

JUVENILE GREEN TURTLE STRANDED AT THIKKODI BEACH, KERALA, INDIA

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In the coastal regions of Kerala, India, olive ridley turtles (*Lepidochelys olivacea*) nest at low densities along the sandy shores while olive ridley, green (*Chelonia mydas*) and hawksbill (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) turtles forage in the state's waters. Sea turtles in Kerala face significant threats, including habitat loss, pollution, climate change and accidental capture in fishing gear (Bhupathy, 2007).

A dead juvenile green turtle (Figure 1 and 2) was found stranded on Thikkodi beach, Kolavipalam, Calicut, Kerala, on 11th December 2023. The stranding location was ~10km from the known nesting beach of olive ridley turtles at Kolavipalam Beach, Kerala. The stranded turtle was in a relatively fresh condition when found, and weighed 32kg (Delta Digital Scales, max 200kg capacity).

The northern Indian Ocean subpopulation of green turtles was recently assessed as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List (Mancini *et al.*, 2019). In India, all species of sea turtle are included in Schedule-I part (2) of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. There is one other



Figure 1. Dorsal View of the Stranded Juvenile Green Turtle. (Photo credit: Ramya Abhijith)



Figure 2. Ventral View of the Stranded Juvenile Green Turtle. (Photo credit: Ramya Abhijith)

stranding of a green turtle from the same beach (Abhijith *et al.*, 2020) but no regular survey for stranded turtles or in-water surveys to understand threats and abundance of sea turtles in the area.

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