

WORK REPORT ON "SAVING THE OCEAN'S GIANTS: FISHERMEN'S HEROIC ACT RESCUES WHALE SHARK" PROGRAM

Malpe Fishing Harbour, Udupi – October 5, 2024

In an inspiring display of environmental responsibility and quick action, local fishermen were honored for their remarkable efforts in saving a Whale Shark, one of the ocean's gentle giants. The program, titled "Saving the Ocean's Giants: Fishermen's Heroism Rescues a Whale Shark", was organized by the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) in collaboration with the, Small Pelagic Purse Seine Fisheries - Karnataka State Fisheries Improvement Program (KSFIP), the Department of Fisheries - Government of Karnataka, and the College of Fisheries - Mangalore.

Event Overview:

The event was held at **Meenugarara Samudaya Bhavana, Malpe Fishing Harbour, Udupi**, where the captain and crew of the fishing vessel "Sri **Durgambika" (Registration Number: IND-KA-02MM-4961)** were felicitated for their heroic efforts. On **September 20, 2024**, the crew rescued a Whale Shark that had accidentally been caught in their fishing nets. Demonstrating their commitment to marine conservation, the fishermen carefully released the endangered species back into the ocean, ensuring its safe return to its natural habitat.

Distinguished Guests and Felicitation:

The event was graced by several distinguished guests who acknowledged and appreciated the fishermen's conservation efforts:

- Dr. Sujitha Thomas, Principal Scientist and Head, CMFRI Mangalore
- Mr. Dayananda Suvarna, President of Malpe Fishermen's Association

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- **Mr. Nagaraja Suvarna**, President of Purse Seine Fishermen's Association, Malpe & Partner - Yashaswi Fish Meal and Oil Company
- Mr. Raviraj Suvarna, President of Deep-Sea Trawl Boat Drivers' Association
- Mr. Vivek R, Joint Director, Fisheries Department, Udupi
- Mrs. Anjanadevi, Assistant Director, Fisheries Department, Udupi
- Dr. Mridula Rajesh, Head of Department, College of Fisheries, Mangalore
- Mrs. Savitha Khadri, Assistant Director, Fisheries Department, Udupi
- Mr. Sadashiva S. Mendon, Captain of "Sri Durgambika," who was felicitated for his crew's extraordinary efforts

Significance of the Initiative:

This initiative underscores the **vital role that local fishermen play in marine conservation**. By rescuing the **Whale Shark**, a species classified as **endangered**, the fishermen have not only exhibited their dedication to sustainable fishing but have also set a remarkable precedent for the entire fishing community. Their actions align with the broader goals of marine conservation and responsible fishing practices.

The Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) in collaboration with the Small Pelagic Purse Seine Fisheries - Karnataka State Fisheries Improvement Program, and state fisheries departments, continues to emphasize the significance of preserving marine biodiversity. The success of this event highlights the collective responsibility required to protect marine ecosystems and safeguard the future of endangered species like the Whale Shark.

Conclusion:

The felicitation of the **crew of Sri Durgambika** serves as a **testament to the importance of ethical fishing practices and marine conservation**. By recognizing their **heroic efforts**, the program aims to inspire more **fishermen to adopt conservation-friendly approaches**. Events like these reinforce the necessity of **collaborative efforts** between **fishermen**, **scientific institutions**, **and government**

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bodies to ensure a sustainable and thriving marine environment for future generations.

Malpe fishermen lauded for releasing whale shark back into sea

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

THE Mangalore Regional Centre of ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI), in collaboration with the College of Fisheries Mangalore and Karnataka State FIP, on Saturday felicitated a group of fishermen who successfully released an accidentally caught whale shark in Malpe.

Dr Sujitha Thomas, scientist in charge of ICAR-CMFRI's Mangalore Regional Centre, speaking on the occasion, said that the regular and continuous awareness campaigns led by ICAR-CMFRI are yielding results as fishermen took extreme precautions to rescue the whale sharks.

"The awareness campaigns conducted on International Whale Shark Day played a pivotal role in educating the fishermen about the importance of saving these gentle giants. The successful rescue of the whale shark is a significant step in preserving the biodiversity of our



Fishermen being felicitated for rescuing a whale shark recently | EXPRESS

oceans," she added. Sadashiva S. Mendon, the owner of the Sri Durgambika purse seine boat from which the fishermen released the whale shark back to the ocean, said that the giant fish got caught in the net when the boat was about 15 nautical miles offshore. "The whale shark that weighed about two tonnes was released back to the ocean," he said.

The scientific community commended the fishermen for their responsible action in releasing the whale shark. Savitha Khadri, Assistant Di-

rector of Port Department; also spoke on the occasion and said that the awareness program about the preservation of whale sharks was held last month and more such awareness programs will be held in the coming days. Vivek R., Joint Director of Fisheries, was present. Malpe fishermen and captains' association president Raviraj Suvarna said that plastic waste that is flowing into the ocean through rivers is a menace and it has dwindled the fish catch for fishermen.

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Press report on the event

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Ensuring Sustainability...



Mr. Vivek-Joint Director, Addressing the event



Dr. Sujitha Thomas - Principal Scientist and Head, CMFRI Mangalore, Addressing the event

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Felicitation to the Captain of Fishing Vessel



Fishermen Crews along with Officials and association leaders

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WORK REPORT ON THE DISCUSSION ON FURTHER PLANS ON THE CONSERVATION OF ETP SPECIES

After the felicitation program, the officials of Department of Fisheries, Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute and Faculties of college of Fisheries, met the Members of Small Pelagic Purse Seine Fisheries-Karnataka state FIP at the office of Yashaswi Fish Meal and Oil company and discussed on the further actions that needed for the conservation of ETP species.

Minutes of Meeting

Date: October 5, 2024 Venue: Yashaswi Fish Meal and Oil Company's Office, Udupi

Attendees:

- Dr. Sujitha Thomas, Principal Scientist and Head, CMFRI Mangalore
- Mr. Vivek R, Joint Director, Fisheries Department, Udupi
- Mrs. Anjanadevi, Assistant Director, Fisheries Department, Udupi
- Dr. Mridula Rajesh, Head of Department, College of Fisheries, Mangalore
- Mrs. Savitha Khadri, Assistant Director, Fisheries Department, Udupi
- Members of Small Pelagic Purse Seine Fisheries Karnataka State Fisheries Improvement Program (Mr. Udaya Kumar Salian, Mr. Pradeep Moger, Mr. Arun Kumar)

Agenda:

- Discussion on further needs for the conservation of Endangered, Threatened, and Protected (ETP) species.
- Review of the heroic rescue of the Whale Shark by local fishermen.
- Planning awareness initiatives and conservation strategies.

Key Discussion Points and Outcomes:

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1. Awareness Program on ETP Species

- CMFRI will prepare a calendar for conducting awareness programs on ETP species in all fishing harbours.
- **Deadline for Calendar Preparation:** End of April 2025.

2. Awareness Materials in Fishing Harbors

- The Department of Fisheries will install posters and banners in each fishing harbour to create awareness about ETP species.
- The posters will also include contact details for reporting the catch of ETP species.
- **Deadline for Implementation:** End of 2025.

3. Financial Assistance

• The financial support for the above actions will be provided by the Small Pelagic Purse Seine Fisheries - Karnataka State Fisheries Improvement Program.

Conclusion:

The meeting concluded with a shared commitment to enhancing conservation efforts for ETP species, particularly in recognition of the fishermen's heroic act of rescuing the Whale Shark. The participants agreed to work collaboratively to implement the discussed action plans within the specified deadlines.

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END OF REPORT

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