



St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners

Communications Division

April 2, 2019
For Immediate Release

2019 Sea Turtle Nesting Season Begins in May

St. Johns County, FL – The beaches of St. Johns County are home to several species of endangered or threatened sea turtles. Residents and visitors have a special opportunity and responsibility to protect these magnificent creatures and their vulnerable nesting sites as they return each season to nest along the beaches. Sea turtle nesting season begins May 1, and St. Johns County officials are asking residents, visitors, and businesses to help protect natural habitat by observing all nesting season laws and regulations. Between May 1 and October 31, vehicular traffic on the beach is allowed between the hours of 8 a.m. and 7:30 p.m. In addition, all beachfront properties are required to reduce their impact by eliminating interior and exterior lights which may disrupt nesting sea turtles. Volleyball court lights at St. Johns County Pier Park will turn on at sunset and turn off at 9 p.m. during this time. Beach visitors can also have a positive impact on nesting sea turtles by taking the following actions while enjoying the beach:

- Refrain from using fireworks and open fires.
- Remove ruts and fill in holes left by vehicles and sand castle building.
- Please remove all chairs, umbrellas, or canopies from the beach before dark. These items are subject to removal by County staff.
- Flashlights are strongly discouraged as they can harm sea turtles.
- Avoid entering sand dunes and conservation zones (15 feet seaward of the dune line).
- Refrain from using balloons, as they can fall into the ocean and harm marine life.
- Never approach sea turtles emerging from, or returning to the sea. Nesting sea turtles are vulnerable, timid, and can be easily frightened away.

Never push an injured animal back into the ocean. If an injured, sick, or deceased sea turtle is encountered, please call the St. Johns County Sheriff's Office non-emergency dispatch line at 904.824.8304. Leave only your footprints, providing the turtles with a safe and clean habitat in which to nest and hatch. St. Johns County is grateful to volunteers, residents, visitors and businesses for supporting habitat conservation efforts and keeping our beaches beautiful. For more information, please contact St. Johns County Habitat Conservation and Beach Management at 904.209.3740 or visit www.sjcfl.us/hcp.

###