

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Fourth World Congress of Herpetology Colombo, Sri Lanka

The Fourth World Congress of Herpetology, Colombo, Sri Lanka, will take place from 2nd – 9th December 2001 (please note change of date). For details and expressions of interest, contact the Conference Director: **Ansem de Silva**, Faculty of Medicine University of Peradeniya, Peradeniya, Sri Lanka, or visit the updated website <<http://www.4wch.com>>.

### Olive Ridley Turtles Make First Day Cover

On the 29<sup>th</sup> of January 2000 the olive ridley turtle, was featured in an Indian first day cover and domestic rate postage stamp. It is hoped that this will help to promote awareness of the species which although nesting on the coasts of the Indian State of Orissa in great numbers is also exposed to high levels of incidental mortality in marine fisheries.

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### Moratorium Declared on Trawling in Kenyan Waters

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The last 6 months in Kenya has seen a concerted campaign by Watamu Turtle Watch, local conservationists, sport fishermen and artisanal fishermen against the destructive and illegal activities of trawlers in Kenyan waters. On the 27th of October 2000, a landmark was reached in our fight against the trawlers when the Fisheries Department declared a 3 month moratorium on trawling starting December 1st, pending investigations as to whether trawling should continue and if so, under what conditions.

Trawlers in Kenya are only licenced to fish outside a 5 nm zone from the coast, which they disregard with impunity. Trawlers have also failed to adopt TEDs as stipulated by the Fisheries Department. The results have been devastating to turtle populations; local livelihoods - due to declines in fish catches for both artisanal and sport fishermen (the latter important to the local tourist industry) and thousands of dollars of uncompensated damage to artisanal fishing gears; and the marine environment.

The sustained pressure by concerned groups resulted in the Fisheries Department organising a stakeholder meeting on marine resource issues. As a result of prior lobbying, interest groups focussed their efforts on the trawlers, despite a broad meeting agenda. Representatives of artisanal fishermen, conservation groups and sport fishermen presented data and impassioned attacks on trawlers and their illegal and destructive activities as well as Fisheries policy.

The meeting was extremely heated with the trawlers admitting they were fishing illegally within the 5nm limit.

By the end of the meeting, so great was the pressure that the Fisheries Department was forced to declare a 3 month moratorium on trawling as from the end of November (when licenses are up for renewal) while a Task Force (established at the meeting) is to investigate the following:

- 1) assessment of the status of marine resources in trawl areas and the impact of trawling on endangered species, the marine environment and local livelihoods
- 2) based on analysis of this information determine whether trawlers should be allowed to continue trawling in Kenya
- 3) if permitted to continue trawling: in what capacity, according to what conditions, and how will they be enforced.

The Task Force will include a representative from: the Fisheries Department, research institutions, fishing communities, Kenyan Navy, Coast Development Authority, Kenya Wildlife Service, trawlers association, and conservation groups- represented by Watamu Turtle Watch.

Watamu Turtle Watch will ensure that conservation issues particularly those regarding turtles will remain key issues in the ensuing Task Force investigations.

This progress has come about as a result of a collaborative effort by varied stakeholders and an incessant campaign of letter writing to government officials and involvement of the media.

We are hopeful something positive will come of this for Kenya and that it may provide inspiration to groups in other countries facing trawler problems and intractable government, particularly in the developing world.