

REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER: 06748860 (England and Wales)  
REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1130369

**REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES AND**  
**UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE PERIOD**  
**13 NOVEMBER 2008 TO 30 NOVEMBER 2009**  
**FOR**  
**MALDIVES WHALE SHARK RESEARCH PROGRAMME**  
**LIMITED**

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**MALDIVES WHALE SHARK RESEARCH PROGRAMME**  
**LIMITED**

**CONTENTS OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE PERIOD 13 November 2008 TO 30 NOVEMBER 2009**

	Page
Report of the Trustees	1 to 20
Independent Examiner's Report	21
Statement of Financial Activities	22
Balance Sheet	23 and 24
Notes to the Financial Statements	25 to 27

**MALDIVES WHALE SHARK RESEARCH PROGRAMME  
LIMITED**

**REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES  
FOR THE PERIOD 13 November 2008 TO 30 NOVEMBER 2009**

The directors present their annual report and the independently examined Financial Statements for the period ended 30 November 2009

The Trustees confirm that they have complied with the duties in Section 4 of the Charities Act 2006 to have due regard to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit.

**INCORPORATION**

The charitable company was incorporated on 13 November 2008.

**REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS**

**Registered Company number**

06748860 (England and Wales)

**Registered Charity number**

1130369

**Registered office**

Oakdene  
Broadfield Hill  
Saundersfoot  
Pembrokeshire  
SA69 9PA

**Trustees**

A Harman  
R Rees  
M Riley  
R Williams

Chairman  
Secretary

- appointed 13 November 2008  
- appointed 13 November 2008  
- appointed 13 November 2008  
- appointed 13 November 2008

**Independent Examiner**

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Chartered Accountants  
Bank Chambers  
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**MALDIVES WHALE SHARK RESEARCH PROGRAMME**  
**LIMITED**

**REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES**  
**FOR THE PERIOD 13 NOVEMBER 2008 TO 30 NOVEMBER 2009**

**Contents to the operational section of the report**

<b>1</b>	<b>Structure, Governance and Management</b>	<b>4</b>
1 1	Structure of the Chanty	4
1 2	The Directors	4
1 3	Induction and Training	4
1 4	Organisational structure and decision making process	4
1 5	Risk Assessment	4
1 6	Statement of Recommended Practice "Accounting and Reporting by Charities"	4
1 6 1	Mission Statement	5
1 6 2	Background	5
1 6 3	Funding	6
1 7	Scope of Document	6
1 8	Next Updates	6
<b>2.</b>	<b>Objectives and Activities</b>	<b>7</b>
2 1	Research Objectives	7
2 2	Stakeholder and Community Outreach Objectives	7
<b>3</b>	<b>Achievements and Performance</b>	<b>8</b>
3 1	Research Summary	8
3 1 1	Whale Shark Encounter Log Information	8
3 1 2	Telemetry Tagging	8
3 1 3	Initial Assessment of Other Whale Shark Aggregation Areas	8
3 1 4	South Ari Atoll Inventory Survey	9
3 1 5	South Ari Atoll Community Perception Survey	9
3 2	Stakeholder and Community Outreach Summary	9
3 2 1	Stakeholder Outreach	9
3 2 2	Community Outreach	10
<b>4.</b>	<b>Other Activities</b>	<b>11</b>
4 1	Government Consultations	11
4 1 1	Ministry of Fisheries and Agnculture	12
4 1 2	Ministry of Housing, Transport and the Environment	12
4 1 3	Ministry of Education	12
4 2	International Outreach	12
4 2 1	Doha, Qatar	12
4 2 2	Bristol, UK	12
4 2 3	Papua, Indonesia	12
<b>5</b>	<b>Financial Review</b>	<b>12</b>
5 1	Reserves Policy	12
5 2	Funds	12
<b>6.</b>	<b>Plans for the Future</b>	<b>13</b>
6 1	Research	13

**MALDIVES WHALE SHARK RESEARCH PROGRAMME**  
**LTD**

**REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES**  
**FOR THE PERIOD 13 NOVEMBER 2008 TO 30 NOVEMBER 2009**

6 1 1	Encounter Log Information	13
6 1 2	Telemetry Tagging Project	13
6 1 3	Stakeholder and Community Outreach	15
7	<b>Publications</b>	<b>15</b>
8.	<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>16</b>
9.	<b>Tables</b>	<b>17</b>
9 1 1	Encounter Log Information	17
10	<b>Appendices</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Appendix A – Personnel</b>		<b>18</b>
A1	MWSRP Core Team Members	18
A2	MWSRP Scientific Advisory Board	18
A3	April – June 2009	18
A4	September – October 2009	18
A5	December 2009 – January 2010	19
A6	April – June 2010	20

**MALDIVES WHALESHARK RESEARCH PROGRAMME  
LIMITED**

**REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES  
FOR THE PERIOD 13 November 2008 TO 30 NOVEMBER 2009**

**1. Structure, Governance and Management**

**1.1 Structure of the Charity**

The Company is a charity and company limited by guarantee. The governing documents are its Memorandum and Articles of Association.

The Members are the guarantors of the Company and each has undertaken to contribute such amount as may be required (but not exceeding £1) to the Company's assets if it should be wound up while he or she is a member or within one year after he or she should cease to be a member, for payment of the Company's debts and liabilities contracted before he or she ceased to be a member, and of the costs, charges and expenses of the winding up, and for the adjustments of the rights of the contributors among themselves

**1.2 The Directors**

The Directors are the trustees in accordance with the Charities Act 2006 and they are also the Directors in accordance with the Companies Act 2006. The Board is made up of four directors and they serve a term decided by themselves.

**1.3 Induction and Training**

New members are provided with copies of the governing and key policy documents. In addition, we also encourage communication with existing Trustees, senior staff and volunteers.

**1.4 Organisational structure and decision making process**

The Board meets as necessary. Day to day operational decisions are made by the Quorum as set out in the Memorandum and Articles of Association.

**1.5 Risk Assessment**

A Corporate Risk Assessment has been undertaken in 2008 and updated in 2009 by the Board and senior staff and is the subject of continuous review. The assessment includes plans for managing, evaluating and monitoring major risks. The Board considers that appropriate steps have been taken to assess and control these risks.

**1.6 Statement of Recommended Practice "Accounting and Reporting by Charities"**

The 'Statement of Recommended Practice "Accounting and Reporting by Charities" (revised 2005)' (SORP 2005) has been complied with.

**MALDIVES WHALESHARK RESEARCH PROGRAMME**  
**LIMITED**

**REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES**  
**FOR THE PERIOD 13 November 2008 TO 30 NOVEMBER 2009**

**Structure, Governance and Management**

**1.6.1 Mission Statement**

The charity's objectives are to promote for the benefit of the public the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment of whale shark and marine biological diversity by (a) promoting and carrying out for the public benefit research and publishing or otherwise disseminating the useful results of such research (b) raising awareness and understanding of marine conservation

In 2008 and 2009 the MWSRP worked in collaboration with Dr Brent Stewart, a Senior Research Scientist at Hubbs-SeaWorld Research Institute in San Diego USA, to document the habitats (vertical and geographic) and movements of whale sharks in the Maldives using archival and satellite telemetry tags

The MWSRP has accumulated over 1000 photographic sightings of 157 individual sharks dating back to 1999. The scope for future work in the Maldives is huge, with questions about spatial distribution, long distance movement and diving behaviour still unanswered. Furthermore, of the 157 individuals identified up to June 2010, only eight are females, with 95% of the recorded population being sub-adult, immature males. The male bias in the Maldives aggregation, as in many other whale shark aggregations in the Indian Ocean (e.g., W Australia, Mozambique, Seychelles) is puzzling and further research is required to account for an apparent lack of female whale sharks.

The MWSRP's research into the characteristics and movements of the whale shark population in the Maldives provides the scientific basis behind the Programme's role as a grass-roots conservation charity. Since 2006 the MWSRP has made numerous school visits, conducted education field trips and facilitated international cultural exchange programmes for local children. Industry stakeholders, fishermen and local island governing agencies have also been continuously consulted and the Programme has been successful in fostering co-operation between resort and island communities and re-establishing an important bond between the local community and the whale shark.

The MWSRP has continued to provide key information to the various ministries of the Maldivian government. Two notable achievements to date include the government's adoption of whale shark encounter guidelines for tour operators developed by the MWSRP in stakeholder consultations and more recently the gazetting of the Maldives largest collaboratively managed Marine Protected Area (MPA).

The South Ari Atoll Marine Protected Area (MPA) encompasses the Maldives primary whale shark aggregation site and by forging partnerships with resorts and local communities, the MWSRP is continuing to assist the government by building the management capacity of the local stakeholder and island communities within the MPA.

**1.6.2 Background**

The whale shark *Rhincodon typus* is the largest species of fish on Earth, attaining lengths in excess of 12m. Nonetheless, very little is known about its distribution, habitat requirements, movements or reproduction – all of key importance for conserving and managing this marine mega-vertebrate. The Maldives appears to be unusual, perhaps unique in the Indian Ocean, in supporting a year round aggregation of whale sharks, making the archipelago a superb place to study their behaviour and biology.

Despite these opportunities for research, there were virtually no scientific studies of whale sharks in the Maldives before the MWSRP engaged in a three month research expedition in 2006. That pilot study documented several dozen sharks and also highlighted the need for further research, conservation and education and provided the seed for the creation of the MWSRP.

In 2008 and 2009 the MWSRP worked in collaboration with Dr. Brent Stewart, a Senior Research Scientist at Hubbs-SeaWorld Research Institute in San Diego USA, to document the habitats (vertical and geographic) and movements of whale sharks in the Maldives using archival and satellite telemetry tags.

**MALDIVES WHALESARK RESEARCH PROGRAMME**  
**LIMITED**

**REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES**  
**FOR THE PERIOD 13 November 2008 TO 30 NOVEMBER 2009**

**1. Structure, Governance and Management**

**1.6.3 Funding**

The MWSRP is a not-for-profit charitable organisation (UK registered June 2009 no 1130369) The Programme is run by a small core team of voluntary staff (the aim is that the charity will eventually be able to sustain a small team of paid staff) and relies on small research and conservation grants, fundraising initiatives and the generous support of in-kind logistical and financial support of corporate and private sponsors. In 2009 a volunteer programme was launched to offer the opportunity to non-team members to donate their time and a small financial contribution to the Programme. This has been very successful exchange whereby the MWSRP have been able to draw upon a wide variety of skill sets and volunteers have been able to gain hands on research and conservation outreach experience.

Please refer to the finance section of this document on pages 23 to 28 for a full account of income and expenditure and assets and liabilities during this period.

The South Ari Atoll Marine Protected Area (MPA) encompasses the Maldives primary whale shark aggregation site and by forging partnerships with resorts and local communities, the MWSRP is continuing to assist the government by building the management capacity of the local stakeholder and island communities within the MPA.

**1.7 Scope of Document**

The MWSRP currently spend 6-7 months of the year in the Maldives divided up into 3-4 distinct field study periods. This document reports on the research and outreach work carried out by the MWSRP over the Programme's first 14 month period as a registered charity - between April 2009 and June 2010.

**1.8 Next Updates**

- The next field trip is planned to take place between Nov 2010 and Feb 2011 and will be followed by a trip report in Feb 2011.
- The next Annual Report will be published in August 2011.
- Updates are available online [www.mwsrp.org](http://www.mwsrp.org)
- Subscribe to a new quarterly newsletter by emailing [adam@maldiveswhalesharkresearch.org](mailto:adam@maldiveswhalesharkresearch.org)



**MALDIVES WHALESHARK RESEARCH PROGRAMME**  
**LIMITED**

**REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES**  
**FOR THE PERIOD 13 November 2008 TO 30 NOVEMBER 2009**

**2. Objectives & Activities**

**2.1 Research Objectives**

The research objectives of the MWSRP are as follows

- 2.1.1 Identify and measure all whale sharks encountered to continue to build a database of the characteristics of the whale shark aggregations found in the Maldives. Behavioural ecology and various physical parameters at the time of encounter will also be recorded.
- 2.1.2 Tag several whale sharks at South An atoll with satellite linked telemetry instruments (pop-up archival tags or PATS) in collaboration with Dr. Brent Stewart and the Marine Research Centre
- 2.1.3 Retrieve any existing telemetry tags and shorten any tag tethers that remain on whale sharks from the 2008 and 2009 tagging study
- 2.1.4 Retrieve biopsy skin samples from whale sharks for DNA analysis
- 2.1.5 Assess potentially additional whale shark study areas in the Maldives
- 2.1.6 Assess general perception and levels of awareness of the newly gazetted South An Atoll Marine Protected Area through a community perception survey of islanders within the MPA.

**2.2 Stakeholder and Community Outreach Objectives**

The stakeholder and community outreach objectives of the MWSRP are as follows

- 2.2.1 Interpret the Programme's research and community outreach work to members and representative bodies of the local community and dive and liveaboard tourist industry
- 2.2.2 Ascertain responses to the proposed development of a pan-Maldivian whale shark monitoring network developed in association with the Dive Association of the Maldives (DAM), the Liveaboard Association of the Maldives (LAM).
- 2.2.3 Pilot an encounter management and whale shark behaviour training course for tour operators as part of the development of a web-based course in collaboration with DAM and LAM, and The Travel Foundation UK
- 2.2.4 Propose, develop and facilitate the first leg of an international school environmental exchange programme between Brockhill College, Kent, England and Dhigurah School, South An atoll, Maldives
- 2.2.5 Meet the local fishing communities of the islands within South An atoll, to raise awareness of the Programme, whilst gathering information
- 2.2.6 Conduct school field trips with fishery science classes from local island schools within South An atoll.
- 2.2.7 Organise and participate in cooperative community and industry beach cleaning events on inhabited and uninhabited islands throughout South An atoll

**MALDIVES WHALESHARK RESEARCH PROGRAMME**  
**LIMITED**

**REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES**  
**FOR THE PERIOD 13 November 2008 TO 30 NOVEMBER 2009**

**3. Achievements and Performance**

**3.1 Research Summary**

**3.1.1 Whale Shark Encounter Log Information**

Between April 2009 and June 2010 398 whale shark encounters were logged and environmental parameters recorded. 95 individual whale sharks were photo identified and sexed. Of these 44 were previously unidentified individuals. Of the 44 new sharks, 6 were female and 34 were male (4 were not sexed). The average length of individuals (both measured and estimated combined) during this period was just under 6 metres. For a breakdown of the raw data for each study period please see table 8.1a

During this period, photographs of 15 previously unidentified sharks were also contributed to the MWSRP by tourists and tour operators bringing the total number of photo identified sharks in the MWSRP whale shark catalogue to 157 individuals. The contribution of tourist photo-data is something that has been actively encouraged, in conjunction with whale shark tour operators and is seen as a way of promoting active tourist interest stakeholder participation.

**3.1.2 Telemetry Tagging**

In collaboration with Dr. Brent Stewart of Hubbs Sea World Institute, the MWSRP tagged 26 sharks with a total of 34 tags. Tags were deployed over a two week period in April 2008 and 2009 in South An atoll and September 2009 in Baa atoll. 15 of these were satellite-linked PAT tags and the remaining 19 were archival recorders. 19 of the 26 sharks were tagged once, 6 were tagged twice and 1 shark was tagged 3 times (over two separate tagging periods in 2008 and 2009).

As of June 2010, 13 of the 15 PATs had released from sharks and have reported data to us via earth-orbiting satellites. Two of these 13 PATs were recovered by the island communities and a third by a tour operator. All 3 were returned to the MWSRP and as such detailed stored data has been uploaded. 11 of the 19 Archival Recorders were removed from sharks by the MWSRP and 1 archival tag has been returned by a tour operator.

There are now a total of 3 archival telemetry tags remaining to be retrieved from 3 sharks. The remaining 4 tags are unaccounted for. 15 tag tethers were also trimmed to below the target length of 1cm. The Programme is hugely grateful for the assistance of all tour operators and islanders for their help in recovering the tags.

In April and May 2009 the team retrieved 11 biopsy skin samples from 11 different sharks. These samples along with data from the telemetry tags are currently being analysed by Dr. Stewart.

**3.1.3 Initial Assessment of Other Whale Shark Aggregation Areas**

In May and June 2010 the research team conducted brief whale shark surveys in North An atoll (N 04°15'02", E 72°46' 05"), South An atoll (N 02°39' 04", E 72°53' 05") and North Nihandhe atoll (N 03°03' 03", E 72°51'04"). One 5 metre female whale shark was identified just outside Gangehi lagoon, North An atoll as WS077. The MWSRP met with local representatives and surtable permissions, timings and logistical requirements for future visits were discussed. In all three areas whale sharks are reported as being sighted on a regular basis however it was suggested that at least two of the areas are seasonal in terms of frequency of encounters. According to local tour operators the 'whale shark season' in and around Gangehi lagoon is between August and October and fisherman from Kudahuvadhoo, South Nihandhe atoll, suggest that most whale sharks are encountered between December and February.

Future MWSRP surveys will coincide with these periods beginning with a return trip to South Nihandhe atoll in December 2010.

**MALDIVES WHALESHARK RESEARCH PROGRAMME**  
**LIMITED**

**REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES**  
**FOR THE PERIOD 13 November 2008 TO 30 NOVEMBER 2009**

**3.1.4 South An Atoll Inventory Survey**

Since 2006 the MWSRP has identified and recorded many different species of fauna in differing habitats within the MPA. This information has been compiled for the EPA and Marine Research Centre (MRC) in the form of a basic MPA Inventory. The Inventory report will be circulated separately to all interested parties.

**3.1.5. South An Atoll Community Perception Survey**

Through close liaison with the Environment Protection Agency (EPA) and with the expert guidance of the University of Newcastle upon Tyne Tropical Coastal Management Programme, Aberystwyth University and the IUCN - World Commission on Protected Areas the MWSRP have offered to assist in the ongoing design and implementation of the MPA's first phase objectives

Over a 5 week period in May –June 2010 a community perception survey was carried out in affiliation with University of Newcastle upon Tyne. A total of 60 interviews were conducted with a cross-section of the communities of Dhigurah, Dhiddhoo, Maamigili and Fenfushi islands. The results of the survey which was carried out are currently being collated and will be available for publication by August 2010

**3.2 Stakeholder and Community Outreach Summary**

**3.2.1 Stakeholder Outreach**

A total of 10 liveaboard vessels, 6 local islands and 12 resort based dive centres were visited by MWSRP team members. Some vessels and resorts were presented to on a weekly basis and others participated in one-off informal workshops with a view to establishing more regular visits. 2 liveaboard vessels hosted a MWSRP member for 1 and 4 day periods respectively in order to enhance their guests' experience and to exchange knowledge with their staff. Topics covered with all stakeholders included the biology and ecology of the whale shark, MWSRP research - including a photo-identification demonstration, and a questions and answers session specifically on the methods and status of the 2008 - 2009 tagging programme, conservation of the whale shark, whale shark encounter best practice and future MWSRP initiatives

A Whale Shark Awareness Programme for Liveaboards and Divers of the Maldives was kindly facilitated by the Dive Association of the Maldives (DAM) and Liveaboard Association of the Maldives (LAM) in Dhoshimenya Hall on the 16<sup>th</sup> April 2009. The MWSRP discussed many issues including whale shark tourism, conservation and research techniques including the use of telemetry tags. A follow-up meeting was held with the Ministry of Fisheries, Marine Research Centre, the Ministry of Tourism, LAM and DAM in May 2009 to further discuss the telemetry tagging programme

In April and May 2010 two separate meetings were held with both LAM and DAM in Male and both representative bodies were continuously updated via telephone throughout the field study period. A meeting was also held with the Maldivian Science Society and contact was made with Maldives College, Malé. Among the items discussed with all three organisations were the development of a collaborative volunteer scheme targeting Maldivian students and dive leaders, the piloting of a whale shark tour operator training course, and the development of a pan-Maldivian whale shark monitoring network

In June 2010 over two 2 hour sessions, 12 dive instructors, dive masters and compressor operators from a Sub Aqua dive centre attended a whale shark tour operator training and accreditation course covering whale shark biology, conservation, research and ecotourism. This course has been adapted by the MWSRP and the Travel Foundation UK from a similar course currently being used by the Mexican government. This was a pilot initiative to assess the suitability and compatibility of the content for a Maldivian audience. The course was delivered successfully and it was well received. The feedback from the students and the trainers will be used to modify the course before it is made available online for tour operators throughout the Maldives to download

**MALDIVES WHALESHARK RESEARCH PROGRAMME**  
**LIMITED**

**REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES**  
**FOR THE PERIOD 13 November 2008 TO 30 NOVEMBER 2009**

**3.2.2 Community Outreach**

During the study periods the MWSRP met with the island office staff of Dhigurah, Fenfushi, Maamigili, Dhangethi and Dhidhoo. The concept note outlining the first phase of the potential South An Atoll MPA was revisited and reviewed with each Island Chief and their permission was requested to present the resultant preliminary proposal to the Ministry of Environment.

A meeting was held with the fishermen of Dhigurah and Dhangethi to gather local knowledge on the whale shark, discern key fishing areas, techniques and discuss the concept and feasibility of proposed agreed "No-Take" areas or sanctuaries within the MPA.

In June 2009 the Minister of Housing Transport and Environment Mr Mohammed Aslam declared the whale shark aggregation site along the southern outer reef of South An Atoll a Marine Protected Area (MPA). Whale shark sighting information documented by the MWSRP over four years suggests that whale sharks show a preference for the length of reef between Rangali and Dhigurah Islands. The MPA boundary reflects this, encompassing the area where most human-whale shark interactions take place.

The MWSRP have visited and conducted 5 whale shark field trips with students from Fenfushi, and Dhigurah Island schools. A school trip with Maamigili School planned for June in association with Villa hotels was postponed because of bad weather until November. A school excursion involving Mandhoo Island School is also planned for this time.

During June 2009 the MWSRP facilitated a scoping visit by Ms Kerry Young of Brockhill College, Kent, UK to Dhigurah School, South An Atoll. Ms Young gave a presentation about Brockhill College to the Dhigurah school teaching staff and presented a microscope to Head Master Hussein Fayaz. This initial visit was followed up in April 2010 by 7 pupils aged between 16 and 18 years and 2 teachers from Brockhill College were hosted by grade 10 pupils and staff from Dhigurah School on the first leg of an international school exchange facilitated by the MWSRP. Accommodation and logistical support for the initiative was kindly provided by Diva Resort and Spa. The trip had an environmental education and cross-cultural theme and pupils from both schools participated in a beach clean event, gained hands on experience of researching whale sharks and also received three separate presentations by the MWSRP team on whale shark, coral reef and marine mammal biology and conservation. The UK school group also experienced Maldivian cultural events such as boduberu dancing and drumming and a traditional arts and crafts demonstration. The return leg of the exchange is partly dependent on fundraising carried out by Brockhill students and is planned for early 2011.

The MWSRP assisted staff from the Conrad Rangali Resort and Spa in a reef and beach clean-up on Rangali and Mandhoo islands in celebration of World Environment Day on the 5th June 2009. In April, May 2010 the MWSRP organised and participated in two beach cleaning events on Dhigurah and Huruelhi Island. A third beach clean event planned in June was postponed due to bad weather. The team were joined by members of the Dhigurah island community and by staff members from Conrad Maldives, Resort and Spa.

**MALDIVES WHALESARK RESEARCH PROGRAMME**  
**LIMITED**

**REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES**  
**FOR THE PERIOD 13 November 2008 TO 30 NOVEMBER 2009**

**4. Other Activities**

**4.1 Government Consultations**

Throughout all research periods, when in-person meetings are not logistically possible, all relevant ministries are continually kept abreast of the MWSRP's activities by email and telephone.

**4.1.1 Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture**

The MWSRP met with Deputy Minister Dr Hussain Rasheed, Adam Ziyad and Dr Shiam Adam of the Marine Research Centre. The MWSRP's studies into whale shark population demographics and telemetry tagging were discussed along with whale shark conservation and the suitability of the South An whale shark aggregation site for protected area status.

In May 2010 the MWSRP team met on two occasions with the Minister of Fisheries and Agriculture Dr Didi and Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture, Dr Naseer and Director of the Marine Research Centre (MRC), Dr Adam - to discuss the possibility of scoping other potential whale shark research areas throughout the Maldives.

**4.1.2 Ministry of Housing, Transport and the Environment**

The MWSRP team were invited to present to the Minister of Housing, Transport and the Environment Mr Mohamed Aslam with a preliminary project proposal for South An atoll MPA.

In April 2010 the MWSRP team met in person with Ibrahim Naeem and Zaha Waheed of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to discuss the MPA perception survey.

**4.1.3 Ministry of Education**

The Minister of Education, Dr Musthafa Luthfy, met with the MWSRP team to discuss an upcoming international school exchange between South An schools and a UK secondary school. The Minister extended his support for the project and also discussed the possible inclusion of shark biology and ecology in the Maldivian national curriculum.

**4.2 International Outreach**

**4.2.1 Doha, Qatar**

En-route to the Maldives in December 2009 and March 2010 the MWSRP team spent 5 days and one week respectively in Doha, Qatar where they gave a number of presentations to raise awareness about whale sharks in the Maldives. Presentations were given to 'Tuesday Ladies Group', Doha Sub Aqua Club and the International School of Doha. This was followed up by a meeting with the American School of Doha to discuss a school exchange with local Maldivian schools planned for November 2010.

**4.2.2 Bristol, UK**

In June three members of the MWSRP team also attended and gave a public lecture at the Shark Week exhibition in the newly opened Blue Reef Aquarium in Bristol, UK.

**4.2.3 Papua, Indonesia**

In June two members of the MWSRP visited Papua, Indonesia to assess and consult with tourist industry representatives and local communities on the potential research and management of a recently discovered whale shark aggregation.

**MALDIVES WHALESHARK RESEARCH PROGRAMME**  
**LIMITED**

**REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES**  
**FOR THE PERIOD 13 November 2008 TO 30 NOVEMBER 2009**

**5. Financial Review**

The results for the year and financial position of the Charitable Company are as shown in the annexed Financial Statements.

Net incoming resources for the period amounted to £460. It is planned to increase reserves in future years in line with the Charitable Company's reserves policy.

**5.1 Reserves policy**

The Charitable Company aims to have reserves that ensure that it has sufficient working capital, bearing in mind the timing of receipts and payments.

Free reserves equivalent to a research period's unsponsored subsistence costs are considered to provide an adequate level of working capital. This means that unrestricted free cash reserves in the region of £3,000 are required.

Whilst reserves are not yet sufficient to meet the Charitable Company's goals, the trustees are satisfied that there is adequate working capital available to allow the Charitable Company to meet its commitments as they fall due. In order to achieve the required level of reserves, the Charitable Company's aim is to retain a sum out of any surplus, if any, each year until reserves have reached the required level.

Reserves are monitored and reported to the Board regularly and the Reserves Policy is reviewed on an annual basis as part of the business planning cycle.

**5.2 Funds**

The Charitable Company has one main fund which are described in note 1 to the Financial Statements.

The Charitable Company did not designate any funds at 30 November 2009.

Restricted funds can only be used in accordance with the donor's instructions for agreed programmes of work and cannot therefore form part of the unrestricted funds that are under the control of the Charitable Company's trustees.

**MALDIVES WHALESHARK RESEARCH PROGRAMME**  
**LIMITED**

**REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES**  
**FOR THE PERIOD 13 November 2008 TO 30 NOVEMBER 2009**

**6. Plans for the Future**

**6.1 Research**

**6.1.1 Encounter Log Information**

The encounter data that continues to be collected is providing a powerful a strong data set from which meaningful conclusions on whale shark characteristics, behavioural ecology, aggregation triggers and growth rates can be made. The data set would benefit from year round data collection and from surveys at different locations within the Maldives.

In order to address these limitations the MWSRP are in talks with sponsors to enable a year round base for the programme in South An atoll. The team are involved in ongoing discussions with the government and respective local governing agencies to enable pilot research projects to be conducted in other atolls. Namely Baa atoll, North and South Nilhande atoll, Gaaf Dhaal and Gaaf Alif atoll and Alif Alif (North An) atoll.

The team are also working alongside representative bodies to encourage the participation of industry stakeholders and their guests in contributing whale shark encounter information to the MWSRP database. In return stakeholders will receive whale shark identification information and feature as a member of the web based Maldivian Whale Shark Monitoring Network.

**6.1.2 Telemetry Tagging Project**

Due to a combination of the high re-sighting rate of whale sharks and the research team's expertise in recovering the tags the collaborative tagging programme carried out in 2008 and 2009 has been very successful and the results may have global significance.

Speculation over the deployment methods of the tags did lead to concerns being raised within the whale shark tourist industry as to the effect the tagging programme would have on their livelihoods. The MWSRP have decided to discontinue the tagging programme until these concerns have been alleviated and as such the MWSRP have made stakeholder consultation a high priority, meeting with industry representative bodies and holding workshops with liveaboard vessels and resort based diving and excursion centres.

Thus far, the responses to these consultations have been very positive and the MWSRP will continue to maintain dialogue with all stakeholders. The following statement summarises the MWSRP and HSWRI's responses to the most commonly expressed concerns regarding the tagging project.

*"Because whale sharks spend so much of their lives far from our range of detecting and observing them, tagging and telemetry is a key tool for learning about the basic biology, movements, and habitat needs of these elusive animals. This information is critical for conserving, protecting and managing whale sharks and the various elements of the marine ecosystems that they travel through and feed and reproduce in."*

*The objective of the tagging project was to obtain and provide this information to the Maldivian government agencies that have authority for managing marine resources and to the Maldivian public, non-governmental organisations, and other stakeholders who have interests in using and maintaining vital marine ecosystems throughout the Maldives archipelago.*

*Preliminary results from the tagging programme have emphasised the logic and importance of this approach. It has revealed that whale sharks that spend at least parts of their lives in the Maldives are highly mobile, travelling vast distances and sometimes into unprotected waters on the high seas and other states where they can be vulnerable to fishing and fining attempts.*

*A large part of the MWSRP's tagging programme includes the monitoring of the behaviour of individual sharks before and after being tagged (both of tagged and untagged individuals). If any evidence of chronic or acute impacts was observed on an individual or group of whale sharks, the tagging programme would be discontinued immediately. Observations and systematic data indicate that there have not been any adverse effects on individual whale sharks or whale shark abundance owing to the tagging activities of the past two years.*

**MALDIVES WHALESHARK RESEARCH PROGRAMME**  
**LIMITED**

**REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES**  
**FOR THE PERIOD 13 November 2008 TO 30 NOVEMBER 2009**

*Tagged whale sharks have been routinely observed again by the MWSRP team, colleagues, tour boat operators, and resort dive operators within minutes, hours, days, weeks, months and years after being tagged. The MWSRP has not tagged any sharks at South An Atoll since May of 2009, in part to avoid the intense and busy tourist activity along Maamigili Reef in December and January.*

*The tagging is monitored by the Ministry of Fisheries who supply all the relevant permits. All information received from the tags is readily shared within this collaboration. It has been, and will continue to be, frequently distributed to local dive centres, liveaboards, resorts, local islands and peer-reviewed forums.*

*For a visual demonstration of telemetry tagging methods please follow the following link <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RoghikoxJHw>. The video clip shows Dr Brent Stewart (Hubbs SeaWorld Research Institute) tagging whale sharks in collaboration with WWF Philippines using the same methods used in the Maldives. (NB the floating tag in the video which is attached to the shark using a long tether is not being deployed in the Maldives).*

*It is important to note that these tags do not provide the MWSRP with any data until the tags release, or are recovered from the shark. It is MWSRP's policy that absolutely no sharks are tagged and no DNA samples are taken when other boats and tourists are in the vicinity. DNA biopsy samples are 4mm across by 2mm deep and are taken from an area close to the upper caudal lobe (tail).*

*In consideration of concerns from stakeholders, the MWSRP in conjunction with the government, was already limiting (in 2009) the number of sharks tagged at Maamigili Reef and in the South An Atoll Marine Protected Area. In October 2009 the MWSRP worked with associates to tag sharks elsewhere in the Maldives archipelago. The MWSRP has continued an active outreach and education programme with communities throughout the Maldives to inform them about whale sharks and respond to questions and perceptions about tags, tagging methods, and findings.*

*The MWSRP feels that active and continued dialogue with all stakeholders is important for learning of and responding to claims and perceptions. There are many possible reasons why whale sharks may aggregate in certain areas – spatially and temporally variable plankton blooms are potentially important factors and may explain variability in the number, frequency, and location of whale shark sightings in South An Atoll and elsewhere.*

*The whale shark research being conducted during the 'peak season' (December 2009/January 2010) involves simply taking photographs of whale sharks and visual observations of the sex, degree of scarring, and length of each shark (please visit [www.mwsrp.org/research](http://www.mwsrp.org/research) for details of methodology). This allows the maximum number of shark encounters to be logged and prevents the potential for misconceptions.*

*The MWSRP invites any and all parties with concerns about 'the methodology used in tagging' to contact them with any questions they may have. The tags and methods being used have been developed and tested to prevent adverse effects to individual whale sharks or their local abundance and have been subjected to public and government rigorous scrutiny in the United States, Australia, Philippines and in Kenya where our collaborators have worked previously and are continuing studies in collaboration with other parties there.'*



**MALDIVES WHALESARK RESEARCH PROGRAMME**  
**LIMITED**

**REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES**  
**FOR THE PERIOD 13 November 2008 TO 30 NOVEMBER 2009**

**6.1.3 Stakeholder and Community Outreach**

The MWSRP plans to continue and expand existing outreach work. Ongoing outreach initiatives include community and industry stakeholder presentations and workshops, international school exchanges, school field trips and beach clean events.

The MWSRP, in association with DAM, LAM and Maldives College will also be combining their respective experience in volunteer schemes and educational initiatives to spearhead a volunteer internship programme specifically targeting Maldivian youth. This will provide opportunities for Maldivian students to gain hands-on research and conservation experience.

In order to maximise the benefit to recipients, MWSRP team members will be participating in 'ReefCheck' instructor training with an aim to help Maldivian nationals become actively involved in 'Fishwatch Maldives' a joint Marine Conservation Society and Darwin Initiative project.

In collaboration with DAM and the Travel Foundation UK, the MWSRP aims to launch a web-based training and accreditation course aimed at whale shark tour operators and incorporating whale shark research, biology, conservation and encounter best practice.

The MWSRP will continue to work with the Environment Protection Agency (EPA) to develop capacity within the South An community to initiate and manage the first phase objectives of the new South An atoll Marine Protected Area.

**7. Publications**

The following scientific papers have been published during this period in peer-reviewed journals:

Riley, M. J., Hale, M. S., Harman, A., Rees, R. G. (2010). Analysis of whale shark *Rhincodon typus* aggregations near South An Atoll, Maldives Archipelago. *Aquat Biol*, 8, 145-150.

Riley, M. J., Harman, A., Rees, R. G. (2009). Evidence of continued hunting of whale sharks *Rhincodon typus* in the Maldives. *Environ Biol Fishes*, 86, 371-374.

**MALDIVES WHALESHARK RESEARCH PROGRAMME**  
**LIMITED**

**REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES**  
**FOR THE PERIOD 13 November 2008 TO 30 NOVEMBER 2009**

**8. Acknowledgements**

We thank our principle sponsor the Conrad Maldives Rangali Island for hosting us at Mandhoo Island and for continuing to provide exceptional logistic support during the field study periods. We particularly thank Carsten Schieck, Wille Ribbe, Gaye Wood and their staff for their warm hospitality and enthusiastic support of the Programme.

We also thank Mohamed Faiz, Adbulla Naseer, M. Shiham Adam and Adam Ziyad of the Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture for helping with issuance of the research permit and Zaha Waheed of the EPA for their continued support and guidance.

We would like to thank MV Ocean Dancer, Peter Hughes Diving and Scuba Tours for their generous financial contributions towards the Programme and for facilitating the sale of MWSRP merchandise. On behalf of the South Ari Atoll Marine Protected Area initiative we thank Diva Resort and Spa for all their efforts in facilitating the guest contribution mechanism.

We also thank House Clover, Male for providing essential logistical assistance throughout all of the trips, Hogan & Lovells and Ibex Earth for combining their expertise to provide MWSRP with pro-bono legal services, Olympus for the loan of camera equipment and Shepway Glass and Perspective Signs for their ongoing support.

We thank Dr Brent Stewart of Hubbs Sea World Research Institute for providing the expertise and equipment needed to execute a successful collaborative tagging project and for his continued support, guidance and friendship.

Thank you to Rachel James and Beth Wilson from the Travel Foundation for their work on the tour operator training and accreditation scheme.

We thank Nigel Dudley and Sue Wells from Equilibrium Research for their continued support and expert guidance on protected area development.

Thank you to Nick Hirschkom of Feel Films for all of his enthusiastic encouragement and invaluable media and fundraising advice.

Big thank you to Anise and his team at Kuduhuvadhoo Island for their incredible hospitality!

We thank the Scubasigns Foundation and Papua Eco Tours for facilitating and hosting the work in Papua, Indonesia.

**MALDIVES WHALESHARK RESEARCH PROGRAMME  
LIMITED**

**REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES  
FOR THE PERIOD 13 November 2008 TO 30 NOVEMBER 2009**

**9. Tables**

**9.1.1 Encounter Log Information**

Table 9 1 1 summarises the whale shark encounter information collected over the four research periods.

	From	Apr 2009	Sept 2009	Dec 2009	Apr 2010
	To	Jul 2009	Oct 2009	Jan 2010	Jun 2010
<b>No. of Whale Shark Encounters</b>		<b>104</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>144</b>
<b>No. of Different Individual Sharks</b>		<b>46</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>Known Sharks</b>		<b>34</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>35</b>
of which Male		34	7	39	32
of which Female		0	0	3	3
<b>New Sharks</b>		<b>12</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>21</b>
of which Male		11	0	4	13
of which Female		0	0	1	5
of which sex unknown		1	0	0	3
<b>Average Shark Length (metres)</b>		<b>5.9</b>	<b>6.4</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>5.6</b>
<b>Total individual Whale Sharks in the MWSRP database</b>		<b>116</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>157</b>

**MALDIVES WHALESHARK RESEARCH PROGRAMME**  
**LIMITED**

**REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES**  
**FOR THE PERIOD 13 November 2008 TO 30 NOVEMBER 2009**

**10. Appendices**

**Appendix A**

**A1 MWSRP Core team members**

Richard Rees – Director  
Adam Harman – Director  
Rachel Bott – Research Coordinator  
Ben Fothergill – Research Coordinator  
Morgan Riley – Director  
Rhodn Lloyd Williams – Director

**A2 MWSRP Scientific Advisory Board**

Dr Brent Stewart Ph.D.,J.D  
Dr Giuseppe Notobartolodi Scara Ph D

**A3 April – June 2009**

Name	Date On	Date Off	Position
Adam Harman	1 <sup>st</sup> April	8 <sup>th</sup> June	Director
Richard Rees	1 <sup>st</sup> April	8 <sup>th</sup> June	Director
Ben Fothergill	18 <sup>th</sup> April	8 <sup>th</sup> June	Research Coordinator
Rachel Bott	18 <sup>th</sup> April	8 <sup>th</sup> June	Research Coordinator
Dr Brent Stewart	21 <sup>st</sup> April	18 <sup>th</sup> May	Collaborative Scientist
Kerry Young	28 <sup>th</sup> May	6 <sup>th</sup> June	Volunteer

**A4 September – October 2009**

Name	Date On	Date Off	Position
Adam Harman	11 <sup>th</sup> September	10 <sup>th</sup> October	Director
Dr Brent Stewart	11 <sup>th</sup> September	10 <sup>th</sup> October	Collaborative Scientist

**MALDIVES WHALESHARK RESEARCH PROGRAMME**  
**LIMITED**

**REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES**  
**FOR THE PERIOD 13 November 2008 TO 30 NOVEMBER 2009**

**A5 December 2009 – January 2010**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Date On</b>	<b>Date Off</b>	<b>Position</b>
Adam Harman	1 <sup>st</sup> December	31 <sup>st</sup> January	Director
Richard Rees	1 <sup>st</sup> December	31 <sup>st</sup> January	Director
Ben Fothergill	8 <sup>th</sup> December	31 <sup>st</sup> January	Research Coordinator
Rachel Bott	8 <sup>th</sup> December	31 <sup>st</sup> January	Research Coordinator
Dr Brent Stewart	9 <sup>th</sup> December	23 <sup>rd</sup> December	Collaborative Scientist
Darren Curley	11 <sup>th</sup> January	25 <sup>th</sup> January	Volunteer
Karren Kavanagh	11 <sup>th</sup> January	25 <sup>th</sup> January	Volunteer
Brenna Quigley	15 <sup>th</sup> December	4 <sup>th</sup> January	Volunteer
Ayesha Malik	26 <sup>th</sup> December	23 <sup>rd</sup> January	Volunteer
Sian Whitmore	28 <sup>th</sup> December	11 <sup>th</sup> January	Volunteer
Jay Khan	4 <sup>th</sup> January	30 <sup>th</sup> January	Volunteer

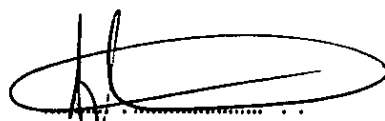
**MALDIVES WHALESHARK RESEARCH PROGRAMME**  
**LIMITED**

**REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES**  
**FOR THE PERIOD 13 November 2008 TO 30 NOVEMBER 2009**

**A6 April – June 2010**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Date On</b>	<b>Date Off</b>	<b>Position</b>
Adam Harman	21 <sup>st</sup> March	24 <sup>th</sup> May	Director
Richard Rees	23 <sup>rd</sup> April	30 <sup>th</sup> June	Director
Ben Fothergill	21 <sup>st</sup> March	8 <sup>th</sup> June	Research Coordinator
Rachel Bott	21 <sup>st</sup> March	30 <sup>th</sup> May	Research Coordinator
Rebecca Walker	10 <sup>th</sup> April	26 <sup>th</sup> April	Volunteer
Lara Howe	10 <sup>th</sup> April	26 <sup>th</sup> April	Volunteer
Dr Brent Stewart	16 <sup>th</sup> May	1 <sup>st</sup> June	Collaborative Scientist
Cire Lambden	26 <sup>th</sup> April	16 <sup>th</sup> May	Volunteer Photography student
Sherrie Chambers	24 <sup>th</sup> April	7 <sup>th</sup> June	Volunteer
Melody Sky	1 <sup>st</sup> June	14 <sup>th</sup> June	Volunteer Photographer
Simon Wells	1 <sup>st</sup> June	23 <sup>rd</sup> June	Volunteer Banker
Katherine Rowe	26 <sup>th</sup> April	5 <sup>th</sup> June	Newcastle University
Rhodri Lloyd-Williams	29 <sup>th</sup> May	15 <sup>th</sup> June	Director
Caroline Mogford	11 <sup>th</sup> June	23 <sup>rd</sup> June	Volunteer – Google

**ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD**



A Harman - Trustee

Date 10 August 2010

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF**  
**MALDIVES WHALE SHARK RESEARCH PROGRAMME**  
**LIMITED**

I report on the accounts for the period 13 November 2008 to 30 November 2009 set out on pages twenty two to twenty seven

**Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner**

The charity's trustees (who are also the directors for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this period (under Section 43(2) of the Charities Act 1993 (the 1993 Act)) and that an independent examination is required

Having satisfied myself that the charity is not subject to audit under company law and is eligible for independent examination, it is my responsibility to

- examine the accounts under Section 43 of the 1993 Act
- to follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission (under Section 43(7)(b) of the 1993 Act), and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention

**Basis of the independent examiner's report**

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statements below

**Independent examiner's statement**

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention

- (1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that, in any material respect, the requirements

- to keep accounting records in accordance with Section 386 and 387 of the Companies Act 2006, and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records, comply with the accounting requirements of Sections 394 and 395 of the Companies Act 2006 and with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice Accounting and Reporting by Charities

have not been met, or

- (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached

 **Bryan Kemsley** FCCA

Mr Bryan Kemsley  
McCabe Ford Williams  
Chartered Accountants  
Bank Chambers  
1 Central Avenue  
SITTINGBOURNE  
Kent  
ME10 4AE

Date 10 August 2010

**MALDIVES WHALE SHARK RESEARCH PROGRAMME**  
**LIMITED**

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES**  
**FOR THE PERIOD 13 November 2008 TO 30 NOVEMBER 2009**

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £
<b>INCOMING RESOURCES</b>		
Incoming resources from generated funds		
Voluntary income		34,577
<b>RESOURCES EXPENDED</b>		
Charitable activities		20,650
Charitable activities		834
Governance costs		12,634
Other resources expended		
Total resources expended		34,117
<b>NET INCOMING/(OUTGOING) RESOURCES</b>		460
<b>TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD</b>		<u>460</u>

The notes form part of these financial statements



**MALDIVES WHALE SHARK RESEARCH PROGRAMME**  
**LIMITED**

**BALANCE SHEET**  
**AT 30 NOVEMBER 2009**

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>		
Tangible assets	4	324
Investments	5	<u>1</u>
		325
 <b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Cash at bank and in hand		3,632
 <b>CREDITORS</b>		
Amounts falling due within one year	6	<u>(3,497)</u>
 <b>NET CURRENT ASSETS/(LIABILITIES)</b>		<u>135</u>
 <b>TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		<u>460</u>
 <b>NET ASSETS/(LIABILITIES)</b>		<u>460</u>
 <b>FUNDS</b>	7	
Unrestricted funds		<u>460</u>
 <b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>		<u>460</u>

The notes form part of these financial statements

**MALDIVES WHALE SHARK RESEARCH PROGRAMME  
LIMITED**

**BALANCE SHEET - CONTINUED**  
**AT 30 NOVEMBER 2009**

The Charitable Company is entitled to exemption from audit under Section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 for the period ended 30 November 2009

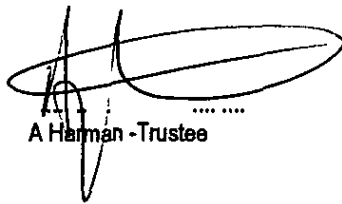
The members have not required the Charitable Company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the period ended 30 November 2009 in accordance with Section 476 of the Companies Act 2006

The trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for

- (a) ensuring that the Charitable Company keeps accounting records that comply with Sections 386 and 387 of the Companies Act 2006 and
- (b) preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Charitable Company as at the end of each financial year and of its surplus or deficit for each financial year in accordance with the requirements of Sections 394 and 395 and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 relating to financial statements, so far as applicable to the Charitable Company

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small Charitable Companies and with the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities (effective April 2008)

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees on 10 August 2010 and were signed on its behalf by



.....  
A Harman - Trustee

The notes form part of these financial statements

**MALDIVES WHALE SHARK RESEARCH PROGRAMME**  
**LIMITED**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE PERIOD 13 November 2008 TO 30 NOVEMBER 2009**

**1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES**

**Basis of preparing the financial statements**

The Chantable Company achieves its day to day working capital requirements through the financial support of the trustees. The trustees expect their financial support to continue for the foreseeable future and therefore the financial statements do not include any adjustment that would otherwise be required should that financial support cease.

**Accounting convention**

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, with the exception of investments which are included at market value, and in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities (effective April 2008), the Companies Act 2006 and the requirements of the Statement of Recommended Practice, Accounting and Reporting by Charities.

**Incoming resources**

All incoming resources are included on the Statement of Financial Activities when the Chantable Company is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy.

**Resources expended**

Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

**Tangible fixed assets**

Depreciation is provided at the following annual rates in order to write off each asset over its estimated useful life.

Computer equipment - straight line over 3 years

**Taxation**

The charity is exempt from corporation tax on its charitable activities.

**Fund accounting**

Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the trustees.

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the Chantable Company. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

**2. NET INCOMING/(OUTGOING) RESOURCES**

Net resources are stated after charging/(crediting)

Depreciation - owned assets

£  
162

**MALDIVES WHALE SHARK RESEARCH PROGRAMME  
LIMITED**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - CONTINUED**  
**FOR THE PERIOD 13 November 2008 TO 30 NOVEMBER 2009**

**3. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS**

There were no trustees' remuneration or other benefits for the period ended 30 November 2009

**Trustees' Expenses**

There were no trustees' expenses paid for the period ended 30 November 2009

**4. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS**

	Computer equipment £
<b>COST</b>	
Additions	<u>486</u>
 <b>DEPRECIATION</b>	
Charge for year	<u>162</u>
 <b>NET BOOK VALUE</b>	
At 30 November 2009	<u>324</u>

**5. FIXED ASSET INVESTMENTS**

	Shares in group undertakings £
<b>MARKET VALUE</b>	
Additions	<u>1</u>
 <b>NET BOOK VALUE</b>	
At 30 November 2009	<u>1</u>

There were no investment assets outside the UK.

The Charitable Company holds 100% of the issued share capital of Maldives Whale Shark Research Programme Trading Limited, a dormant company incorporated in England & Wales.

**6. CREDITORS. AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR**

	£
Other loans	3,419
Other creditors	<u>78</u>
	<u>3,497</u>

**MALDIVES WHALE SHARK RESEARCH PROGRAMME**  
**LIMITED**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - CONTINUED**  
**FOR THE PERIOD 13 November 2008 TO 30 NOVEMBER 2009**

**7. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS**

	At 13 11 08 £	Net movement in funds £	At 30 11 09 £
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>			
General fund	-	460	460
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>	<hr/> -	<hr/> 460	<hr/> 460

Net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>			
General fund	34,577	(34,117)	460
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>	<hr/> 34,577	<hr/> (34,117)	<hr/> 460