



# Olive Ridley Turtle

[Source: IE](#)

## Why in News?

Recently, the **traditional Chinese sky lantern festival** has **sparked outrage among environmentalists and wildlife conservationists** as it was scheduled near a nesting site of the **endangered Olive Ridley turtles**.

- As per **environmentalists**, the **bamboo or metal wire frame** of these lanterns takes months to decompose and acts as a **trap for wildlife, fish, dolphins, birds, and turtles**.

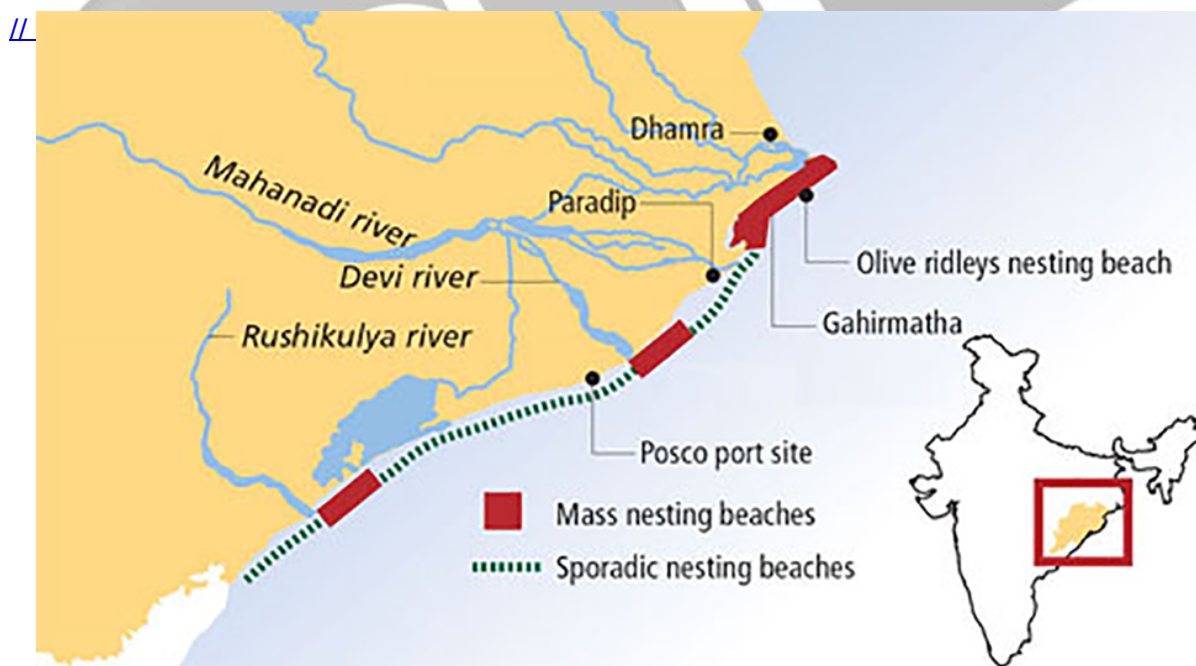
## What are Olive Ridley Turtles?

### ▪ About:

- These turtles **are [carnivores](#)** and get their name from their **olive-coloured carapace**.
- They are best known for their **unique mass nesting called Arribada**, where thousands of females come together on the same beach to lay eggs.

### ▪ Habitat:

- They are **found in warm waters of the Pacific, Atlantic, and Indian oceans**.
- Odisha's **[Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary](#)** is known as the **world's largest rookery** (a colony of breeding animals) of sea turtles.



### ▪ Protection Status:

- [Wildlife Protection Act, 1972](#): **Schedule 1**

- [IUCN Red List](#): **Vulnerable**
- [CITES](#): **Appendix I**
- **Initiatives to Protect Olive Ridley Turtles:**
  - **Operation Olivia:** Every year, the **Indian Coast Guard's "Operation Olivia"**, initiated in the early 1980s, helps protect Olive Ridley turtles as they congregate along the Odisha coast **for breeding and nesting** from November to December.
    - It also intercepts unlawful trawling activities.
  - **Mandatory use of Turtle Excluder Devices (TEDs):**
    - To **reduce accidental killing** in India, the Odisha government has made it mandatory for trawls to use **Turtle Excluder Devices (TEDs)**, a net specially designed with an exit cover that allows the turtles to escape while retaining the catch.
  - **Tagging:**
    - The tagging of the Olive Ridley turtles using non-corrosive metal tags is done to enable scientists to chart their movements and know the areas they visit to protect the species and their habitats.

### Sky Lantern Festival Glowfest:

- This sky-lantern festival is celebrated in **China and other Asian countries** that **honours deceased ancestors** on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the first month of the lunar calendar.
- This festival aims to promote reconciliation, peace, and forgiveness.
- It is celebrated by **releasing candle-lit paper lanterns into the sky.**

### What are the Threats Faced by Olive Ridley Turtles?

- Coastal development projects, such as the **construction of seawalls, resorts, and ports**, destroy nesting beaches and reduce **foraging grounds** for olive ridley turtles.
- They are **accidentally caught in fishing gear**, such as gillnets, trawls, and longlines. This can injure or kill the turtles.
- **Raccoons, crabs, birds, and foxes** can raid olive ridley turtle nests and predate on the eggs affecting their population growth.
- Warmer ocean temperatures can also **disrupt the sex ratios of hatchlings**, producing more females.
- They can often **consume plastic bags** in search of foods like for jellyfish, and ingest them, leading to **blockages and starvation.**
- **Artificial lights** from nearby towns and industries can disorient hatchlings, causing them to move away from the sea and towards nearby villages.

# Few Turtle Species



## Loggerhead Sea Turtle

- Species of oceanic turtle
- Spend most of their life in saltwater and estuarine habitat
- IUCN status: **Vulnerable**

## Leatherback Turtle

- The largest of the seven species of sea turtles
- Able to maintain high body temperature using metabolically generated heat
- IUCN status: **Critically Endangered**



## Green Turtle

- Named after the greenish colour of their cartilage
- Found in tropical and subtropical waters
- IUCN Status: **Endangered**

## Olive Ridley Turtle

- Smallest and most abundant of all sea turtles
- Carnivores
- They practice Unique Mass Nesting called Arribada
- IUCN Status: **Vulnerable**



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#FewTurtleSpecies

## UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

### Prelims

**Q. Which one of the following is the national aquatic animal of India? (2015)**

- (a) Saltwater crocodile
- (b) Olive ridley turtle
- (c) Gangetic dolphin
- (d) Gharial

**Ans: C**

**Q. Consider the following statements: (2019)**

1. Some species of turtles are herbivores.
2. Some species of fish are herbivores.
3. Some species of marine mammals are herbivores.
4. Some species of snakes are viviparous.

**Which of the statements given above are correct?**

- (a) 1 and 3 only
- (b) 2, 3 and 4 only
- (c) 2 and 4 only
- (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

**Ans: (d)**

PDF Reference URL: <https://www.drishtiias.com/printpdf/olive-ridley-turtle-12>

