

1OCEAN (Ocean Conservation Education and Action Network) Making Waves in Ramanathapuram, Rameswaram

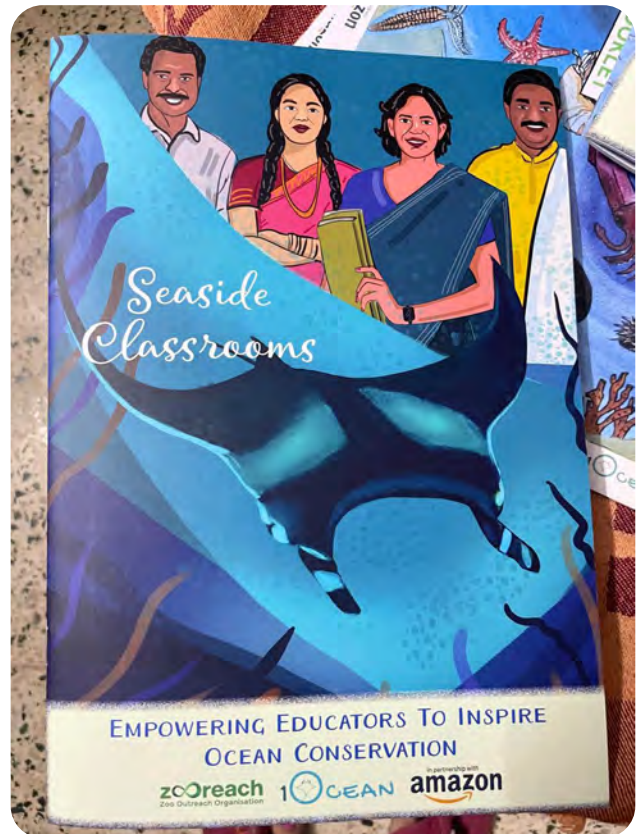


Hey everyone, it's Dr. Monta Ray here, the official mascot for the 1OCEAN (Ocean Conservation Education and Action Network) initiative by Zooreach! I've been on quite the adventure since 2023, and I have some cool stories to share from my latest trip to Ramanathapuram district, Rameswaram. So, buckle up, and let's dive into the fun stuff!

This past July, from the 3rd to the 5th in the CMFRI campus, the Zooreach 1OCEAN team put together an educator's workshop in the heart of Rameswaram. Backed by the UN Ocean Decade program and supported by Amazon, we're on a mission to mix ocean topics into our school lessons, making learning about the ocean as exciting as it sounds. We had 20 teachers from different schools in the district join us for this ride, diving into what it means to be ocean literate with the help of an Educator's manual, "Seaside Classrooms," prepared by the Zooreach team. The manual "Seaside Classrooms" was our way of saying, "Hey, the ocean is awesome. You can learn about it using different subjects and simultaneously be a hero for it."

A Glimpse into the Educators' Workshop: An Insightful Three-Day Workshop on Ocean Literacy

The workshop, attended by 20 educators, was held at the CMFRI campus from 3–5 July 2024. Here's a recount of the enriching experience that unfolded.

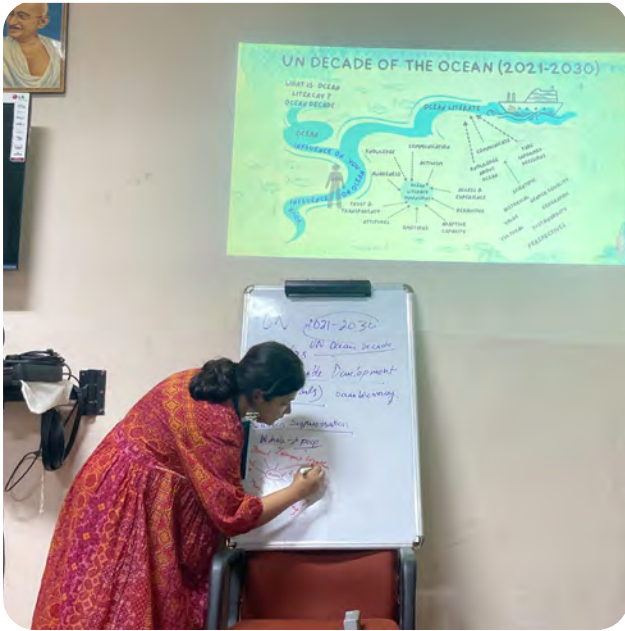


The teacher manual photo.



Resources for students.

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Explaining about the UN Ocean Decade.



Activity to understand the different zones of the ocean.



Know my friends game played by the teachers.

Day 1: The beginning

- The day began with a friendship band tying ceremony, underscoring our collective commitment to protect the ocean. This symbolic act set a tone of unity and dedication among us.
- An engaging icebreaker session soon followed, facilitating a lively interaction among the participants.
- After a refreshing tea break, the workshop continued with an enlightening session on mind maps aimed at developing a comprehensive understanding of the ocean. It was intriguing to observe the diverse perspectives of different educators. On the third day, we revisited the mind maps with a post-workshop exercise, and it was revelatory to witness the evolution in the teachers' understanding post-workshop.
- I, Dr. Monta Ray, was also introduced to the educators. This was followed by discussing innovative ways to engage with marine life. This included a marine species hunt and interactive games highlighting the Indian coastline and the difficulty in measuring it.

Day 1 was a rich mix of learning, active participation, and mutual enthusiasm for exploring ocean literacy further. It left us, the teachers, eagerly anticipating the upcoming sessions.

Day 2: Dive into Information about marine biodiversity present in Rameswaram

- On the second day, our journey into marine education continued with a visit to the Central Marine Fisheries Research Marine Museum in the morning. This excursion was designed as an immersive learning experience, allowing them to observe and document the diverse

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marine species on display, thereby fostering a practice of mindful observation that could be encouraged among their students, along with the importance of nature journaling.

- Following this visit, we engaged in a Dichotomous Key game, an activity aimed at simplifying the complexities of taxonomy and classification in a fun and interactive manner. This was educational and equipped them with a tool to spark curiosity among our students about the scientific aspects of marine life.
- The afternoon session introduced them to the Species Card game, a competitive yet informative game that challenging them to recognize various marine species through facts and data on the cards, emphasizing the importance of marine conservation.
- After a well-deserved lunch break, the day ended with a compelling talk by a guest speaker, H. Byju, a researcher focusing on the shorebirds of the Rameswaram coastline. The educators were pleasantly surprised by the diversity of shorebirds they encountered in Rameswaram. Many had not realized the region hosted such a wide variety of species, showcasing the richness of the local marine ecosystem, instilling a sense of pride among the teachers.

The second day was a testament to the importance of observation, the importance of nature journaling, and the exposure to the diverse biodiversity on the coastline.

Day 3 - The Conclusion

- Day 3 started with “Stripes Tell Stories,” which depicted the alarming trend of rising temperatures in India through a visually striking and interactive method. Teachers represented the surface temperature of different years, with



The educators getting to know each other by introducing each other.



Activity to map and understand the length of India's coastline.



Visit to the Marine museum.



Pledge taking ceremony with the educators.

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the intensity of the color indicating the increase in temperature. This innovative approach conveyed the critical message of climate change while demonstrating how complex data can be simplified and made accessible for students.

- This was followed by a Jenga game designed to symbolize the importance of collective efforts in environmental conservation.
- N. Raveendran from Iragukal Amritha Nature Trust spoke about his journey working in Rameswaram's landscape.
- The afternoon session was dedicated to "What the teachers could do with their students" for an exhibition that will be done post-workshop with the students. A discussion on setting realistic expectations followed the importance of maintaining communication and strategies for effective follow-up post-workshop.

The 3-day workshop concluded with feedback and mind mapping sessions, similar to Day 1. These sessions allowed participants to reflect on their learning experiences, share feedback, and brainstorm ideas for implementing their new knowledge in their teaching practices.

After the workshop, each teacher was given a seaside classroom manual and education packets to teach their students.

The journey we started with these 20 teachers is just the beginning. "Seaside Classrooms" is set to make waves across schools, promising a future where every kid gets how majestic and crucial the ocean is to our planet. In times like these, when our oceans face so many threats, stepping up our game in education is not just cool; it's essential. We're all about building a smarter, more caring, ocean-loving world. So, here's to making a splash and keeping the ocean awesome for generations!

Following this experience, the teachers implemented their new knowledge in their teaching practices using the educator's manual and to create more awareness and to drive action amongst the rest of the community prepared exhibits to showcase in the exhibition. The following article highlights the exhibits, representing their efforts and the impact of the "Reverse the Red" Exhibition.



The 20 educators who participated in the workshop were K. Sivakumar, M. Syed Sharifa from Panchayat Union Primary School (PUPS), Mandapam, Nesamalar Sumathi from Panchayat Union Primary School (PUPS), C. Koraiyur, S. Ilamaram from St. Josephs HSS Verkottu, D. Meena from Vallal Pari

Workshop held for teachers on ocean literacy

Ramanathapuram: The Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI), in collaboration with the Zoo Outreach Organisation, conducted a three-day educators' workshop on ocean literacy for govt schoolteachers across the Ramanathapuram district from Wednesday.

According to a release, the workshop aimed to equip teachers with the knowledge and tools needed to integrate marine biodiversity and ocean conservation into their curriculum and to use activities and experiential learning from a manual produced and published by the Zoo Outreach Organisation. The manual encourages educators to use Rameswaram's diverse ecosystems as a living classroom for their students. The workshop participants, along with their students, will organize an exhibition in the last week of August. TNN

Middle School, J.D. Christopher from Government Higher Secondary School (GHSS) Pamban, R. Navaneethapriya from Panchayat Union primary school Gendhamathanaparvatham, S Selvaswamy from Government Higher Secondary School (GHSS), Vedhalai, P. Inbaraj from PUPS Thalaitoppu, J.S.R. Arockiam from PUPS Padaivettivalai, N. Raja from PUPS, Panaikulam, K. Ravi from GHSS Alangakulam, S. Nagarethnam from GHSS Kamankottai, R. Manimozhi from GHSS Thinaikulam, M. Balamurugan from GHS Vaniyankulam, R. Dharmaraj from GHS Thiruthrakosamangai, B. Muruganantham from GHSS Uppoor, M. Arulselvan from GHSS Sikkal, A. Ramar from GHSS Athiyoothu, and G. Kumar.

Acknowledgements

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Last but not least, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to the 20 teachers whose participation and enthusiasm were essential to the success of this project. Without their commitment, the workshop would not have achieved its goals.

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