

Cell Phone Lights a Bad Mix with Nesting Sea Turtles

By Maria Lamb

Nesting sea turtles, hatchlings, cell phone lights, and flash photography are a bad mix according to FWC. State wildlife officials are calling cellphones the new “21st century hazard.” Recently, the number of reported false crawls in Florida has increased, which has led FWC to issue a warning on cell phone use at

night on the beach during sea turtle season. Here on Marco Island, the record shows 310 false crawls for this year, which is 80 more than last year.

Here is a likely scenario: it is sea turtle season; you’re on the beach and it is pitch black. You reach for your cell phone flashlight (people used to carry a flashlight, but smartphones now have built-in flashlights). Suddenly, you come across a mother sea turtle dragging herself ashore carrying about 100 eggs! What a rare camera-worthy moment! You snap a photo with the flash on and also take a selfie to share online.

According to FWC, “even a smartphone’s lighted screen could disrupt egg-laying and also disorient hatchlings trying to find the ocean. Any sort of interruption of that process could be considered a violation of the Endangered Species Act.”

Save a Sea Turtle - don’t blind them with your smartphone lights! Dr. Rob-

bin Trindell of FWC suggests, “if you must have light, use a red LED flashlight, adjust cell phone screens to dark mode and don’t take flash photos.”



Photo by FWC

When you encounter a nesting sea turtle, the best thing you can do is keep a distance of at least 10 feet, stay calm and quiet, and avoid touching. Females coming ashore have one mission - to deposit their eggs. If spooked, she is likely to false crawl and dump her eggs in the water.

Sea Turtle Activity Update July 29 - August 4, 2025

Beach	Nests		False Crawls		Hatched Nests		
	This Year	Last Year	This Year	Last Year	This Year	Last Year	Disoriented
Barefoot	299	222	263	182	83	57	21
Delnor Wiggins	64	55	99	73	32	19	0
Vanderbilt	274	218	205	193	98	104	20
Parkshore	212	211	272	188	89	51	37
City of Naples	267	243	224	275	85	61	25
Keewaydin Is.	544	415	737	645	142	104	0
Sea Oat Island	19	10	23	17	2	0	0
Marco Island	117	96	310	230	20	22	5
Kice and Cape Romano	188	134	215	187	10	27	0
10,000 Islands	153	126	171	134	40	42	0
Collier County Totals	2137	1730	2519	2124	601	487	108

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

Christmas House and Business Decoration Contest

2025 Dates Announced



Submitted Photo

The 2025 Marco Island Christmas House and Business Decorating Contest Committee Members. Front row: Mary Shaw and Lilibeth Nordell. Second row: Larry Sacher, Lyn Bedell, Richard Droste, Linda Turner, Jerry Swiacki, Dave Rice, Judy Sacher, Mindy Star, Roger Star, Rachel Schenk, Kristina Lambros, and Marc Creech. Back row: Jeanne Rice, Bob Boland, Russ Simmons, Betty Newman, Mary Vertin, Brad Shaw, Bruce Robertson, Gerry Richards, Mike Richards, D Honecker, and Ken Honecker. Not pictured are Jackie Strategos, Jim Richards, Allyson Richards, Steve Josselyn, Bette McGilvray, Sandy Dauch, and Marlene Eichman.

Submitted

Jennifer Goes to Kona

By Steve Stefanides

In early October, a local area woman will be embarking on a trip to Hawaii. She’ll be taking this journey to fulfill a dream she has had for several years - a dream she has worked extremely hard to fulfill over those years. This October, she, along with her husband and daughter, will fly to the big island of Hawaii to participate in the 2025 Women’s World Championship Ironman Competition in Kona, Hawaii.

I met Jennifer Cameron (Bristow) when we ran a story about her participation in the Escape from Alcatraz Triathlon in 2019. Since then, she has successfully competed in a total of 13 Iron Man Triathlons, thus allowing her to be registered as a “legacy” for the upcoming 2025 World Championship. The men’s race in Nice, France, will be held on September 14,



2025, while the women’s race in Kona will be held on October 14, 2025.

Cameron grew up in California, moving to Wisconsin before transferring to the Tampa area, where she began her fitness career working for a local YMCA.

She relocated to the Naples area and spent 15 years here as the Fitness and Wellness Director at Fiddlers Creek, where she was extremely well-liked and respected.

She became involved more heavily in the sport of running and eventually the competitive Triathlon field, which includes a swimming, biking, and running component. She laughingly comments that it was where she met her husband Richard, who encouraged her competitive nature to try it, and she was hooked.

The Kona World Championship will begin with a two and a half mile open ocean swim across Kailua-Kona Bay with its swells and chops. Competitors will then hop on their bikes and take on a grueling 112-mile bike course with strong, gusty winds, which can be very unpredictable at times. The last segment of the event will involve a full 26.2-mile marathon where extreme heat radiating off lava fields will drain contestants due to a lack of shade and high humidity.

The drain on the athletes’ physical condition is compounded by the strain on their mental condition as the race will take a toll on athletes throughout the course.

Cameron has been taking this challenge seriously and has utilized trainer Karen Tamson, a local Naples resident and veteran Triathlete who has been coaching Cameron on her run-up to the Kona event. “Karen has been extremely helpful in not only providing me great insight into what this will take physically but also mentally,” said Cameron.



She smiles when talking about the support that her daughter and her husband Richard have provided to her. “They’ve both been wonderful, they truly are my rocks, providing me with the emotional support and encouragement needed in the run-up to October,” she said.

Approximately 2,000 women and another 6,000 spectators will be on hand to cheer on their family and friends who will be entered in the event. Meanwhile, Cameron is working and training hard in preparation for her big day on the big island.

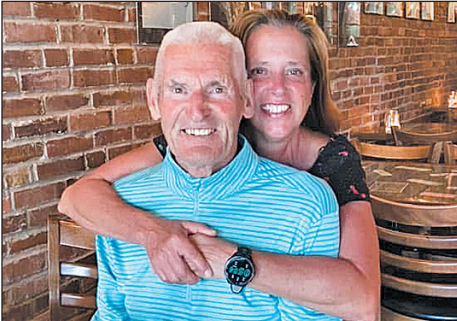


Photo by Steve Stefanides

Jennifer and Richard Cameron.

The 32nd annual Marco Island Christmas House and Business Contest Committee met at the Esplanade at CJ’s and The Snook Inn to celebrate “Christmas in July.” The evening, organized by Committee member Judy Sacher, included cocktails at CJ’s followed by dinner at The Snook. Committee Chairman Dave Rice announced the dates and plans for this year’s contest, which is in its 32nd year of sponsorship by LCEC.

The dates for the 2025 Christmas House and Business Decorating Judging are as follows:

December 15-17 - Preliminary Judging on all 3 nights from 6:30-9:30 PM.

December 19 - Final Judging Trolley Ride to select the 2025 House Decorating Winner.

The contest begins with three nights of preliminary judging. The Island is divided into nine zones, and judging teams select the top contenders in each zone by visiting every street on the island. The third night of preliminary judging selects the top ten from the top contenders from the zone judging.

The Business Decorating Contest is held concurrently with the House Contest and is chaired by Marc and Cristina Lambros-Creach and assisted by Mindy and Roger Star. The Marco Island Chamber of Commerce assists with distributing contest information to local business members.

The Christmas Decorating Committee will next meet in November at their annual Potluck dinner to finalize plans and review procedures for the 2025 judging.

The Christmas House and Business Decorating Committee is an independent organization funded solely by 32-year sponsor Lee County Electric Cooperative. For further information, contact Committee Chair, Dave Rice at www.marcodave@comcast.net