

Arribada

Date- March 3-8, 2022

Arribada: A Journey to Witness the Miracle of Life

From March 3 to March 8, 2022, Oasis organized a transformative five-day trip to the Rushikulya River mouth, one of the most significant mass nesting grounds for Olive Ridley turtles in India. Aptly named *Arribada*, meaning "arrival" in Spanish, the event centered around the awe-inspiring phenomenon of thousands of turtles arriving en masse to lay their eggs along the sandy shores of Odisha. With proper permissions from the concerned authorities and a deep sense of responsibility, the participants, including Oasis members and other students, experienced a rare opportunity to observe this marvel of nature up close.

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A Night under the Stars: Observing Mass Nesting

The trip was designed to maximize the experience of witnessing turtle nesting, with participants staying overnight to watch the turtles emerge from the sea under the cover of darkness. The sight was nothing short of magical, as Olive Ridley turtles, guided by instincts honed over millennia, made their slow, deliberate journey up the beach to lay their eggs in carefully dug nests. Each night, the group observed this remarkable process, noting the turtles' meticulous nesting behavior and learning about the critical role these nesting grounds play in the species' lifecycle.

Lessons in Conservation: The Science of Turtle Nesting

The event offered students a unique opportunity to delve into the science behind turtle nesting. Guided by ecologists and local experts, the group learned how geo-climatological factors—such as sand temperature, coastal topography, and seasonal changes—affect turtle nesting. These factors not only influence the turtles' choice of nesting sites but also determine

the gender of the hatchlings, a phenomenon known as temperature-dependent sex determination. The team discussed the threats faced by these turtles, including habitat destruction, marine pollution, and climate change, and explored ongoing conservation measures aimed at safeguarding their future.

Witnessing New Beginnings: Hatchlings Take to the Sea

As the trip progressed, participants were lucky enough to witness a few nests hatch, a rare and exhilarating experience. Watching tiny, vulnerable hatchlings instinctively make their way to the sea under the early morning light filled everyone with awe and hope. The sight of these fragile creatures beginning their perilous journey into the ocean underscored the importance of protecting nesting grounds and reducing human-induced threats.

Reflections and Commitments: A Call to Action

The *Arribada* trip wasn't just a field observation; it was an emotional journey that deeply impacted all who participated. The pristine environment of Rushikulya served as a powerful reminder of nature's interconnectedness and our role in preserving it. Participants left with a renewed sense of responsibility and commitment to conservation. For Oasis, the trip reinforced its mission to foster ecological awareness and inspire future generations to champion sustainability.

This unforgettable experience bridged the gap between theory and real-world application, emphasizing the importance of coexistence with nature. Oasis plans to continue such initiatives, blending education, action, and inspiration to create a ripple effect of ecological consciousness.

Associated members - Existing members at that time

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