

Item No.01:

**BEFORE THE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL
SOUTHERN ZONE, CHENNAI**

[Through Physical Hearing (Hybrid Option)]

Original Application No.13 of 2025(SZ)

IN THE MATTER OF:

Tribunal on its own motion - **SUO MOTU**
based on the News item in The New Indian
Express newspaper, Chennai e-edition
dated 16.01.2025, titled, **"Experts are
alarmed as 350 turtles was ashore dead till
January 15"**.

Union of India,
Represented by its Secretary,
MOEF & CC, New Delhi and ors.



...Respondent(s)

Date of hearing: 17.01.2025.

CORAM:

HON'BLE Smt. JUSTICE PUSHPA SATHYANARAYANA, JUDICIAL MEMBER

HON'BLE Dr. VIJAY KULKARNI, EXPERT MEMBER

For Applicant(s): Suo Motu.

For Respondent(s): Ms. Kavia Tamilmozhi represented
Dr. D. Shanmuganathan for R2, R5 & R6.
Ms. Kavia Tamilmozhi represented
Mr. S. Sai Sathya Jith for R3 & R4.

ORDER

1. The above case has been Suo Motu registered by this Tribunal based on the news item published in *The New Indian Express*, Chennai Edition dated 16.01.2025 titled, **“Experts are alarmed as 350 turtles was ashore dead till January 15”**.

2. It is reported in the newspaper that over the past 15 days, more than 350 carcasses of endangered Olive Ridley turtles have been floating in the open sea between Marina and Kovalam, marking an alarming spike in deaths in the last two decades. Bulging eyes and swollen necks are the visible signs.

3. It is further reported that the number keeps increasing in multiples of ten daily. The cause remains unclear and the authorities like the Forest Department, Fisheries Department, and Coast Guard have no definite answers.

4. It is suspected that the majority of the turtles have died due to drowning after becoming entangled in fishing nets, particularly those used for squid, which are laid 3 Nautical Miles from the shore in the late evening and harvested in the next morning. If a turtle gets entangled during the night, it cannot survive until morning. As the Olive Ridley turtle being a Schedule -1 species, which is protected under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, the Forest Department has to conduct postmortem before the carcasses are buried.

SUPPLEMENTARY LIST

5. The very same issue has been reported in various newspapers viz., *The Times of India* dated 17.01.2025 titled, "**More than 500 sea turtles found dead along Chennai Coast**", *The Hindu* dated 17.01.2025 titled, "**High-level review meeting to be held amid surge in death of Olive Ridley turtle in city**" and *The New Indian Express* dated 17.01.2025 "**50 more Olive Ridleys die in one night, death toll may soon hit 500**".

6. From the above-referred newspaper reports, it is seen that the State Government is examining the issue in consultation with the organizations concerned and the Chief Secretary to Government of Tamil Nadu has called for a High-level Committee meeting in this regard on 20.01.2025.

7. The Fisheries Department and the Forest Department along with the Coast Guard need to come together in implementing the enforcement of trawling and gillnets as per the SOP submitted before the Hon'ble High Court of Madras. The use of Turtle Excluder Device (TED) in trawl nets is not enforced by the Fisheries Department.

8. Considering the gravity of the issue, let notice be issued to all the respondents through the Tribunal along with a copy of the newspaper reports.

9. The learned counsel Ms. Kavia Tamilmozhi representing Dr. D. Shanmuganathan accepts notice on behalf of Respondents Nos.2, 5 & 6 and Ms. Kavia Tamilmozhi representing Mr. S. Sai Sathya Jith accepts notice on behalf of Respondents Nos.3 & 4.

SUPPLEMENTARY LIST

10. The concerned authorities are directed to take swift action to prevent further turtle fatalities, particularly the Department of Fisheries & Fishermen Welfare and the Forest Department are directed to ensure that fishermen use the TED in their trawl nets and to take appropriate action against the offenders.

11. The respondents herein are directed to file their respective reports regarding the course of action they have taken before the date of next hearing.

12. Post the matter on **22.01.2025** for further consideration.



Sd/-

Smt. Justice Pushpa Sathyanarayana, JM

Sd/-

Dr. Vijay Kulkarni, EM

**O.A. No.13/2025(SZ)
17th January, 2025. Mn.**