

News from the states

Andhra Pradesh

In situ conservation at Vishakapatnam

“In situ” conservation of Olive Ridleys was carried out at Vishakapatnam, Gangavaram and Pudimaka coast. A total of 389 nests were counted over 112 km of coast, mostly in February and March, 1999. The hatching success was 70 %. The main problems continue to be poaching of eggs by humans and dogs. Also, 35 adults were poached this season. The poaching of adults, which is a major problem, has been reduced due to monitoring by the VSPCA. Trawling mortality of male and female adults continues to be high.

(A complete report is available from the VSPCA)

*Source: Pradeep Kumar Nath
Vishaka Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
26-25-200, Main Road, Vishakapatnam
530001. India*

Operation Angel

Operation Angel is being launched at Sacramento, mouth of the Godavari, Gangavaram, Pudimuka, and Ayalachettu Dibba. Operation Angel is part of a community based sea turtle restoration effort on this coast.

*Source: Dr. Nasreen Banu & Pradeep Kumar
Marine Turtle Preservation Group
M3/281-3RT, Sanjeeva Reddy Nagar,
Hyderabad 500038. India.
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Goa

The Forest Department has been monitoring Morjim beach on the Goa coast with forest

personnel and labourers. 8 nests were monitored and the hatchlings released. Two dead Olive Ridleys were found on Morjim beach.

*Source: C.A. Reddy
Deputy Conservator of Forests (Wildlife)
Forest Department, Government of Goa, Junta
House, Panaji, Goa. India.*

Joint Wildlife Management in Goa

The villagers in Tembawado, a small coastal settlement located 13 kms from Mapuca, along with the state forest department, are helping to protect the Olive Ridley turtle from rampant poaching of its eggs. Morjim beach which forms the beach front for Tembawado witnesses a sizeable number of these turtles coming to nest during October to February. During the nesting period 30-40 village youth along with two forest guards patrol the beach and nab those who try to poach turtle eggs. Capt. Gerard Fernandes, a retired Army officer who has now settled down at Tembawado has had a big role to play in this conservation movement that was started in 1994.

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Gujarat

There is widespread concern over the oil slick at the Marine National Park near Jamnagar. It is believed that the leak emanated from a sub sea pipeline connecting the Single Buoy Mooring installed by the Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) in the deep sea to unload imported crude oil. The slick threatens the mangrove forests and corals, as well as the marine life which includes sea turtles and dolphins.

Source: E.K. Nareshwar
Helpin' Herps
B-201, Alaukik Apts, Bodakdev, Satellite,
Ahmedabad 380015. India.

Tamil Nadu

The Students' Sea Turtle Conservation Network (SSTCN) monitored 7 km of coast in Chennai in 1998 – 99. 25 dead turtles were enumerated. 69 nests were translocated to the hatchery at Nilankarai, Chennai and

approximately 6000 hatchlings were released. 15 wild nests were also monitored. Education and awareness programmes were conducted for city schools and colleges. In 1999/ 2000, 4 dead turtles have already been counted till Jan 1, 2000.

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Research News

- Bivash Pandav, who has been working on Olive Ridelys in Orissa for the past five years, has been appointed as Scientist 'SC' at the Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun. The WII's research team, led by Pandav and BC Choudhury, have tagged 3000 mating pairs and 5000 nesting females on the Orissa coast over the past three years. They have been estimating nesting and mortality along the coast. Bivash Pandav will continue his tagging studies and the monitoring of nesting and mortality. He will also be initiating a study on the quantitative analysis of incidental sea turtle captures and mortalities during commercial shrimp trawling in the coastal waters off Orissa.
- Karthik Ram, a student of Pondicherry University, will be working with Operation Kachappa as a researcher. He will study the mating behaviour and movement patterns of Olive Ridelys off the Orissa coast. The densities, movement patterns and distribution will be determined, enabling enforcement agencies to monitor and protect the turtles.
- Dr. M. Rajagopalan, along with P. Kannan and S. Venkatesan of Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) are initiating a study of Green turtles and Olive Ridelys on the Gujarat coast. The study will begin with a survey off the coast during the early part of 2000.
- A population genetics study was carried out by Dr. Kartik Shanker and B.C. Choudhury (Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun) in collaboration with Dr. Ramesh Aggarwal and Dr. Lalji Singh of the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology, Hyderabad. 38 samples from principal sites at Orissa and Chennai were analysed using Multilocus DNA fingerprinting, mitochondrial DNA sequencing, RAPD analysis and microsatellite analysis. Preliminary results suggest that population structure along the coast is weak.