



OF INDIA

GREEN TURTLES

Growing up to 4 feet in length, green turtles (*Chelonia mydas*) are the largest of the hard-shelled turtles and derive their name from the colour of their fat. Unlike other species, when juvenile green turtles grow into adults, they become predominantly herbivorous. They feed on seagrass and marine algae in shallow coastal waters around the world. They are found across tropical and subtropical waters in the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian Oceans.

DIET

Adult green turtles are primarily herbivores and are 'ecosystem modifiers' in many marine habitats. They mainly feed on seagrass and alter community structure and function in these habitats when foraging in large numbers. As elsewhere, in Lakshadweep, high densities of green turtles have grazed down entire meadows, leaving behind bare sandy patches.

REPRODUCTIVE BIOLOGY

Green turtles nest on tropical and subtropical beaches around the world. Females nest every 2-4 years and can lay up to 6 clutches per season. Each clutch consists of 100-120 eggs on average. Hatchlings emerge after about 50-60 days of incubation.

DISTRIBUTION

In India, green turtles nest in Gujarat, the Lakshadweep archipelago, and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The seagrass meadows in the shallow waters of India's two island groups, specifically the Lakshadweep Islands, are important foraging grounds for green turtles. Satellite tracking and recapture of tagged green turtles suggest that individuals nesting in Sri Lanka travel to India for foraging.

Green turtles nest through the year in both the island groups with peaks in July and October to January in Lakshadweep and July to August in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The nesting season in Gujarat is between July and January.



Gujarat



Lakshadweep Islands



Andaman & Nicobar Islands