

Race to rescue turtles entangled in plastic on Bangladesh beach

July 12 2020, by Suzauddin Rubel and Sam Jahan



A rescued turtle is released back into the sea at Cox's Bazar. At least 20 were killed and dozens trapped in tonnes of plastic waste washed ashore

At least 20 turtles were dead and dozens more were rescued Sunday after being entangled in plastic waste washed ashore on one of the world's

longest beaches in Bangladesh, officials and conservationists said.

Locals said waves of waste—mostly [plastic bottles](#), fishing nets and buoys—floated ashore late Saturday. They spotted turtle carcasses among the [sand dunes](#) early Sunday.

Bangladesh's forestry department said it was the first time such a large volume of plastic had washed onto the 120-kilometre (75-mile) beach along the Bay of Bengal.

"Hundreds of locals rushed to the beach since [early morning](#) to rescue the wounded [turtles](#)," forestry spokesman Sohail Hossain told AFP.

"We have buried the dead ones and are trying to release the rescued turtles back to sea."

Beach clean-up charity Plastic Bank Bangladesh said their volunteers found and buried at least 20 Olive Ridley turtles among the estimated 50 tonnes of waste spread out over a 10 kilometre stretch of the beach at Cox's Bazar.

"I haven't seen these many dead turtles lying on the beach in my life and also haven't seen such a massive pile of waste floating ashore," fisherman Jashim Uddin told AFP.

Leading Bangladesh turtle and tortoise expert Shahriar Caesar Rahman of the NGO Creative Conservation Alliance said most of the turtles were at least 30 years old.



At least 20 dead sea turtles were found among piles of plastic waste washed along the Bay of Bengal beach near Cox's Bazar

"The turtles often get trapped in gigantic waste patches floating in the sea and eventually die of suffocation. This seems to be a similar case," he told AFP.

About 26 tonnes of waste produced from ships and neighbouring countries float into Bay of Bengal every year, said Moazzem Hossain of local conservation charity Save the Nature Bangladesh.

"This is a unique case of plastic invasion. It sends a great danger signal to our marine biodiversity," he said.

It was not clear how many turtles were rescued.

Local district administrator Kamal Hossain said authorities were investigating the incident.

Olive Ridentles are the most abundant of all sea turtles around the world, according to conservationists.

But their numbers have been declining and the species is recognised as vulnerable by the IUCN Red list.

© 2020 AFP

Citation: Race to rescue turtles entangled in plastic on Bangladesh beach (2020, July 12) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2020-07-turtles-entangled-plastic-bangladesh-beach.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.