

Bharuch District: Not just the cradle of Industry but Biodiversity too!

Bharuch district is well known for its industrial hubs, especially the Specialized Chemical Industries along its coastal area. Many of the industries along the coastal area in Dahej SEZ produce specialized chemicals for multiple industrial uses, which cater to the national and international markets.

When we talk about chemical industries, the immediate image that comes to one's mind is polluted air, water and land. But contrary to this imagination is the rich biodiversity of saline grasslands, agricultural fields, salt pans and Mangroves along the coastal area in Bharuch district. Out of the nine talukas of the district, three talukas: Jhambusar, Vagra and Hansot have long boundaries along the Coast in the Gulf of Khambhat that join the Arabian Sea. With the ever-increasing threat of global climate change and increasing temperature, the coastal areas in the district are facing severe coastal erosion.

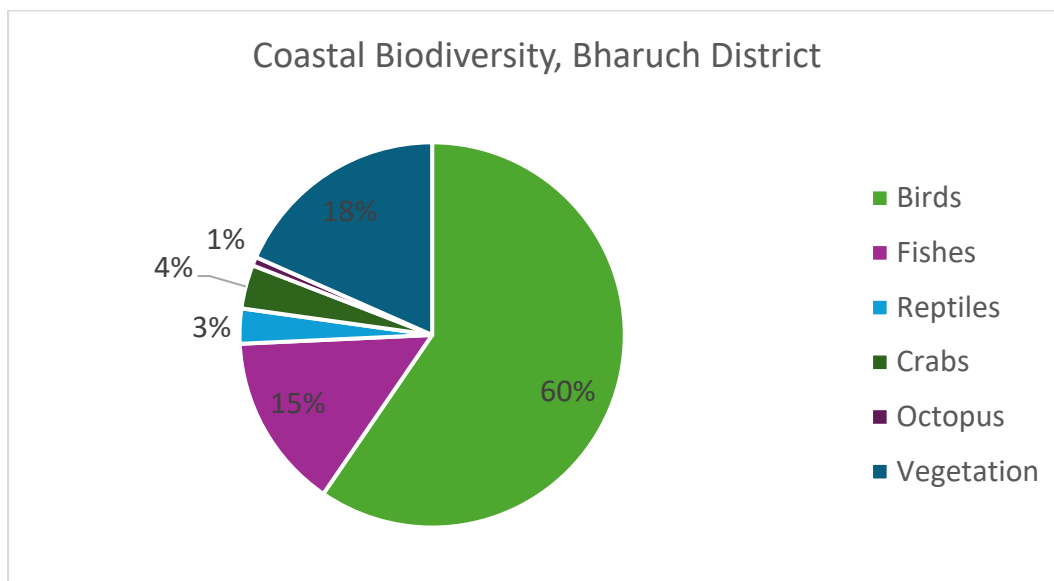
Deepak Foundation, with the support of Deepak Phenolics Ltd has initiated Mangrove restoration along the Vagra coast in Bharuch district to reduce and stop coastal erosion to protect the land and livelihoods of the local fishermen. We are planting 2 lakh mangrove saplings in 40 hectares along the coast in Vagra taluka. While restoring the coastal ecosystem, we are not just doing the plantations, but we are also documenting the coastal area biodiversity of the district. From September 2025 till August 2025, we have documented 136 biodiversity species, which include plants, birds, fish, crabs, snakes, and mammals. Out of the 136 biodiversity species documented, 60% are birds, followed by 18% of plant species and 15% of fish species. The Gujarat Ecology Commission (GEC) in 2011 did the biodiversity documentation of Vagra taluka and reported 44 biodiversity species from the region. This is a 209% increase in the biodiversity documentation of the region.

What is important is not just the documentation of such a high number of biodiversity from a highly industrialized area, but the composition of IUCN Red List species and new species being documented for the first time from the Vagra coast. A total of nine IUCN Red List species are documented from the coastal regions of Bharuch (Table 1), of which six are bird species, two fish species and one reptile species. One invasive fish species, Common Pleco, an aquarium fish, native to South America, was also documented from the coastal region of Bharuch. Two of the shark species: Arabian Carpet Shark and Hooktooth Shark are being documented for the first time from the Vagra coast and are listed as "Near Threatened" and "Vulnerable" under the IUCN Red List. For the first time, an Octopus species, "Old Lady Octopus," has been documented from the Vagra coast; the species was previously documented in the Narmada estuary.

Table 1. IUCN Red List species.

Species	Vulnerable	Near threatened	Endangered
Birds	2	3	1
Reptiles	1	0	0

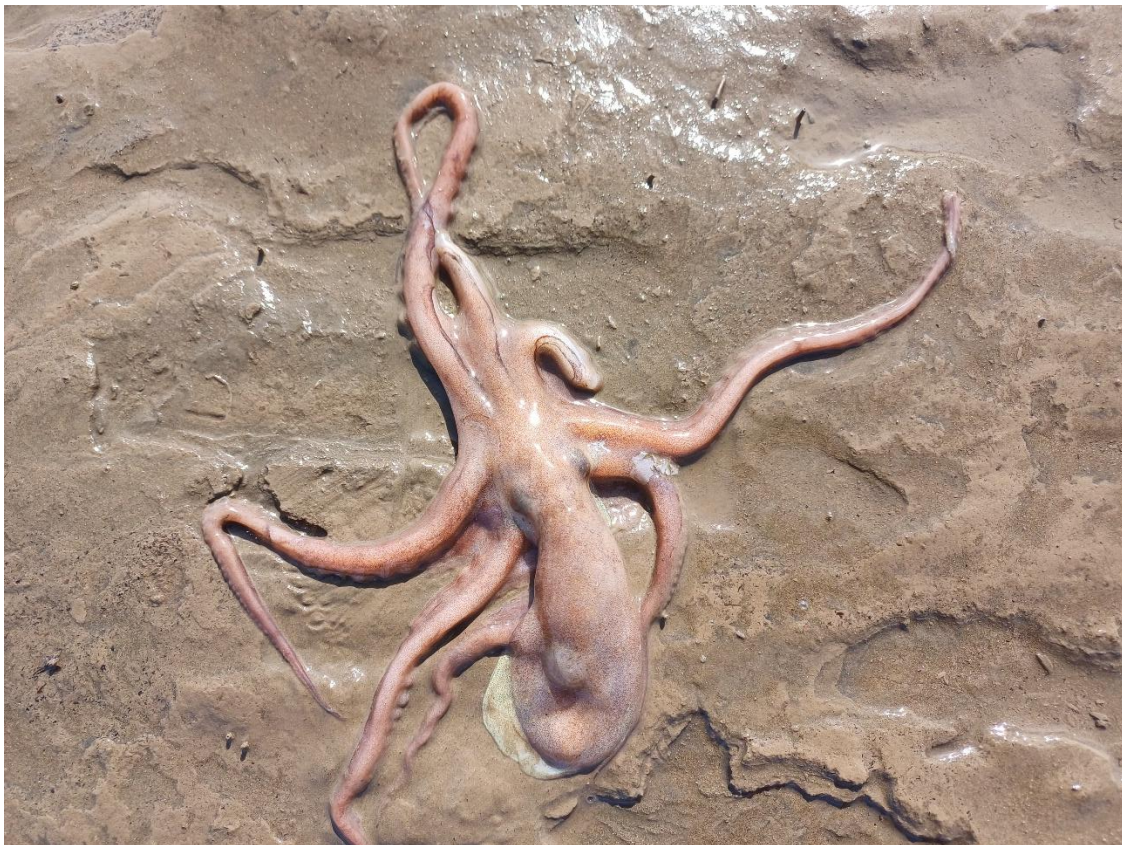
Fish	1	1	0
Total	4	4	1



Arabian Carpet Shark *Chiloscyllium arabicum*. Anil K. Nair



Hooktooth Shark *Chaenogaleus macrostoma*. Anil K. Nair



Old lady Octopus *Cistopus indicus*. Ankit Thakur.



Sting Ray.



Puffer Fish *Takifugu oblongus*. Ankit Thakur.



Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata*.



Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus*. Anil K. Nair



Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*. Anil K. Nair.



Mugger Crocodile *Crocodylus palustris*. Ankit Thakur.



Eurasian Wryneck *Jynx torquilla*.



Common Pleco *Hypostomus plecostomus*. Anil K. Nair.