



PATINA

MALDIVES • FARI ISLANDS



### HELP FOR HAWKSBILLS: PATINA MALDIVES, FARI ISLANDS PROVIDES LAUNCHPAD FOR COUNTRY'S FIRST EVER SEA TURTLE GENETICS EXPEDITION

*Pilot study by the Olive Ridley Project and the Environmental Protection Agency of the Maldives will aid conservation efforts by unravelling the genetic makeup and population structures of the critically endangered hawksbill sea turtle.*

One year on from its opening, [Patina Maldives, Fari Islands](#) is taking another step forward in its pursuit of 'Perpetuality' by facilitating a pioneering genetic research expedition to study the local Maldivian hawksbill sea turtle population. Conducted by registered turtle conservation charity the [Olive Ridley Project](#) (ORP) in conjunction with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) of the Maldives, the pilot expedition will depart from Patina Maldives later this year on a mission to gather tissue samples that will unravel the genetic makeup of Maldivian hawksbill sea turtles – revealing some of the mysteries of this critically endangered species.

Described as "the never-ending journey to making a positive impact on people and place", Patina's interpretation of 'Perpetuality' is the guiding principle behind a growing number of pioneering sustainability initiatives. From its Fab Lab, where kids can turn marine plastic into 3D-printed models; to free kids' diving lessons to nurture next-generation respect for the environment; to becoming the first resort in the Maldives with 100 percent solar-powered kids' club, recreation and dive centres, Patina Maldives has rapidly become a standard-bearer for marine conservation in the Maldives. Providing financial and logistical support for this crucial genetic research expedition represents a natural next step in the resort's longstanding strategic alliance with Olive Ridley Project.

info.maldives@patinahotels.com  
www.patinahotels.com/maldives

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 @patinamaldives



Image courtesy of Olive Ridley Project & Alex Mustard

Says Dr Stephanie Köhnk, lead scientist, Olive Ridley Project and author of the International Union for Conservation of Nature's [Maldives National Red List Assessment on the Hawksbill Sea Turtle](#), "Until now our studies of turtle populations have relied on photo identification of individuals via unique scale patterns on their heads. While this means anyone with an underwater camera can contribute to the research, it only provides – quite literally – a snapshot, since turtles can travel thousands of miles across areas of the ocean that are not readily accessible to humans. This targeted expedition will instead gather genetic material for analysis, addressing a major research gap, with the aim of assessing the genetic diversity, population structure and connectivity of hawksbill turtles in the Maldives."

Trained individuals from Olive Ridley Project, the Environmental Protection Agency as well as the Maldives' Ministry of Environment will use tried and tested in-water methods to collect tissue samples from turtles' flippers for genotyping. The resulting data will be used to establish the first ever baseline genetic dataset for this species in the Maldives; further understanding of how different hawksbill turtle populations are related, both within the Maldives and in a larger regional context; and identify important genetically unique subgroups and 'hotspots' of high genetic diversity. These findings will in turn support and inform both local and regional policy and management plans for a critically endangered species in a highly understudied part of its distribution.

On the morning of the expedition, Patina guests will be invited to join Dr Köhnk for a guided tour of the research vessel, revealing the painstaking planning and specialist equipment involved in frontline marine biological research. Guests will also have a unique opportunity to shadow the first stage of the expedition on a turtle snorkeling trip led by Dr Köhnk; and to further support this pioneering research and conservation initiative by 'adopting' turtles included in the study. Adoptees will be able to name their turtle, receive future re-sighting alerts, and enjoy priority access to updates and insights from the project.

The sea turtle genetic research expedition forms part of a wider strategic alliance between Patina Maldives and Olive Ridley Project that is anchored in a shared 'Oceans First' ethos. From 1 June, a sea turtle biologist will be stationed on-island at Patina Maldives, acting as a guest educator; overseeing rescue efforts for any sea turtles that become entangled in so-called [ghost gear](#) in the area; and supporting ongoing photo identification and population monitoring in North Male Atoll – home to the second largest turtle database in the country. The Patina Maldives team, along with its Fari Islands neighbours, also contributes to the ongoing removal of ghost gear from the ocean, providing Olive Ridley Project with valuable data that can be used to trace the origins of discarded or abandoned fishing equipment and help tackle the problem at source.



## ABOUT PATINA HOTELS & RESORTS

Patina Hotels & Resorts is the latest hospitality concept from Capella Hotel Group. Born out of guests' desire to honour individuality, Patina appeals to a new generation of travellers who seek deeper connections with themselves and the world around them. The human-centred design flows with the natural modes people are in, gently and intuitively providing for each guest's individual needs, ensuring that no two stays are exactly the same. A five-star, sophisticated lifestyle brand, Patina Maldives, Fari Islands will be the first launch, with a property in development in Ubud, Bali and opportunities in China, Japan and Southeast Asia also being pursued.

## ABOUT FARI ISLANDS

Fari Islands is an elevated Maldivian resort experience that celebrates nature, craft and connection. A Pontiac Land Group development anchored by three world-class hospitality brands, Fari Islands is located in the North Malé Atoll within the Maldives, a 45-minute luxury boat transfer from Malé International Airport. The archipelago also features the picturesque Fari Marina Village, built around a vibrant Beach Club, charming boutiques and a selection of handpicked, upscale food and beverage options. Spaces have been masterfully designed by renowned architects from Studio MK27 (by Marcio Kogan), Kengo Kuma & Associates, and Kerry Hill Architects, to bring about a delicate balance of serene and social. One of the islands is home to a thoughtful hospitality campus; Fari Campus is a dedicated island for staff with a focus on community, education, and engagement, and is

For further press information or images  
on Patina Hotels & Resorts, please contact:

Luann Alphonso ([luann.alphonso@patinahotels.com](mailto:luann.alphonso@patinahotels.com))  
Zainab Shihab ([zainab.shihab@patinahotels.com](mailto:zainab.shihab@patinahotels.com))

Patina Maldives, Fari Islands  
Fari Veli Huraa  
North Malé Atoll, 20026