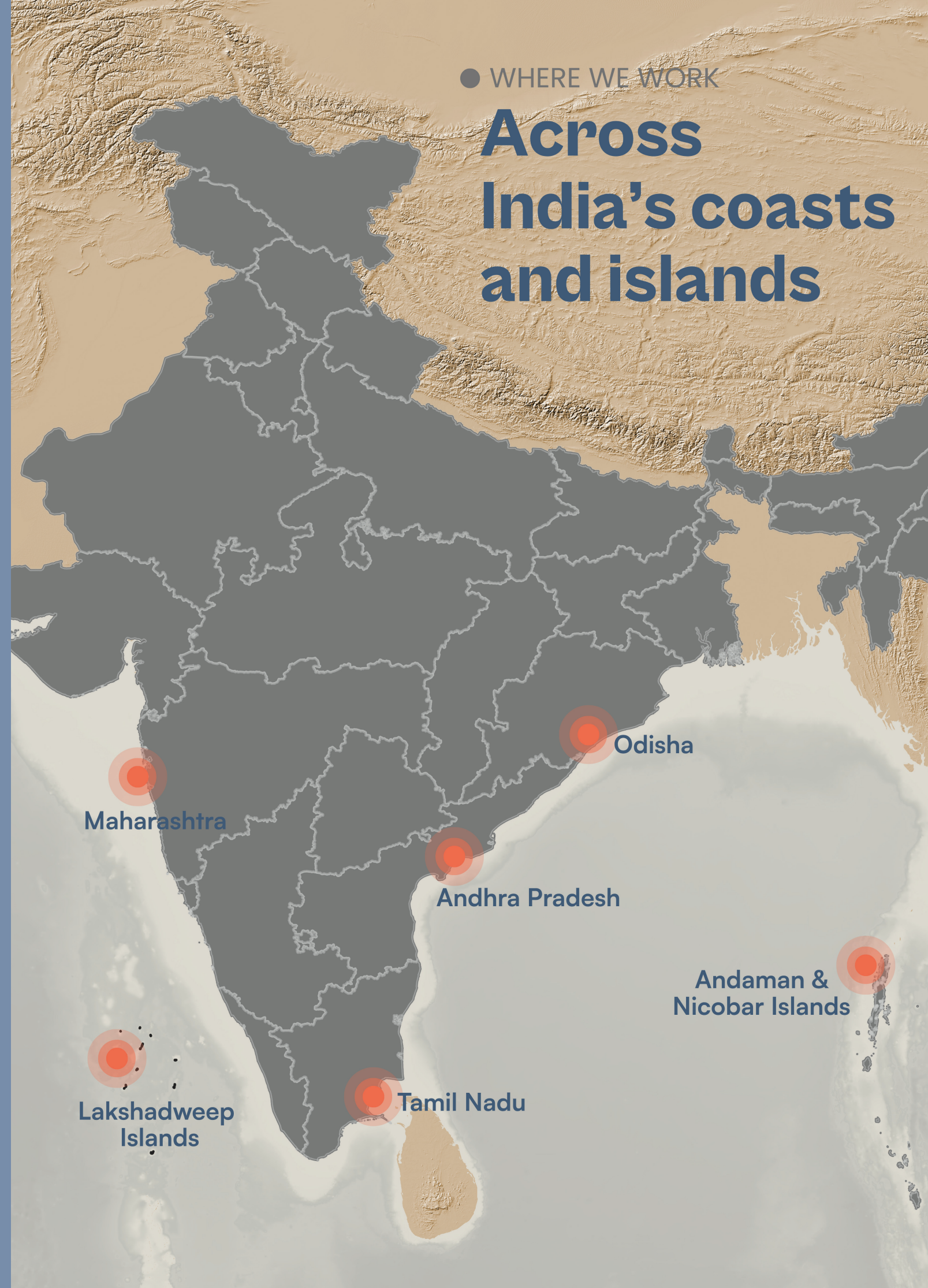
We translate research into articles, reports, websites, educational resources and public engagement initiatives. Platforms such as [Sea Turtles of India](#) and [Sharks and Rays of India](#) help make ecological knowledge accessible to practitioners, policymakers, educators and the wider public.

● Citizen science

We work with divers, naturalists, fishers and coastal communities to document marine life and ecological change. Initiatives such as [ReefLog](#) and the Green Turtle Photo Identification Project contribute observations that strengthen long-term monitoring and expand our understanding of marine ecosystems. In addition to building long-term ecological datasets, these initiatives help enhance ocean literacy, foster stewardship and inspire sustained conservation action.

● WHERE WE WORK

Across India's coasts and islands



● KEY FINDINGS

What the long view is telling us



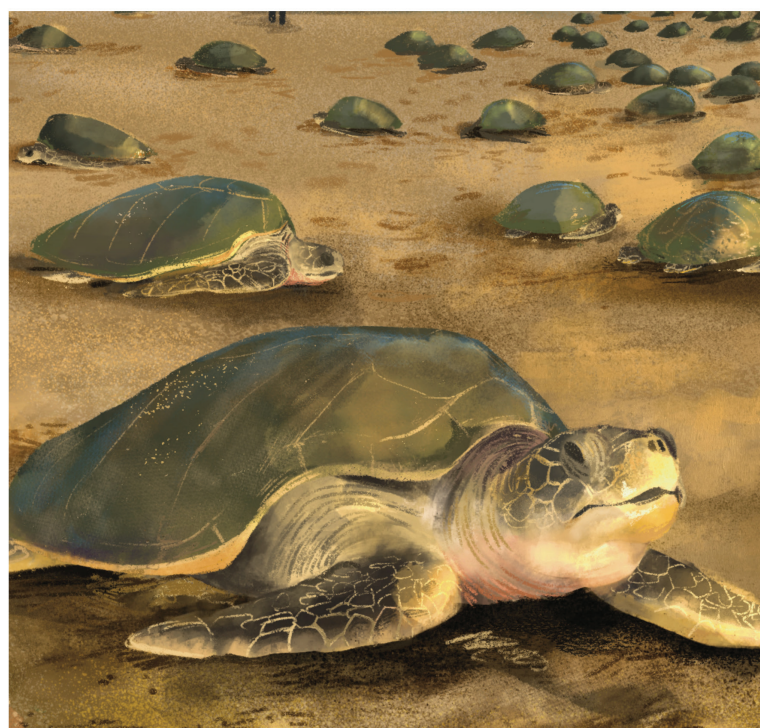
Artwork credits: Upasana Chaddha and Current Conservation

Climate change may alter olive ridley populations

Long-term monitoring in Odisha shows how rising temperatures are altering hatchling sex ratios and may influence the future health of olive ridley populations.

Wildlife populations can recover

Long-term monitoring in Odisha reveals a significant increase in olive ridley turtle populations, altering how we frame management actions and priorities.



Artwork credits: Karunya Baskar



Artwork credits: Pencil Sauce and Current Conservation

Green sea turtle recovery reshapes seagrass ecosystems

Long-term monitoring in the Lakshadweep Islands demonstrates that recovering populations of green sea turtles deplete seagrass meadows through intensive grazing with cascading effects on biodiversity and local fisheries.

Leatherback turtles connect distant ocean basins

Satellite tracking reveals that leatherback turtles nesting in the Andaman Islands migrate thousands of kilometres across the Indian Ocean, highlighting the need for coordinated conservation approaches beyond national boundaries.



Artwork credits: Karunya Baskar

Fisheries place hidden pressures on sharks and rays

Fisheries monitoring has identified potential nursery grounds for endangered sharks and rays while improving our understanding of the ecological and livelihood implications of fisheries bycatch. These findings contribute to a stronger evidence base for conservation planning, area-based management and sustainable fishing practices.



Artwork credits: Sayan Mukherjee and Current Conservation

Primary institutional donors



Key thematic donors

- Accenture Solutions Private Limited
- AVIN Systems Private Limited
- Axis Cares, Axis Bank Foundation
- BirdLife International, Conservation Leadership Programme
- Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru
- Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change of India
- Pearlite Liners Private Limited
- Sundaram Finance Limited
- The Rufford Foundation



Partner with Dakshin

Dakshin Foundation seeks to work with governments, research institutions, civil society organisations, philanthropic partners, practitioners and local communities who share a commitment to equitable blue food systems, community-centred fisheries management, and sustainable seafood value chains.

To explore opportunities for collaboration, write to info@dakshin.org

Artwork credits: Smitha Shivaswamy and Current Conservation