

**BEFORE THE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL**

**SOUTHERN ZONE, CHENNAI**

**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".

Versus

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

...Respondent(s)

**REPORT FILED BY 6<sup>TH</sup> RESPONDENT- THE PRINCIPAL CHIEF  
CONSERVATOR OF FOREST AND CHIEF WILDLIFE WARDEN,CHENNAI.**

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		11.A.M on 27.01.2025 under the Chairmanship of Principal Chief Conservator of Forests & Chief Wildlife Warden.	
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(**Note:** The page numbers are at the top centre of every page)



Through  
Dr. D. Shanmuganathan  
Standing Counsel of Tamil Nadu  
National Green Tribunal  
Southern Zone, Chennai

**DATE: 30.01.2025**

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SOUTHERN ZONE, CHENNAI  
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**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 dt.16.01.2025,  
titled, “Experts are alarmed as 350 turtles was ashore  
dead till January 15”

And

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

....Respondent(s)

**STATUS REPORT FILED BY THE 6th RESPONDENT**

I, Rakesh Kumar Dogra, I.F.S., Son of Late M L Dogra, Hindu, aged about 57 years, residing at A-1204, AIS Housing Complex, TAISHA, Nerkundram, Chennai-92, and presently working as Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Chief Wildlife Warden, Chennai do hereby solemnly affirm and sincerely state as follows:

1. It is respectfully submitted that I am the 6<sup>th</sup> respondent herein, and I am acquainted with the facts of the case based on the available records. I am filing this counter on behalf of Tamil Nadu Forest Department.
2. It is respectfully submitted that Tamil Nadu state has a coastal length of about 1,076 Km, constitutes about 15% of the total costal length of India and stretches along the Bay of Bengal Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea. The state also has a number of rivers, estuaries and lagoons. The state has lagoons at pulicat lake south and Muthupettai as well as Pichavaram. Tamil Nadu coast has been blessed with vibrant eco-systems and preservation and protection of the eco-system is vital for sustainable development.

3. It is respectfully submitted that Tamil Nadu Forest department is entrusted with the prime responsibility of conserving Sea turtles (Olive Ridley and four other species) throughout the coast of Tamil Nadu. All District Forest Officers and Wildlife Wardens having jurisdiction over the coastal stretches are actively involved in conserving the Sea turtles every year in respect of their jurisdiction. The sea turtle conservation season starts every year from November, where Tamil Nadu Forest Department starts its conservation initiatives, organizing awareness programmes, interdepartmental workshops, appoint locally the sea turtle conservation watchers or turtle guardians, organize night patrol of beaches with the help of Non-Governmental organizations involved in turtle conservation like SSTN (Students Sea Turtle Conservation Network), Tree Foundation etc, organize beach cleanups, create hatcheries, collect and translocate eggs from identified nests for better protection, collect scientific data and release the hatchlings in transparent manner involving general public in the process. The turtle conservation season lasts through April each year. For the kind information of the Hon'ble Tribunal, the last four data from 2020-2021 onwards in shown below.

<b>Sl.No</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>No.of eggs Collected</b>	<b>No.of hatchlings</b>	<b>Hatchling Success (%)</b>
1	2020-21	126110	116160	92
2	2021-22	194444	172339	89
3	2022-23	216887	182917	84
4	2023-24	258907	215778	83
5	2024-25	46372	120	---

It is submitted that during each season, the turtles approach shores of Tamil Nadu for breeding and then the female turtles approach the beaches for laying eggs, which in most instances happen at nights. During this period, the disturbance in the coastal water leads to the mortality of turtle, mostly due to drowning as they get caught in fishing nets, as by-catch in trawlers and also inflicted physical injuries from the propellers.

4. It is respectfully submitted that the Olive Ridley turtles, classified as “Vulnerable” under the international Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List. The Government of TamilNadu has made landmark decisions for conservation of the species to mitigate threats as noted above.
  - a) G.O (Ms) No.186, Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fishers (FS-4) Department, dated 30.09.2015 mandates that no trawl net shall be used without fixing Turtle Excluder Device (TED) before the Cod end, during turtle nesting period of November to April.
  - b) The G.O (Ms) No.146, Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fishers (FS-3) Department, dated 27.09.2016 prohibits the fishing by mechanized fishing vessels, motorized country crafts and those using mechanized fishing techniques in a radius of 5 (five) nautical miles around potential nesting and breeding sites of sea turtles identified by Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute and Department of Forest in the coastal areas of Chennai, Kanchipuram, Cuddalore, Villupuram, Nagappattinam, Ramanathapuram, Thoothukudi and Kanyakumari Districts of Tamil Nadu during the turtle breeding season.
  - c) Instructions to the local bodies to strictly implement ban of beach front lighting during turtle nesting period as ordered in G.O (Ms) No.35, Municipal Administration and Water Supply (MC-1) Department, dated 31.01.2011.

5. It is respectfully submitted that the strategies evolved for monitoring and conserving the Olive Ridley/ Sea turtle include

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Mechanism</b>
Strict Monitoring of Fishing practices	To enforce the mandatory use of Turtle excluder devices (TEDs) in trawl nets as per the Marine Fisheries Regulations and keep a check on prohibited fishing practices as per Government orders referred above. (Action: Fisheries Department)
Awareness Campaigns	To motivate the local fishing community about the importance of sea turtle conservation and sustainable fishing practices. (Action: Fisheries Department/ Local bodies/Forest Department)
Marine Patrols	To Increase patrolling during nesting and migratory seasons to ensure compliance with regulations, through Authorized Officers and Adjudicating officers. (Action: Fisheries Department / Coastal Security Group).
Beach Protection Measures	To Safeguard nesting sites along the coastline to ensure safe nesting and hatching of the turtles and the release in the sea. Action: Forest Department.
Scientific Studies	To Commission research to identify hotspots for turtle activity and implement localized protective measures. (Action: Forest Department & Research Organizations)

6. It is respectfully submitted that this year abnormally high mortality of sea turtles has been seen on the beaches of Chennai. As on 28.01.2025 the data on egg collection, hatchlings released and mortality is given below: -

**Sea Turtle Data 2024-25**

(as on 28.01.2025)

Sl No.	Division	No. of Hatchery	No. of Nests	No. of Eggs collected	No. of Hatchling released	Egg Casualty Reported (Un hatched)	No. of persons engaged	No. of dead turtles washed ashore reported during 2024-25
1	WLW Chennai	8	32	2900	0	0	27	841
2	Villupuram	2	13	1715	0	0	15	11
3	Cuddalore	10	145	16525	0	0	20	70
4	WLW Nagapattinam	10	164	18592	0	0	20	17
5	WLW Ramand	9	33	3900	0	0	11	38
6	Tuticorin	3	4	451	0	1	6	6
7	Tirunelveli	2	5	666	78	0	8	1
8	Kanniyakumari	8	16	1623	42	0	9	5
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>412</b>	<b>46372</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>989</b>

7. It is respectively submitted that considering gravity of situation and bolster efforts of various departments, a meeting was chaired by the Chief Secretary to the Government on 21.01.2025 with Forest Department, Fisheries Department, ICG (Indian Coast Guard), Coastal Security Group and after detailed deliberations, actionable points were arrived to reduce sea turtle mortality during breeding season as detailed in **Annexure I**
8. a) It is respectively submitted that following the deliberations of the above meeting, The Nodal Task Force Meeting was convened on 27.01.2025 under the chairmanship of the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests & Chief Wildlife Warden, Chennai. The various actions initiated by the respective department i.e., Fisheries Department, Department of Environment, Tamil Nadu Coastal Restoration Mission, Coastal security Group, Indian Coast guard, Students Sea Turtle Conservation Network (SSTCN), Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board and Local Bodies were deliberated in details. Copy of the minutes of the meeting is enclosed **Annexure- II.**

b) The Postmortem of dead sea turtles found along the coasts were organized by Forest Department with the help of Government and Private Veterinarians and reports are enclosed in Annexure – III.

9. It is respectively submitted that the **observations of the postmortem reports** are highlighted below:

- (i) It is respectfully submitted that the Chennai Coast is an integral part of the broader Eastern Coastal ecosystem, playing a pivotal role in marine conservation along the entire coastline. The Chennai Coast shares boundaries with several other protected areas, including the Palk Bay Conservation Reserve and the Gulf of Mannar Marine National Park, contributing to the ecological continuity of marine habitats across the Eastern Coast. This strategic location facilitates essential ecological functions, including the protection and nesting of Olive Ridley Sea turtles, while also supporting the migration of various marine species. The Chennai Coast serves as a critical habitat, fostering biodiversity and providing an important link between different marine ecosystems, thus enhancing gene flow and ensuring the survival of numerous marine species.
- (ii) It is respectfully submitted that the recent rise in the number of deaths of Olive Ridley Sea turtles along the Chennai coast is a cause for grave concern. The stranding of dead carcasses along the coastline has been reported in increasing numbers, highlighting a disturbing trend. All the mortalities are duly accounted and inspected by the Forest Department with the help of veterinarians and volunteers and the GPS coordinates and sex is recorded. Most of the carcasses washed ashore are unfit for post-mortem examination onsite and therefore unfit for any reasonable conclusion indicating cause of death.

Additionally, necropsy findings conducted by the team of Veterinarians at Madras Veterinary College, TANUVAS off site and have provided critical insights into the causes of death. The findings include

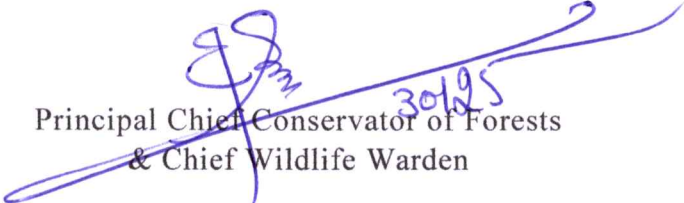
- a. Case 1: Traumatic shock - Comminuted skull fractures, avulsion of the right eyeball, ascites, and hydropericardium in some turtles.
- b. Case 2: Shock - accompanied by emphysema (bullous), hemoperitoneum, haemorrhagic pneumonia, and rupture of the right lung.

It is indicated that these findings point to a range of severe physical trauma, likely from human-related activities, that are contributing to the increasing mortality rates of the post mortem reports of dead sea turtles enclosed for kind reference.

10. It is respectfully submitted that due to sudden increased mortalities of sea turtle there is a need for conducting scientific study which involves scientific investigation as to whether the death is because of anthropogenic activities or discharging untreated industrial effluents or discharging domestic sewage or change of temporal variation of temperature, humidity, whether condition or outbreak of any fatal disease. Hence, the scientific assistance of Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun have also been sought.
11. The joint action by the Tamil Nadu Fisheries Department, Forest Department, Coastal Security Group has been enhanced in the form of joint patrols and as many as 27 cases of violations have been charged by the Fisheries Department for further action as per rules. The joint action will continue to strictly enforce the Marine Fisheries Regulations and is also being monitored by the task force.

In light of the above facts and circumstances, it is humbly prayed that this Hon'ble Tribunal may pass any direction or order as it may deem fit, in the interests of justice and ecological preservation.

Date:- 30.01.2025

  
Principal Chief Conservator of Forests  
& Chief Wildlife Warden

**VERIFICATION**

I, Rakesh Kumar Dogra, I.F.S., Son of Late M L Dogra, Hindu, aged about 57 years, residing at A-1204, AIS Housing Complex, TAISHA, Nerkundram, Chennai-92, and presently working as Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Chief Wildlife Warden, Chennai Solemnly affirm that the contents of this Report are true to the best of my knowledge based on the records and I have not suppressed any facts.

Date:- 30.01.2025

  
Principal Chief Conservator of Forests  
& Chief Wildlife Warden



**Environment, Climate Change  
and Forests (FR.5) Department,  
Secretariat, Chennai-9.**  
**Phone:- 044-25671511**  
**E-mail:-eccfd@tn.gov.in**

**Letter No.108/FR.5/2025 - 4, Dated 27.01.2025**

**From**

Dr. P. Senthilkumar, I.A.S.,  
Principal Secretary to Government.

**To**

The Additional Chief Secretary to Government,  
Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Department,  
Secretariat, Chennai – 9 (w.e).

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The Principal Secretary to Government,  
Animal Husbandry, Dairying, Fisheries and Fishermen  
Welfare Department, Chennai – 9.(w.e)

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The Principal Secretary to Government,  
Municipal Administration and Water Supply Department,  
Secretariat, Chennai – 9 (w.e)

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The Commissioner,  
Greater Chennai Corporation,  
Chennai – 2 (w.e.)

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The Director,  
Commissioner of Fisheries and Fishermen Welfare,  
Chennai -35 (w.e).

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The Inspector General,  
Coast Guard, Chennai (w.e).

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The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests,  
(Head of Forest Force), Chennai – 32 (w.e).

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The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Director,  
Advanced Institute for Wildlife Conservation (AIWC),  
Vandalur, Chennai-48 (w.e).

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The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and  
Chief Wildlife Warden, Chennai – 32 (w.e).

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The Chief Mission Director,  
Tamil Nadu Coastal Restoration Mission,  
O/o. the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests,  
Chennai – 32 (w.e).

The Additional Director General of Police,  
Coastal Security Group of Tamil Nadu  
Chennai – 600 004 (w.e).

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The Chairperson,  
Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board,  
Chennai – 32 (w.e).

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The Wildlife Warden,  
Chennai (w.e).

**Sir/Madam,**

Sub: Forest- Wildlife – Conservation of Sea Turtle  
– Meeting held on 21.01.2025 under the  
Chairmanship of Chief Secretary to  
Government at Chief Secretary's Conference  
Hall, Secretariat, Chennai – Minutes  
Communicated - Regarding.  
Ref: Government letter No.108/FR5/2024-1, dated  
20.01.2025.

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In continuation of Government letter cited, I am directed to enclose a copy of the approved minutes of the meeting of the Conservation of Sea Turtle under the Chairmanship of Chief Secretary to Government held on 21.01.2025 for necessary action. The action taken report on the minutes may be sent to Government early.

Yours faithfully,

*P. selvi*  
27.1.25

for Principal Secretary to Government

**Copy to:-**

The Senior Principal Private Secretary to Chief Secretary to  
Government, Chennai – 9.

The Private Secretary to Principal Secretary to Government,  
Environment, Climate Change and Forests Department,  
Chennai – 9.

**Minutes of meeting held on 21.01.2025 under the Chairmanship of Chief Secretary regarding Conservation of Sea Turtle**

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In the meeting chaired by the Chief Secretary to Government held on 21.01.2025, after detailed deliberations the following actionable points were arrived at to reduce mortality of Sea Turtles during the turtle breeding season.

The list of participants is annexed.

- To strictly implement the orders issued in the G.O.(Ms)No.186, Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries (FS-4) Department, dated 30.09.2015 as no trawl net shall be used without fixing Turtle Excluder Device (TED) before the Cod end, during November to April.

**Action: Fisheries Department**

- To enforce the orders issued in the G.O.(Ms)No.146, Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries (FS-3) Department, dated 27.09.2016 to prohibit the fishing by mechanized fishing vessels, motorized country crafts and those using mechanized fishing techniques in a radius of 5 (five) nautical miles around potential nesting and breeding sites of sea turtles identified by Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute and Department of Forest in the coastal areas of Chennai, Kanchipuram, Cuddalore, Villupuram, Nagapattinam, Ramanathapuram, Thoothukudi and Kanniyakumari Districts of Tamil Nadu during the turtle breeding season.

**Action: Fisheries Department**

- Penal action to be taken by Authorized Officers / Adjudicating Officers of Fisheries Department under Tamil Nadu Marine Fishing Regulation Act, 1983 for violations of above Government Orders.

**Action: Fisheries Department**

- Commissioner, Fisheries may authorize officials of Coastal Security Group (Sub-inspector of Police and above) and Marine Enforcement Wing to initiate penal action against the violators of Tamil Nadu Marine Fishing Regulation Act and Rules.

**Action: Fisheries Department/CSG & MEW**

- Amendment may be issued to Tamil Nadu Marine Fishing Regulation Act and Rules to make switching off of GPS transponders in fishing boats as an offence.

**Action: Fisheries Department**

- All fishing boats in 5 nautical miles may be monitored through GPS technology to analyze their movement and amount of time spent along the coast. Suitable technical platform may be developed for that.

**Action: Fisheries Department /SP, CSG**

- Diesel subsidy and other allowances given by Government should not be extended to fishermen who are not fitting TED during the period of November to April.

**Action: Fisheries Department**

- To implement the orders issued in the G.O.(Ms)No.30, Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries (FS-3) Department, dated 09.02.2017. The Task Force constituted by the above G.O should meet once in a week during the breeding season of sea turtles. If required more departments may be included in the task force.

**Action: PCCF & CWW**

- Task force should arrange for joint inspection including representatives of all departments concerned.

**Action: PCCF & CWW**

- Task force should share information on hotspots of turtle activity to Coast Guard. Coast Guard will monitor activities of fishing boats in the hotspots and send periodical reports to task force.

**Action: PCCF & CWW/CMFRI/Coast Guard**

- Capacity building of departments of Fisheries and Animal Husbandry, Forests and Research institutions like AIWC and TANUVAS should be done to equip them to deal with turtle mortality.

**Action: Fisheries / Forest Department**

- Forest Department should ensure daily night patrol in turtle nesting areas and whenever increase in mortality is observed, it should be immediately reported.

**Action: Forest Department**

- Forest Department to take action to involve more turtle volunteers to support conservation initiatives.

**Action: Forest Department**

- To instruct the local bodies to control the movement of stray dogs in and around the nesting areas during turtle nesting season.

**Action: GCC / RD&PR / MA&WS Department**

- Local bodies may take action to regulate unlicensed local eateries along beaches and ensure proper waste disposal.

**Action: GCC / RD&PR / MA&WS Department**

- Enforce Ray fish net ban during the period of November to April.

**Action: Fisheries Department**

- To instruct the Local bodies to strictly implement ban of beach front lighting during turtle nesting period as ordered in G.O.(Ms)No.35, Municipal Administration and Water Supply (MC-1) Department, dated 31.01.2011.

**Action: MA&WS / GCC /RD&PR Department**

- Forest Department should increase no of post mortem carried out in cases of turtle mortality (minimum 50%) so that some scientific conclusion on cause of death may be arrived at.

**Action: Forest Department**

- Fisheries department may examine the feasibility of taking up a pilot study on efficiency of nets fitted with specially designed LED lights to scare off turtles.  
**Action: Fisheries Department**

- Long term telemetry studies on movement of turtles along Tamil Nadu Coast may be undertaken to collect proper scientific data on turtle movement and local migration.  
**Action: AIWC**

The Chief Secretary to Government instructed all departments concerned to take follow-up action immediately.

**N. MURUGANANDAM,  
CHIEF SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT**

**// True Copy //**

*P. Selvi*  
27.1.25  
**SECTION OFFICER**  
*27/1/25*

**List of Participant's**

1. Thiru. Satyabrata Sahoo, I.A.S.,  
Principal Secretary to Government,  
Animal Husbandry, Dairying, Fisheries and Fishermen Welfare Department
2. Dr. P. Senthilkumar, I.A.S.,  
Principal Secretary to Government,  
Environment, Climate Change and Forests Department.
3. Thiru. Srinivas R.Reddy, I.F.S.,  
Principal Chief Conservator of Forests & Head of Forest Force.
4. Thiru. A. Udhayan, I.F.S.,  
Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Director,  
Advanced Institute of Wildlife Conservation, Vandalur.
5. Thiru. Rakesh Kumar Dogra, I.F.S.,  
Principal Chief Conservator of Forests & Chief Wildlife Warden.
6. Thiru.Anurag Mishra, I.F.S.,  
Special Secretary (Environment, Climate Change)
7. Thiru. Deepak S. Bilgi, I.F.S.,  
Chief Mission Director, TNSHORE.
8. Thiru. Ritto Cyriac, I.F.S.,  
Special Secretary (Forests)
9. Thiru.Manish Meena, I.F.S.,  
Wildlife Warden, Chennai.
10. Thiru. V.A. Saravanan,  
District Forest Officer, Chennai.
11. Thiru. Sanjay Kumar,  
Additional Director General of Police,  
Coastal Security Group.
12. Thiru.S. Prem kumar, Commandant,  
Regional Head Quarters (East).
13. Thiru. I. Inbarajan,  
Deputy Commandant, DHQ-5.
14. Thiru. R. Kannan, Member Secretary,  
Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board.

15. Ms. Sharmila,  
Joint Director (Regional), Chennai.
16. Thiru. Julius Edward,  
Deputy Director (marine).
17. Thiru D.Kumar,  
Superintendent of Police,  
Marine Enforcement Wing.

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**Minutes of Nodal Task Force Meeting for Conservation & Protection of Sea Turtles held at 11.A.M on 27.01.2025 under the Chairmanship of Principal Chief Conservator of Forests & Chief Wildlife Warden, Chennai at Mini conference Hall, Forest Headquarters, Chennai-32.**

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**The following officers and members were present during the meeting.**

<b>Sl. No.</b>	<b>Name &amp; Designation</b>	<b>Representing for</b>
1	<b>Mr. Rakesh Kumar Dogra, IFS.,</b> Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Chief Wildlife Warden, Chennai-32.	O/o the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Head of Forest Force), Chennai-32.
2	<b>Mr. A. Udhayan, IFS.,</b> PCCF & Director, Advanced Institute for Wildlife Conservation (Research, Training and Education), Vandalur.	Advanced Institute for Wildlife Conservation (Research, Training and Education), Vandalur.
3	<b>Mr. Ashish Kumar Srivastava, IFS.,</b> Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Director, Arignar Anna Zoological Park, Vandalur.	Arignar Anna Zoological Park, Vandalur.
4	<b>Mr. Deepak Bilgi, IFS.,</b> Chief Mission Director, Tamil Nadu Coastal Restoration Mission, Chennai	Tamil Nadu Coastal Restoration Mission, Chennai
5	<b>Mr. Manish Meena, IFS.</b> Wildlife Warden, Chennai.	Wildlife Warden, Chennai.
6	<b>Mr. Sanjay Kumar, IPS</b> Additional Director General of Police (ADGP), Coastal Security Group.	Coastal Security Group
7	<b>Mr. Rohith Nathan Rajagopal, IPS.,</b> Superintendent of Police, Coastal Security Group.	Coastal Security Group
8	<b>Mr. N. Suresh Kumar,</b> Deputy Director, Department of Environment.	Department of Environment
9	<b>Mrs. Sharmila,</b> Joint Director of Fisheries Regional, Chennai.	Commissioner of Fisheries
10	<b>Mr. M. Senthil Kumar,</b> Assistant Director of Fisheries (Marine), Head Office.	Commissioner of Fisheries
11	<b>Mr. B. Thirunageswaran,</b> Assistant Director of Fisheries (Fishing Harbour), Chennai.	Commissioner of Fisheries
12	<b>S. Premkumar,</b> Commandant, Regional Fisheries & Environment Officer, Indian Coast Guard	Indian Coast Guard.
13	<b>KI Inbarajan,</b> Deputy Operation Officer,	Indian Coast Guard.
14	<b>Mr. V. Arun,</b>	Student Sea Turtle

	Co-Ordinator	Conservation Network (SSTCN)
15	<b>Mrs. B. Akila,</b> Co-Ordinator	Student Sea Turtle Conservation Network (SSTCN)
16	<b>Mr. K. Shravan Krishnan,</b>	Student Sea Turtle Conservation Network (SSTCN)
17	<b>K. Kuppan,</b> Chennai - Thiruvallur District Visai Padagu, Association President.	Chennai - Thiruvallur District Motorised Fishermen Boat Association
18	<b>Mr. M. Vijesh</b>	Chennai Sengai Singaravelar Motorised Fishermen Boat Owners.
19	<b>Mr. Vinoth</b>	Chennai Sengai Singaravelar Visai Padagu Owners.
20	<b>K. Prabakaran,</b> Treasurer,	Gill Net Fishing Association
21	<b>S. Raghunath,</b> President,	Gill Net Fishing Association
22	<b>K. Suresh,</b> Deputy Secretary,	Chennai Motorised Fishermen Boat Association.
23	<b>K. Karthikeyan,</b> Deputy Secretary,	Chennai Motorised Fishermen Boat Association.
24	<b>K. Sudhakar,</b> Deputy Treasurer,	Chennai Visai Padagu Fishing Association.
25	<b>K. Jeevarathnam,</b> Secretary	Chennai Visai Padagu Fishing Association.

The Principal Chief Conservator for Forests and Chief Wildlife Warden, Chennai welcomed all the participants for the meeting and flagged the issue of abnormally high mortality of sea turtles getting washed ashore in the Chennai Coast. It was brought to notice of task force that as on 25.01.2025, 706 sea turtle mortalities were reported in the Chennai coast and for last three days only female deaths were

reported. He added that the the main objective of the task force is to ensure synergy in the various organizations and departments in taking concerted steps for tackling unusual mortality as well as ensuring conservation of turtles. The following agenda were discussed during the meeting

<b>Sl. No.</b>	<b>Agendas</b>	<b>Action to be followed</b>
1	To strictly implement the orders issued in the G.O.(Ms)No.186, Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries (FS-4) Department, dated 30.09.2015 as no trawl net shall be used without fixing Turtle Excluder Device (TED) before the Cod end, during November to April.	<p>The Fisheries Department had informed that joint raids have been stepped up subsequent to the decision taken in meeting by Chief Secretary, and 24 trawlers have been issued challans for using trawl net with in the 5 nautical miles from coastal and without fixing TED. Whereas the development of better TEDs with lesser loss of catch is an ongoing process and better models are getting tested, the fact of the ban remains, and its use is mandatory. Fisheries department can provide the prototype of recently evolved devices to the fishermen associations for its adoption.</p> <p>It was also requested that the Fisheries Department would initiate strict action against the persons violating the regulation.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Action: Fisheries Department</b></p>
2	To enforce the orders issued in the G.O. (Ms)No.146, Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries (FS-3) Department, dated 27.09.2016 to prohibit the fishing by mechanized fishing vessels, motorized country crafts and those using mechanized fishing techniques in a radius of 5 (five) nautical miles around	<p>It was emphasized to enforce the ban by better monitoring.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is requested that control room needs to physically monitor for 24 x 7 boat movement in the coastal areas within the 5 nautical miles, by more than the time spend in the prohibited zone.</li> <li>• Further, It was requested to share the Helpline Numbers to the public in coastal villages and other departments in the committee, so that information on the violations can be shared.</li> <li>• Enhanced Patrolling may be done by Fisheries department.</li> <li>• Joint patrolling along with CSG and Forest department. The fisheries department was requested to hire boats</li> </ul>

	<p>potential nesting and breeding sites of sea turtles identified by Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute and Department of Forest in the coastal areas of Chennai, Kanchipuram, Cuddalore, Villupuram, Nagapattinam, Ramanathapuram, Thoothukudi and Kanniyakumari Districts of Tamil Nadu during the turtle breeding season.</p>	<p>for this purpose.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forest Department would also hire one boat for joint patrolling to strengthen the surveillance and monitoring.</li> <li>• Random patrolling also need to be undertaken during night hours, as movement of turtles is during night for egg laying.</li> <li>• Associations were requested that Fisherman may give information on movement of turtle for nesting, so that focused approach is taken to ensure clear passage.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Action: Fisheries Department</b></p>
<p>3</p>	<p>Penal action to be taken by Authorized Officers / Adjudicating Officers of Fisheries Department under Tamil Nadu Marine Fishing Regulation Act, 1983 for violations of above Government Orders.</p>	<p>It is requested that the Fisheries Department may levy early penalty as decided by Adjudicating officers and fishing license may also be cancelled for violations as reported on exemplary penal action to act as deterrence to violators. The action taken on 24 boats may please be informed by next meeting.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Action: Fisheries</b></p>
<p>4</p>	<p>Commissioner, Fisheries may authorize officials of Coastal Security Group (Sub-inspector of Police and above) and Marine Enforcement Wing to initiate penal action against the violators of Tamil Nadu Marine Fishing Regulation Act</p>	<p>The Fisheries Department has informed that proposal was under submission to delegate powers to the Coastal Security Group to strengthen implementation of regulation. It was requested to issue order early as we are in critical turtle nesting period.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Action: Fisheries</b></p>

	and Rules.	
5	Amendment may be issued to Tamil Nadu Marine Fishing Regulation Act and Rules to make switching off of GPS transponders in fishing boats as an offence.	It was informed that necessary action will be taken at HoD level and reported. <b>Action: Fisheries</b>
6	All fishing boats in 5 nautical miles may be monitored through GPS technology to analyze their movement and amount of time spent along the coast. Suitable technical platform may be developed for that.	It is ensured that the Transponders may be fitted in all fishing boats and fishing boat movements monitored every day. It was represented that the transponders could also be converted to solar for better working.
7	Diesel subsidy and other allowances given by Government should not be extended to fishermen who are not fitting TED during the period of November to April.	It was reported that it is now being followed by Fisheries Department. The specific cases may kindly be brought to notice of the task force.
8	To implement the orders issued in the G.O.(Ms)No.30, Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries (FS-3) Department, dated 09.02.2017. The Task Force constituted by the above G.O should meet once in a week	It was decided that the Task force would meet once a week during breeding season of sea turtles. The next meeting has been scheduled on Monday the 6th February 2025 to take fresh stock of the situation and assess the action taken. <b>Action: Nodal Task Force</b>

	during the breeding season of sea turtles. If required more departments may be included in the task force.	
9	Task force should arrange for joint inspection including representatives of all departments concerned.	Additional patrolling would be carried for joint inspection including representatives of all departments. To help in the effort, the forest department would also hire the votes. <b>Action: Nodal Task Force</b>
10	Task force should share information on hotspots of turtle activity to Coast Guard. Coast Guard will monitor activities of fishing boats in the hotspots and send periodical reports to task force.	The Wildlife Warden, Chennai is requested to communicate the sea turtle nesting hotspot locations in lat.-long to the Fisheries Department, Coastal Security Group to monitor the activities of fishing boats. <b>Action: Wildlife Warden, Chennai</b>
11	Capacity building of departments of Fisheries and Animal Husbandry, Forests and Research institutions like AIWC and TANUVAS should be done to equip them to deal with turtle mortality.	The Wildlife Warden has reported that already postmortem reports were obtained on turtle mortality involving vets from various departments like AH deptt, AIWC, AAZP and TANUVAS apart from NGOs and private sector vets. PCCF and Director AIWC was also requested to host one such programme during February 2025. <b>Action: Wildlife Warden, Chennai</b>
12	Forest Department should ensure daily night patrol in turtle nesting areas and whenever increase in mortality is observed; it should be immediately reported.	CCF Chennai and Coastal Mission Director and Wildlife Warden, Chennai were requested to ensure daily early morning and night patrol in the turtle nesting areas and report and inform the action taken by next meeting. <b>Action: TN Shore, Wildlife Warden, Chennai</b>
13	Forest Department to take action to involve	Wildlife Warden, Chennai is requested to take action for more turtle volunteers along with

	more turtle fishermen support conservation initiatives. The volunteers to support Forest department has already created a portal for conservation initiatives. for volunteers to register for participation in turtle conservation activities and same should be well publicized. <i>Sagar mitras</i> of Fisheries department in fishing villages may also be involved.	<b>Action: Wildlife Warden, Chennai</b>
14	To instruct the local bodies to control the movement of stray dogs in and around the nesting areas during turtle nesting season.	Request to be officially placed with local bodies. The BMAD volunteered to help with Animal birth control measures to be carried out to avoid multiplication of stray dogs in nesting areas. <b>Action: WLW and BMAD</b>
15	Local bodies may take action to regulate unlicensed local eateries along beaches and ensure proper waste disposal.	It was informed that Forest Department would initiate necessary request to local bodies for regulating such unregulated usage of beaches. <b>Action: Wildlife Warden, Chennai.</b>
16	Enforce Ray fish net ban during the period of November to April.	The Fisheries department has informed that the Ray fish nets are banned during the nesting period. It needs to be strictly enforced. <b>Action: Fisheries</b>
17	To instruct the Local bodies to strictly implement ban of beach front lighting during turtle nesting period as ordered in G.O. (Ms)No.35, Municipal Administration and Water Supply (MC-1) Department, dated 31.01.2011.	Wildlife Warden, Chennai is requested to initiate reference to the local bodies to implement the ban of beach front lighting during the turtle nesting period. The same need to be monitored while making turtle walks. <b>Action: Wildlife Warden, Chennai.</b>
18	Forest Department should increase no of post mortem carried	Wildlife Warden, Chennai informed that the action is being taken involving vets from AAZP, TANUVAS, BMAD as well as AH department. He

	out in cases of turtle mortality ( <u>minimum 50%</u> ) so that some scientific conclusion on cause of death may be arrived at.	is requested to submit the postmortem reports of turtle mortality before 28.01.2025. The report of various samples collected to analyze mortality reasons should also be obtained urgently and Task force apprised about the results.  <b>Action: Wildlife Warden, Chennai.</b>
19	Fisheries department may examine the feasibility of taking up a pilot study on efficiency of nets fitted with specially designed LED lights to scare off turtles.	Fisheries Department has informed that the usage of LED lights attract fish unnaturally and designed LED lights are already banned by Gol. It was requested to share the orders with the Task force.  <b>Action: Fisheries</b>
20	Long term telemetry studies on movement of turtles along Tamil Nadu Coast may be undertaken to collect proper scientific data on turtle movement and local migration.	Mrs. Akila, Co Ordinator, Student Sea Turtle Conservation Network (SSTCN) has informed that the Odisha model scientific data on turtle movement will be shared. The PCCF and Director, AIWC was also requested for anchoring long term telemetry studies to understand turtle movement patterns and habitat usage along the Chennai coast.  <b>Action: PCCF &amp; Director, AIWC, Chennai.</b>

The following additional actionable points were deliberated by the member's suggestions for necessary action.

1. It was requested by the Fishermen Associations to enlighten on authorities to whom pollution and industries discharging effluents complaints may be addressed and it was informed by Deputy Director Department of Environment that the concerned District Collectors and District Environmental Engineers available in each district may be addressed.
2. It was requested by the Fishermen Association to check sea water for contamination by plastic wastes and industrial effluents.
3. The motorized fisherman boat Association were requested to provide information to the Fisheries Department on specific instances of using motorized boats above 240 hp.

4. The Fishermen Association were requested to inform on boats operated beyond 5 nautical miles and also report the movement of turtle for nesting to shore.
5. It was also requested that the fishing nets may be lifted more frequently, every half hour, to check for trapping of sea turtle in nets, especially during the nesting season.
6. It was informed that Forest Department would also hire boats for increased patrolling to bolster the enforcement of fisheries regulation. It was also requested to use technologies like drones to monitor the violations.

The Chairperson thanked the participants and requested active cooperation of all the department in saving sea-turtles. The next meeting is scheduled on 6th February 2025 at 11 AM in the same venue.

Chairperson  
Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and  
Chief Wildlife Warden, Chennai

To:

The Members and Invitees,

Nodal Task Force, Sea Turtle Conservation.

Copy submitted to the Principal Secretary to Government, Environment Climate Change and Forest Department, Secretariat, Chennai-9 for kind information.