

ANNUAL REPORT 2020 |



The Pearl
Protectors



THE PEARL PROTECTORS

**OUR VISION IS A SUSTAINABLY
PROTECTED MARINE ENVIRONMENT
IN SRI LANKA WHERE HUMAN
IMPACT DOES NOT HARM ITS
MARINE BIODIVERSITY**

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MESSAGE FROM THE COORDINATOR

Sri Lanka's marine environment has been facing a series of severe challenges due to both human and natural impacts. The Pearl Protectors was established to counter these threats while creating a more passionate society in protecting our oceans.

This year has been the most eventful and impactful for The Pearl Protectors. Even during challenged times due to the pandemic, our team has been committed and passionate in protecting our oceans through innovative methods, and for this, I am very grateful for all the contributions made. The Pearl Protectors impact on Sri Lankan population and the governing body has been significant. The urgency to resolve the plastic crisis through the #PlasticFree2020 campaign has resulted in legislative actions and social habitual changes to a sustainable lifestyle. The Pearl Protectors has strived to inspire more individuals to love and care for our oceans while highlighting the importance of volunteering. We intend to elevate our commitments in the coming years and I along with our team will ensure that Sri Lanka's ocean will be protected and sustained for generations more.

I would like to invite you to be part of this movement and to contribute towards the goals of protecting the uniquely beautiful marine environment of Sri Lanka

Muditha Katuwawala



MESSAGE FROM THE ADVISOR

Year 2020 was a challenging year for the entire human population around the globe. Despite the challenges which entirely changed lifestyles, we witnessed occasions where the spirit of compassionate human beings that were never shaken. I experienced the same spirit in its finest form among the volunteers of The Pearl Protectors who persistently pushed forward through multiple challenges the Sri Lankan marine environment faced endangering the marine life and ecosystems in our waters during the year. In Pearl Protectors, the year 2020 saw the initiation of a new step in volunteer efforts which resulted in the production of multiple case studies, a continuous effort towards raising awareness of the public on environmental issues and new partnerships which strengthen the effort of the conservation movement to protect our marine environment.

The collective efforts of the volunteers in The Pearl Protectors made the year a success and paved the way for new avenues to be explored in future. With adamant spirits and determination to protect the Sri Lankan marine environment and strong commitments towards their goal, I hope Pearl Protectors will have more success stories in the coming year as it is these efforts that contribute to conserving and ensuring sustainable utilization of our invaluable marine environment and its resources.

Amila Sumanapala



MESSAGE FROM THE ADVOCACY COORDINATOR

We began our work over two years ago intending to inspire more ocean action. Over the years, we have been able to expand what we do, to formulating a voluntary phase-out method to eliminate single-use plastic items while effectively advocating for policies that safeguard the invaluable marine ecosystems of our island nation.

If we fail to act now, our younger generations will be inheriting an ocean filled with problems that they did not create. The growing number of volunteers who are voicing their concerns, conducting research for campaigns and raising awareness to influence others certainly brings hope for a better tomorrow.

I am looking forward to another impactful year of protecting our marine environment and I hope more passionate individuals would join us to bring about change.

Maleesha Gunawardana



MESSAGE FROM THE AWARENESS COORDINATOR

I believe that the positive change towards protecting our environment lies in our younger generations. Educating young minds on marine conservation have been a priority for our organization from the beginning, especially because of the variety of marine ecosystems we have on the island.

As the awareness coordinator for the Pearl Protectors, I have witnessed firsthand the impact our awareness programs have had on young minds from all walks of life. It is truly inspiring to see the younger generations learn, grow and make greater impacts to protect our ecologically rich marine environment. Personal growth creates an inspiring platform for others to follow! Inspiration and tangible change go hand in hand! Encompass both as we strive towards a brighter future for our marine environment!

Avishka Sendanayake



THE PEARL PROTECTORS OUR IMPACT

VOLUNTEERISM

The Pearl Protectors is a volunteer platform which promotes like minded individuals to volunteer in protecting our marine environment.

AWARENESS

We raise awareness by conducting seminars on plastic pollution in educational institutes and hosting panel discussions to discuss current issues and solutions with marine environmental protection experts in the field.

ADVOCACY

Our advocacy entails conducting research to support campaigns that aim to protect the marine environment through policy implementations.



THE PEARL PROTECTORS TEAM



Muditha Katuwawala



Amila Sumanapala



Maleesha
Gunawardana



Avishka Sendanayake



Masato Ranasinghe



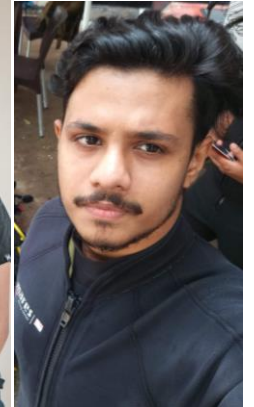
Ahamed Rukshan



Praveen Bandara



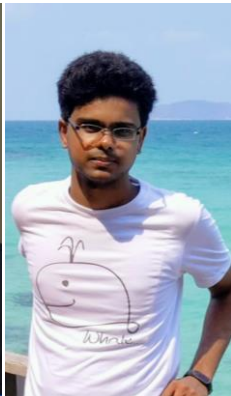
Mohamed Shanu



Minuka
Hagarapitiyaarachchi



Eranga Mendis



Danushan
Gnanasekaran



Akitha Gunasekera



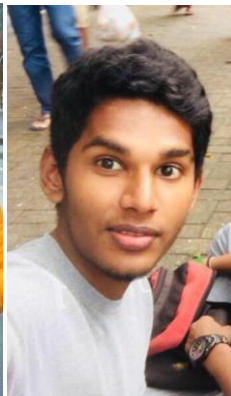
Kavishka Vikum



Abeedarshan
Shan



Kasumi Ranasinghe



Lenin Indra De Silva



Sajid Salih



Verani Jayasekara

2020 TIMELINE

January



Café Kumbuk declared as Pearl Protector Approve



Initiation of the #PlasticFree2020 campaign



Conducting awareness session at Keble College



February



Conducting awareness session at Arethusa College



Conducting awareness session for Instagram Influencers



Releasing of rescued turtle hatchlings in Wellawatta

March



Conducting eco brick workshop at Building Hope Children's Center



Conducting a coastal cleanup in Modara



Briefing on step-by-step coastal cleanup in Wellawatta with Itswellabeach

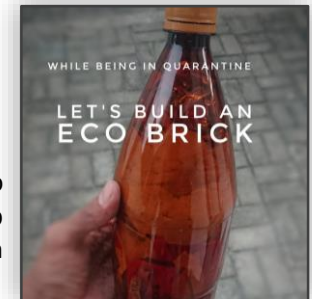
April



Campaign against commencing beach nourishment project in Mt. Lavinia without an EIA



Conducting of a foreign PET bottle category audit



Conducting online Eco brick step-by-step guide campaign



Official launching of The Pearl Protectors Twitter page



Publication of Beach cleanup Step-by-step guide hand flyer

May



Conducting an online upcycled Vesak lantern campaign



Representing an online awareness interview on Marine conservation with XR Sri Lanka



Partnering with the #protectvidattaltivu campaign



Representing an online awareness interview on sustainable habits and marine protection with Mimi Peiris

June



Conducting the World Oceans Day Online Symposium



Premiering of the 'Plastic Seabed's of Sri Lanka' short documentary

Hosting the 'World Oceans Day Through Art' online exhibition



June

Conducting an urgent Coastal Cleanup in Mt Lavinia (2nd)



Conducting an urgent Coastal Cleanup in Mt Lavinia (1st)



Conducting a coastal cleanup in Mt. Lavinia (3rd)



Conducting an online awareness session 'Conserve2Preserve' with AIESEC Colombo Central



Representing an online awareness interview on effects of microplastic pollution with Reach Foundation



Representing an online awareness interview on plastic pollution with XR Sri Lanka



Hosting a fact-finding webinar on the Beach Nourishment in Mt. Lavinia



Conducted the 'Say NO to Plastic' video campaign

July

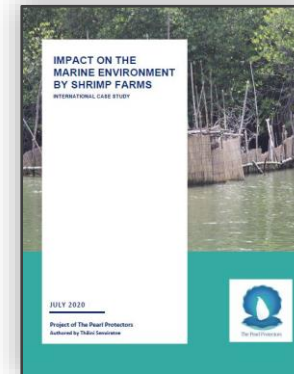


Conducting an online awareness session for girl guides of Ladies College

August



Conducting the AIESEC International volunteer's awareness session on marine threats and micro plastic



Publication of 'Impacts on the Marine Environment by Shrimp Farms (International case study) Vol I



Organizational partnership with the Mangrove Conservation & Sustainable Livelihood Forum

Conducting senior level discussions with the authorities of Marine Environment Protection Authority



September



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மத்திய சுற்றாடல் அதிகாரசபை
Central Environmental Authority



Conducting discussion with the
Secretary to the Ministry of
Environment , Dr. Anil Jasinghe



Mt. New Diamond disaster emergency
volunteer mobilization preparation



Reaching a partnership with AIESEC University of
Moratuwa and University of Colombo



Conducting the World Cleanup Day
beach cleanup in Dehiwala



Representing discussions
with the Ministry of
fisheries, Mr. Kanchana
Wijesekara under
#protectvidattaltivu

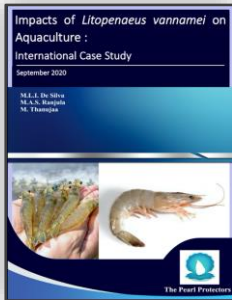


Publication of 'Impacts of
Aquaculture Farms on the
Marine Environment
(International case study) Vol II



Representing discussions with the Ministry
of Environment, Hon. Mahinda
Amaraweera under #protectvidattaltivu

Publication of 'Impacts of Litopenaeus
Vannamei on Aquaculture
(International Case Study)



October



Creation of dead marine life reporting data base and reporting system



Conducting an online awareness session 'Project Whispering Waves' with AIESEC Colombo Central

November



Collaboration on underwater seabed cleaning in Mt. Lavinia



Conducting an online Awareness session 'From the Depths' with Rotaract club of ACBT

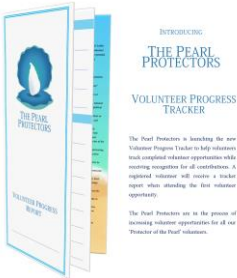


December



Representing an online awareness interview with Sharan Velauthan on daily sustainable habits

Representing an online awareness interview 'Trash talk' with Ananta Sustainable on eco bricks



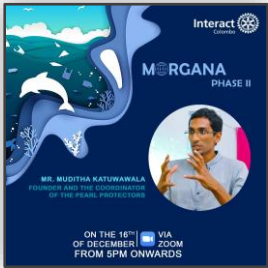
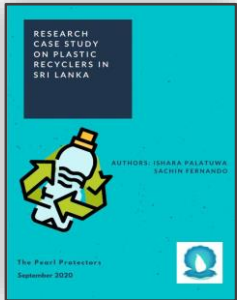
Launch of The Pearl Protectors 'Volunteer Progress Tracker'

Protectors of the Pearl volunteers receive PADI Open Water license

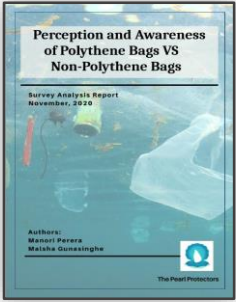


Organizing the Virtual Upcycled Plastic Christmas Tree mosaic

Publication of 'Plastic Recyclers in Sri Lanka (Research Case Study)



Publication of 'Maritime Accidents Around Sri Lanka (Regional case study)



Publication of 'Perception & Awareness of Polythene Bags vs Non-Polythene Bags (Survey Analysis Report)

Conducting an online awareness session 'MORGANA Phase II' with Interact Club of Colombo

OUR IMPACT

SPREADING AWARENESS ON OCEAN CONSERVATION

The Pearl Protectors has prioritized creating a larger awareness of protecting the ocean and the marine environment of Sri Lanka. Our awareness programs focus on highlighting the ecologically rich marine ecosystems of Sri Lanka and the various threats they face due to human activities.

The Pearl Protectors has identified that plastic and microplastic pollution can be significantly reduced through effective large-scale awareness. To increase the impact, our awareness sessions entail practical workshops on methods that reduce single-use plastics such as switching to reusable alternatives. Through both theoretical and practical sessions, we have been able to inspire more individuals to follow a plastic-free lifestyle and to protect our ocean.





CELEBRATING WORLD OCEAN DAY ON A NATIONAL LEVEL

The World Oceans Day 2020 was marked nationally through various initiatives by The Pearl Protectors. We hosted, for the first time, a national online symposium to emphasize threats faced by the marine environment and possible opportunities to conserve. A marine life art exhibition that we launched, once again for the first time, gained over 600 submissions that highlighted the endangered and critically endangered marine life in Sri Lankan waters. A documentary that reveals the polluted seabed of the Western Province was also premiered. The success of celebrating World Oceans Day is certain to have a ripple effect in spreading awareness and inspiring action to protect the ocean while helping progress the initiative for years ahead.

INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION OF RESEACHERS

The Pearl Protectors was successful in publishing research case studies and survey reports on issues relating to aquaculture, plastic consumption and on the maritime domain. The research was carried out by enthusiastic volunteer researchers who authored and contributed, together with the support of The Pearl Protectors team. As an initiative under our Advocacy movement, we will continue to further strengthen youth engagement in conducting marine-related research while providing adequate support for national policy decision making.





PROMOTING THE CONCEPT OF UPCYCLING

To promote sustainable consumption, The Pearl Protectors aims to promote upcycling that combines upgrading and recycling plastic waste simultaneously. With Vesak and Christmas being widespread celebrations in Sri Lanka, we continue to invite those who celebrate to upcycle as opposed to purchasing new decorations which would end up in our ocean when discarded. We have recognized creative submissions shared with us to inspire more to join in the movement towards an upcycling culture.

IMPACTFUL PARTNERSHIP WITH AIESEC

As a youth-led organization, our goals comprise of enhancing youth engagement and representation in conserving the marine environment of Sri Lanka. Through awareness sessions and video campaigns, we have connected with students who took an interest in channeling their voices towards taking the message of individual commitments and the need for systematic changes to the masses.

As a knowledge partner to AIESEC Sri Lanka, we intend to initiate more projects to foster a network of young environmental leaders who can turn the tide.





ADVOCATING TOWARDS SUSTAINED DEVELOPMENT

Development projects in the coastal zone can have significant negative impacts on sensitive ecosystems if carried out without adequate measures in place to prevent and mitigate any environmental damage. Therefore, The Pearl Protectors continue to advocate for the relevant environmental assessments to be conducted and due process to be adhered to before the commencement of projects that have the potential to cause irreversible damage.

CREATING A HEALTHIER SHORLINE

While beach cleanups are not the grassroots solution to the plastic crisis at hand, such events assist in assessing the magnitude of the problem. We understand the importance of maintaining a healthier shoreline as it helps to filter the pollutants, protect from erosions and provide habitat for coastal marine life and corals. Clean beaches are also imperative for recreation, tourism and the conservation of endangered marine life that come ashore. For this purpose, we have continued to host beach cleanups and promote short beach cleanups among beachgoers. Engaging with coastal communities through positive interactions has also attributed towards maintaining a healthy coastline.





PROMOTING VOLUNTEERISM TO PROTECT OUR OCEAN

The Pearl Protectors has prioritized promoting volunteerism and recognizing passionate volunteers through all initiations. We have elevated the national recognition of being globally ranked as the leading nation of volunteer participation according to the World Giving Index. Standing at more than 300 registered volunteers, more volunteers are inspired to join hands in protecting the marine environment of Sri Lanka. The Pearl Protectors will continue to further facilitate our volunteers with opportunities and necessary resources to accomplish impactful goals.

HIGHLIGHTING POLLUTED SEABEDS

Plastic debris accumulates in the seabed's and causes the death of marine fauna when ingested. The benthic community is also threatened by the high concentrations of microplastics. The Pearl Protectors documented and premiered a closer look at this unseen amassing to highlight the need to stop the pollution at the source. The Pearl Protectors took part in a seabed cleanup event where our team members scuba dived and snorkeled in an effort to remove the plastic waste. While identifying the need for more attention on the issue at hand, we will be organizing more cleanups.



WHAT WE DID IN 2020



THE PEARL
PROTECTORS



325 VOLUNTEERS
REGISTERED

607

ART SUBMISSIONS IN CELEBRATING
WORLD OCEANS DAY



6 RESEARCH
PUBLICATIONS



2 PARTNER
ORGANIZATIONS



7 BEACH
CLEAN-UPS



8 VIDEO
PUBLICATIONS



2780KGS OF WASTE
COLLECTED FROM THE SHORELINES



175
PHYSICAL

23,628
VIRTUAL



8200 FACEBOOK FOLLOWERS

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

THE PEARL PROTECTORS

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