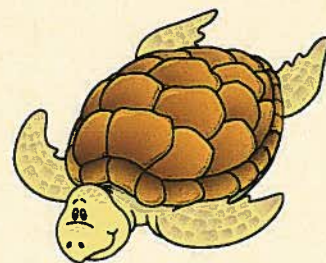


# May 1 Begins TURTLE SEASON !



Marine turtle nesting and hatching occurs each year from May 1st through October 31st. Female turtles come ashore in the dark, dig a hole using their flippers, and lay 100 to 150 eggs at a time. During the course of a season, a single female lays three to eight nests. After a 45 to 70 day gestation period, hatchlings emerge from the nest at night and follow the moonlight reflecting off the Gulf.

These turtles return to the beaches where they were born, sometimes decades before.

## *Turn Lights Out !*

*Turn out unnecessary beach lights to help prevent disorientation of female sea turtles and hatchlings. Close your curtains and be mindful of bright lights shining on the beach.*

## *Keep it dark !*

*Sea turtles can become disoriented from lights and illuminated objects visible from the beach. Most importantly, bright lights disorient hatchlings by attracting them inland where they often die of dehydration, predation, or are run over by motor vehicles. It is very important that occupants and managers of beachfront properties minimize the use of lights that shine directly on the beach. Information about turtle-friendly beach lighting can be found on the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission website (Sea Turtle Lighting Guidelines).*

## *Remove Obstacles !*

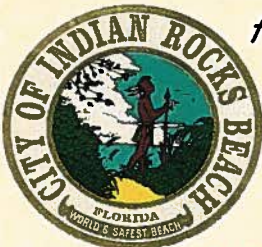
*Knock down sand castles and fill in sand pits. This helps to eliminate the challenges the baby hatchlings must cross on their way to the shoreline. Sand pits can be like the Grand Canyon and sand castles like Mount Everest to tiny baby sea turtles.*

## *Clear the way !*

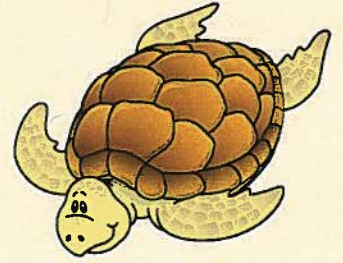
## *Keep the Beach Clean !*

*Picking up trash eliminates items that both hatchlings and adults may become entangled in. Something as small as a bottle top or as large as unwanted beach furniture can pose potential problems, leading to both false crawls and disorientation.*

## *Keep it clean !*



# May 1 Begins TURTLE SEASON !



Daily early morning surveys for nests are performed during nesting season between May and November each year. Pinellas County contracts with the Clearwater Marine Aquarium to monitor sea turtle nesting along all the nourished beaches. When nourishment projects are constructed, the aquarium staff relocates turtle nests within construction zones to areas outside of the construction zones, thus protecting the eggs from damage.

For further information, please access the following websites:

Pinellas County ([www.pinellascounty.org](http://www.pinellascounty.org))

Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission ([www.myfwc.com](http://www.myfwc.com))

Clearwater Marine Aquarium ([www.seewinter.com](http://www.seewinter.com))

*(Sea turtle nesting information excerpted from the Clearwater Marine Aquarium and Pinellas County websites.)*

