

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)

**ADDITIONAL TYPESET FILED BY 6TH RESPONDENT-
THE PRINCIPAL CHIEF CONSERVATOR OF FOREST
AND CHIEF WILDLIFE ,CHENNAI.**

INDEX

S. No.	Date	Description	Page No.
1	31.01.2011	Annexure 1	1-2
2	28.01.2026	Annexure 2	3-4

Note: The page numbers are at the top centre of every page)



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

DATE: 08.02.2026

**ABSTRACT**

Wild Life - Olive Ridley Turtle - Save the lives of Olive Ridley Turtle in the Coast of Bay of Bengal by switching off the lights erected on the mast all along the coast from Adyar estuary to Neelankarai between 11.00 P.M - 5.00 A.M every day during breeding season i.e. January-April of every year - Proposal of the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests & Chief Wild Life Warden - Orders - Issued.

MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATION AND WATER SUPPLY (M.C.I) DEPARTMENT

G.O.(Ms) No.35

Dated. 31.01.2011.

Read:

From the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests & Chief Wild Life Warden, Panagal Maaligai, Saidapet, Chennai - 600 015 Letter Ref.No.WL1/8802/2010 Dated 13.01.2011.

ORDER

The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests & Chief Wild Life Warden, Panagal Maaligai, Saidapet, Chennai - 600 015, in the Letter read above, has stated that:-

- Sea turtle especially Olive Ridley Turtle, an endangered species comes to sea shore in the coast of Bay of Bengal including in the coast of marina, Neelankarai, Elliots Beach during breeding season for laying eggs between January to April every year.
- This sea turtle face several problems in their entire life until it meets its natural death. The scientific study proves that only one out of 1000 hatchlings entered into the sea attains the adulthood and comes to the shore for breeding. It is also said that the turtle comes to same shore for breeding year after year. The rest of the hatchlings will become a feed for other marine organisms in general.
- The forest Department is taking up the conservation of turtles with active participation of some NGOs based at Chennai and Tamil Nadu. The turtle lays egg in the beach about 20-30 m from the high tide and the clutch size varies from 100-200 eggs depends upon the age of the turtle.
- Tamil Nadu beaches are known for sporadic nesting and it has now become very scarce because of vandalism enacted by anti-social elements either by killing turtle for meat or collection of eggs for food. Sometimes the emergent hatchlings were also eaten by stray dogs.
- In addition to the above problems, the hatchlings emerging out from the nests formed in beaches, move towards bright light emanating from powerful sodium vapour lamp erected all along the coast from Adayar estuary to Neelankarai instead of moving towards sea.
- In fact, the hatchlings are programmed by birth to move towards the sea on seeing bright stars and moonlight and reflection of the sea water to reach the sea in the night. However, due to powerful sodium vapour lamps erected all along the coast of Adayar estuary to Neelankarai, the hatchlings by disorientation move toward the landside and get killed by stray dogs, bandicoots, crows, human being, etc.,

- Sometimes they were run over by speedy vehicles during the period. Information has been received from field staff and NGOs that the hatchlings are getting killed unnaturally every day when they move towards opposite direction.
- The above said problem was discussed in a meeting convened by the Environment & Forests Department and consequently the powerful lights erected on the mast all along the coast were switched off between 11.00 P.M - 5.00 A.M every day during breeding season i.e. January-April 2010. During this year also, the same problem would continue without switching off the powerful lamp filled on the mast.

3. Since the problems continue to be there every year after year during breeding season, the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests & Chief Wild Life Warden has requested the Government in Environment and Forest Department to issue necessary orders to switch off the lights by the Corporation during the breeding season of every year so that it becomes a regular feature and this will help in conservation of turtle in a smaller extent. The Environment & Forest Department has suggested issuing suitable orders in this regard so that this issue need not be pressed every year.

4. The Government, after careful examination of the proposal of the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests & Chief Wild Life Warden, direct the Commissioner, Corporation of Chennai to switch off the lights erected on the mast all along the coast from Adyar estuary to Neelankarai between 11.00 P.M - 5.00 A.M every day during breeding season i.e. January-April of every year in order to save the lives of Olive Ridley Turtle.

5. Consequent on the above orders, the Government also direct the Commissioner of Police, Chennai to coordinate with the Commissioner, Corporation of Chennai in this regard and to keep a vigil in the coastal areas.

// By Order of the Governor //

K. Ashok Vardhan Shetty
Principal Secretary to Government.

To

The Commissioner, Corporation of Chennai,
Chennai - 600 003.

The Commissioner of Police, Egmore, Chennai - 600 008.

The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests & Chief Wild Life Warden,
Panagal Maaligai, Saidapet, Chennai - 600 015

Copy to:-

The Environment & Forest Department, Ch - 600 009.

The Home Department, Chennai - 600 009.

The Special Personal Assistant to the Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister,
Chennai - 600 009.

The Personal Secretary to the Principal Secretary, Municipal Administration
and Water Supply Department, Chennai - 600 009.

The Municipal Administration and Water Supply (O.P.II) Department,
Chennai - 600 009.

// Forwarded By Order //


Section Officer.

Office of the Director, Fisheries
and Fishermen Welfare
Department, Chennai – 600 035.

Rc. No. 1368/J6/2025

Dated 28. 01.2026

MEMORANDUM

- Sub : Marine Fisheries – Conservation and protection of Sea turtle - Directions of the Hon'ble National Green Tribunal Southern Zone, Chennai in their order dated 05.01.2026– Regulation of Light and Sound Disturbances along the Coast during Turtle Nesting Season (January–April) – Reg.
- Ref : Order dated 05.01.2026 of the Hon'ble National Green Tribunal, Southern Zone, Chennai in O.A. No.13 of 2025 (SZ).

In the order dated 05.01.2026 in Original Application No. 13 of 2025(SZ), the Hon'ble National Green Tribunal Southern Zone, Chennai has directed the Department of Fisheries & Fishermen Welfare and the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests & Chief Wildlife Warden, along with the Tamil Nadu State Coastal Zone Management Authority, to take preventive measures to avoid disturbances to the nesting and hatching of Olive Ridley turtles (Copy enclosed) and the matter be listed on 09.02.2026.

The Hon'ble National Green Tribunal Southern Zone, Chennai has further observed that disturbances are caused not only by natural predators such as crows and dogs, but also by human activities, particularly excessive artificial lighting and sound, which adversely affect the nesting season between January and April in all the Coastal Districts of Tamil Nadu.

In compliance with the above directions, all Coastal Assistant Directors of Fisheries and Fishermen Welfare are instructed to sensitize fishermen in coastal villages through field Staffs and Sagar Mithras regarding the need to switch off or minimize non-essential lights facing the seashore during night hours, prohibit the use of loudspeakers and other noise-generating activities along the coast during the nesting season, prevent temporary lighting and sound arrangements near nesting beaches, and emphasize the importance of reducing light and sound pollution for effective sea turtle conservation.

Further, all Coastal Assistant Directors of Fisheries and Fishermen Welfare are requested to take up the matter with the respective District Collectors in coordination with District Forest Officer to issue suitable instructions to the Rural Development Department, Local Municipal Administration, Town Panchayats,

Village Panchayats, Police Departments, and other concerned local bodies under their jurisdiction to ensure that the following measures are strictly implemented in coastal areas identified as turtle nesting and hatching sites:

1. Switching off or minimizing all non-essential street lights, high-mast lights, decorative lights, and floodlights facing the seashore during night hours throughout the nesting and hatching season (January–April).
2. Prohibiting the use of loudspeakers, sound systems, public address systems, music events, and other noise-generating activities along the coastal stretches during night hours in the nesting season.
3. Ensuring that no temporary lighting arrangements or sound systems are permitted on beaches or coastal roads adjoining sea turtle nesting areas.
4. Sensitizing local body officials, elected representatives, coastal residents, and commercial establishments regarding the importance of reducing light and sound pollution for the protection of sea turtles.

Encl : As above

Sd/- K.V. Muralidharan
Director,

Fisheries and Fishermen Welfare

K.V. Muralidharan
For Director, 28/01/2026

Fisheries and Fishermen Welfare

To

Assistant Director of Fisheries and Fishermen Welfare

Tiruvallur, FHMW-Chennai, Chennai, Kanchipuram, Villupuram, Cuddalore, Mayiladuthurai, Nagapattinam, Tiruvarur, Thanjavur, Pudukottai, Ramanathapuram North, Ramanathapuram South, Mandapam, Rameswaram, FHMW-Thoothukudi, Thoothukudi, Radhapuram, Kanniyakumari, Colachel, Thengaipattanam.

Copy to the Joint Director of Fisheries and Fishermen Welfare (Regional),
Chennai, Nagapattinam, Thoothukudi

Copy to the Deputy Director of Fisheries and Fishermen Welfare (Regional),
Cuddalore, Tiruchirappalli, Ramanathapuram, Kanniyakumari