

Please - do not disturb

Turtles swim to our shores by the thousands each year, and not to vacation. Their sole mission is to bring life to the next generation of sea turtles. Every May through October, our local beaches become important habitat for the largest congregation of sea turtle nesting on the Gulf Coast of Florida.

Sarasota County is honored with this ancient ritual each summer when the female sea turtle laboriously crawls onto our shores, selects a nesting site and completes her instinctive mission to nest. The hundred or more eggs she buries in the sand will soon burst with life, and hatchlings will scurry out of the nest in a nighttime race for the relative safety of the Gulf of Mexico.

As long as humans have lived where the land meets the sea, we have shared the beaches with sea turtles. However, in recent years our lights have caused them great harm by confusing small hatchlings searching for the gulf.

Tens of thousands of hatchlings die each year because they mistake artificial lights from homes, condominiums, hotels and resorts for the natural glow of the ocean horizon. Obstacles such as beach furniture, cabanas, boats and toys also make it difficult for female sea turtles to find safe places to nest.

Because of worldwide population declines, all sea turtles are threatened or endangered. Federal, State and local regulations provide protection to these magnificent creatures, but laws alone will not ensure their survival.

Photo by Alan Rees/ARCHELON

May through October

Please help our sea turtles survive.

Keep beaches TURTALLY dark and obstacle-free.

Please - do not disturb

Here's how you can help:

Outside lights - turn out, shield or otherwise modify so that they are not visible from the beach.

Portable lighting - do not use flashlights, flash photography, fishing lamps or other transient lighting on the beach after dark.

Draperies - close and move interior lamps away from the windows.

Beach furniture and other equipment or toys - remove from the beach each night or store in a safe location far away from the shoreline.

Campfires and motor vehicles - are not permitted on the beach.

Pets - keep them on a leash if allowed on the beach.

Garbage - "pitch in" and pick it up.

And besides that, it's the law!

Sarasota County Ordinance No. 97-082
Florida Statute Chapter 370
US Endangered Species Act, 1973

For more information, call the Sarasota County Call Center at 861-5000 and ask about the Sea Turtle Protection Program.

Thank you for
helping to make
Sarasota County
beaches turtle-friendly