



Sea Turtle Nesting Season is May 1st through October 31st

The City of Atlantic Beach would like your help in protecting endangered Sea Turtles by keeping the beach as dark as possible during the nesting season. The voluntary elimination of beachfront artificial lighting between sunset and sunrise continues to produce excellent results during the nesting season. It's important to take extra precautions to ensure the safety of not only the females that come ashore to lay their eggs but their nests and hatchlings as well.

Hatchling sea turtles 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 hatchling sea turtles. Most hatchlings that wander inland will die of exhaustion, dehydration or are eaten by predators.

Disorientation from a variety of artificial lighting sources causes thousands of hatchling deaths each year in Florida and is a significant sea turtle conservation problem. There are actions you can take to help save and protect these vulnerable marine animals and their critical nesting environment.

How can I help protect sea turtles?

During Nesting Season

- Avoid unnecessary lights, noise and movement on the beach at night.
- Remove chairs, umbrellas and other gear from the beach. All items left on the beach including beach furniture, toys and trash may provide barriers to nesting or result in entanglement and predation of hatchlings.
- Avoid using flashlights or flash photography at night. Do not shine any lights directly on sea turtles, this might cause her to abandon her nest.
- Level sandcastles, fill in holes and ruts that may pose additional hazards at night.
- Pick up all trash. Sea turtles mistakenly eat debris, especially plastic, which results in death.
- Restrict or shield direct beachfront lighting.
- Fires on the beach are prohibited during nesting season.
- Honor the leash law. All dogs on the beach must be leashed and not allowed to disturb nesting turtles or hatchlings.

The Beaches Sea Turtle Patrol, Inc. is an all-volunteer 501(c) (3) non-profit that works to protect endangered sea turtles by patrolling the beaches and monitoring sea turtle nesting activity. For more information on sea turtle nests you can visit the Beaches Sea Turtle Patrol website at www.bstp.net.

Anyone who finds a sea turtle washed ashore is asked to

- Call the [Beaches Sea Turtle Patrol, Inc.](http://www.bstp.net) at (904) 613-6081, the [Fish & Wildlife Commission](http://www.fwc.com) at 1-888-404-FWCC (3922), or by cell phone dial *FWC or #FWC.
- Never try to push a live sea turtle back into the water. If the turtle is alive but way up on the beach, keep the shell wet by putting a wet towel on it or sprinkling water on the shell.
- Notify the above numbers if you find a live Sea Turtle. A deceased turtle that has been painted with an orange X on the shell has already been documented and is awaiting disposal. If it is not marked, please report the location to the turtle patrol.

Remember, it is illegal to touch, handle or interfere in any way with a sea turtle, nest or hatchling, alive or dead, unless instructed by an FWC-permitted individual.

Interested in being a volunteer?

For more information on volunteer opportunities helping sea turtles, please contact [Beaches Sea Turtle Patrol, Inc.](http://www.bstp.net) at (904) 613-6081.

Your help is greatly appreciated.

City Ordinance 95-17-114 Sea Turtle Protection