

# Facilitating livelihoods through Ecotourism

Ecotourism is defined as "responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education"

This is well aligned with the goal of the Conservation and Sustainable Management of Existing and Potential Coastal and Marine Protected Areas (CMPA) project: "The conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in the CMPAs sites are improved, while taking into account the economic well-being of the local population"

The Velas to Dabhol CMPA site in Maharashtra has become popular due to sea turtle nesting sites and turtle conservation effort by the community. This stretch is a conducive social environment for participatory conservation and ecotourism.



Photo credit Supriya Jhunjunwala

## The turtle festival is an excellent example of low impact high volume tourism

About 3,500 tourists come to Velas to witness Olive ridley turtle hatchlings returning to sea.

The number of tourists for the Turtle festival and homestays have doubled in Velas during the course of the CMPA project. This brings in an additional income of about 25,00,000 rupees to the village

The CMPA project also started the Turtle festival in Anjarle Village in 2016. About 3,000 people came to Anjarle for this festival in 2017 boosting the local economy by about 25,00,000 rupees.

Guidelines have been developed by the CMPA project in the local language for managing the turtle festival, and have been shared with the community

## Communities based conservation and ecotourism.

The villages have banned the use of Styrofoam plates following waste management studies and conservation education and outreach conducted by the CMPA project.

Posters related to biodiversity conservation and harmful effects of plastic were distributed, and are displayed in the homestays

Regular beach clean-ups are conducted with the help of locals and tourists

An assessment was carried out to make homestays more eco-friendly.

Biodiversity libraries have been provided to schools and regular activities are conducted to build the next generation of conservationists

## Nature Interpretation and education

We have built an interpretation centre in Velas Village to enrich the personal experience of tourists and locals.

The displays for the centre were manufactured in Germany

Nature trails, outdoor signs and outreach material have also been developed for Velas, Anjarle and Kelshi villages.

Several trainings have been conducted for local youth as natural history guides.

A field guide for the coastal and marine biodiversity of Maharashtra has been developed in the local language and English

A film on turtle conservation has been made  
Nature trails and biodiversity talks are conducted regularly for tourists



Photo credits Supriya Jhunjunwala

## CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF COASTAL AND MARINE PROTECTED AREAS (CMPA)

Implemented by

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