

Olive Ridley turtle rescue program in Gulf of Mannar, North - West of Sri Lanka

Thushan Kapurusinghe

Turtle Conservation Project (TCP), 'Ruwani' Netolpitiya, Rekawa, Tangalle, Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Olive ridley turtles including mature and immature animals belong to both sexes inhabit the Gulf of Mannar region of Sri Lanka. Fishermen in Gulf of Mannar accidentally catch many of these turtles during the flying fish season, which occurs between September and March each year. First Olive Ridley turtle rescue program was carried out from September 1999 to March 2001. Major objective of this program was to release entangled turtles in fishing nets while recording the some important scientific information.

During the Flying fish season in Gulf of Mannar region, the Turtle Conservation Project TCP hired fishing boats and the fishermen were expected to fish as normal. TCP checked the fishing nets for accidental by-catch and entanglements. If live Olive Ridley sea turtle were entangled in fishing nets they were brought aboard and measured their (what??), tagged and released.

A total of 278 Olive ridley turtles were released during this period. These included 57 adult males, 29 sub adult males, 105 adult females, 52 sub adult females and 35 sex unknown juveniles. Therefore, it can be assumed that this region provides the important habitat for there breeding and foraging. It was also evident that the Sri Lankan Fishermen catch all sizes and sexes of Olive ridley turtles as incidental by-catch.

Correspondence : *turtle@slt.net.lk*