

ADOPT A NEST!

Adopt-A-Turtle-Nest benefits include :

- Date of deposition and emergence
- Information on hatchling success
 - Adoption Certificate
- Location of adopted nest

To help protect sea turtle nests on the beach, please contribute to our Adopt-A-Nest program.

Just fill out the form below and send \$25 to

CLEARWATER MARINE AQUARIUM

249 Windward Passage
Clearwater, FL 33767

Make checks payable to:
Clearwater Marine Aquarium

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE

ZIP

PHONE

E-MAIL

The Clearwater Marine Aquarium is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to the rescue, rehabilitation and release of marine animals.

In addition, the Aquarium provides environmental education to the public through exhibits and classes.

If you have any questions regarding sea turtles and lighting, or are concerned about a nest in your area, please contact the Clearwater Marine Aquarium.



727-441-1790 ext.224

249 Windward Passage
Clearwater, FL 33767

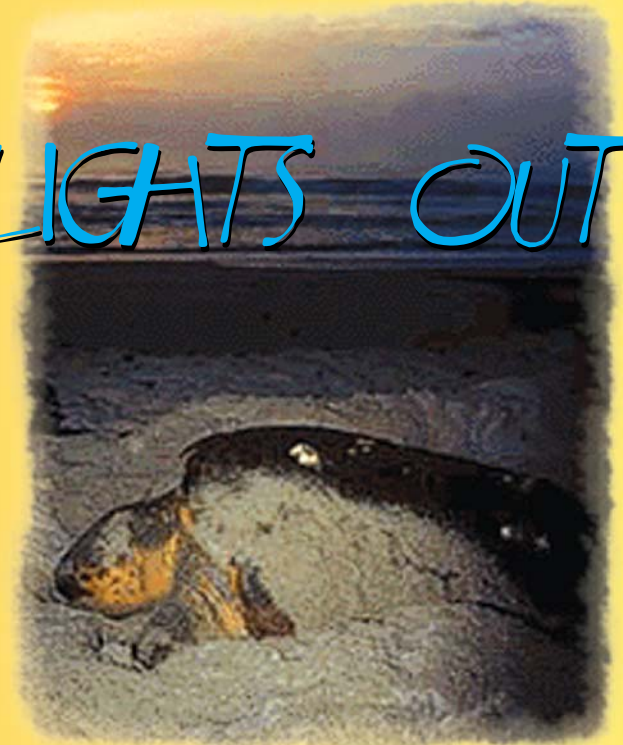
www.CMAquarium.org

SEA TURTLES

Help them Survive

Turtle Nesting Season
May – October

LIGHTS OUT!



Photograph provided by FWC

**Loggerhead Turtles
& Hatchlings
use these beaches at night!**

**They are a protected,
endangered species!**

PLEASE

report all

Sea Turtle sightings to the

CLEARWATER MARINE AQUARIUM

so we can protect these
wonderful creatures.

727-441-1790 ext 224

Sea Turtles are marine reptiles that spend most of their lives at sea. During the night, from May through early September, the 350-pound female sea turtle comes ashore to deposit her eggs.

Florida is home to one of the largest nesting populations of Loggerhead (*Caretta caretta*) sea turtles in the world. During a single nesting season, one female will lay four or five nests, depositing an average of 120 eggs into a bell-shaped cavity that is 2 to 3 feet in depth. The nest is characterized by the tracks left in the sand by the female.

Typical of most reptile eggs, sea turtle eggs resemble soft, leathery ping pong balls. During an approximate incubation of 60 days, the eggs are vulnerable to a variety of predators including raccoons, dogs, ants and people.

When the three-inch hatchlings emerge, they use the natural light from the moon and stars reflecting off the water to find their way to the ocean. In areas where artificial lighting overpowers natural light, hatchlings can become disoriented leading to dehydration and even death.

Sea Turtles use the cover of darkness to avoid encounters with people and predators. When beaches are heavily lit, females tend to avoid nesting. It is important during nesting season to eliminate artificial lighting by turning unnecessary lights off, shielding lights, or changing light fixtures to more appropriate lighting.

Sea Turtles are protected under the Endangered Species Act and by Florida State law. Penalties for interfering with Sea Turtles can be severe.

Sea Turtles have been around since the time of the dinosaurs. Although their exact role in the ocean is unknown, the mere fact they have survived as a species for so long is testament to their importance on earth.



Photographs provided
by FWC

ADULT TURTLES

Nesting Season

May 1 - August 31

HATCHLINGS ON THE BEACH AT NIGHT

July - October



ADULT TURTLES

DO NOT:

- Harass the turtle as she makes her way back to the sea. After nesting, the turtle may appear slow or hesitant – this is normal.
- Approach, make noises, shine lights or use photo equipment with a flash.

DO:

- Give her a lot of space and approach from a distance – your eyes will adjust to the darkness.

HATCHLINGS

DO NOT:

- Pick up hatchlings heading toward the water, shine lights or use photo equipment with a flash.

DO:

- Turn off outside lights, draw drapes and avoid using flashlights or fishing lamps on the beach from May 1 to October 31.