



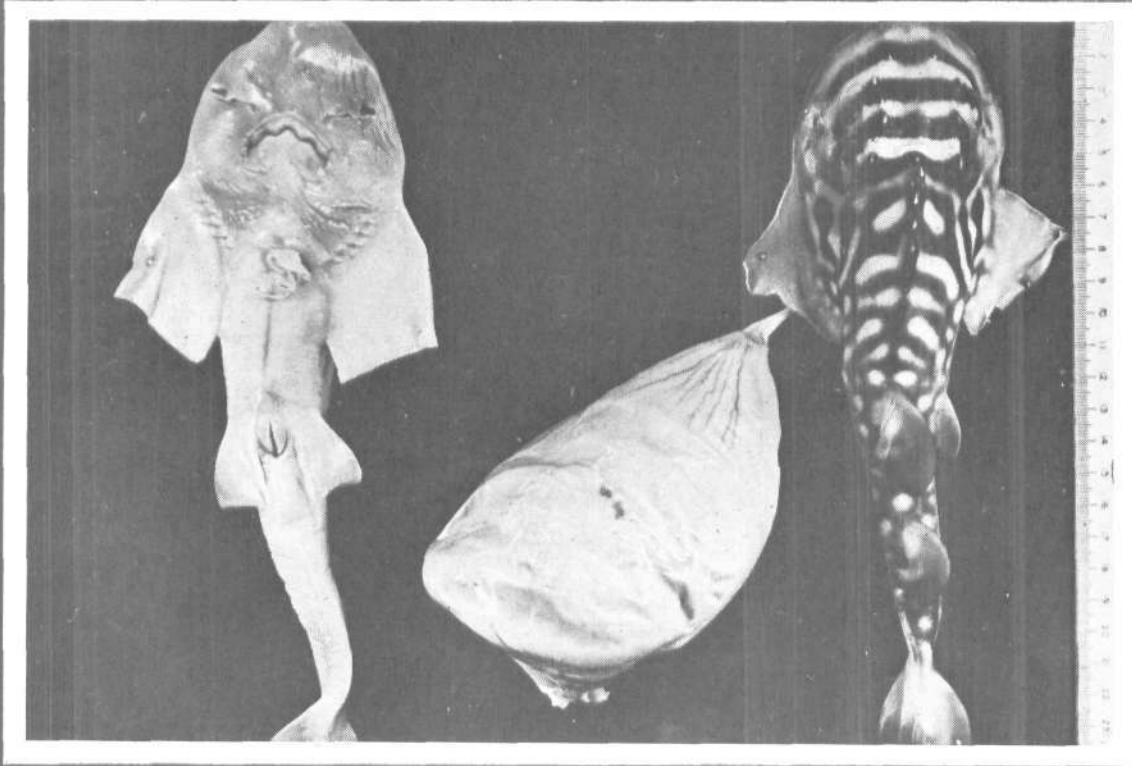
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On the nesting site and hatchlings of olive ridley turtle observed at Muller, Near Vizhinjam, southwest coast of India*

Five species of marine turtles of our waters have been included in the Wild Life (Protection) Act 1972 and are considered as endangered species. The olive ridley *Leptochelys olivacea* is one among them. A major threat to this species in general, is their incidental trapping in gillnets, hooks and line and trawlers. This turtle comes to the beach for nesting purpose. The present account deals with a nesting site found on the beach near Vizhinjam, Trivandrum, Kerala.

Eighteen numbers of just hatched-out hatchlings of olive ridley turtle were collected on 22.12.94 from a nest on the beach of Muller near Vizhinjam (Fig. 1). The place is said to be a good nesting ground for this turtle.



Fig. 1. Muller beach where young ones of olive ridley were observed.

The morphometric measurements of 18 hatchlings were taken and are given in the Table 1. The average carapace length of hatchlings was 46 mm and width

41 mm, the mean plastron length was 35 mm and width 29 mm. The average head and flipper length were 28 and 39 mm respectively, and their width was averaged to 16 and 14 mm respectively. The average weight of the young ones was 19.5 g. After taking the measurements the hatchlings (Fig. 2) were released into the sea on the same day.

Table 1. Morphometric measurements of hatchlings of Olive ridley turtle *Leptochelys olivacea* observed at Muller near Vizhinjam on 22-12-94

S. No.	Carapace		Plastron		Head		Flipper		Weight (in g)
	Length (in mm)	Width (in mm)	Length (in mm)	Width (in mm)	Length (in mm)	Width (in mm)	Length (in mm)	Width (in mm)	
1	50	45	35	30	30	16	40	15	17.5
2	45	40	36	30	26	15	41	15	18.0
3	45	40	35	30	30	16	40	15	15.5
4	45	42	38	30	30	16	40	15	18.0
5	45	43	37	28	29	16	40	15	18.5
6	45	40	36	27	29	16	40	15	18.5
7	45	40	37	32	28	15	40	14	19.0
8	47	42	35	30	27	16	40	15	20.0
9	47	42	37	30	30	16	40	15	20.0
10	42	40	35	28	28	15	38	14	20.0
11	45	42	30	29	30	16	38	15	20.0
12	46	42	37	32	29	17	40	14	21.0
13	47	42	35	28	29	17	40	14	20.5
14	46	41	33	30	30	16	40	14	21.5
15	46	40	37	29	30	16	40	14	20.5
16	44	38	35	28	28	17	40	14	21.0
17	47	42	35	34	30	16	39	14	21.0
18	44	37	35	28	28	15	38	15	22.0
Total	822	738	638	533	521	286	710	258	351.5
Mean	46	41	35	29	28	16	39	14	19.5

Bhaskar (*Ind. Fore.*, No. 11, 1981, p. 707-711) and Bhaskar and Whitaker (*Bull. Cent. Mar. Fish Res. Inst.*, No. 34 1983, p. 94-97) gave an account of the nesting beaches of the sea turtles along the Indian coast. Biswas (*Rec. Zool. Surv. India*, No. 79, 1981, p. 275-302) gave an account of the nesting beaches of olive ridley of the Bay of Bengal. Some of the important nesting grounds of this species along the Orissa coast were studied recently by Silas *et al.* (*Mar. Fish. Infor. Serv., T & E Ser.* No. 50, 1983, p. 1-12) and *Mar. Fish Infor. Serv., T & E Ser.* No. 64, 1985, P. 1-19). Nesting site and hatchlings of Hawksbill turtle (*Ertmochelys imbricata*) of Tirunelveli coast of Tamil Nadu were reported by Bastian Fernando (*Mar. Fish Infor. Serv. T & E Ser.*, No. 50, 1983, P. 33-34)

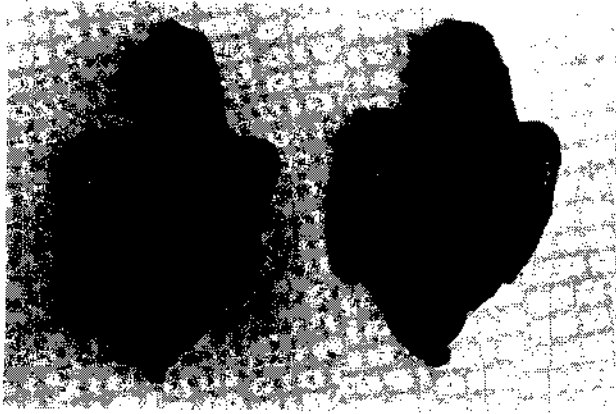


Fig. 2. Hatchlings of olive ridley turtle collected at Muller, near Trivandrum.

and that of olive ridley on the Ratnagiri coast by Katkar (*Mar. Fish. Infor. Serv., T & E Ser., No. 108, 1991, p. 16*). The nesting of the leather back turtle, *Dermochelys coriacea* along the Kerala coast was reported by Cameron (*J. Bombay, Nat. Hist. Soc., 29: 299-300, 1959*) and by Jones (*J. Nat. Hist. Soc., 29: 137-139, 1959*).

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