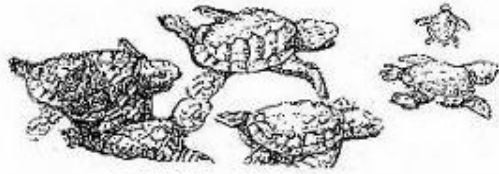


## Sharing Our Beaches



### Give a Mother A Break

Please turn off all exterior lights and close window coverings after dark.



### LIGHTS OUT

Threatened loggerhead sea turtles nest on St. George Island from May 1 through October 31st. Starting in July and for the next three months, the nests will hatch at night and baby turtles will scramble to the sea, guided by light reflected from Gulf waters.

LIGHTS ON LAND MAY CONFUSE BABY TURTLES, CAUSING THEM TO TURN AWAY FROM THE SEA.

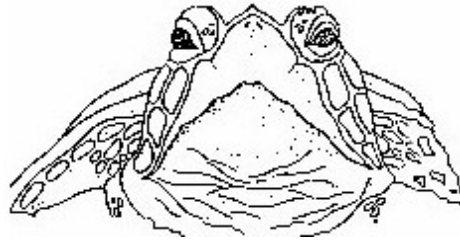
If you are fortunate enough to see a hatch take place, do not help the babies to the water. Baby sea turtles must get oriented to their future-nesting beach. If you have any questions, please call our local permit holder - Bruce Drye at 927-2103, FWC Wildlife Alert at 1-888-404-3922, ANERR at 670-4783, or STAR at 653 3820.

SHARING THE BEACH – Allow hatchlings to make their way to the sea.

After incubating for about two months, the two inch long turtles hatch and scurry down the beach to the ocean. Hatchlings swim offshore to live for several years in floating seaweed, drifting along the edges of ocean currents. Many years pass until the hatchlings reach maturity. Sea turtles may live for up to 60 years or more. Only 1 in 1000 hatchlings reaches reproductive age.

**Watch for disoriented hatchlings and keep outside lights out or at a minimum from May 1 – October 31.**

## Attention Beach Users



BE AWARE!

FEMALE SEA TURTLES emerge on our beaches between May and August. They deposit approximately 100 eggs in a nest cavity about 12 inches deep, usually near the dune line. If you see a crawl, we would like to gather data on the nesting attempt. Please contact Bruce Drye at 927-2103, or 1-888-404-3922 or Apalachicola National Estuarine Research Reserve at: 670-4783 .

### **THOUSANDS OF SEA TURTLES CALL FLORIDA HOME – HOW YOU CAN HELP**

In order to avoid disrupting the nesting sea turtles we suggest the following:

- . Keep exterior lights out and shades drawn between dusk and dawn.
- . Avoid disturbing a turtle that is crawling to or from the ocean.
- . Avoid shining lights on a sea turtle or snapping flash photos.
- . Avoid other nighttime activities, such as bonfires, fireworks, etc. that might prevent sea turtles from coming ashore.
- . Take in beach chairs, tents and toys at night, so a sea turtle won't get tangled in them.
- . Fill in any holes you dig on the beach.
- . If you are lucky enough to see a turtle; sit quietly in the dark, at a distance, to watch her nest.
- . Discourage others from harassing any sea turtle.
- . Contact Bruce Drye 927-2103 or 1-888-404-3922 if anyone does harass a sea turtle.
- . Volunteer to help with Sea Turtles At Risk (STAR)'s sea turtle protection program – (850) 653-3820 – [www.seaturtlesatrisk.org](http://www.seaturtlesatrisk.org)

## LIGHTS OUT



### Sharing Our Beaches

ENJOY THE BEACH AND MAKE A COMMITMENT TO THE ENVIRONMENT.

### Loggerhead (*Caretta caretta*)

Sea turtles are large air-breathing reptiles remarkably adapted to life in the sea. They nest only on subtropical beaches where it is warm enough to incubate their eggs. The most common sea turtle in Florida, the loggerhead, is named for its massive, block-like head. Adults weigh an average of 275 pounds and have a shell length of about 3 feet. The powerful jaws of the loggerhead allow it to easily crush the clams, crabs and other armored animals it eats. Federal and state laws protect all species of sea turtles. STAR's sea turtle protection program assists St. George Island's property owners to correct lighting that endangers sea turtles. To learn more about this program, support our efforts, or to help as a volunteer - call (850) 653-3820.

Lighting near beaches causes hatchlings to become disoriented and wander away from the sea. When this happens, most hatchlings die from exposure, dehydration, or being run over by vehicles on nearby roads.

Please help protect Florida's threatened and endangered sea turtles – SHARE THE BEACH



### ATTENTION BEACH USERS LIGHTS OUT

**Beach Lights Disorient  
Sea Turtle Hatchlings!!**