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**ECOTOURISM POLICY GUIDELINES FOR  
ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR ISLANDS**

Port Blair, dated the 10<sup>th</sup> February, 2015.

## 1. PREAMBLE

Andaman and Nicobar Islands form an important group of oceanic Islands with rich biodiversity and high degree of endemism. This tropical paradise is a unique combination of terrestrial, mangrove, coastal and marine ecosystems. It has an impressive coastline of 1962 kms. These Islands form two of the 218 endemic bird areas of the world. The bays, natural harbours, coral reefs, mangroves, sea grass meadows and beaches and the characteristic biodiversity make these Islands special.

The famous Forester H.G. Champion has passionately remarked "If tropical rain forests are to be seen in their pristine glory anywhere in the world, it is in the Andamans." The forests are quite rich with tropical evergreen, semi-evergreen, moist-deciduous and littoral forests, mangroves, bamboo and cane brakes. Kurz, an eminent German Botanist of the 19<sup>th</sup> century commented on the Andaman flora by saying "The knowledge of the Andamans is ... as important as it has been shown to be that of the Galapagos Archipelago, St. Helena and other isolated Islands". Plant diversity described is over 2500 in the Islands compared to 4500 in India and 2,50,000 in the World. Of the total species described so far 14% are endemic and 40% have only extra-Indian distribution. Of the 630 species of higher plants in Red Data Book, 46 are from Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Of the 62 terrestrial and 20 marine mammals found in the Islands, 19 species are endemic and of the 94 reptiles found in the Islands, 32 species are endemic. The Islands harbour 1491 species of fish, 231 species of echinoderms, 1443 species of molluscs and many lower forms. The coral diversity is rich which is estimated to be around 600 species or so but only 560 species are recorded. The deep seas are rich in planktons, fishes, dolphins, dugongs, whales and turtles. The flora and fauna provide biodiversity treasure house for biological researchers. Jacques Coustou, the famous marine explorer, who made a film, on these Islands titled "The Invisible Islands" said that he had never come across such clear waters during his many voyages across the globe, as in Andamans he could see live corals even at a depth of 60-100 meters off the Narcondam Islands.

In order to conserve the rich biodiversity of these Islands, about 70% of the forest area is fully protected under Tribal Reserve and Protected Area Network. There are 9 National Parks, 96 Sanctuaries and 1 Biosphere Reserve in these Islands.

The Policy and guidelines for ecotourism in India brought out by the Ministry of Tourism Govt. of India, recognize 8 major ecotourism resources such as Biosphere Reserve, Mangroves, Coral Reefs, Deserts, Mountains and Forests, Flora and Fauna, Sea, Lakes and Rivers and Caves. Of these seven resources are found in these Islands the exception being the Desert. These Islands possess high quality natural environment; and provide a chance to see undisturbed natural forest.

Andaman and Nicobar Administration always paid careful attention to the biodiversity conservation, to the extent that Andaman and Nicobar Islands has got highest number of Protected Areas in the country and nearly 84 percent of the land area is under forests managed by the Department of Environment and Forests. It is of utmost necessity to conserve this natural heritage and at the same time to exploit the comparative advantage of promoting the Islands as ecotourism destination to welcome both domestic and foreign visitors. The Andaman and Nicobar Administration attaches much importance to ecotourism since it is in harmony with nature. The ecotourism destinations in forest areas and Protected Areas are created and managed by the Department of Environment and Forests by incorporating prescriptions in Working Plans and Management Plans. It is necessary to formulate a policy for ecotourism which will act as guiding principles in bringing about unique blend of tourism and conservation. It also simultaneously shares the benefits of the positive impacts of ecotourism on social, cultural, economic and physical environment and minimizes the negative impacts on the natural environment.

## **2. VISION**

Make Andaman and Nicobar Islands as an ultimate and unique ecotourism destination recognized globally offering memorable and high quality learning experience to visitors and to promote nature conservation and contribute to inclusive economic empowerment of Islanders.

## **3. MISSION**

To develop a value driven ecotourism industry encompassing every aspect of Andaman and Nicobar Islands' wild, natural and cultural heritage offering professional services that is community driven and conserves the environment.

## **4. OBJECTIVES**

- Preserve the rich natural, cultural and wilderness areas and exploit the ecotourism potential of the natural heritage of Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
- Encourage environmental and cultural understanding, appreciation and conservation among tribal and non-tribal communities.
- Showcase the natural resource to different segments of the society, for viewing the nature and the natural processes for educational, recreational values and to propagate the message of nature conservation.
- Attract both domestic and foreign tourists of high spending categories by creating adequate eco-friendly infrastructure to visit wilderness areas, beaches, forests, caves, Islands and Protected Areas.
- Promote activities like Bird Watching, Turtle Watching, Trekking, Nature trails, Cruising along the Creeks/Water Ways, Surfing, Beach Combing, Sea/Reef Walk, Snorkeling, Scuba Diving, Canoeing, Parasailing, Traditional Fishing and Collection, Ethnobotanical knowledge and Traditional Medicine, etc. and more importantly mere watching of the scenic beauty of the Islands, Hills, Valleys, Meadows, Water Bodies and learn to live in nature.

- Accord priority to develop places closer to existing popular ecotourism destinations and lesser-known ecotourist spots so that infrastructure development will be kept at bare minimum.
- Permit activities and facilities which would have least impact on natural resources and local culture.
- Promote Andaman and Nicobar Islands as an attractive ecotourists destination at the International level.
- Position Andaman and Nicobar Islands as a visible global brand in ecotourism and enhance Island's ecotourism market within India.
- Ensure employment for skilled and un-skilled persons, besides inclusive development for the local people.

## 5. KEY PRINCIPLES

- Adopt low-impact tourism that protects ecological integrity of wilderness areas, secures conservation values of the destination and its surrounding areas.
- Highlight the heritage value of Islands' Forests, Mangroves, Coastal, Marine and other Wilderness areas.
- Enhance and maintain natural systems and processes.
- Build environmental and cultural awareness and respect.
- Facilitate the sustainability of ecotourism enterprises and activities.
- Provide livelihood opportunities to indigenous and local communities.
- Use indigenous, locally produced and ecologically sustainable materials for tourism activities.
- Visitors pay for visiting the ecotourism destination and polluters pay for damaging the ecotourism resources/destinations.
- Should not denigrate the natural resources and there is no erosion of resources integrity.
- Minimise the negative impacts on nature and culture that can damage a destination.
- Educate the traveller on the importance of conservation.
- Build a progressive and productive partnership among indigenous people, resource dependent local communities, visitors, ecotourism products and services.
- Maximise the economic benefits for the communities, local business, particularly those living in and around Wilderness and Protected Areas.

## 6. DEFINITIONS RELATED TO ECOTOURISM

**6.1 Ecotourism :** Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and sustains the well being of local people (TIES).

Environmentally responsible travel and visitation to relatively undisturbed natural areas, in order to enjoy and appreciate nature that promotes conservation, has low negative impact and provides for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local populations (IUCN).

Thus ecotourism pertains to a conscious and responsible effort to preserve the naturally endowed diversity, sustaining its beauty and local culture and directly benefitting the economic development of local communities.

**6.2 Environment :** Natural surroundings of the ecotourism product and services, including air, water, soil, natural resources, flora, fauna, human beings and their interactions.

**6.3 Ecotourism Activities :** Activities conducted/co-ordinated by a qualified interpreter, guide, instructor designed to entertain and educate the tourists/visitors. Examples include trekking, bird watching, turtle watching, scuba diving, snorkeling, wildlife photography, angling, beach combing, reef walk, canoeing, surfing etc.

**6.4 Sustainable Ecotourism Development :** Development of ecotourism that meets the needs and aspirations of the present generation without endangering the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

**6.5 Local Community :** Community resides within 5 km radius from the forests, Wildlife Sanctuaries and National Parks or ecotourism destinations. If there is no human settlement within 5 km radius, then the nearest accessible village will be considered as local community.

**6.6 Carrying Capacity :** The maximum number of visitors that can physically fit into a defined space, over a particular time.

**6.7 Ecotourism Services :** Tourism services such as transportation, food, lodging, guiding and interpretation services which cause minimal damage to the biological and cultural environments and promote a better understanding of the natural and cultural history of an area.

## **7. STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

### **7.1 Baseline Inventory and Review :**

The process will involve identification of existing ecotourism activities, products and services at various locations in the Islands and their positive and negative social, economic and environmental impacts. The review will seek improvement in the products and services and also will focus on identification of new ecotourism sites and activities. This will help to identify suitable sites and/or activities for ecotourism development and strengthening of the existing sites.

### **7.2 Review of existing Regulatory Mechanism :**

This process involves compilation of existing regulatory mechanisms and standard operating procedures available in various sectors related to ecotourism activities and reviewed to identify any shortcomings with regard to compliance. Wherever necessary, improvement to regulatory frame work will be undertaken where appropriate to ensure that the ecotourism activities are encouraged, sustained and promoted.

### **7.3 Ecotourism Planning, Management and Development of New Sites and Products :**

Make appropriate prescriptions to incorporate low impact ecotourism as a tool for conservation management of Forest Working Plans, Wildlife Management Plans and Ecodevelopment Plans. Forests, National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries are potential generators of jobs and income for the surrounding population, by means of employment in the range of support services and activities related to ecotourism.

Draft participative ecotourism Management Plan, on the basis of community input, that will help the management authorities for better implementation and management of activities related to ecotourism.

Introduce user-pays-principle and polluter-pays-principle in managing the ecotourism resources and destinations.

Enhance and improve the current visitor facilities and infrastructure. Only eco-friendly materials and locally available ones will be used for infrastructure and will be kept bare minimum. Prohibit concrete infrastructures and buildings.

Promote EDCs and JFMCs and prepare micro plans for each EDCs/JFMC with details of potentials and feasibilities, products and services, roles and responsibilities, waste management plan, infrastructure management, financing, benefit sharing, carrying capacity etc.

Encourage Indigenous native communities viz. Onges, Great Andamanese and Nicobarese to showcase their knowledge and skills in conservation and protection of natural resources and environment and their participation in ecotourism.

Activities and facilities which would have least impact on natural resources and local culture only would be permitted. Conduct carrying capacity analysis in forests and PAs.

Develop interpretive signages, wayside exhibits, maps of ecotourism sites and activities, publicity materials.

Promote trained and knowledgeable local interpreters, staff and guides to facilitate and interpret various ecotourism activities.

Use of renewable and biodegradable resources will be encouraged and ecofriendly waste disposal methodologies will be explored.

Plan and manage recreation and ecotourism activities in such a way that it is effective in terms of sustainability.

Impose fines on visitors/ecotourism service providers to protect the environment by making them liable for any damage they cause.

#### **7.4 Fostering Partnerships :**

The various stakeholders currently involved in ecotourism activities will be identified and actively involved in the ecotourism management processes to build stronger partnership and to create platform to exchange experience and find solutions to further improve ecotourism experience to reap real benefits. A network will be established with various stakeholder departments, communities, research and academic institutions, and NGOs and information related to ecotourism will be developed and disseminated to all stakeholders.

#### **7.5 Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism :**

A system will be put in place for monitoring the implementation of various ecotourism activities to ensure compliance of various regulatory mechanisms which will include monitoring the impacts on flora and fauna, biodiversity and forests, mangroves, coastal and marine ecosystems, indigenous and local communities. Develop effective monitoring and evaluation criteria to ascertain that the activities conducted are in accordance with the guidelines and policies prescribed. Qualitative evaluations needs to be carried out with aspects related to.

**Economic Dimension :** capacity to generate income to support the ecotourism resources and the destination, generation of business opportunities and income for the population surrounding the destination.

**Environmental Dimension :** Capacity to preserve flora and fauna and diversity, capacity to handle threats posed by local inhabitants and tourists, environmental impacts of visits on flora and fauna, improvements in infrastructure.

**Social Dimension :** capacity to generate improvements in infrastructure of the communities surrounding the ecotourism destination, as a result of ecotourism. Generation of jobs for indigenous and local inhabitants, use of ecotourism for environmental education and motivation of youths/children needs to be assessed.

#### **7.6 Ecotourism Certification Programme :**

Benchmarks or specific criteria will be developed /provided to which various ecotourism activities, services and establishments are expected to conform and then assessing adherence to the standard. Modalities will also be worked out for establishment of Ecotourism Certification Scheme to ensure quality of ecotourism products and services. The ecotourism certification can provide significant benefits viz. ensure sustainability and conservation, raise standard, provide means of self regulation and deliver marketing advantages.

#### **7.7 Public Awareness Programme :**

Comprehensive sensitization programme will be undertaken at the District, Block and Panchayat level including seminars, workshops etc. for stakeholders viz. various Government Departments, Community based Organisation, EDCs, JMFCs, PRIs, NGOs, Tour Operators, Hoteliers etc. In addition the existing Eco Clubs and National Green Corps in Schools including Teachers will be sensitized to foster ecotourism in the Islands.

Involve public education and information campaigns to influence patterns of consumption and waste disposal.

#### **7.8 Regional and Local Training and Capacity Building Programmes :**

Short, medium and long term training programme will be organized for the frontline staff of the Department of Environment and Forests and other stakeholders to further consolidate and enhance the capacities in issues related to ecotourism promotion, biodiversity conservation, management of destinations and products, visitor management, visitor facilities, interpretation, impact assessment, management techniques focusing on guiding, health, safety, life saving operations and other issues.

Tourist Guides will be in direct interaction with the tourists. The quality and authenticity of guide services has a direct bearing on the experience of the tourists. Hence, Guide Training Programs will be organized for unemployed youth. The training program includes awareness about the destinations, activities, communication, attitude and etiquette. The training includes site visits also. They will be accredited by the Tourism Department and the Department of Environment and Forests.

Training programme in areas like ecotourism resource management including activities viz. reception, housekeeping, accounts, interior decoration and catering will be provided for EDCs, JFMCs, CBOs, Indigenous and Local Communities involved in ecotourism.

#### **7.9 Enabling Environment :**

Provide enabling environment to facilitate private, community based organizations, EDCs, JFMCs, NGOs and Local Communities to engage in continual improvement of existing services as well as development of new products and services.

Facilitate self employment opportunities in ecotourism enterprises and encourage direct sales of goods and services to the visitors.

Incentivize to ecotourism service providers and local communities by way of capital subsidy, subsidizing the operational cost etc., to promote ecotourism activities in lesser developed areas like North and Middle Andaman, Little Andaman and Great Nicobar and for ensuring compliance with standards set for various ecotourism activities.

#### **7.10 Involvement of Local Communities :**

The local community will act as 'Ecotourism Ambassadors', who are responsible to share knowledge about the area's biodiversity and culture. In turn, they benefit by an increase in income, better employment and positive impact on lifestyle.

Promote local communities to produce local handicrafts and other souvenirs on a sustainable manner with minimum impacts on ecosystems.

Encourage local communities to produce organic vegetables, honey, dairy products to offer as local cuisines. Provide fair and equal treatment for all local communities and make sure they follow protection rules for strict ecological safety and security.

#### **7.11 Ecotourism Promotion and Marketing :**

The unique values of Andaman and Nicobar Islands will be identified through a participatory process for establishing a 'brand' and responsible marketing of sustainable ecotourism development.

Establish a website to promote and coordinate the marketing of ecotourism initiatives in the Islands. The website will explain the concept and principles of ecotourism, special values and highlight the ecotourism destinations, activities and facilities.

#### **7.12 Ecotourism Research and Outreach :**

Research will provide information on the outcomes and implementation of ecotourism policy and will focus on generating new knowledge, insights and mechanisms for sustainable ecotourism. Undertake continuous research and planning to evolve new ecotourism products, circuits and destinations. The new products will be given adequate publicity. Travel Writers and Researchers will be encouraged to write about locations, experience, activities, culture etc. of the Islands.

#### **7.13 Budget :**

Adequate funding needs to be provided to manage the existing infrastructures at various ecotourism destinations and create new infrastructures. Require access to adequate financial resources including external funding and expertise to develop new destinations.

The income generated from ecotourism activity including entry fee and fines shall be ploughed back for maintenance of ecotourism facilities and welfare of the communities involved in ecotourism and eco-development activities.

Introduce "local conservation cess" as percentage of turnover to be levied on all privately run tourist facilities/services within 5 km of the boundary of the Protected Area. The money thus collected should be earmarked to fund the Protected Area Management, Conservation and Local Livelihood Development.

### **8. INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISM FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

The Department of Environment and Forests shall be the nodal department and responsible for implementing ecotourism policies and projects in Forests and Protected Areas in Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Other departments including Tourism, Revenue, Agriculture, Fisheries, Tribal Welfare, ANTRI, PRIs, APWD, Industries and Rural development would be the stakeholders.

Andaman and Nicobar Ecotourism Development Board shall be constituted under the Department as an autonomous body and shall be mandated to ensure the achievement of objectives detailed in this policy. The Board shall consist of a General Body and Executive Committee.

The Board shall develop necessary procedure, system and standards for the purpose and shall be equipped with the required technical and financial resources.

Constitute a State Level Steering Committee under the Chairmanship of the Hon'ble Lt. Governor/ Chief Secretary, for the speedy implementation of various ecotourism related projects.

For implementation of the ecotourism project at the Divisional Forest Officer level, a Project Management Unit shall be established.

#### **8.1 Local Advisory Committee :**

Local Advisory Committee will be constituted territorial division-wise and the composition of the committee include —

1. Deputy Commissioner of the concerned District.
2. Territorial DFO of the concerned Division.
3. DFO/DCF of Wildlife Division
4. Representative of Tourism Department.
5. Representative of Tribal Department / ANTRI.
6. Block Development Officer.
7. Pramukh, Panchayat Samiti.
8. Pradhan, Gram Panchayats.
9. Scientist from Zoological Survey of India.
10. Scientist from Botanical Survey of India.
11. Representative of ANET.
12. Representative of SANE.
13. Asstt. Conservator of Forests, Member Secretary.

#### **Mandate**

To oversee the implementation of the ecotourism strategies and guidelines with respect to the concerned area and make recommendations to the Ecotourism Board and Administration, whenever necessary.

To advise local communities on issues relating to development of ecotourism in non-forest areas.

Monitor the activities of tour operators and ensure that they follow all safety norms, rules and procedures and do not cause any damage or disturbance to the ecotourism resources and activities.

To ensure that the revenue from ecotourism flow to the local communities.

#### **9. GUIDELINES FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS, RESEARCHERS AND VISITORS**

The objectives of the guidelines described below are to conserve the biodiversity and forest, mangrove, coastal and marine ecosystems of Andaman and Nicobar Islands and to enhance visitor experience and ensure visitor safety. The guidelines underline the rules for Service providers (Tour Operators, Travel Agents, Boat Operators, Tourist Vehicle Operators, Dive Operators, Adventure Sports Operators and Guides), Researchers and Visitors.

**9.1 THE TOUR OPERATORS, TRAVEL AGENTS, BOAT OPERATORS, TOURIST VEHICLE OPERATORS, DIVE OPERATORS, ADVENTURE SPORTS OPERATORS, GUIDES, RESEARCHERS AND VISITORS SHALL NOT :**

- Use of firewood or kindle fire or throw cigarettes butts in wildlife and forest areas.
- Damage or cut shrubs or thickets.
- Pollute water body.
- Collect plants or their parts, shells, corals etc.
- Accompany with dogs, cats and other pet animals.
- Feed, shout, tease, chase, disturb or molest wild animals.
- Play loud music or use loud speakers.
- Camp outside the designated campsites.
- Trek outside of the designated natural trails.
- Cause environmental pollution.
- Despoil sites of natural and cultural significance such as, sacred monuments, rocks and caves, including the infrastructure.
- Commit any other act that may be injurious to forests, water bodies, plants, animals or disturb the natural tranquility of such sites or become a nuisance to other visitors.
- Carry arms, ammunition and weapons.
- Consumption of liquor, gutkha and other intoxicants.
- Sale of liquor, gutkha and other intoxicants.
- Indulge in hunting of any animals or carry on the business of buying and selling any animals, animal articles, trophy, uncured trophy or meat of wild animals and specified plants.
- Damage, destroy or remove any wildlife, infrastructures and plants/trees, sign boards etc.
- Collect specimens of wildlife without permission of the competent authority.

**9.2 THE TOUR OPERATORS, TRAVEL AGENTS, BOAT OPERATORS, TOURIST VEHICLE OPERATORS, DIVE OPERATORS, ADVENTURE SPORTS OPERATORS, GUIDES, RESEARCHERS AND VISITORS SHALL :**

- Obtain a permit and pay prescribed fees, if any, before entering the area.
- Ensure that the visitors from foreign countries carry the Restricted Area Permit and the permit issued for entry into a Sanctuary or National Park.
- Segregate degradable and non-degradable litters and burn or bury all bio-degradable items and carry back all other non-degradable items.
- Inform the nearest Forest / Wildlife authorities, in case the visitors come across forest fire, wildlife/forest offence, death/carcass of wild animals during their trip.
- Prepare and carry medical first-aid kits for the visitors.
- Arrange insurance for your clients/visitors when you take them to wilderness areas particularly on adventure trip.
- Educate and sensitize the visitors on ecotourism initiatives and regulations and restrictions, if any, and the guidelines before start of the activity.

## 10. GUIDELINES FOR BEST PRACTICES FOR VARIOUS ECOTOURISM RELATED ACTIVITIES

Here are some of the best practices listed in order to increase awareness of how everyone can minimize the impact of their activities when they visit to the forest, wildlife, coastal and marine areas of Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

### 10.1 FOR ALL ACTIVITIES :

- Respect the other people using the area you are visiting.
- Be aware of the effect of your activity on the environment and the other people and avoid conflicting activities in the same area.
- Take time to learn about the area you are visiting and how to 'minimize the impact of your activities.

### 10.2 BEST PRACTICES FOR BOATING :

- Strictly adhere to the safety norms and do not exceed beyond the approved passenger capacity.
- To avoid collisions with large marine creatures, stay alert for the following species at these times of the year:
  - Dugongs all year round in shallow inshore areas along the Andaman and Nicobar coasts;
  - Turtles all year round along the coast, and particularly during the breeding season of September/October to December/January.
- Use care when approaching shorelines, beaches and reef edges. Proceed slowly and carefully choose where to come a shore or beach/berth your vessel.
- Take care when transferring fuel. Refuel on land to minimize the risk of fuel and oil spillages.

### 10.3 BEST PRACTICES FOR ANCHORING AND USE OF MOORINGS :

- Carry enough chain or chain and line for the depth.
- Check out the area before anchoring.
- Anchor in sand or mud away from corals.
- Motor towards the anchor when hauling in.
- Use moorings, if available in preference to anchoring.

### 10.4 BEST PRACTICES FOR FISHING :

- Take only what you need.
- If you intent keeping a fish, remove it from the hook or net quickly and humanely.
- Return all undersized or unwanted fish to the water carefully and quickly.
- Avoid fishing in areas where fish are gathering to spawn.
- Report 'fish kills' to the fisheries/forest department authorities.

### 10.5 BEST PRACTICES FOR WHALE AND DOLPHIN WATCHING :

- Avoid all contact with whale/dolphins with calves.
- If there is a sudden change in behavior, move away.
- Report sick, injured or stranded whales or dolphins to forest/fisheries authority.

#### 10.6 BEST PRACTICES FOR DIVING AND SNORKELING :

- Check you are weighted correctly before diving and practice buoyancy control away from coral.
- If you are a beginner, practice snorkeling techniques away from coral and dive over sand until you have mastered buoyancy control.
- Secure dragging diving equipment such as gauges.
- Do not rest or stand on coral. Take extra care when taking underwater photographs.
- Avoid touching anything with your fins and try not to disturb sediment or coral.
- If you need to rest while snorkeling, try to use the sandy areas instead of corals.
- Observe animals rather than handle them. Handling some animals may be dangerous.
- Do not chase or attempt to ride or grab free-swimming animals and avoid blocking their path.
- Do not prod any plants or animals.
- Do not pick up anything under water. If you pick up anything under water, living or dead, always return it to exactly the same position.
- Learn about the underwater environment.

#### 10.7 BEST PRACTICES FOR VISITING FORESTS / ISLANDS:

- Before visiting forest areas and islands, check for special requirements and obtain necessary permissions from the Department of Environment and Forests and other concerned authorities, where necessary.
- Remove seeds of plants from your clothing or shoes before reaching/landing.
- Camp only in areas where allowed and the areas marked for tourists/visitors.
- Follow the marked nature trail or use the regularly used routes.
- Take any litter or rubbish back to the mainland or put in the dust bins, if available.
- Take care when washing and cleaning :
  - Do not use detergents, toothpaste or soap in creeks, streams or closed waterways;
  - Wash atleast 50 m away from water courses;
  - Use sand as a scourer to remove waste when cleaning dishes.
- Always use toilets where provided. Where there are no toilets, use a spot atleast 200 m from campsites/visitor areas and water courses and bury all wastes atleast 15 cm deep.
- Do not disturb vegetation or break off branches from trees and shrubs.
- Do not disturb nesting of birds or turtles. Avoid making loud noises, using strong lights or making sudden movements near their nests.
- Do not take any animals or plants nor feed the animals.
- Do not write or place graffiti anywhere.
- Do not play amplified music on island national parks and sanctuaries.
- Learn about the natural and cultural values of the island you are visiting.
- Help conserve habitats of flora and fauna and any site, natural or cultural, which may be affected by tourism.
- Make no open fires and discourage others from doing so.
- Plants should be left to flourish in their natural environment and avoid taking away cuttings, seeds and roots.
- Leave the campsites clean after use. Remember that another party will be using the same campsite after your departure.

**10.8 BEST PRACTICES FOR SEA/REEF WALKING :**

- Be careful not to step on coral or living matter.
- Follow trails, if available and avoid straying.
- If there is no marked trail, locate regularly used routes or follow sand channels.
- If you pick up anything, living or dead, always return it to the exact position where you found it.
- Do not pick up species which are attached to the reef flat.
- Do not feed the animals of the reef ecosystem including fishes.
- Be aware of restrictions imposed as per Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.
- Learn about the reef environment and what to look for before reef walking.

**10.9 BEST PRACTICES FOR TURTLE WATCHING :**

- Keep lighting to a minimum.
- Lights should be no more than a three-volt, two-cell, hand-held torch.
- Do not approach closely or shine lights on turtles leaving the water or moving up the beach.
- Avoid shining lights directly on the turtle during egg laying.
- Avoid loud noise and sudden movements.
- Keep stray dogs away.
- Do not light campfires on turtle nesting beaches.
- Report the place and date of turtle sightings to the nearest forest office.
- Learn about the habits and needs of turtles.

**10.10 BEST PRACTICES FOR BIRD WATCHING :**

- Exercise restraint and caution during observation, photography, sound recording or filming.
- Avoid stressing of birds or exposing them to danger, chasing and repeatedly flushing.
- Avoid the use of recordings and other methods of attracting birds and never use such methods in heavily birded areas or for attracting any species that is threatened, endangered or rare in local area. Playing a recording of bird calls can divert a bird from other important duties such as feeding its young ones.
- Never use playback to attract a species during its breeding season.
- Keep away from nests and nesting colonies, roosts, display areas and feeding sites to avoid disturbances.
- Use artificial lights sparingly for filming or photography, especially for close-ups.
- Stay on roads, trails and paths where they exist; otherwise keep habitat disturbance to a minimum.

**10.11 BEST PRACTICES FOR OBSERVING SEABIRDS :**

- Avoid roosting or nesting seabird colonies.
- Don't approach close enough to stress birds. This may force them to move from their nests or young, or to take flight.
- If seabirds exhibit stressful behaviour overhead, such as raucous calling or swooping, leave immediately, taking care to avoid crushing well-camouflaged eggs.

- When approaching birds, be quite, avoid rapid or sudden movement, crouch and use existing cover.
- Never attempt to touch birds, chicks or eggs.
- Avoid using lights near or in bird colonies.
- Take particular care at the following sensitive times :
  - Late afternoon and early evening
  - During the hottest part of the day
  - Wet and/or cold weather
  - Moonlit nights
  - When eggs or naked or downy chicks are in their nests
- Learn about the habits and needs of seabirds.

**10.12 BEST PRACTICES FOR RESEARCH ACTIVITIES:**

- Ensure your research programme is having minimal impact on the physical environment and the visual aesthetics of frequently visited sites.
- Consider what effect your research has on the animals/habitats being researched and avoid harming animals/habitats at all times.
- Ensure your activities are not interfering with those of other users and assess potential dangers to other users.
- Explain the purpose of the research program to the staff and other users and where appropriate provide the opportunity for involvement of forest and wildlife authorities and other stakeholders.
- Provide updates on the progress of the study and feedback research results to the department and those who have provided assistance in setting up and conducting the research program.

**By order and in the name of the Lt. Governor (Administrator),  
Andaman & Nicobar Islands.**

**Sd./-  
(Dr. P. Viswakannan)  
Director, Science and Technology**