

Olive Ridley Turtles

April 8, 2020

- The Olive ridley turtles are the **smallest and most abundant of all sea turtles** found in the world,
- They inhabit **warm waters of the Pacific, Atlantic and Indian oceans.**
- These turtles, along with their cousin the Kemp's ridley turtle, are best known for their unique **mass nesting called Arribada**, where thousands of females come together on the same beach to lay eggs.
- These turtles spend their entire lives in the ocean, and migrate thousands of kilometers between feeding and mating grounds in the course of a year.
- Though international trade in these turtles and their products is banned under **CITES Appendix I**, they are still extensively poached for their meat, shell and leather, and their eggs, though illegal to harvest, have a significantly large market around the coastal regions.
- **The most severe threat they face is the accidental killing of adult turtles through entanglement in trawl nets** and gill nets due to uncontrolled fishing during their mating season around nesting beaches.
- To reduce accidental killing in India, the Odisha government has made it **mandatory for trawls to use Turtle Excluder Devices (TEDs).**
- **Rushikulya rookery coast in the Ganjam district of Odisha, Gahirmatha beach (Bhitarkanika National park) and the mouth of the Debi River,** are the major nesting sites in Odisha.