

# Help Protect Sea Turtles!

Sea turtles are remarkable creatures. Their powerful front flippers and streamlined shape allow these air-breathing reptiles to dive to great depths and swim long distances. More sea turtles nest on Florida's sandy beaches than in any other state. Five species of sea turtles are found swimming in Florida's waters and nesting on our beaches.



Photo: Chris Johnson - www.floridaleatherbacks.com

## LOGGERHEAD (*Caretta caretta*)

- In the U.S., 90% of loggerhead nesting occurs in Florida
- 275 pounds/3 feet long on average



Photo: Blair Witherington, FWC

## GREEN TURTLE (*Chelonia mydas*)

- 350 pounds/3.3 feet long on average



Photo: USFWS

## KEMP'S RIDLEY (*Lepidochelys kempii*)

- Rarest sea turtle in the world
- 85-100 pounds/2-2.5 feet long on average



Photo: Robbin Trindell, FWC

## LEATHERBACK (*Dermochelys coriacea*)

- Dives deeper, travels farther, and tolerates colder waters than any other sea turtle
- 500-1,500 pounds/6 feet long on average



Photo: Nicole Ordway

## HAWKSBILL (*Eretmochelys imbricata*)

- 100-200 pounds/30 inches long on average

Sea turtles have lived in our oceans for over 100 million years. Today they are threatened in many ways—loss of beach nesting habitat, disorientation from beach lighting, encounters with pollution and beach furniture, drownings in fishing gear, illegal harvest and boat collisions.

Find out more about sea turtles in Florida waters:  
[MyFWC.com/SeaTurtle](http://MyFWC.com/SeaTurtle)



MyFWC.com

Sea turtles remain at sea their entire lives; however, adult females come ashore approximately every 2-3 years to lay eggs. Nesting generally occurs on the Gulf Coast between May-Sept.; peak nesting occurs in June-July. Hatchlings emerge between June-Nov. after 2 months of incubation. Nests may be marked with tape or signs identifying the nest as a protected area. Help sea turtles by filling in holes you dug in the sand and removing all beach furniture when you leave the beach each day.

You may encounter a nesting female or hatchlings on the beach after dark. Do not disturb them and do not get too close. Any disturbance may frighten or disorient them, causing a female to return to the ocean before digging a nest or misdirecting a hatchling away from the water. Any light—even red or amber—can interfere with their natural behavior.

If you find a dead, sick or injured sea turtle, please call FWC's Wildlife Alert Number: 888-404-FWCC or \*FWC on a cell phone.

