

SEA TURTLE REPORT

Sea Turtle Alert

Beach Residents - Lights Out by 9:00 PM

By Maria Lamb

Marco Island beaches are monitored each night by Marco Island Code enforcement to ensure that everyone is following the sea turtle lighting compliance ordinance. The purpose of the light compliance is to protect sea turtle nests and hatchlings.

We are into the third month of sea turtle season, which started May 1st and runs through October 31st. The sea turtle lays up to 100+ eggs, which incubate in the warm sand for 60 days. For this year, sea turtle monitors have recorded 115 nests, 310 false crawls, 13 hatched nests, and three disorientations.

Hatchlings rely on the natural glow of light from the ocean to draw them down to the water. Unfortunately, bright lights from condo buildings and even streetlights from Collier Boulevard can disorient the hatchlings away from the water towards the bright artificial light. Artificial lighting, according to experts, is a severe threat to turtles – both female loggerheads coming to nest and to hatchlings.



Photo by FWC - Tonya Long

According to experts, baby sea turtles hatch from their nest en masse and then rush to the sea all together to increase their chances of surviving.

When sea turtle monitors arrive on the beach, their morning inspection often shows the hatchlings’ tiny prints heading to the dunes or building structures. In the past, hatchlings have been found on condo parking lots or drowned in pool water, resulting in “irreparable harm” to the hatchlings. This is the tragic result of hatchling disorientation from bright artificial light.

Help Sea Turtles from Disorientation

- Turn off all unnecessary lights by 9:00 PM.
- Close blinds and curtains.
- Shield light sources.
- Do not use flashlights or flash photography on the beach after 9:00 PM.
- Interior lights should not be seen from the beach.
- Keep the beach free of litter.

Sea Turtle Activity Update July 15 - 21, 2025

Beach	Nests		False Crawls		Hatched Nests		
	This Year	Last Year	This Year	Last Year	This Year	Last Year	Disoriented
Barefoot	293	221	269	182	60	57	13
Delnor Wiggins	64	55	99	73	21	19	0
Vanderbilt	273	218	203	193	61	48	11
Parkshore	209	211	266	186	53	26	34
City of Naples	263	243	221	273	48	33	13
Keewaydin Is.	531	404	720	635	107	42	0
Sea Oat Island	18	10	23	17	0	0	0
Marco Island	115	93	310	229	13	10	3
Kice and Cape Romano	185	131	213	187	5	10	0
10,000 Islands	149	125	171	134	26	22	0
Collier County Totals	2100	1711	2495	2109	394	243	74

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

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