

# Olive ridley sea turtle

The Olive Ridley sea turtle (*Lepidochelys olivacea*) is a medium-sized sea turtle that is found in the warm waters of the Pacific, Atlantic, and Indian Oceans. This species is named for the olive-green color of its shell. They are known for their mass nesting events known as arribadas, which occur on a few select beaches around the world.

## Features

In India, the Olive Ridley sea turtles are found in large numbers along the eastern coast, particularly in the state of Odisha. They also inhabit other coastal areas of India such as the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Tamil Nadu, and Maharashtra. The turtles are known to migrate in large numbers to the beaches of Odisha to nest during the breeding season.

Olive Ridley sea turtles are small to medium-sized, with adults typically measuring around 2-2.5 feet in length and weighing between 50-100 pounds. The shells of these turtles are usually olive green in color, although they may also appear brown or grey in certain light conditions. They have a heart-shaped shell and a slightly upturned snout.

## Habitat and nesting

Olive ridley sea turtles are known for their mass nesting events, also known as “arribadas,” where thousands of females come ashore to lay their eggs on the same beach at the same time.

The number of eggs laid by Olive ridley sea turtles can vary depending on the size and age of the female, as well as other factors such as food availability and environmental conditions. On average, females of this species lay between

100-150 eggs per clutch, with some larger females laying up to 200 eggs in a single clutch.

The Olive Ridley sea turtle is a pelagic and omnivorous species. They primarily feed on jellyfish, crustaceans, mollusks, and other marine invertebrates. They are also known to consume algae and seagrass in smaller amounts. They are particularly vulnerable to plastic pollution and ingestion of plastic debris, which can cause blockages in their digestive system.

## IUCN status



The Olive Ridley sea turtle is currently listed as vulnerable on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. This species is under threat due to various anthropogenic activities such as poaching, egg collection, and accidental bycatch in fishing nets. In addition, habitat loss, pollution, and climate change are also major threats to the survival of this species.

## Conservation

To conserve the Olive Ridley sea turtles, various conservation measures have been taken in India. The Government of Odisha has established a sea turtle protection force that works to protect the nesting sites and eggs of the turtles. The Forest Department also conducts awareness campaigns and educates the local communities about the importance of sea turtle conservation.

In addition, several NGOs and conservation organizations are working to protect the Olive Ridley sea turtles in India. One such organization is the Wildlife Protection Society of India, which works to combat wildlife crime and protect the habitats of endangered species.

## **Where to see them**

To see Olive Ridley sea turtles in India, one can visit the beaches of Odisha during the breeding season, which occurs from November to March. The best time to witness the mass nesting of these turtles is during the night. The Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary in Odisha is the largest nesting site of the Olive Ridley sea turtles in India.

In conclusion, the Olive Ridley sea turtle is a fascinating and important species that is found along the eastern coast of India. The turtles are under threat due to various human activities, and conservation measures are being taken to protect them. If you are interested in seeing these amazing creatures, you can visit the beaches of Odisha during the breeding season and witness the mass nesting of these turtles. It is important to remember that these turtles are protected under the law, and their habitats should be respected and conserved for future generations.