

SEA TURTLE REPORT

# Lighting Retrofit Program for Beachfront Properties

By Maria Lamb

The Sea Turtle Conservancy (STC) funding program started in Marco in 2019, and it was a collaboration with the Beach and Coastal Resources Advisory Committee, the Sea Turtle Conservancy (STC) of Gainesville, and Marco’s Code Enforcement Department. STC provided

training to Marco’s Code Enforcement about the impacts of artificial lighting on sea turtles.

Back in the 2019 sea turtle season, over 50% of hatched nests in Marco resulted in hatchling disorientation due to beachfront artificial lighting. According to STC, “Poorly managed artificial lighting on nesting beaches is a fix-

### Sea Turtle Activity August 10-16, 2026

| Beach                 | Nests     |           | False Crawls |           | Hatched Nests |           |             |
|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|--------------|-----------|---------------|-----------|-------------|
|                       | This Year | Last Year | This Year    | Last Year | This Year     | Last Year | Disoriented |
| Barefoot              | 247       | 300       | 257          | 280       | 134           | 168       | 11          |
| Delnor Wiggins        | 61        | 65        | 63           | 99        | 40            | 47        | 2           |
| Vanderbilt            | 204       | 274       | 228          | 205       | 109           | 172       | 17          |
| Parkshore             | 240       | 217       | 184          | 272       | 127           | 134       | 31          |
| City of Naples        | 315       | 268       | 290          | 224       | 147           | 156       | 20          |
| Keewaydin Is.         | 627       | 546       | 848          | 740       | 287           | 257       | 0           |
| Sea Oat Island        | 37        | 19        | 36           | 24        | 15            | 5         | 0           |
| Marco Island          | 168       | 117       | 251          | 310       | 77            | 35        | 11          |
| Kice and Cape Romano  | 183       | 187       | 305          | 216       | 80            | 31        | 0           |
| 10,000 Islands        | 140       | 154       | 165          | 171       | 73            | 71        | 0           |
| Collier County Totals | 2222      | 2147      | 2627         | 2541      | 1089          | 1076      | 92          |

To report dead, injured or disoriented sea turtles on Marco call 239-289-9736 or 239-289-9687



South Seas West Towers One and Two BEFORE the Lighting Retrofit Grant.



Photos by Sea Turtle Conservancy

South Seas West Towers One and Two AFTER the Lighting Retrofit Grant.

able problem. Artificial lights confuse and disorient adult and hatchling sea turtles resulting in tens of thousands of hatchlings wandering each year toward landward sources of light, often dying in the process.”

STC was able to assist beachfront properties in retrofitting their lighting without compromising safety and security to the properties. They covered 100% of the cost of fixtures and bulbs ranging from \$23,000 to \$65,000. STC also assisted properties pay for damages from Hurricane Ian, Helene, and Milton.

Below is a list of properties in Marco that took advantage of the funding program from STC:

- South Seas W (Buildings One and Two)
  - South Seas NW (Buildings Three and Four)
  - Royal Seafarer
  - Apollo Condominium
  - Summit House
  - Tampico
  - Sea Winds of Marco
  - Gulfview Condominium
- According to Rachel Tighe, Lighting Program Manager for STC, the grant program is based on grant availability. If interested, beachfront properties should reach out to the Sea Turtle Conservancy for more information at: [www.conserve-turtles.org](http://www.conserve-turtles.org).

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