



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](#)