

Scientists survey Odisha shores for horseshoe crab

KENDRAPADA: Scientists from the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI), Kolkata, recently surveyed the Odisha coast to submit a status report about the horseshoe crab to the government for its conservation and management.

Horseshoe crabs were found in large numbers along the Odisha coast two decades ago but now the species is confined to specific pockets like Eakakula beach within Bhitarkanika National Park, Balarampur and Chandipur beach in Balasore district and Hukitola in Kendrapada district, said Basudev Tripathy, a senior scientist at ZSI. The Centre had declared it an endangered species in 2009, he added.

During the week-long survey, the team visited Eakakula, Hukitola, Gahirmatha, Nasi, Madali, Agaranasi beaches in Kendrapada district, Chandipur and Balarangadi in Balasore district, Paradip beach in Jagatsinghpur district.

"We wanted to know their numbers and habitats. We had earlier conducted a survey for horseshoe crab in the Sundarbans, Digha and other areas of West Bengal and beaches in Viskhatnam and its neighbouring areas in Andhra Pradesh," said Tripathy.

Tripathy said there is a huge demand for horseshoe crab in the international market because lysate extracted from the animal is effective against many diseases.