

Sustainability at Gili Lankanfushi

Gili Lankanfushi is a pioneer of sustainable tourism in the Maldives, a country which is at the forefront of the battle against environmental degradation and climate change. Sustainability is at the heart of Gili Lankanfushi, with an emphasis on preserving the natural environment, protecting the fragile marine ecosystem and leaving only footprints behind. The resort is committed to minimising its environmental footprint through implementing sustainable initiatives and following detailed action plans to reduce energy and water use and effectively manage waste. Gili Lankanfushi works closely with **EarthCheck**, the world's leading scientific benchmarking, certification and advisory group for sustainable travel and tourism, and achieved silver certification in 2017.

Marine Biology and Conservation

Gili Lankanfushi employs two dedicated marine biologists, working from the island's marine biology shack, **Gili Veshi**. Meaning 'Gili Environment' in the Dhivehi language, Gili Veshi is the island's primary marine research facility and the central hub for all sustainability and conservation issues.

Gili Lankanfushi's innovative **Coral Lines Project** aims to protect and replenish the island's house reef, to maintain biodiversity and mitigate episodes of bleaching. The project started in 2014 and the nursery now boasts 160 lines. Each coral line comprises 50 coral fragments attached along a five-metre length of rope, suspended on a frame five metres below the ocean surface. The growth of each coral fragment is closely monitored over a period of three years, before being carefully transplanted onto the house reef. All coral growth data is logged on a master database and published online on lines.lankanfushi.com. Gili Lankanfushi's coral nursery has been very successful to date, and the Gili Veshi team works closely with marine biologists across the Maldives to consult on their conservation efforts and help to replenish other islands' coral nurseries following bleaching events.

Known as the lungs of the ocean, **sea grasses** are a vital part of the local ecosystem, providing habitat for nursery fish, crustaceans and sea cucumbers, and food for the local turtle population, as well as acting as a strong carbon sink. Gili Lankanfushi is committed to protecting and replenishing the island's sea grass meadows, and regularly monitors regrowth of sea grass around the resort.

Invasive **Crown of Thorns** starfish are voracious corallivores, consuming 10m² of coral every year, and can have a catastrophic effect on new coral growth. The Gili Veshi team closely monitors the population and removes any starfish threatening the reef. In October 2017, Gili Lankanfushi hosted visiting researchers investigating Crown of Thorns control and removal methods.

Gili Lankanfushi works closely with several international NGOs to support their conservation activities within the Maldives. The marine biology team assists the **Manta Trust** by photographing and identifying manta rays encountered on scuba dives and sharing the ID information with the **Maldivian Manta Ray project (MMRP)** to track the population and health of reef mantas in the Maldives. The team also works alongside the **Olive Ridley Project** to rescue Olive Ridley sea turtles that have been injured through entanglement in ghost fishing nets.

Resort Design

Every aspect of Gili Lankanfushi is designed with sustainability in mind. All buildings are constructed using **sustainably-sourced** plantation teak, palm wood, bamboo and palm fronds, whilst the overwater villas and jetties are supported with **recycled telegraph poles**.

The villas are designed to catch the natural ocean breeze, with counter-current heat exchange systems and large roof overhangs to increase shading and **minimise the need for air-conditioning**.

Organic Garden

The island's organic garden is amongst the largest in the Maldives and provides a ready supply of fresh vegetables and herbs for the kitchen. Vastly expanded over the past five years, the garden has been transformed using **traditional organic farming techniques** and compost created from island food waste,

Waste Management

Gili Lankanfushi has a strict **no plastic policy** on the island, but still encounters a lot of floating plastic carried on the current from other islands. In August 2017, the resort began a plastic recycling scheme in partnership with **Parley Maldives** to intercept single-use plastics and prevent them entering the ocean.

The island's fully functioning **Eco Centre** recycles glass, plastic, aluminium and food waste. Glass is ground up and donated as aggregate, aluminium is crushed to provide scrap metal, plastic is sorted and donated to Parley, and food waste processed into compost.

Following extensive research and auditing of **food waste** across the resort, in 2016 Gili Lankanfushi purchased the Maldives' first and only mechanical biological composter — The Rocket. The large, self-contained composting chamber allows Gili Lankanfushi to process and compost 100% of the organic waste produced in the kitchen and return valuable nutrients to the garden soil. This system is supplemented with a barrel composting system for island waste as well an exciting new **vermiculture** or 'worm composting' programme, a uniquely effective method for creating fertiliser on a remote island.

Purchasing

Throughout the resort, items are sourced locally and through local businesses and communities, wherever possible. All **spa products** are sourced from organic and eco-friendly providers such as Voya and Sodashi, as well as Meera products created on the island from oceanic and plant extracts.

All fish is caught using **sustainable fishing methods** and sourced from local fishermen on nearby islands. The marine biology and culinary teams work together to ensure that the fishermen only catch species with a healthy and sustainable local population.

Education

All staff at Gili Lankanfushi receive compulsory **Sustainable Living Training** to educate them about current environmental issues. This includes topics such as recycling and reducing waste water, food and energy. Staff are also encouraged to reduce waste water, and participate in **water-saving challenges** across the resort.

Community Engagement

Gili Lankanfushi offers day visits and **sustainability tours** for local schools, and the Gili Veshi team works closely with teachers to tailor the experience to specific curriculums. Schoolchildren have the opportunity to learn about the environment through an Eco Tour and explore the natural world under a telescope in the Gili Veshi lab. The team also works with local island communities, donating to island clean-up activities and a local orphanage.

For more information, please visit www.gili-lankanfushi.com