

Sea Turtle Lighting Code Magistrate Violations

By Maria Lamb

On June August 27, 2024, Special Code Magistrate Robert Pritt presided over two Sea Turtle Lighting Code Violations that occurred in July 2024.

940 Cape Marco Drive - City of Marco Island vs. Veracruz at Cape Marco Condominium Association - Sea Turtle Protection

On July 11, 2024, Officer Ira Warder observed lighting violations on three units at the Vera Cruz Condominium and issued a notice of code violation. With a five-year history on this building, this is the third offense from this location and the second offense this year. A warning was issued on 5/14/2024; a Second Offense Notice of Violation was issued on 5/29/2024

Testifying for the City: Code Enforcement Officer Negra (on behalf of Ira

Warder, who is no longer with the City of Marco Island).

According to Luis Ruiz, Head of the Front Desk at the Vera Cruz Condominium, "On July 11, 2024, I was working that night and it is part of my job that at 9 pm to go outside by the boardwalk to look at the building and make sure that all the lights are turned off. When I noticed the lights, I had to go inside and go unit by unit and knock on the doors – this is our protocol. On this night, by the time I was done, it was about 9:30 PM."

Magistrate's Findings: That the Owner shall pay a one-time fine of \$250 and a \$50 fee for cost of prosecution.

890 S Collier BLVD - City of Marco Island vs. Sea Winds of Marco Condominium Association - Sea Turtle Protection.

On July 11, 2024, at 9:23 pm, Officer Ira Warder observed a Sea Turtle lighting



Photo by Maria Lamb

A morning routine for the Sea Turtle monitors – checking for evidence of hatchlings, disorientation and evidence of predation at South Beach.



Photo by FWC - Karrie Singil

Of all the hatched nests on Marco 28% were disoriented – the highest percentage in the county.

Sea Turtle Activity Update August 27 - Sept. 2, 2024

| Beach | Nests | | False Crawls | | Hatched Nests | | |
|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|--------------|-----------|---------------|-----------|-------------|
| | This Year | Last Year | This Year | Last Year | This Year | Last Year | Disoriented |
| Barefoot | 222 | 255 | 187 | 496 | 102 | 206 | 17 |
| Delnor Wiggins | 55 | 58 | 75 | 167 | 21 | 51 | 0 |
| Vanderbilt | 221 | 326 | 198 | 430 | 116 | 264 | 15 |
| Parkshore | 213 | 221 | 188 | 394 | 71 | 170 | 12 |
| City of Naples | 244 | 337 | 277 | 392 | 70 | 245 | 9 |
| Keewaydin Is. | 421 | 525 | 658 | 918 | 161 | 374 | 0 |
| Sea Oat Island | 10 | 13 | 17 | 6 | 0 | 8 | 0 |
| Marco Island | 97 | 119 | 231 | 424 | 36 | 81 | 10 |
| Kice and Cape Romano | 135 | 108 | 190 | 171 | 34 | 80 | 0 |
| 10,000 Islands | 129 | 156 | 134 | 184 | 44 | 98 | 0 |
| Collier County Totals | 1747 | 2118 | 2155 | 3582 | 655 | 1577 | 63 |

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

violation and issued a notice of violation for this location. On a five-year history on this location, this is the second offense. A warning was issued on 5/16/2024.

Testifying for the City: Code Enforcement Officer Negra; Testifying for the Respondent: No One

Magistrate's Findings: That the Owner shall pay a one-time fine of \$150 and a \$50 fee for cost of prosecution.

Under Marco's Sea Turtle Lighting Ordinance, "After one warning in a calendar year, excluding an irreparable event, the following shall apply:"

First Offense: minimum of \$150, not to exceed \$50 for each offense.

Second Offense: minimum of \$500, not to exceed \$1,500.

Third Offense: minimum of \$1,500, not to exceed \$2,000.



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Location: JCMI, 991 Winterberry Drive, Marco Island