

SEA TURTLE REPORT

# Hatchling Etiquette: Hands Off!

By Maria Lamb

The female sea turtle lays up to 100 eggs, which incubate in the warm sand for about 60 days, according to NOAA Research. The Sea Turtle Weekly Activity Report shows that Marco has reported one hatched nest.

Just remember: Hands off! According to FWC, this is the best policy when encountering sea turtle hatchlings. "Many Florida beachgoers are unaware that sea turtle hatchlings should be watched from a distance and left undisturbed," according to Dr. Robbin Trindell, who heads the FWC's sea turtle management program. According to FWC, "well-meaning efforts to rescue a sea turtle hatchling by helping it leave a nest or picking it up and placing it in the ocean are not good ideas."

Yet, many beachgoers cannot help themselves when they see these cute, seemingly helpless hatchlings scampering toward the water. They are just helping these poor things get to the water quickly. Or worse yet, they are handled to take a photo. Only individuals with a special permit from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) are allowed to handle sea turtle hatchlings.

Let nature take its course! According to FWC, you can help the hatchlings get home (to the water) by leaving them alone. Sea Turtle researchers say that any misdirection to their path, such as



Photos by Tonya Long, FWC  
Almost there! A newly hatched sea turtle hatchling approaches the surf for the first time.

getting through a maze of sandcastles or beach toys, may leave them exhausted and disoriented.

So, please remember to keep your hands off sea turtle hatchlings and tell others to do the same.



Hatchlings on their way to the water can easily get disoriented through a maze of sandcastles. Remember, before leaving the beach, please knock down your sandcastles.

## Sea Turtle Activity June 29 - July 5, 2026

Beach	Nests		False Crawls		Hatched Nests		
	This Year	Last Year	This Year	Last Year	This Year	Last Year	Disoriented
Barefoot	203	244	209	245	4	4	0
Delnor Wiggins	51	60	53	84	0	2	0
Vanderbilt	167	244	196	184	4	10	1
Parkshore	200	183	162	249	0	3	0
City of Naples	242	226	224	202	3	0	0
Keewaydin Is.	500	464	712	663	2	1	0
Sea Oat Island	26	14	25	15	0	0	0
<b>Marco Island</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>276</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Kice and Cape Romano	145	145	251	193	2	0	0
10,000 Islands	114	125	474	145	3	3	0
<b>Collier County Totals</b>	<b>1787</b>	<b>1790</b>	<b>2521</b>	<b>2256</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>1</b>

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

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