



# SPECIES QUICK FACT SHEET

## OLIVE RIDLEY SEA TURTLE



**Common Name:** Olive ridley - named for its olive green colored shell.

**Scientific Name:** *Lepidochelys olivacea*

**Description:** Head is quite small. Carapace is bony without ridges and has large scutes (scales) present. Carapace has 6 or more lateral scutes and is nearly circular and smooth. Its body is deeper than the very similar Kemp's Ridley sea turtle. Both the front and rear flippers have 1 or 2 visible claws. There is sometimes an extra claw on the front flippers. Juveniles are charcoal grey in color, while adults are a dark grey green. Hatchlings are black when wet with greenish sides.

**Size:** Adults measure 2 to 2.5 feet (62-70 cm) in carapace length.

**Weight:** Adults weigh between 77 and 100 pounds (35-45 kg).

**Diet:** Have powerful jaws that allow for an omnivore diet of crustaceans (such as shrimp & crabs), mollusks, tunicates, fish, crabs, and shrimp.

**Habitat:** Generally found in coastal bays and estuaries, but can be very oceanic over some parts of its range. They typically forage off shore in surface waters or dive to depths of 500 feet (150 m) to feed on bottom dwelling crustaceans.

**Nesting:** Nest every year in arribadas. Nests 2 times each season. Lays an average of over 105 eggs in each nest. Eggs incubate for about 55 days. An average clutch size is over 110 eggs which require a 52 to 58 day incubation period.

**Range:** Tropical and subtropical waters of the Pacific, Indian and Atlantic Oceans.

**Status:** *U.S.* - Listed as Threatened (likely to become endangered, in danger of extinction, within the foreseeable future). *International* - Listed as Endangered (facing a very high risk of extinction in the wild in the near future).

**Threats to Survival:** Direct harvest of adults and eggs, incidental capture in commercial fisheries and loss of nesting habitat are the main threats to this species.

**Population Estimate:** 800,000 nesting females (based on monitoring reports and publications from 2004.)