



AFRICAN SEA TURTLE NEWSLETTER



Cabo Verdean World Champion kitesurfer, Mitu Monteiro, rescues a loggerhead sea turtle tangled in plastic in the waters of Sal Island, Cabo Verde.

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A New Clutch Size Record from an Olive Ridley Sea Turtle Nest in Cameroon

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During a 2012-2014 survey of nesting beaches between Eboundja and Mbendji in Cameroon (the future Marine National Park of Manyange na Elombo - Campo), an exceptionally large olive ridley clutch was recorded. On 12 December 2012, our local team found an olive ridley preparing to nest at the edge of the vegetation line between the village of Ebodjé and the Likodo river estuary. Its curved carapace length was 72 cm and its curved carapace width was 73 cm. The nest was threatened by erosion, and was relocated to a safer area, which allowed for an accurate egg count. There were 178 eggs laid in this one nest!

Marquez (1990) summarized the average clutch size for olive ridleys from around the world.

Table 1. Average clutch size of olive ridleys recorded in different countries. Data compiled from Marquez (1990).

Country	Average clutch size	n
Australia	108.0	6
Brazil	123.0	57
Costa Rica (Pacific coast)	105.1	20
Guyana	167.0	50
Honduras	108.3	50
India	113	9
Mexico	105.3	1,120
Oman	118	-
Suriname	116	1,154

In Sri Lanka, Deraniyagala (1939) indicated that a clutch ranges from 90 to 135 eggs. In Suriname, where olive ridleys have been extensively studied, Pritchard (1969) calculated an average of 116.07 (n= 928 clutches) with the largest clutch containing 168 eggs. Schulz (1975) examined 1,154 nests on Eilanti beach in Suriname and no clutch exceeded 160 eggs. However, the largest clutch size appears to have been recorded in Pirambu, Brazil: 182 eggs (mean=100.1 eggs; range=4–182; n=6480; Da Silva et al. 2007). The olive ridley clutch size of 178 eggs recorded in Cameroon would be the second largest clutch size ever recorded in the literature for olive ridleys!

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