

INFLIGHT

ISSUE 02 | 2018 **MAGAZINE**



THE TODDY TAPPER & THE ARDUOUS PROCESS OF MAKING 'DHIYA HAKURU'

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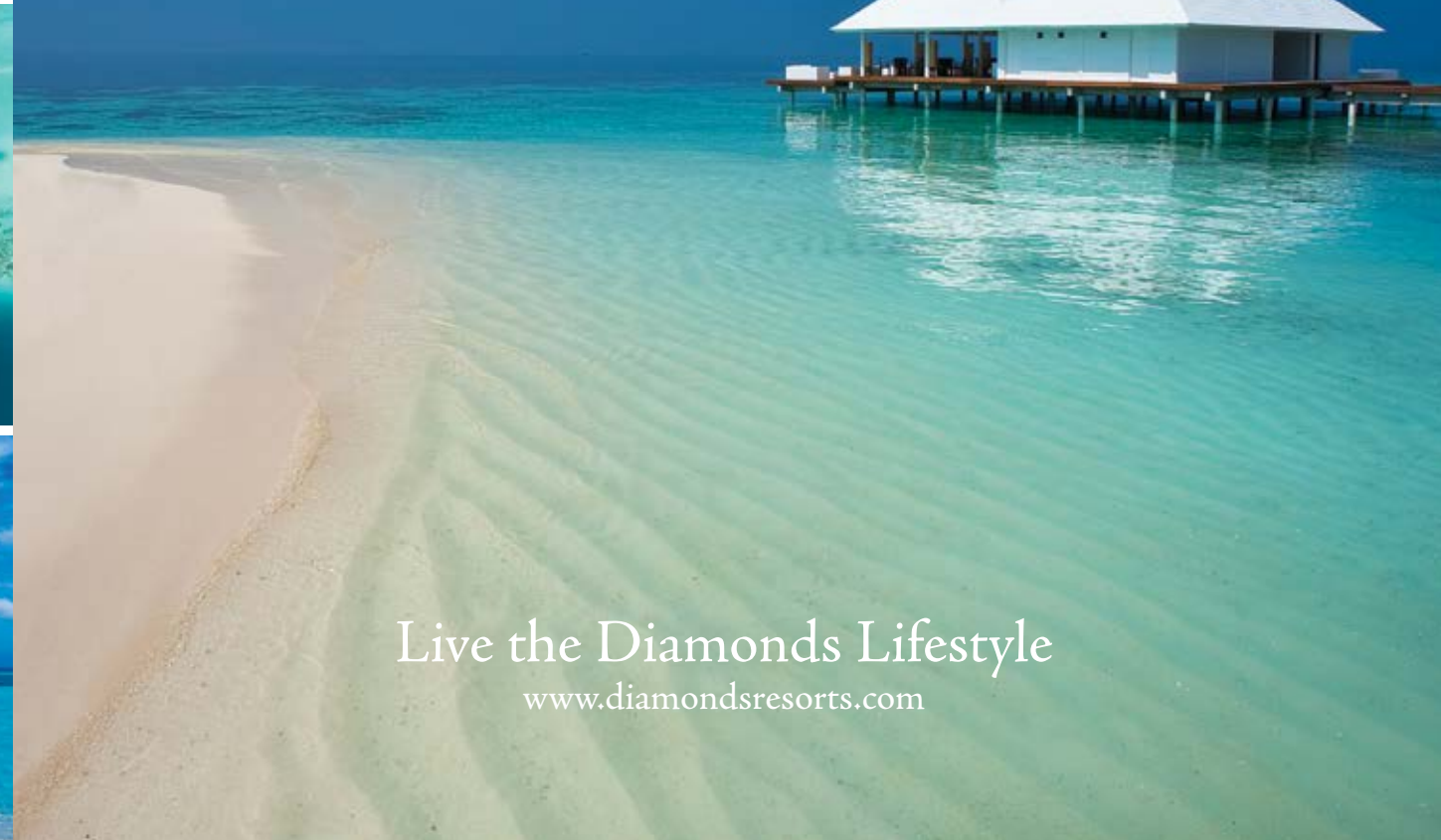
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EDITOR'S NOTE



A flight on a seaplane over the Maldives is an experience most travelers looks forward to, no matter how many times you have done it. The view never fails to mesmerize; the reefs with their varying shapes and tones of blue, white foamy waves gently lapping on the atolls' outer reefs and dots of green enveloped by rings of blue.

The miniscule islands you see come together to form the lowest country in the world and its beauty comes with its inherent risks. In this issue of Inflight we have offered you some unique perspectives on the threats of climate change on the country's unique environment and actions that are being taken to preserve the islands and reefs. 'Shoreline' offers you an insight into the building of groynes and seawalls and how your perception of these structures can help in saving the islands. We often hear about a phenomenon called coral bleaching which may be confusing to the average reader but for a marine biologist it is a recurring threat to fear. 'Coral Gardeners' looks at the causes of reef and coral damage and what conservationists and resorts are doing to reverse the trend.

We dive deeper to give you more. The shallow reefs and oceanic currents combine to form a shelter from the open ocean that attracts thousands of species of fish to the area. 'Big Fish Diving' looks at some of the sites where you can experience this awe-inspiring sight.

While we enjoy the beauty of the Maldives we often miss the country's rich culture and tradition. 'The Toddy Tapper' looks at the craft of toddy tapping and the effort that goes into making *dhiya hakuru*, the sugary golden liquid, which was an important part of the traditional Maldivian diet and still is an important part of authentic Maldivian recipes.

Have an enjoyable Maldives experience.

Adheel Ismail
Editor



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Barbara Tori is a copywriter and web editor at Theconcept. When she's not crafting persuasive, take-me-there content to help market Maldives' resorts, she likes to return to her beloved Lhaviyani Atoll where she was working for three years.



JON HANCOCK

Jon started diving when he was 14, and has dived all over the world. He first came to the Maldives in 2010, working for Kuoni Travel as an overseas representative after completing his Masters in Quaternary Science in London, and later worked with Providers in Kuredu.



FATHMATH IJAZA

Ijaza is a Maldivian writer who now resides in Sri Lanka. Being permanently based in Sri Lanka, she now gets to travel in the Maldives once in a while as a 'visitor' enabling her to see local culture, customs and traditions from kind of an outsider's perspective.



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Verena Wiesbauer is a marine biologist and environmental consultant who founded an educational brand "Oceanoholic" and started Mermaiding in Maldives. She is currently consulting the solar energy company "Swimsol Maldives"



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Restaurateur and founder of Maldivology, is an enthusiastic traveler and has been in love with the Maldives since her honeymoon in 2007. When not serving clients at her restaurant in Italy she is planning perfect holidays for first time Maldives adventurers.

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WELCOME ON BOARD

Welcome on board



It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the Maldives and to Trans Maldivian Airways. For most visitors to the Maldives, the seaplane journey is an essential part of the Maldives experience not just as a mode of transfer, but as a unique opportunity to see the atolls and the islands and the hues of the reefs from the air. For the country's tourism industry, we are the backbone of the industry's infrastructure, enabling convenient transfers to resorts dotted along the length of the island nation.

As new resorts open and the number of resorts grow, we are able to provide this beautiful experience to more and more visitors. 2018 has been a record year in terms of new contracts with resorts. I am pleased to announce that so far this year, we have signed transfer contracts with more than ten new resorts that are scheduled to open in the next six months.

We take pride in our role in the industry and as our customer base expands we are continuously seeking ways to expand our services to cater to the increased demand and find convenient transfer solutions for our resort partners. We strive to improve our services in order to provide the best and memorable experience to all our flyers!

As a responsible partner to the holistic growth of Maldives, we are constantly looking for symbiotic ways of growing. As a leading player we have invested in engaging and employing Maldivian youth. In our Zuvana – Youth Development Program we have so far focused our efforts on training and employing young Maldivian pilots to work with us. We intend to re-launch the program for pilots and a new Zuvana program for aircraft engineers in year 2019, intended especially for TMA staff. The initial program was a great success and we hope it will have a similar outcome this time around as well.

At TMA, we make certain that your flight is the safest and most convenient method of transport in this beautiful island national that you have made your destination. As you inch closer to your island resort, we wish you a wonderful stay in Maldives and hope you can create delightful memories of your Sun, Sand, Sea and Seaplane holiday.

Have a safe and enjoyable flight.

A.U.M. Fawzy
CEO

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Maldives

BEYOND THE SUN, SAND
AND SEA

GEOGRAPHY

The Maldives consists of approximately 1,190 coral islands grouped in a double chain of 27 atolls, spread over roughly 90,000 square kilometers, making the country one of the most unique destinations in the world. The islands stretch over a distance of 800 km from north to south.

CLIMATE

The temperature of Maldives ranges between 24°C and 33°C throughout the year. Although the humidity is relatively high, the constant sea breeze helps to keep the air moving. The average sea temperature is around 26°C.

POPULATION

The population of Maldives has increased rapidly during the last few decades. However, with a population of approximately 400,000, the country still remains one of the smallest independent nations in the world.

RELIGION

Maldivians are devout Muslims and rigorously follow the basic tenets of Islam. The Islamic Center which accommodates more than 5,000 worshippers dominates the skyline of the capital city Male' with its shining golden dome and minaret.

Several mosques are dispersed throughout the capital and each inhabited island is graced with at least one or two mosques where the people attend to their daily prayers.

HISTORY

Archeological remains excavated in different parts of the country prove that people were living here as early as third century BC. The Maldives and its people are mentioned in several mariners' logs and records of naval expeditions by the Chinese and the Arabs and later the British and other European explorers.

CULTURE

A proud history and rich culture evolved from the first settlers who were from various parts of the world travelling the seas in ancient times. The Maldives has been a melting pot of different cultures as people from different parts of the world came here and settled down. Some of the local music and dance for instance resemble African influences, while other cultures and traditions reflect East Asian and South Asian characteristics and traits.



LANGUAGE

Dhivehi, spoken throughout the Maldives, is a language belonging to the Indo-Iranian group of languages. The language is spoken only in the Maldives and Minicoy Island in the Lakshadweep Atoll (India) to the north of the Maldives. The present script, Thaana was introduced in the late 16th century and is written from right to left. English is widely spoken by Maldivians and visitors can easily make themselves understood getting around the capital Male'. In the resorts, a variety of languages are spoken by the staff including English, German, French, Italian, Japanese and Chinese.

CAPITAL ISLAND

Male', with a total area of 5.8 km², is the capital of the country. It is the center of administration and the hub of trade and commerce. More than 150,000 people live in Male'.

ECONOMY

In the last quarter of the twentieth century, the economy changed from the age-old traditional system based on fisheries and agriculture to a modern economy that rode on the success of the newly established tourism industry and a modernized and mechanized fishing industry. Maldivians enjoy the highest GDP per capita in South Asia today.

CURRENCY

The local currency is Rufiyaa. At the time of publication, the exchange rate is pegged at MVR 15.42 to a US Dollar. If you are heading to a resort, you need not worry about local currency as all your bills at the resort can be paid by US Dollar, Euro or any other European currency. All major credit cards are also accepted at the resorts. However, if you are visiting Male' or any of the local islands, you may need to hold local currency for purchases you may wish to make.

EDUCATION

Maldives boasts one of the highest literacy rates in the world with 98% of the country's population being able to read and write. Educational standards are among the highest in the region and schools follow the British system of education.

HEALTH

The Indira Gandhi Memorial Hospital (IGMH) in Male' is the state run general hospital in the country providing a high standard of medical care. ADK Hospital is one of the private health care facility in the country among several other private hospitals and clinics. Most resorts



have a resident doctor and a decompression chamber is within easy reach in case of a diving emergency.

BUSINESS HOURS

The working week in Maldives begins on Sunday and ends on Thursday. Government offices are open from 0800 to 1400 hours and the private sector from 0900 to 1700 hours. Most offices in the private sector open for business on Saturdays. Weekend falls on Friday and Saturday.

COMMUNICATION

All resorts offer IDD telephone services. Mobile telephone services in the country are offered

by Dhiraagu and Ooredoo Maldives. Both companies have roaming agreements with various operators across the globe, which will enable you to use your home number while in Maldives. All the resorts in Maldives offer Internet Services. Some resorts offer broadband connections in the room while others offer Wi-Fi zones at key locations on the island.

SHOPPING

The northern end of Chaandhanee Magu in Male' is the place to be if you are looking for souvenirs to take home. A range of batik sarongs and wraparounds, wooden handicrafts and other knick knacks are available from the shops lining the street.



You will also be able to find some souvenir items if you visit the neighboring islands near your resort. Lookout for genuine Maldivian hand painted t-shirts and lacquered boxes, miniature dhonis and reed mats if you really want to take a piece of Maldives with you as a memento.

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JAW-DROPPINGLY GOOD: *Big Fish Diving*

by Barbara Tori, Jon Hancock

Photo by Tam Sawers

MANTA TRUST
© Tam Sawers

Dun dun... dun dun... dun dun dun dunnnnnnn! If a chill runs down your spine when you hear that terrifying Jaws theme tune, then prepare to have your prejudice challenged: the Maldives offers divers an unmissable chance to debunk the myth that sharks are nothing but man-eating monsters and to learn to appreciate these mighty creatures for what they are - beautiful and intelligent fish, vital for the health of our oceans. For the best 'wow' experience, explore epic reef corners and channels where shark and ray action is at its most impressive.



Photo by Sebastjan Slanšek

Above and below the water, the scenery in the Maldives is beyond belief: picture-perfect islands fringed with pearly-white sand and vibrant coral reefs that begin where the turquoise lagoons end. All this beauty is the result of the Maldives having been formed over a tectonic hotspot. Similar to the way Hawaii is growing today, the idyllic archipelago is the remnants of an ancient volcanic chain that rises out of the ocean depths to form a dramatic, mountainous underwater landscape of 26 atolls; their 1192 islands and hundreds of sandbanks are the cherry on top of fascinating nature that extends below the surface of the sea. Around the tops of these mountain peaks, where the water is the warmest and sunlight plentiful, coral reefs - one of the most biologically diverse ecosystems on the planet - have developed.

The shallow reefs and oceanic currents combine to form a shelter from the open ocean that attracts thousands of species of fish to the area. The beautiful corals provide home and food for smaller reef fish, and where these reefs merge with the open ocean, predators patrol, looking for opportunities to grab a snack. Schools of jackfish and slender barracuda can be found at the reef's edge, and at places where currents are strongest and hence food in abundance, squadrons of eagle rays and large sharks make their home. When channels (known as kandus) and bays combine, nutrients get trapped and the gentle giants move in - manta rays and whale sharks, the world's largest fish, feeding on the bountiful food source. Thanks to the ample supply of food and strict fishing regulations and good environmental practices, the fish of the Maldives are amongst the largest and some of the most plentiful in the world.

INSIDERS' TIPS: UNIQUE SHARK AND RAY HOTSPOTS

FUVAHMULAH - THE MALDIVES' ONLY 1-ISLAND ATOLL

Because the area is hit by swells and currents from all directions year round, Fuvahmulah is possibly your best bet for sightings of oceanic manta (wingspan up to 7 meters!), mola mola, pilot whales, thresher sharks, hammerheads, silvertips and whitetips, whale sharks and smaller suspects such as barracudas, tunas, bonitos, sailfish and marlins. According to local diving instructor Mosti Ruffian, the main stars of the show are undoubtedly the tiger sharks: 'Seeing these massive beauties at the Tiger Zoo dive site makes one realise how their bad reputation is unjustified. For any ocean-lover looking for an adrenaline rush, Fuvahmulah is the place to be.'



Photo by Alexis Mixe



Photo by Alexis Mixe



Photo by Alexis Mixe

FUSHIVARU - MARINE PROTECTED AREA IN LHAVIYANI ATOLL

You are extremely likely to have an epic dive at Fushivaru Kanduu, Corner and Thila - just ask Laurie Miller. During his 40+ visits, Laurie has done a total of 1564 dives in and around the atoll, and Fushivaru is one of his best-loved sites. Having spent about 174 hours exploring the seas surrounding Kuredu since 1993, Laurie finds it outstanding 'because prevailing currents affect the ability to dive certain parts at certain times, there is always something to see. It is rather open, so in addition to grey reef sharks, and reef mantas on cleaning stations often less common fish can be sighted: I have seen a tiger shark and had the pleasure of admiring a 7-minute oceanic manta performance during a scooter channel crossing!'

HANIFARU - THE WORLD'S LARGEST KNOWN MANTA FEEDING STATION

Known for its huge aggregations of manta rays and occasional whale sharks joining the plankton feeding frenzy, Hanifaru Bay in the Baa Atoll UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve is the country's uncontested winner when it comes to swimming with the big fish. To ensure sustainable interaction, the spectacle



Photo by Tam Sawers

can only be enjoyed on guided snorkelling tours; for an extra dose of excitement in season, divers head to Dharavandhoo Corner where mantas go to have their bodies cleaned. Ocean Dimensions, based at Kihaa, the resort closest to Hanifaru, also take divers with a need for speed to Aidhoo and Maafin, two channel corners perfect for drifting past the big fish patrolling the reef.



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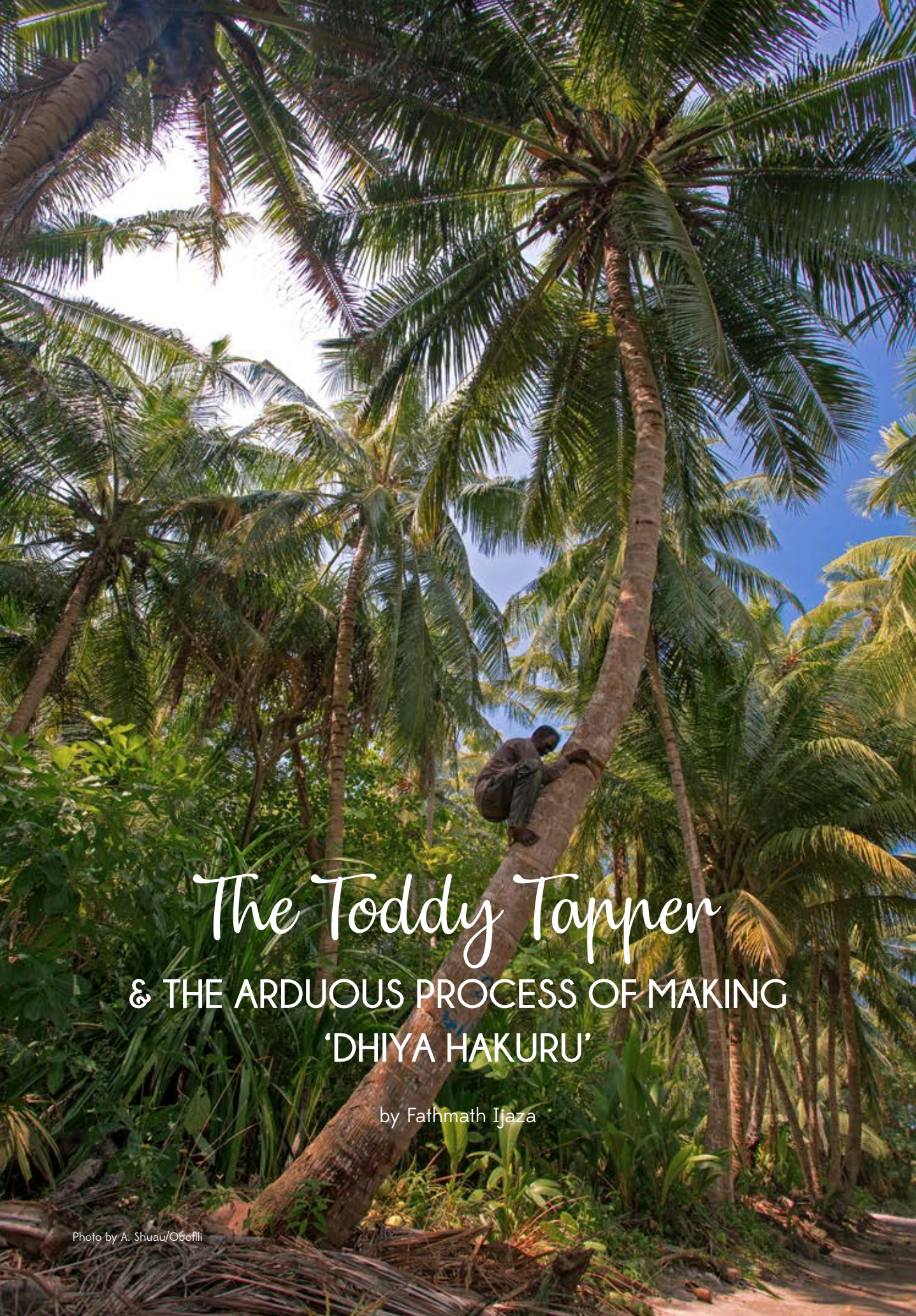


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The Toddy Tapper & THE ARDUOUS PROCESS OF MAKING 'DHIYA HAKURU'

by Fathmath Ijaza

Photo by A. Shuaa/Obofli



Photo by Ibrahim Asad

For Maldivians the coconut palm is invaluable and is traditionally part of one's wealth. This is no surprise as it is one of the most versatile plants. If one questions a Maldivian of mature age about the coconut palm, they would swear by everything they know, that every single part of the palm can be utilized for something useful. But all this information is for another day.

One of the obvious reasons people value the coconut palm so highly is obviously due to the fruit it bears. While coconuts are most valuable when they are fully matured and ripened, Maldivians seem to have a knack of coming up with various creative culinary uses for coconut at its different stages of growth. However, there are some less obvious reasons why the palm is valued so highly. One of them is toddy; the sap harvested from cutting the flower the tree bears. While toddy stands on its own as a delightful drink, it is also converted into a sugary syrup called dhiya hakuru, which used to be a lucrative trade that provided a livelihood for those engaged in its production.

This trade has declined over the years and today there are only a few, who understands

the inside out of this process. There are many reasons for the demise of the toddy tapper. Before cane sugar became commonplace in the country, dhiya hakuru was an integral part of the Maldivian diet. Imported substitutes have taken its place and the decline of this once important cottage industry could be due to the relatively low price that a jar of dhiya hakuru fetches in the market today, in comparison to the number of hours that goes in for its preparation.

From the point the toddy tapper prepares a coconut palm for tapping sap to the point the syrup is jarred for storage, the process is an arduous and meticulous one that requires time, dedication and valuable resources.

Once a coconut palm has reached maturity, it bears an oblong shaped pod enclosing its flowers, which if left would unfold into an impressive cluster of inflorescence blooms. A coconut palm that has been selected for toddy tapping would not be allowed to bear fruit as each flower would be tapped for its sap.

Experienced toddy tappers know when it is the perfect time to tap the flowers for its

sap. Once the flower has reached that ideal stage of maturity, the toddy tapper climbs up the slender trunk of the palm, in light deft hopping movements, bearing a sharp sickle-like knife, special for toddy tapping, and containers made of hollowed coconut shells used as toddy taps (called badhi in the native language and are sold today in souvenir shops). Traditionally toddy tappers wore a loop of braided palm fronds secured around their ankles, to get a grip with their feet, as they make their way to the top of the palm. Sometimes tappers secure wooden batons along the trunk to form what resembles an improvised ladder.

Once they make it to the top, the tapper would cut the flower ready for bloom at its base, removing all to resemble a stump. The stump is then wound with coir rope or covered by a thin cloth to prevent it from drying. The tap for collecting the dripping sap is then secured carefully at the base of the stump at an angle. This process would be repeated on all the palms that the tapper has selected to harvest sap from. The taps are then left overnight before the toddy tapper climbs the palm again for collection. Sometimes collection is done two or three times a day depending on the drip rate. Over a period of days and sometimes months the toddy tapper would gradually and systematically trim the severed stem to facilitate sap flow.

The process of identifying palms for toddy seems a simple one but perhaps it is not so black and white. People who have been in the trade understand that some palms just won't yield while others will offer sap in abundance. Perhaps this is the reason why even today in neighbouring Sri Lanka, toddy tappers who tap the kithul palm for its sap often place a prayer before they climb the tall palms to conduct their business. Although modern-day Maldivians are less ready to believe that prayers and shamanic practices could increase the yield of any crop, folktales and



Photo by Ibrahim Asad

historical accounts capture that in the past Maldivian toddy tappers believed otherwise. In the famous folk story "Dhon Mohonaai Miyaru", the writer gives a description of the laborious process the protagonist of the story goes through, from burning incense, to reciting mantras in isolation into the dead of night, to sacrificing forty sea turtles to the hidden super natural forces, just so his palms yield sap. After all, for the toddy tapper whose main source of income relies on it, it is a big deal.

The entire toddy collected in the tap is not utilized for making sugar. Sometimes the toddy tapper would walk up and down the streets with the pungent refreshing drink selling it by the glass. But if the toddy tapper's sole intention is making dhiya hakuru, or "liquid

sugar", the sap is stored and accumulated for over a period of days until the yield reaches the sufficient volume necessary for processing. This is a critical period as there is the risk of the toddy fermenting into vinegar which would make it unsuitable for processing. Hence it is favourable if the toddy tapper has access to many palms at once so that he can gather the required volume within a short time frame.

In Maldives the method of preparing sugar is different from that practiced in this region. Instead of directly boiling the sap in a metal pot, the bottom of the pot is first covered with coral pebbles specifically collected for the purpose, ones that is usually smooth in texture, before the sap is poured in. Perhaps this could be a method to control the heat and prevent the syrup from burning. One wonders whether this also leaves any significant effect on the quality and taste of the processed sugar itself. Some believe that the sugar would be sour if the process is not followed assuming that this practice was followed to neutralize the acidity of the sap using the calcium carbonate present in the coral. During the cooking process which usually takes a couple of days, the coral inside the wok is taken out and replaced several times to prevent it from disintegrating into the syrup. By the time the desired consistency is achieved, which is when the sap has turned into a thick syrup, the initial volume is reduced to nearly a sixth of its original volume. The end product is light golden in colour with a slightly grainy texture which is then stored in large clay pots, securely covered at the top.

Traditionally dhiya hakuru is sold directly from the pot. However in more recent times it is bottled and sold to people who used this delectable product as part of their everyday meal. A traditional and simple way of using dhiya hakuru is to eat it mixed with rice, fresh coconut chips and pieces of dried fish. It is also an essential ingredient in many traditional sweets and desserts.



Photo by Haisham Shareef



Nostalgia

THE MALDIVES THAT USED TO BE

Nika Island Mastering Maldivian Heritage & Culture

Nika Island Resort & Spa is a milestone of the hospitality industry of the country.

The resort has been pioneering the concept of tourism for more than 35 years, instilling and spreading Italian culture in Ari Atoll.

A.A. Kudafolhudhu turned into a resort back in 1983: since its inception the philosophy and values that shaped this unique boutique-hotel are the same: privacy, natural sophistication and heritage.

All the villas have been built according to the

traditional Maldivian architectural style: being one of the first hotels built in the country, everything on the island has been built using coral blocks, coconut wood and palm leaves. A collection of antiques and unique Maldivian pieces of art decorate the interiors of all the villas.

The management of Nika is implementing “Nostalgia” a new platform that gathers the community of Maldivian artists and the new representatives of the local creative industry. Nostalgia is turning Nika into a “Time Machine”, into the island where “nothing has changed”, where

travellers can experience and live the real Maldives and its fascinating culture.

Edoardo Caccin – External Director at Nika – commented: “ among young Maldivian people there are potential artists, writers, entrepreneurs, craftsmen and women – people who will create, who will consolidate the culturally rich and unique traditions of the County; we like to think about “Nostalgia” as an incubator, where we preserve, revamp and reinvent the Maldivian Heritage”.

Nostalgia supports development by helping to transform young peoples’ potential, creativity, talents, initiative and social responsibility, through the acquisition and sharing knowledge, skills, attitudes and values.

At Nika, the (almost) lost tradition of stone carving is still practised by a young artist – Mohamed Imran – who is getting inspired by the complex carvings that decorates the coral-made Mosques in Male.

While walking around this small island, you can hear the voice of “ the Maldives that used to be” echoing all over: it’s Baburu Kulcha’s music. The group bases its entire musical production on traditional stories that belong to the culture of the people of the Maldives. Music and poetry have the power to express ideas, feelings and culture by the use of style and rhythm. Baburu Kulcha gives a voice to the story of the Country, playing both local and international instruments while singing songs related to local traditions.

The purpose of Nostalgia is to stimulate dialogue and knowledge transfer: that’s why the property is working with the representatives of United Nations (UNDP) to generate awareness on different social issues amongst young people, decision makers and the wider community.

Nostalgia is emerging as a new driver for the cultural growth of the country: with this initiative, Nika Island is implementing a systematic, dynamic and effective action that is required not only to significantly enhance the creative and innovative capacities of the country’s young generation, but also to preserve a century-old unique heritage that is fading away.





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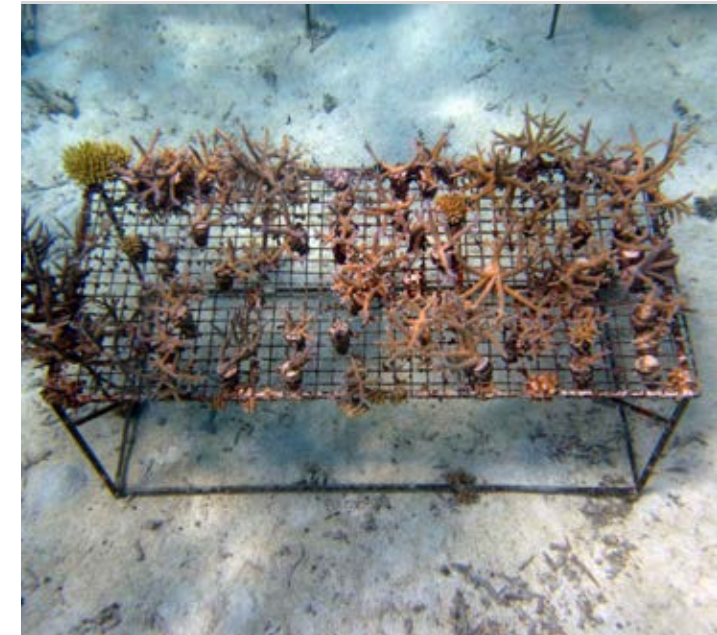
The Coral Gardeners

OF THE MALDIVES

by Verena Wiesbauer

It is almost impossible to believe that the coral framework of the Maldivian ecosystem, which – counting from the time of deposit of underwater volcanic material – has been starting to raise from the Indian Ocean seafloor roughly 57 Million years ago, needs help. Threats to the oceans such as plastic pollution, overfishing and mass occurrence of coral-eating predators now line newspaper articles at least on a weekly basis. Every decade or so, we cannot deny to hear about a phenomenon called “coral bleaching”, which may be confusing to the average reader, but in the eyes of a marine biologist is a periodically recurring threat to fear.

Coral bleaching is often mistaken for a chemical reaction in corals simply because of the false connection between the words “bleach” and “chlorine”. In fact, coral bleaching is a phenomenon that happens when ocean surface temperatures heat up for a longer-than-usual period of time. The coral animal, that usually lives in a happy beneficial relationship with an algae that provides it with food and oxygen, expels its “partner” when it gets stressed (such as in ElNiño years). It can



be somehow described as suicide, where the coral gets rid of what it actually needs to survive, and since it's the tiny algae that give the otherwise transparent tissue on white coral skeleton a colour. The coral eventually looks bright white in a bleaching event once all the symbiotic partners have left and one can see through up to the limestone skeleton of reef-building corals.

Once coral reefs are damaged, they struggle to grow back because there aren't enough coral seedlings around when a reef has undergone an extremely severe and wide-spread stressful event. Since the last coral bleaching in the Maldives in 2016, scientists are already exploring ways to avoid another mass bleaching in the future, and on the other hand help reefs grow back faster once it has occurred. One such effort seeks to minimize the severity of coral bleaching by deploying floating shade cloth to reduce harmful ultraviolet radiation reaching the corals, while another proposes the pumping of cool water up from the depths. Scientists are selectively breeding corals and using genetic engineering to produce “super corals” that are more tolerant of higher temperatures. There are even new robots being used on reefs, such as the underwater autonomous vehicle COTSbot, which is programmed to search for destructive Crown-of-Thorns Starfish and kill them by lethal injection. Concurrently, various groups are searching for coral reefs that naturally exhibit greater resilience to climate change and ocean warming and working to protect such “Hope Spots” for future generations.



A trend that has started about ten years ago in the Maldives, often initiated by hotel resorts, is coral gardening. “Gardening” should not indicate that corals are plants (because, they are, in fact animals!), but in a way we are using a technique that is similar to the pruning of plants: Fragments of a donor coral colony – be it damaged, diseased or a survivor of a bleaching event – can be attached to an artificial structure, where it ideally attaches itself and grows by means of budding off more and more tiny animals. Corals in such a nursery can get observed and cleaned from harmful algae that compete with them. Various techniques are adopted in the Maldives and the success of such rehabilitation projects are often monitored over many months and years. In a joint effort between resorts’ marine biologists, dive centres and often team members from other departments that want to contribute to

reef conservation, we attach coral fragments to sturdy steel structures, to ropes attached to frames, to monofilament hanging down from tree-shaped structures, and sometimes even to mesh nets floating in mid-water off the reef, anchored several meters below the ocean surface. Other means of pruning includes the use of a non-toxic epoxy glue, or underwater cement, which helps to attach especially tiny fragments to a concrete disk or block. The initial aim of attaching a coral to an artificial substrate is to take it out of the sand and rubble where it could get smothered. Subsequently as it grows, it can adapt to the surrounding conditions and grow to a juvenile size before it can get used to re-stock damaged reef areas, or get pruned again. Eventually, a nursery-grown coral – once it reaches sexual maturity – will be the base of a new breeding stock that can colonize even

distant reef areas, because a coral larva can travel far across reefs with the ocean currents until it settles down on a bare piece of rock to form a new colony.

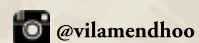
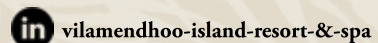
Therefore, if your resort of choice offers a “Coral Gardening” programme, also known as “Coral Restoration” or “Adopt a Coral” initiative, you can take the opportunity to get hands-on experience with propagating coral animals and become one of the many “Coral Gardeners” yourself! Many resorts allow you to actively participate, others give you the option of sponsoring part of the reef that is being created over the years. You can watch your coral, or your “share of the reef”, grow over time once you receive photo-updates from the project, and may even be able to re-visit the grown reef when you return to the Maldives during your following vacation!

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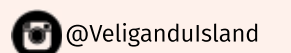
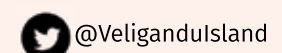
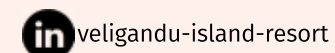
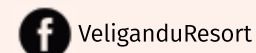


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PROTECTING THE DELICATE BEACH & *Shoreline of the Maldives*

by Eleonora Fiorini



Why sea walls are important to the longevity and health of the Maldives

The wonderful tropical climate of the Maldives is one of the main reasons so many people choose it as their perfect vacation destination. The warm temperatures and glorious sunshine the islands enjoy make it an excellent place to visit. Climate change represents a threat to the delicate shoreline of these islands, and simple but effective preventive measures need to be put in place to prevent erosion.

HOW DOES CLIMATE CHANGE AFFECT THE MALDIVES?

There are few places on Earth that are affected by climate change as much as the Maldives. This is because this small group of miniscule islands in the Indian Ocean come together to form the lowest country in the world. On average, the land of the Maldives is just 4ft 11in (1.5 metres) above sea level.

Since the islands are so low-lying, they're at high risk of becoming flooded by rising sea levels caused by the melting of the polar ice caps. The rise in sea levels causes the water to creep up onto the beaches, sweeping away the sand piece by piece, slowly making the Maldives' beaches smaller.

To keep the tropical atolls above water for the world to enjoy for years to come, the government has come up with a solution - create seawalls and groynes to protect the beaches, and slowly integrate them into the different islands.

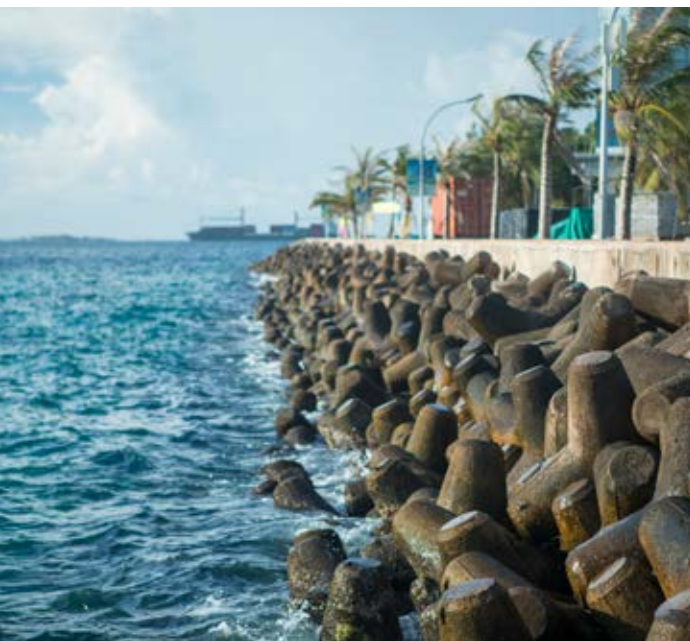
WHAT ARE SEAWALLS AND GROYNES?

SEAWALLS

Seawalls are human-made structures created from coral mounds, cement bags, sheet piles and rock boulders. These walls are located onshore or parallel to the shoreline and work by absorbing the wave energy so it never reaches the beaches.

Most of the seawall structure is underwater, so they do a great job of protecting the islands with minimal visual impact. As well as being used to prevent beach erosion, seawalls have also been built in some areas to avoid coastal flooding caused by high currents and rising sea levels.

In the Maldives, 65% of resorts have built seawalls to prevent erosion of the surrounding areas. These preventative measures are a very precious input to preserve the shoreline and avoid erosion.



GROYNES

Groynes are also human-made structures, but these are created from sand, coral or boulders and stick out into the sea in a magnifying glass shape. Groynes work by trapping the sand as it flows around the islands so it's not washed out to sea. This is much more cost-effective, convenient and environmentally-friendly than continuing to replace the sand washed away from the beaches with new sand.

As well as protecting the beaches from erosion, groynes also promote the growth of healthy coral reefs and sea grasses, as the sedimentation of the surrounding water is reduced. This not only creates a healthy ecosystem underwater, but also creates amazing opportunities for scuba divers and snorkelers.



SUSTAINING

The presence of sea walls is often seen as an eyesore or as an unnatural feature that disrupts the natural beauty of the Maldives. However, sea walls work like a major factor in saving the islands as they exist now.

Seawalls and groynes help keep the islands above sea level so as many people as possible can enjoy all the natural beauty the atolls have to offer.

The truth is that the Maldives simply wouldn't be what they are today if the seawalls and groynes weren't in place.

But it's not all doom and gloom. There is something you can do to help protect the Maldives and their natural beauty to ensure they're still around for years to come.

HOW CAN I HELP?

You can easily make a huge impact to help preserve the Maldives by doing one simple thing - looking at seawalls and groynes in a positive light. Rather than judging them on what they look like, see through the outer shell and appreciate them for their purpose. They do the incredibly important job of preventing coastal erosion in the Maldives. And without them, the islands just wouldn't be the same.



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 Sylwia Stanikowska




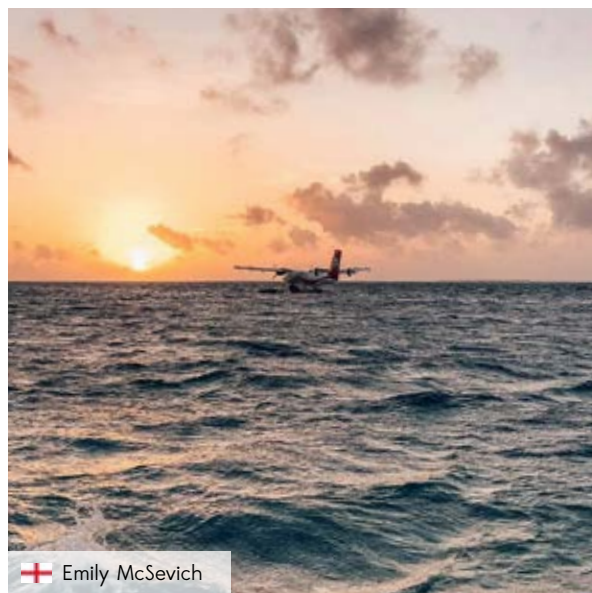
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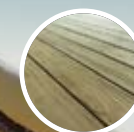
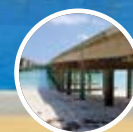


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normal 15, comfortable leather seats and large foldout tables. Cabin services on the VIP flight includes refreshing towels, bottled water and soft drinks. Watch the incredible atoll formations slip below or use the large cushions and the spacious seating to stretch out and catch up on some rest.

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The DHC-6 Twin Otter is a Canadian 19-passenger STOL (Short Take-off and Landing) utility aircraft developed by de Havilland Canada and currently produced by Viking Air.

De Havilland has a history of more than 80 years; the first de Havilland Canada flew in 1925, piloted by none other than Geoffrey de Havilland. The aircraft was called the ‘Moth’ and was quickly followed by many variations – all of them highly successful.

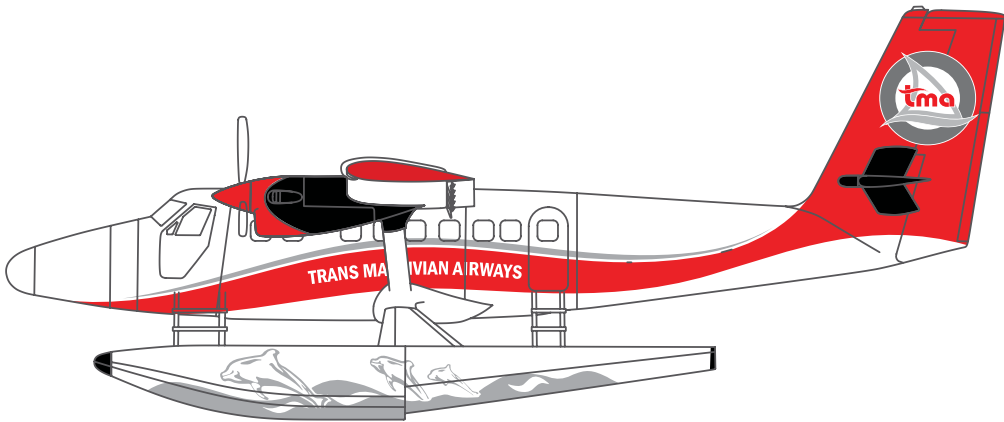
Development of the Twin Otter began in 1964, with the first flight on May 20, 1965 as a twin-engine replacement for the single-engine Otter had been planned by de Havilland Canada. Twin engines not only provided improved safety but also allowed for an increase in payload while retaining the renowned short take-off and landing (STOL) qualities. Design features included double



slotted trailing edge flaps and ailerons that work in unison with the flaps to boost STOL performance. The availability of the 550 shp (410 kW) Pratt and Whitney Canada PT6A-20 propeller turbine engine in the early 1960s made the concept of a twin more feasible.

The Twin Otter proved to be an immediate success, and became immensely popular for short-haul commuter transportation. The Twin Otter is one of the most versatile aircraft ever produced and could come with floats, skis or tricycle landing gear depending on the needs of its users.

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THE FLEET



	 NUMBER OF SEAPLANES	 PASSENGER CAPACITY
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VIP Configuration Aircraft (9-seat)	2	9
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DHC-6 Twin Otter 400 Series	3	15
DHC-6 Twin Otter 100/200/300 Series	43	15
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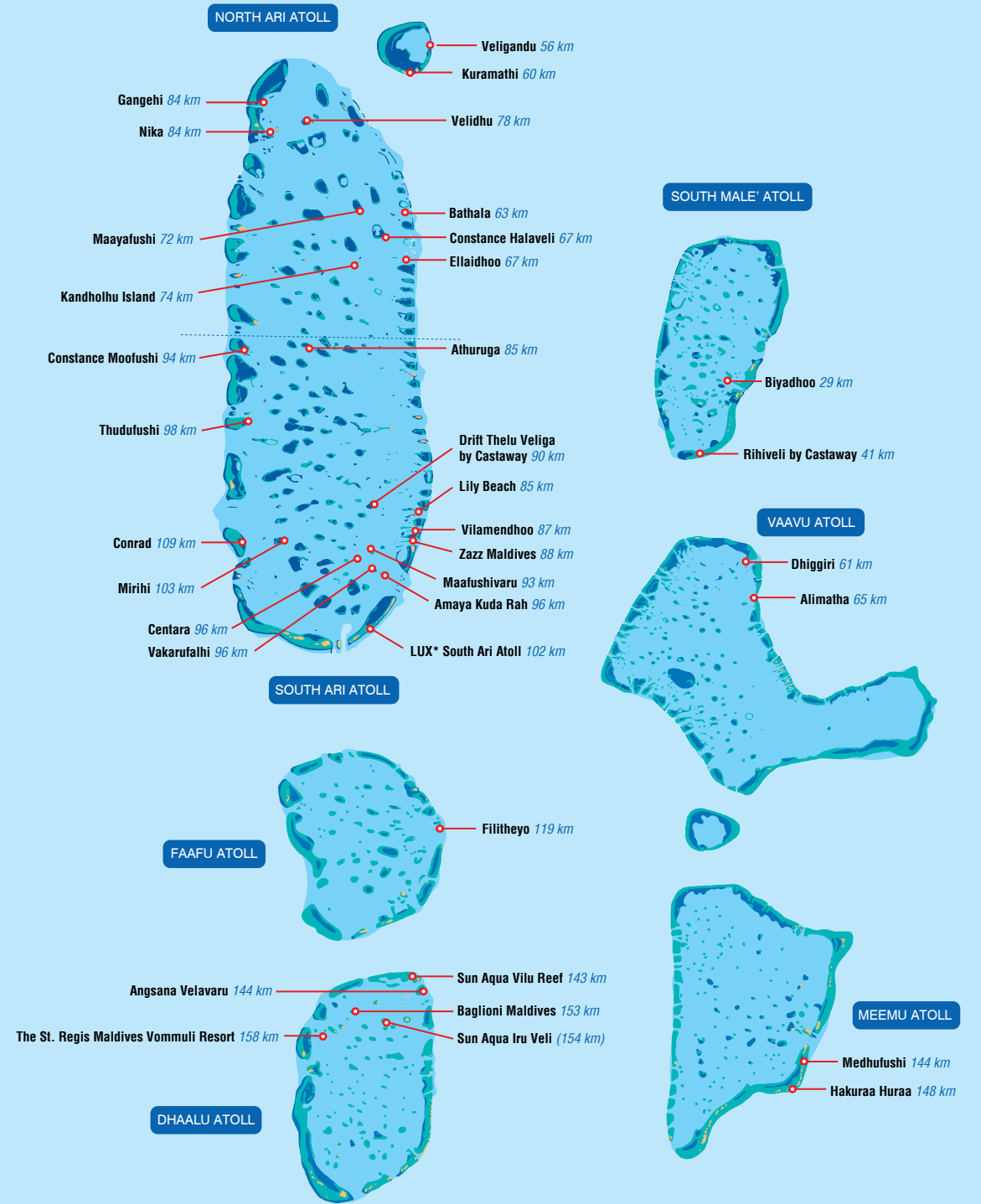
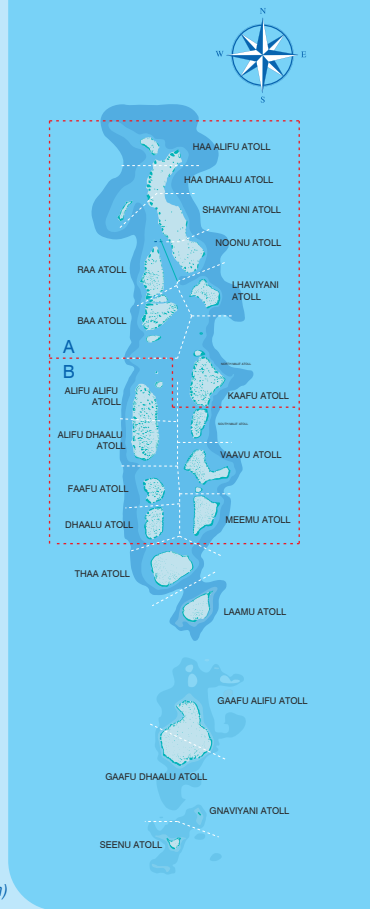


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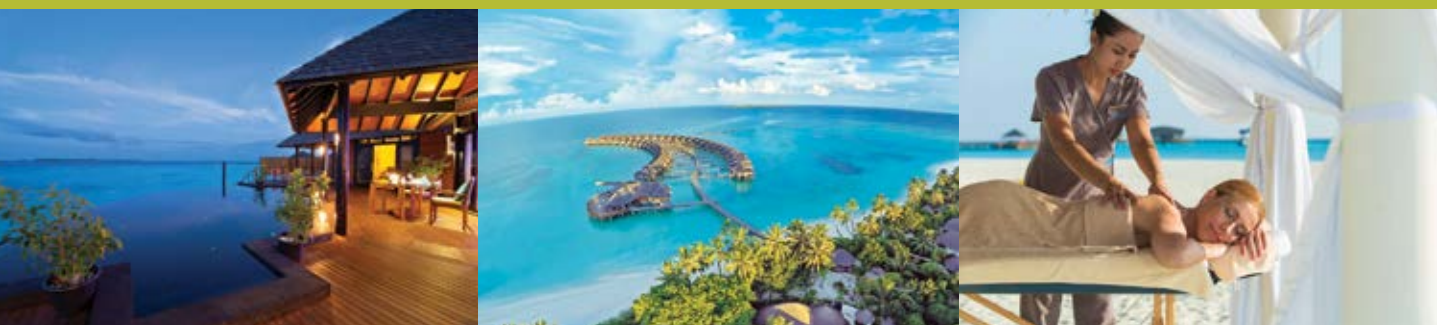
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