

Sea Turtle Preservation Society: Keeping Brevard's Beaches Safe

3-4 minutes

Sea turtle nesting season has officially begun, and from May to October, residents of Brevard County can get a firsthand look at one of nature's most fascinating journeys. As hatchlings emerge from their nests and follow the moonlight reflecting off the ocean, many barriers can prevent the tiny turtles from making it to their home. Here in Brevard County, the Sea Turtle Preservation Society has created a foundation to protect sea turtles and increase the hatchling's chances for survival.

The Sea Turtle Preservation Society works to educate the public about marine turtles through presentations, events and turtle watches during sea turtle nesting season that peaks in June and July. By spreading awareness, the STPS hopes to prevent a potentially irreversible decline in the sea turtle population. The STPS also supports the Archie Carr Wildlife Refuge fund, founded in 1991 that now stretches over 20 miles of beach line between Melbourne and Wabasso, attracting nesting for more loggerhead turtles than virtually any place on Earth. The STPS continues its efforts not only through educating the public, but also through rehabilitating hatchlings and transporting injured sea turtles to facilities for eventual release back into their natural environment.

Sidebar

How we can help prevent the decline in the sea turtle population

- Redirect any lighting away from the beach, keeping the hatchlings from getting confused. This includes both indoor and outdoor lighting.
- Remove all recreational equipment from the beach at night; this includes beach chairs, umbrellas, and boats. Such objects can deter nesting attempts and prevent the hatchlings from reaching the ocean.
- Do not start beach fires during nesting season, since the hatchlings are attracted to light, they may crawl into the fire.
- Do not use flashlights if walking on the beach at night.

- If you come across a turtle on the beach at night, remain still and avoid interaction. Even flash photography could interfere with nesting.
- Leave tracks and nests alone, by interfering with either you could prevent the nest from being marked for protection.
- Do not leave garbage on the beach, the turtles may eat the trash, and result in death.
- Stay off the dunes, by walking on the boardwalk you can stabilize the natural vegetation which helps preserve sand and reduce beach erosion.
- When boating, watch for sea turtles, and stay in channels to avoid seagrass beds which are an important habitat for the species.

Also...

Check out www.seaturtlespacecoast.org and check out the STPS event schedule which includes beach cleanups, events and informational meetings.

Turtle walks are also taking reservations now! Call (321) 676-1701 to make a reservation for the 2011 season.