

# Who Do You Call?

If you see...

- « Problems with turtle nests, eggs, hatchlings or adult nesting turtles, call Mote Marine Laboratory at 941-388-4331.
- « Sick, injured or dead sea turtles or marine mammals, please call Mote Marine Laboratory at 941-988-0212.
- « Someone disturbing a sea turtle or sea turtle nest, please call the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission at 1-888-404-3922.
- « Vehicles on the beach, call Longboat Key Non-emergency Police Dispatch 941-316-1977.

## Resources

Visit [www.longboatkey.org](http://www.longboatkey.org) for information on beach construction, sea turtles, lighting, shorebirds, and links to:

- « Mote Marine Laboratory
- « US Fish and Wildlife Service
- « Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
- « Seaturtle.org ([www.seaturtle.org](http://www.seaturtle.org))

## Things You Can Do

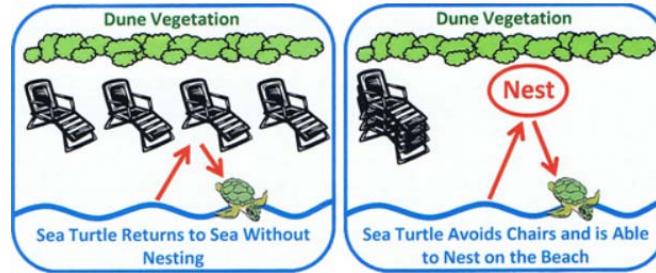
We hope the residents and waterfront businesses will actively participate in sea turtle conservation by observing all sea turtle and lighting regulations. During nesting season (May-October), shield or turn off outdoor lights that are visible from the beach; close curtains after dark; remove furniture from the beach at night; fill in holes and knock down sand castles that may entrap or block hatchlings; place trash in its proper place and do not use flashlights, fishing lights or campfires on the beach.

*Thank you for helping us protect sea turtles.*

(Continued from inside)

Arrange the stacked furniture the shortest edge facing the shoreline. **Place furniture properly during turtle nesting season — at least five feet from any marked nest**

Furniture should not be placed on salt-resistant vegetation or on the dunes



**Use an umbrella holder or sleeve**

To the degree possible, avoid burying umbrella poles during sea turtle nesting season. Either anchor an umbrella holder or sleeve before the nesting season to use throughout the summer, or use umbrellas that clamp directly to the furniture.

## Sea Turtle Encounters

If you happen to encounter a nesting sea turtle while you are on the beach, stay behind her and at such a distance that she cannot see you. Please:

- ⇒ Keep your distance, remain quiet and keep all lights off (including flashlights, flash photography and video equipment). Motion, noise and lights can cause the turtle to return to the sea without laying her eggs. Remember your activities can also affect other turtles nesting in the vicinity.
- ⇒ Keep hands and other objects off and away from the turtle. After nesting, she may appear slow and hesitant. Touching, prodding, shining lights or causing commotion may disturb her and cause her to spend less time covering and camouflaging her

nest.

- ⇒ Allow hatchlings to crawl to the water on their own, as the journey from the nest to the water allows them to imprint on their home beach. Picking up the hatchlings may interfere with this process. Scientists believe imprinting helps the hatchlings remember where they came from so they can return and lay their own eggs 20 to 30 years later.
- ⇒ Leave sea turtle hatchlings in their nest; they will exit the nest when they are ready. If hatchlings are removed from the nest before they are ready, they are less likely to survive.
- ⇒ Keep all lights off (including flashlights, flash photography and video equipment). If sea turtle hatchlings see artificial lights, they become confused, crawl in circles or head away from the water. If they crawl in the wrong direction for long, they will be eaten by other animals or die from dehydration.

## Sea Turtle Protection

The Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA) lists all five species of sea turtles in Florida as either threatened or endangered. In addition, sea turtles are protected by **Florida Statute 370.12, the Marine Turtle Protection Act**. Anyone found harassing a sea turtle or interfering with the nesting process faces criminal and civil penalties.

The Town of Longboat Key Code of Ordinances, Chapter 100—Sea Turtles, provides for local regulation of sea turtle vegetation protection, coastal lighting and furniture on the beach. This chapter can be viewed on our website at [www.longboatkey.org/MuniCode](http://www.longboatkey.org/MuniCode).

*From your Longboat Key Public Works Department  
600 General Harris Street  
Longboat Key, FL 34228  
(941) 316-1988  
[www.longboatkey.org](http://www.longboatkey.org)*



# TOWN OF LONGBOAT KEY



## Coastal Living with Sea Turtles



## Did you know ...

Longboat Key beaches are designated as a major nesting beach that hosts the nesting of several species of threatened and endangered marine turtles? Every May through October Longboat's beaches become crucial habitat for one of the largest congregations of sea turtle nesting on the Gulf coast of Florida.

Over a hundred female sea turtles swim to our shore, emerge from the sea, crawl onto the beach and seek out the best place to release their eggs. In 2015, there were about 700 turtle nesting sites.

An estimated one out of every 1,000 hatchlings lives to reach reproductive age. Due to worldwide population declines, all species of sea turtles are threatened or endangered. Federal, State, and local regulations provide protection for these unique animals but laws alone will not ensure their survival. **Turtles need your help.**

## Turtle Tidbits

- 90% of all sea turtle nesting in the United States takes place on Florida's beaches.
- Longboat beaches are among those with the highest density of loggerhead nests on Florida's West coast.
- Loggerhead sea turtles
  - are named for their large head

- weigh between 200-350 pounds and
- return to the beach from where they hatched to nest approximately every two years.
- Six species of sea turtles are found in US waters – loggerhead, green, hawksbill, leatherback, Kemp's ridley and olive ridley. All are listed as threatened or endangered and are protected by the Endangered Species Act.
- Adult Kemp's ridley sea turtles are the smallest weighing 80-100 pounds and leatherback turtles, the largest, grow to 1,500 pounds.
- Sea turtle eggs are the size of ping-pong balls and hatchlings are about two inches in length.
- Nests contain an average of 100 eggs. Cooler nest temperatures produce male turtles and warmer temperatures produce females.
- Food sources include jellyfish, sponges, crabs, seagrass and seaweed.
- Sea turtles breathe air, but can hold their breath for two hours when at rest underwater.

## Successful Coastal Living with Sea Turtles

### Coastal Lighting

Light pollution has a negative effect on sea turtles. Once hatchlings emerge from the nest, they orient themselves in the direction of the brightest horizon. Reflected celestial light from the Gulf attracts hatchlings seaward. Bright lights landward of the nest will draw hatchlings away from the water. Adult nesting females also become disoriented when light from homes, roadways, and commercial establishments guide them away from the Gulf.

Since light pollution has a negative effect on sea turtle hatchling survival, reducing the amount of light visible from nesting beaches is the first step in reducing these effects. Coastal communities around the world including Longboat Key have adopted ordinances that require

residents to turn off beachfront lights during turtle nesting season.

These are things you can do to help conservation efforts of sea turtles:

- Turn off lights visible on nesting beaches or use special fixtures to shield lights from the beach.
- For exterior lighting of landscaping and buildings, turn off the lights or redirect the lights downward.
- Shield the light source. Materials such as aluminum flashing can be used as a shield to re-direct light and keep it from being visible from the beach.
- Light sockets with an exposed light source (such as plain bulbs or flood lights) should be replaced with fixtures that are specially made to recess the lamp and shield the light source.
- Replace fixtures that scatter light in all directions (such as globe lights or carriage lights) with directional fixtures that point down and away from the beach.
- Replace incandescent, fluorescent, and high intensity lighting with the lowest wattage Red or Amber LED.
- Plant or improve vegetation buffers (such as sea grapes and other native beach vegetation) between the light source and the beach to screen light from the beach.



Sea turtles average 100 eggs per nest.

- Use shielded motion detector lights for lighting, and set them on the shortest time setting.
- To reduce spillover from indoor lighting move light fixtures away from windows, apply window tint to your windows that meets the 45% inside to outside transmittance standards for tinted glass (you'll save on air conditioning costs too!), or use window treatments (blinds, curtains) to shield interior lights from the beach.

### Furniture on Beach

Relaxing on the beach, listening to music or reading a good book and soaking up the sun are some of the many pleasures we enjoy at the beach. Please remember to move the furniture off of the beach nightly. At night, furniture should be completely removed from the beach and stored behind the primary dune. When possible, all furniture should be moved by hand.

### Stack and arrange furniture

Sea turtles prefer to nest on the mid to upper beach, protecting their nest from the high tide. Furniture left on the beach at night can prevent nesting turtles from reaching the upper beach. Furniture should be stacked to minimize interference with nesting or hatchling sea turtles. (Continued)

### Help prevent obstacles to sea turtle nesting.

