

Seabrook Island's Tips for Helping Loggerheads

Seabrook Island and the Department of Natural Resources recommend the following ways to enjoy and help protect nesting and hatching loggerhead sea turtles. From the protecting nesting sites for females to aiding stranded hatchlings, coastal residents can have a part in preserving this threatened species.

Observing Nesting Female Turtles

- Female loggerheads are skittish when they are out of the water and are easily disturbed.
- If a female turtle is seen coming on the beach to nest, spectators should squat down and remain perfectly still since movement will cause her to return to the water without nesting.
- If the turtle is scared away from one nesting site, she may attempt to nest again further down the beach or on the next night, but if that attempt is unsuccessful, she may dump the eggs in the ocean or select a poor nest site.
- Once the female turtle has excavated her nest chamber and begun laying eggs, then spectators may move a little closer to the rear of the turtle to observe her nesting. At this point, the turtle goes into a state similar to a trance.
- No flashlights or other lighting devices should be used while observing the nesting turtle. No flash pictures.

Protecting Turtle Nests

- All turtle nests discovered on the beach should be reported to the Seabrook Island Turtle Patrol.
- In Charleston County, the Department of Natural Resources may be reached at **843.953.9015**. To report a dead or injured sea turtle, please contact Beausie Zahn at **843.768.1053** or the Statewide Wildlife Department at **800.922.5431**.
- Only certified members of the Turtle Patrol are permitted by the Department of Natural Resources to probe turtle nest chambers and move nests.
- If a nest is located below the high tide mark or in a high traffic area such as near a walkway, etc., the nest must be relocated.
- If the nest is not moved within 6 to 12 hours after the eggs are laid, the embryos become attached and will be destroyed if the eggs are handled roughly.

Aiding Stranded Turtle Hatchlings

- It is important to minimize artificial beachfront lighting during the loggerheads' nesting and hatching season, May 1 - October 31. Turtle hatchlings confuse artificial lighting for the natural illumination of the ocean and will head inland, often becoming trapped in vegetation, hit by cars or eaten by predators.
- If you are lucky enough to see hatchlings emerging from the nest, do nothing if they are heading toward the ocean on their own.
- If a hatchling is found stranded on or near the beach, it is important to help it get to the water. Hatchlings will dehydrate in the heat of the sun and will die if they can't make it to the ocean.
- Hatchlings are sometimes trapped in footprints or tire ruts on the beach and will succumb to the heat.
- Place the stranded hatchling just at the edge of the surf to allow it to rehydrate. It will then make its own way out to sea. Do not carry a turtle hatchling out into the water.

Getting Involved to Help Preserve Loggerhead Turtles

- Light switch plate stickers for all beachfront properties are available from the Seabrook Island Turtle Patrol, as are bumper stickers.
- All beachfront exterior lights should be extinguished by 10:00 PM each night. Do not take flash pictures of mothers or hatchlings.
- All dogs must be leashed by State law.

If you are interested in helping to protect turtles at Seabrook, please contact one of the Seabrook Island Coordinators listed below:

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| - Beautsie Zahrn | 843-768-1053 | beautsie2@gmail.com |
| - Terry Fansler | 630-842-9446 | terry@caretta.org |
| - Gary Fansler | 630-567-2099 | fanslery@gmail.com |

Seabrook Island Turtle Patrol Website: <http://www.siturtlepatrol.com/>