

The Baa Atoll Resorts' Marine Conservation Project

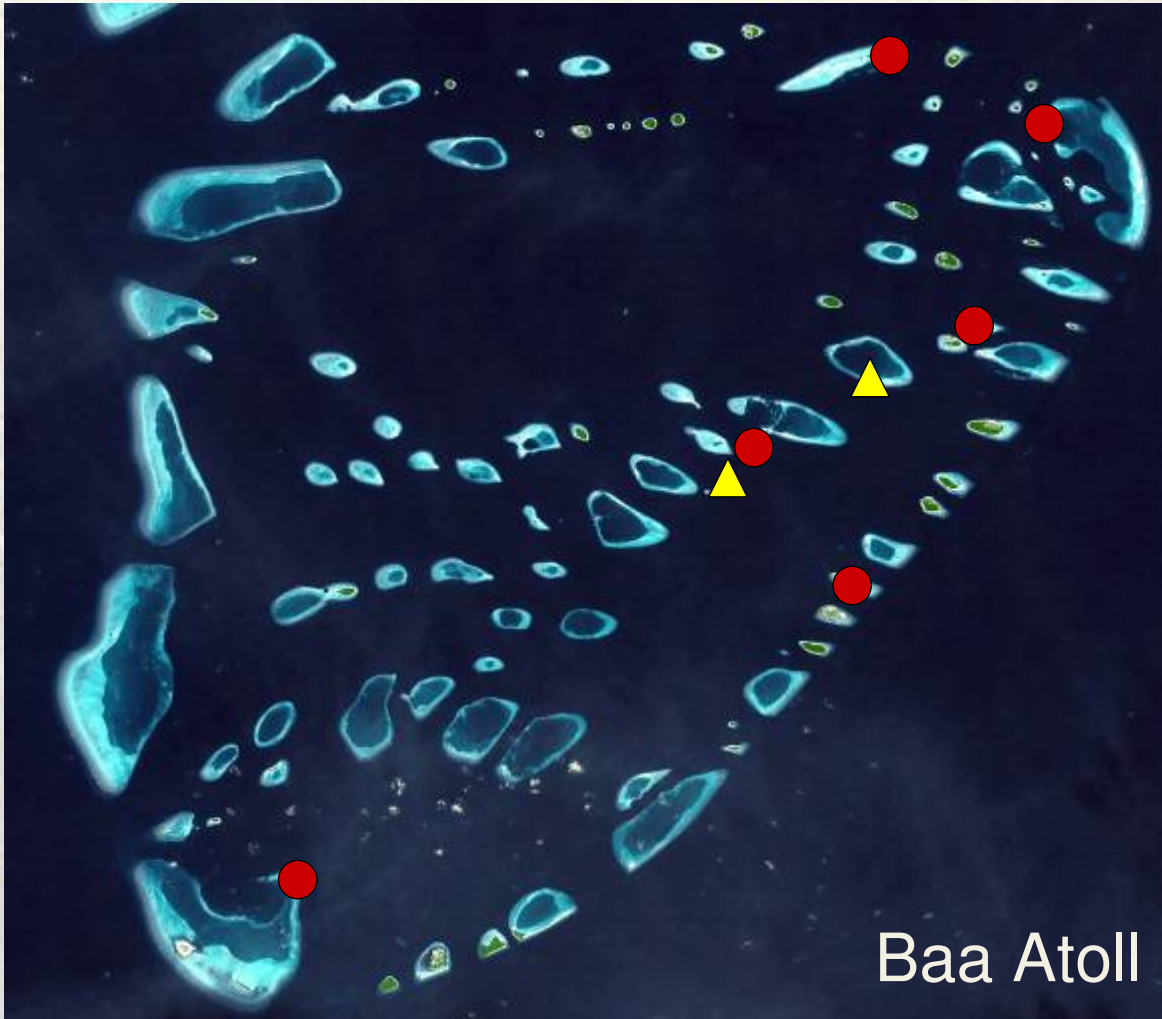
History, Progress, Aims



History of the project

- In recent years, shark numbers have considerably dropped in all of Baa Atoll's dive sites.
- Dhigali Haa (Marine Protected Area) and the shark nursery near Anga Faru, where Grey Reef Shark sightings used to be very common, have no sharks left.
- Manta rays and whale sharks are the only large marine animals left as an attraction for divers, but their existence may also be at risk.
- Increased concern by biologists, divers and guests about the survival of the local marine life has led to the resorts working together on conservation issues.
- Regular meetings have taken place since May 2007.

Participants in the project



Four Seasons
Landaa Giraavaru

Reethi Beach /
Sea Explorer

Kihaadhuffaru /
Valtur Diving

Royal Island /
Delphis Diving

Soneva Fushi /
Soleni Dive Centre

Coco Palm Dhuni
Kolhu / Ocean Pro

Baa Atoll

Topics discussed

- Shark fishing
 - government support sought to stop shark-fishing and trade
 - protected areas and enforcement of conservation laws needed
 - awareness-raising programmes for the youth and other islanders to be developed by the marine biologists and the AEC team
 - alternative income opportunities for the fishermen needed: handicrafts, agriculture, services, cultural centres, etc.
- Manta ray and whale shark fishing
 - issue of concern for the future

Kulhudhufushi, Haa Dhaal Atoll



Rasdho Atoll



Topics discussed

- Night fishing above the reef
 - education programmes for guests and staff needed
 - guidelines of target and non-target species as well as minimum fish and lobster sizes developed
 - restricted areas, no-anchoring policies and special fishing lines needed
- Manta ray and whale shark watching
 - support for manta ray research by Guy Stevens needed
 - flyers with information on manta rays used in all resorts
 - guidelines for controlled snorkelling and diving at Hani Faru being developed



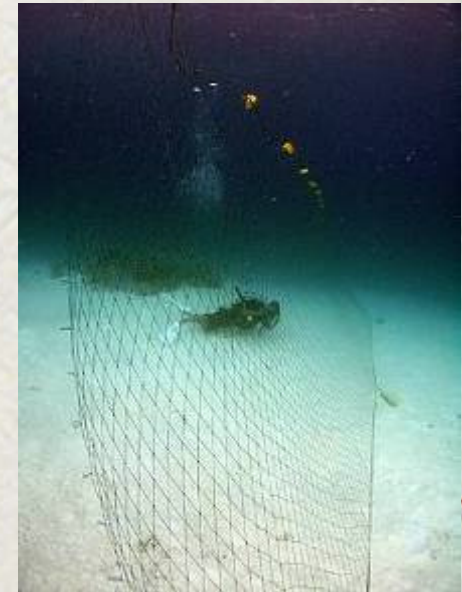
Topics discussed

- Waste disposal
 - alternatives to resorts' food waste disposal at sea needed
 - landfill no solution
 - recycling facilities and awareness-raising training for islanders needed with the help of the resorts
 - support by government or international organisations needed
- Environmental awareness for guests, resort staff and locals
 - leaflet for resort guests about local environmental concerns developed
 - social responsibility projects between resorts and neighbouring islands
 - environmental coordinator as a contact person on each local island needed



Aims of the Baa Atoll resort project

- Nation-wide ban of shark fishing and of shark-fin trade
 - expansion of current no-fishing laws to all atolls
 - complete stop of shark-fin export and sale of shark products (e.g. jaws)
 - enforcement of government laws and regulations (e.g. illegal net fishing)
 - Marine Protected Areas
 - compensation and alternative ways of income for fishermen
 - awareness-raising programmes, especially for the youth
- Nation-wide ban of the killing of rays and greater enforcement of the laws which are meant to protect the endangered species in the Maldives
- Sound waste management solutions for Baa Atoll
- Commitment to sustainable development and nature conservation by all stakeholders



Illegal gill net near Makunueri Island, North Nilandhe Atoll