



# Operation Olivia for Olive Ridley Turtles

## Why in News

Recently, the [Indian Coast Guard](#) has pressed into service an aircraft for 'Operation Olivia' to protect [Olive Ridley turtles](#).

## Indian Coast Guard

- It is an **Armed Force, Search and Rescue and Maritime Law Enforcement agency** under the Ministry of Defence. It was established in 1978.
- It has a **wide range of task capabilities for both surface and air operations**. It is one of the **largest coast guards in the world**.

## Key Points

### ▪ 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**.
- Round-the-clock surveillance is conducted from **November till May** utilising Coast Guard assets such as [fast patrol vessels](#), air cushion vessels, interceptor craft and Dornier aircraft to enforce laws near the rookeries (colony of breeding animals).
  - From November **2020 to May 2021**, the **Coast Guard devoted 225 ship days and 388 aircraft hours to protect 3.49 lakh turtles** that laid eggs along the Odisha coast.

### ▪ Olive Ridley Turtles:

#### ◦ Features:

- The Olive ridley turtles are the **smallest and most abundant of all sea turtles found in the world.** [//](#)



- These turtles are **carnivores** and get their name from their olive colored carapace.
- They **migrate thousands of kilometers** between feeding and mating grounds in the course of a year.
- 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.
  - The Odisha's **Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary** is known as the world's largest rookery of sea turtles.
- **Protection Status:**
  - **IUCN Red List:** Vulnerable
  - **CITES:** Appendix I
  - **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972:** Schedule I
- **Threats:**
  - They are **extensively poached for their meat, shell and leather**, and their eggs.
  - However, the most severe threat they face is the **accidental killing through entanglement in trawl nets and gill nets** due to uncontrolled fishing during their mating season around nesting beaches.
  - An ever-increasing **debris of plastics, fishing nets, discarded nets, polythene and other garbage** dumped by tourists and fishing workers.
- **Other Initiatives:**
  - 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 which allows the turtles to escape while retaining the catch.

**[Source: TH](#)**