



Issues affecting our treasured coastlines

Beach Briefs - July 30, 2014

Turn Off Your Lights!

Despite the record breaking year of sea turtle nests this season, an above average number of hatchling dis-orientations has occurred. 9 have occurred on Captiva. Sea turtle hatchlings emerging from the nests were found heading in the wrong direction. Instead of finding their way toward the Gulf of Mexico, the dis-orientated hatchlings headed into the dune vegetation and towards artificial lighting emanating from nearby beachfront properties.



As a result, biologists have been conducting additional nighttime beach lighting inspections to determine the source(s) of light that are causing these tragic events. While some exterior light sources on beachfront properties have been identified, more alarming is the number of **INTERIOR LIGHTING SOURCES**, including chandeliers, lamps, and other fixtures that are visible from the beachfront because the occupants have **FAILED TO CLOSE THEIR CURTAINS AND BLINDS AND TURN OFF UNNECESSARY LIGHTS AFTER DARK.**

Unshielded interior lighting, even from just a single beachfront condominium, resort unit, or residence is enough to disrupt the normal sea-finding behavior of sea turtle hatchlings. Hatchlings are guided to the ocean by an instinct to travel away from the dark silhouettes of the

dune vegetation and toward the brightest horizon - light from the sky reflecting off the ocean. Artificial lights near the beach can deter females from nesting and disorient hatchlings. Most hatchlings that wander inland will die of exhaustion, dehydration or predation.

Please protect the sea turtles by **TURNING OFF UNNECESSARY LIGHTS AND CLOSING YOUR CURTAINS AND BLINDS AFTER DARK**. This simple practice is a true life-saver for sea turtles. Sea turtle hatchling disorientations are 100% preventable and it is our responsibility to ensure that these amazing creatures survive for future generations to enjoy.

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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

(239) 472-2472

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Captiva Erosion Prevention District | P.O. Box 365 | 11513 Andy Rosse Ln., Unit #4 | Captiva | FL | 33924