

## South Asia most dangerous for sea turtles: study

September 29 2011

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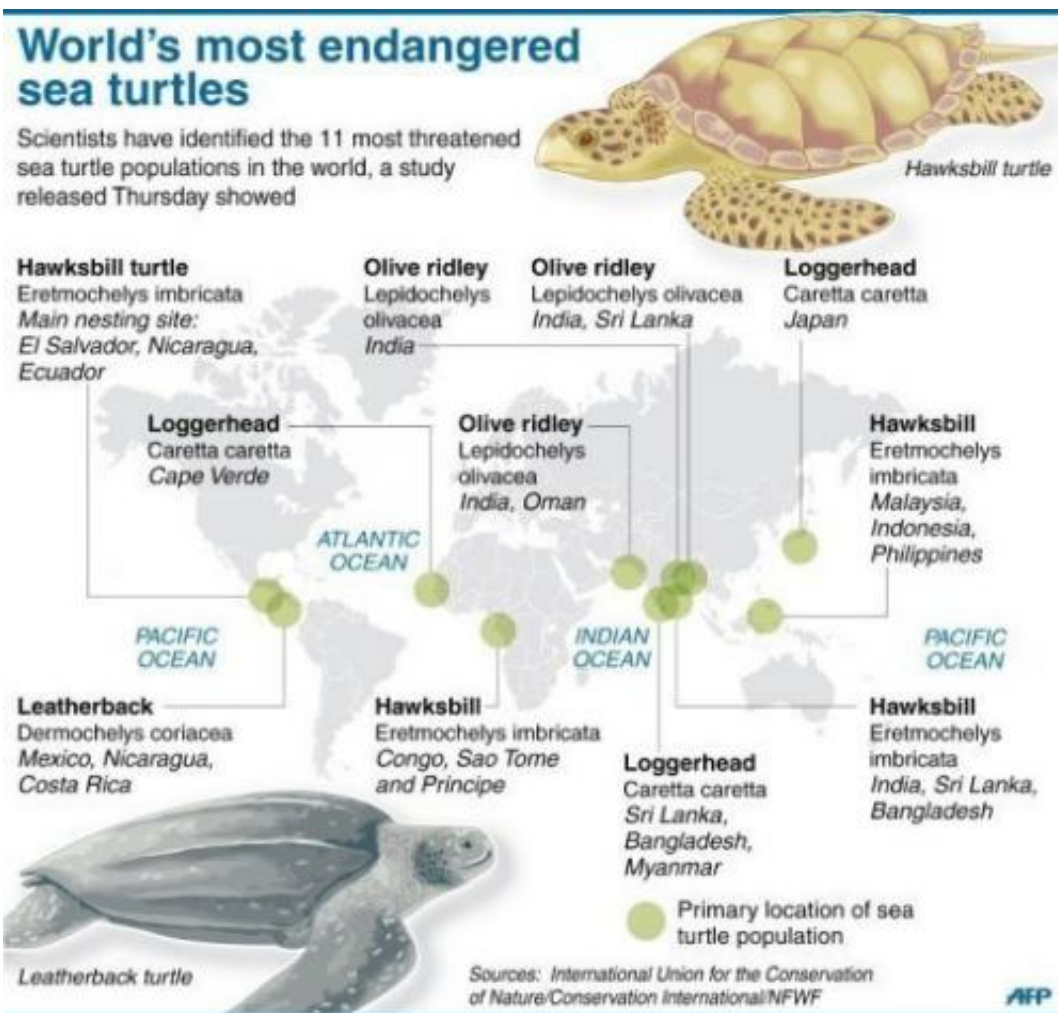
A Green sea turtle is seen in a climate controlled tank at a Nature Centre in Florida. The waters around India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka are home to the world's most endangered sea turtles, according to a study aimed at setting a blueprint for global conservation.

The waters around India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka are home to the world's most endangered sea turtles, according to a study released Thursday aimed at setting a blueprint for global conservation.

While it was well known that almost all sea turtle species face extinction, the study by 30 scientists was the first to identify specific populations around the world that were most at threat, Conservation International said.

It identified the 11 most threatened populations around the globe, five of which were on the beaches or in the exclusive economic zones of Indian Ocean countries India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

Asia in general was found to be a particularly dangerous region for sea turtles, with Japan, Myanmar, the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia also named as having some of the most threatened populations.



Graphic showing the 11 most threatened sea turtle populations. The waters around India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka are home to the world's most endangered sea turtles, according to a study aimed at setting a blueprint for global conservation.

In contrast, the study found the healthiest sea turtle populations in Australia, the South Pacific and Latin American countries including Mexico, Ecuador and Brazil.

The main threats for sea turtles, stunning creatures that have been in existence for at least 110 million years, are getting caught in the nets and long lines of the [commercial fishing](#) industry, the study said.

Other major threats are the gathering of [turtle eggs](#) and the eating of their meat by local communities. [Coastal development](#), shipping and increasingly climate change are also endangering these populations, the study found.

Scientists involved in the study said it would play an important role in mapping out conservation plans for the most vulnerable sea turtles.

"We are excited by the clarity this new study provides by identifying areas around the world that are most important for sea turtle conservation," said Claude Gascon, chief science officer at the US-based National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.



A loggerhead turtle swims near fishing nets. The waters around India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka are home to the world's most endangered sea turtles, according to a study aimed at setting a blueprint for global conservation.

"This report is a guide for scientists, conservationists, policy makers, and funders to determine where conservation resources can be allocated to improve the status of these threatened populations."

Conservation International scientist Bryan Wallace emphasised in a blog that strong [conservation](#) efforts had proved to be successful, offering hope for the future.

He cited the example of green and olive ridley [sea turtles](#) -- once widely harvested particularly in Mexico for their eggs and meat -- but which now have some of the world's healthiest sea turtle populations.

This was credited to a 1990 ban imposed -- and strictly enforced -- on the consumption of such sea turtle products, Wallace said in the blog.

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