

STRANDING OF A GREEN TURTLE, *CHELONIA MYDAS*, ON THE COAST OF KARWAR, INDIA

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An adult, female green turtle was found dead at Karwar beach (14°48'42.29"N, 74°07'33.00"E), Karnataka, west coast of India on 20th December 2012. There was no external injury on its body. It is likely the turtle was incidental catch in one of the gill or trawl nets operated in and around Karwar region, district Uttara Kannada, Karnataka State on the west coast of India. Intensive near-shore fishing takes place between Mangalore and Karwar in near shore water up to depth of 50m. Fisherfolk report the operation of trawlers in this area results in the accidental catch and mortality of sea turtles (Naik, unpubl. data), most of which is unreported or unnoticed.

The olive ridley is the only species of sea turtle known to nest along the coast of Karnataka. Large turtles, possibly green or leatherback turtles, nest in the small islands off the Honnavar coast (Sharath, 2006). In the Indian territorial waters there is little information on the green turtle, except for a few nesting records (Bhaskar, 1984; Sunderraj *et al.*, 2002; Tripathy and Choudhury, 2002; Venkatesan *et al.*, 2004) and no recorded stranding of this species from Karnataka coast in recent years.

The stranding of a green turtle in this area might indicate the Karnataka coastal areas as feeding grounds, or possibly migratory pathways, for the species. Juveniles and adult turtle green turtles are found foraging near the coast or around the islands in the Karwar region mainly. Mortality of sea turtles in trawling gear could be due to the lack of trawler efficiency devices in the fishing nets, as TEDs are

not mandatory on the west coast of India as they are on the east coast.

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