



# Olive Ridley Turtles

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**O**live Ridley turtles are a species of sea turtle that are found in warm and tropical waters around the world. They are named for the greenish color of their skin and shell, which can appear olive in some lights. These turtles are considered one of the smallest of the sea turtles, with adults typically measuring around 2 to 2.5 feet in length and weighing between 75 and 100 pounds. The Ridley turtle is a marine turtle that is found in tropical and subtropical waters around the world. There are two species of Ridley turtles, the Kemp's Ridley turtle and the Olive Ridley turtle, and their feeding habits are similar. The Olive ridley turtle (*Lepidochelys olivacea*) is a species of sea turtle that belongs to the family Cheloniidae. The exact origin of the Olive ridley turtle is not known, but it is believed to have originated in the tropical and subtropical waters of the Pacific, Atlantic, and Indian Oceans. The Olive ridley turtle is found in the warm waters of the Pacific and Indian Oceans, including the coasts of Mexico, Central and South America, West Africa, the Indian Subcontinent, South East Asia, and North Australia. They are also known to migrate thousands of miles across oceans for breeding and feeding purposes.

## Food and Feeding

These turtles are omnivorous, which means they eat both plants and animals. They primarily feed on crustaceans, such as crabs and shrimp, as well as molluscs like clams and mussels. They also eat jellyfish, sea urchins, and small fish. In addition to their diet, Ridley turtles are also known for their feeding adaptations. They have powerful jaws that can crush the shells of their prey, and they also have a sharp beak that they use to tear apart their food. They are able to hold their breath for long periods of time, which allows them to dive to deeper depths to find food.

## Breeding

Ridley turtles are known for their unique nesting behaviour, which is called arribada-Spanish word that means "arrival". During arribadas, thousands of turtles come ashore at the same time to feed on the same beach. This behaviour is often seen during the nesting season, when the females come ashore to lay their eggs. During an arribada, thousands of female turtles will come ashore at the same time, travel 300-500 m from the shore, burrow the sand about 30-40 cm deep to lay about 120-130 eggs. They come for breeding between November and December and stay on until April and May for nesting. Normally, come out of water at night to avoid predation. If the high tide water submerges the eggs, they decompose and die. In natural process, the success rate is hardly 2-3%. Incubation takes about 45-58 days.



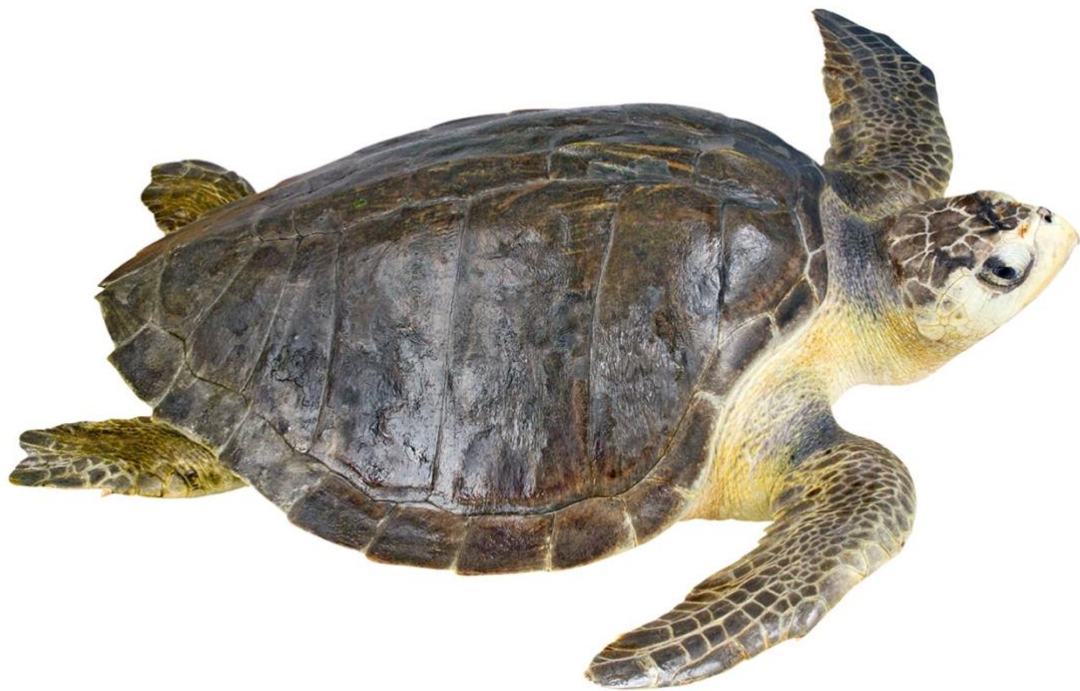
**Fig. 1.** Turtle trail 2. Rubbery Egg and the freshly hatched baby

This usually happens once or twice a year, with the largest arribadas occurring in Costa Rica and India. Research shows that if a turtle's eggs incubate below 27.7 °C (81.86 °F), the turtle hatchlings will be male. If the eggs incubate above 31 °C (88.8 °F), however, the hatchlings will be female.

Despite their wide distribution, olive ridley turtles are considered to be a vulnerable species due to threats such as habitat loss, pollution, and incidental capture in fishing gear. Conservation efforts are underway around the world to protect these turtles and their nesting beaches, including measures such as limiting fishing activity in key areas and implementing beach management practices to minimize disturbance to nesting females. In India, in both East and West coasts, their nesting sites are observed. Olive Ridley turtles also arrive at Gahirmatha beach in Odisha's Kendrapara district, which is known as the world's largest known rookery. About 6.37 lakh Olive Ridley sea turtles have arrived for mass nesting at Rushikulya coast, setting a new record for the beach in Odisha's Ganjam district. In Karnataka state, in the Honnavara coastal region, their arrival is increased every year. The responsible active citizenry and pro-active departmental

activities were observed. The community is celebrating it as a festival which is a good sign of conservation

## **Olive Ridley (*Lepidochelys olivacea*)**







# The Turtle Conservation Group (TCG)

The “Arabian Sea Fisheries Management Coordination Committee (Sea=MC<sup>2</sup>)” has initiated “**Turtle Conservation Group**” to create awareness on conservation of turtles from both freshwater and marine ecosystem. It aims to work with the Department of Forest, Fisheries, Government of Karnataka, NGOs and the local community and takes up conservation measures and initiate the research programs related to their conservation related issues. The Canara Bank, Malpe Branch and Mangalore have come forward to assist our outreach activities. The staff and students College of Fisheries will and other stakeholders will be the active members. Mr Ravishankar, C., IFS, Deputy Conservator of Forest, Honnavar, Joint Directors of Fisheries of Coastal Districts, Dr Prakash Mesta, Conservationist, Honnavar, Mr Rajesh Tandel, Fishermen Leader, Tonka, Honnavar will be the invited members

