



## Olive Ridley Turtle

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### Why in News

Recently, mass nesting of **Olive Ridley Turtles** started at Odisha's Rushikulya rookery coast.

The **Rushikulya rookery on the coast of Odisha in India is the largest mass nesting site for the Olive-ridley**, followed by the coasts of Mexico and Costa Rica.



### Key Points

- **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.

- **Habitat:** They are **found in warm waters of the Pacific, Atlantic and Indian oceans.**
- **Migration:** They migrate thousands of kilometers between feeding and mating grounds in the course of a year.
- **Arribada (Mass Nesting):** They are best **known for their unique mass nesting called Arribada**, where thousands of females come together on the same beach to lay eggs.

They lay their eggs over a period of five to seven days in conical nests about one and a half feet deep which they dig with their hind flippers.

- **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.
- **Protection Status and Steps Taken:** The species is recognized as **Vulnerable by the IUCN Red list**, they are also **protected under CITES Appendix I**. They are also listed on Schedule – I of the Indian **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**.

To reduce accidental killing in India, the Orissa 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**