

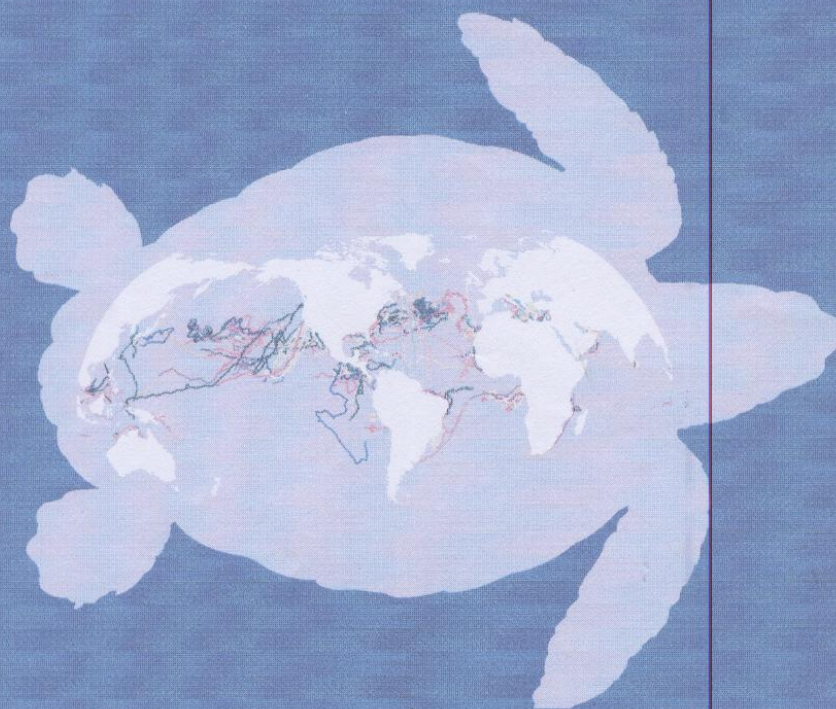
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migrate /mɪɡreɪt/ v.(ting) 1 move from one place
and settle in another, esp. abroad. 2 (of a bird or fish) change
its habitation seasonally. 3 move under natural forces

INTERNATIONAL SEA TURTLE SOCIETY



book of abstracts

OLIVE RIDLEY SEA TURTLE INTERNESTING INTERVALS AT PIRAMBU, BRAZIL

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Olive ridleys (*Lepidochelys olivacea*) are considered to be the most abundant of all sea turtle species worldwide. In some Pacific and Indic nesting beaches, they perform mass nesting events (*arribadas*); however, in the Western Atlantic coast the species is less abundant. Constant studies on *arribada* beaches have been conducted, but much is still uncertain about olive ridleys' reproductive behavior, especially in solitary nesting grounds. Until recently, the Galibi Nature Reserve in Suriname hosted the largest reproductive population of olive ridleys within the Western Atlantic coast, but a 90% decline was estimated for the past three decades. In French Guiana, no more than 1,000 nests were estimated for the 1999 nesting season. The state of Sergipe is the main nesting ground for olive ridleys in Brazil and, at present, probably in the entire Western Atlantic coast, according to recent nesting data observed over the past seven years. In Sergipe, olive ridleys reproduce mainly at Santa Isabel Natural Reserve, part of which is included in Pirambu's research station (within 10°43'S and 36°50'S), where this study was performed. Pirambu's station belongs to the Brazilian Marine Turtle Conservation Program and has been monitored for the past 20 years. Standard night patrols and tagging take place from September through March. The objective of the present study was to identify the internesting interval of the population. Only data from the 2004/05 and 2005/06 nesting seasons were used, during which more intensified patrol efforts began. During the 2004/05 nesting season, 189 individuals were encountered, 22 of which were later recaptured. In 2005/06, 402 individuals were encountered, and 80 were recaptured. A total of 81 internesting intervals were obtained. Only one individual was seen nesting three times. Internesting intervals ranged between 15 and 50 days with the majority between 20 and 23 days. Comments on comparisons with other olive ridley populations are also presented.