



KAMARAJ IAS ACADEMY
Only IAS Academy by Grandson of "Per. unthalsivar Kamarajar"

Olive Ridley Turtle

Published On: 05-03-2023

Why is in news? The magic of the mass nesting of Olive Ridley turtles never fails to mesmerise

The Olive Ridley turtles (*Lepidochelys olivacea*), also known as the Pacific ridley sea turtle, are the **smallest and most abundant of all sea turtles** found in the world, **inhabiting warm waters of the Pacific, Atlantic and Indian oceans.**

These turtles, along with their cousin the Kemps ridley turtle, are best known for their **unique mass nesting called Arribada**, where thousands of females come together on the same beach to lay eggs.

Though found in abundance, their numbers have been declining over the past few years, and the species is recognized as **Vulnerable by the IUCN Red list.**

In the **Schedule I of Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972** and **Appendix I in CITES.**

There are **five species of sea turtles** in Indian waters viz., Leatherback, Loggerhead, Hawksbill, Green and Olive Ridley.

The nesting sites of Olive Ridley turtles include **Rushikulya rookery coast** (Odisha), **Gahirmatha beach (world's largest rookery - colony of breeding animals of sea turtles)** (Bhitarkanika National park).

The coast of Odisha in India is the largest mass nesting site for the olive ridley, **followed by the coasts of Mexico and Costa Rica.**

Mass nesting:

They are best known for their behavior of synchronized nesting in mass numbers, termed Arribadas.

Interestingly, females return to the very same beach from where they first hatched, to lay their eggs.

They lay their eggs in conical nests about one and a half feet deep which they laboriously dig with their hind flippers.

They hatch in 45 to 60 days, depending on the temperature of the sand and atmosphere during the incubation period.

The threats for the olive ridley includes more frequent and intense flooding and cyclones, sex ratio is getting skewed because of global warming, hunted for meat, shell, anthropogenic factors like fishing trawlers etc.

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