



Issues affecting our treasured coastlines

Beach Briefs - April 17 2012

Sea Turtle Nesting Season Begins May 1

Each year beginning around May 1 threatened and endangered sea turtles nest on Florida beaches as they have done for millions of years. Two months later, tiny hatchlings emerge from their sandy nests and scamper for the water using the seaward horizon as their guiding light. Tragically, artificial light visible from the beach confuses them and lures these tiny creatures inland away from the water. Thousands of hatchlings die because lights along the beach are not turned off or shielded properly.



Please Help Sea Turtles Get Safely to the Water

From May 1 through October 31, between 9:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m...

- Shield all sources of light visible from the beach
- Use 25-watt yellow bug lights or amber LED lights
- Close blinds or curtains after dark to eliminate light spilling out to the beach
- Remove all beach furniture and equipment each night from the beach

Sea Turtle Nesting Regulations and Guidelines

- Sea turtle nesting habitat must not be directly or indirectly illuminated by artificial lighting originating from existing development between May and October. Most beachfront lighting issues can be addressed by turning off all unnecessary lights, repositioning or modifying light fixtures, or closing blinds and drapes.
- Driving on the beach in a motorized vehicle is prohibited.
- Fires on the beach are prohibited.
- Stay clear of sea turtles and any marked nesting areas. It is a federal offense to disturb or interfere with a nest. It is illegal to disturb a nesting turtle with lights or noise.

- It is against the law to have in your possession eggs or any part of a turtle, such as skull, bones, or carapace or to retain any threatened or endangered sea turtle hatchlings.
- If you encounter a sea turtle on a nighttime stroll, keep a respectful distance, at least 150 feet, and watch quietly.
- You must remove furniture and other items from the beach at night and not put them back on the beach until daylight.
- Keep the beach and water free of litter. Sea turtle deaths have been caused by the ingestion of trash like balloons, plastic bags, and styrofoam that they mistake for food.
- Level all sand castles and fill any holes dug during play. These may be fine during the day but may pose a hazard at night both for females coming ashore and hatchlings trying to reach the water.
- Honor the leash law. All dogs on the beach must be on a leash and not allowed to disturb nesting turtles or hatchlings.
- If you find lost hatchlings, call the SCCF at 472-2329. A licensed volunteer will pick up the turtles. While waiting, place them in a dry container with a little moist sand in the bottom and hold them in a shaded area.
- If you see a stranded turtle, check to see if there are orange marks painted on its shell. If so, this stranding has already been reported to the SCCF sea turtle program. If this is a new stranding, call Sea Turtle Coordinator Amanda Bryant at 239-470-3360. On weekends, report the stranding to the Sanibel Police at 239-472-3111.



Marked Sea Turtle Nesting Site

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The Captiva Erosion Prevention District is comprised of 5 elected, unpaid Commissioners dedicated to preserving and maintaining Captiva's beaches and shorelines. For more information on CEPD, click on mycepd.com or join our email list by clicking on mycepd@gmail.com

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