

The Ritz-Carlton Residences, Singer Island Turtle-friendly Best Practices

- It is against the law to touch or disturb nesting sea turtles, hatchlings, or their nests. Sea turtles are protected by both Federal and State laws.
- Do not walk on the beach with a flashlight or shine lights at sea turtles. The light can cause females to abandon the nesting process and discourage other turtles from coming ashore to nest.
- Avoid going to the beach to observe turtles at night without a permit.
- Do not take pictures at night using a flash. This high-intensity light can be even more disturbing than flashlights.
- Turn off outside patio lights and shield indoor lights from shining directly onto the beach by closing the drapes at night. Lights disturb nesting sea turtles and disorient hatchlings.
- Avoid disturbing marked sea turtle nests while enjoying the beaches during the day.
- Level all sandcastles and fill any holes dug during play. These are fine during the day but may pose additional hazards at night. Leave the beach as you found it, so that sea turtles and hatchlings are not hindered on their way to nest or to the water.
- Be careful when digging on the beach. Most sea turtle eggs are deposited 18 inches below the surface of the sand above the high tide line. To avoid disturbing sea turtle nests, please dig holes and sandcastles below the high tide line and place umbrellas with care.
- Dispose of trash when you leave. Sea turtles mistakenly eat debris, especially plastic, which results in death.
- When crossing a dune, please use designated cross overs and walk ways. Do not climb over the dunes or disturb dune vegetation.
- Remove beach furniture as it can be an entanglement hazard for nesting sea turtles and can block access to the nesting beach. County regulations require that all beach furniture, boats, and similar items be removed from the beach at night or stored at the toe of the dune.
- Honor the leash law. All dogs on the beach must be on a leash and not allowed to disturb nesting turtles or hatchlings.
- Stay out of the sea turtle's way. Don't put your hands on or near the turtle. Any distractions may frighten or disorient them, causing a female to return to the ocean before finishing her nest, or misdirecting a hatchling away from the water.
- If you see an injured or dead sea turtle or if you see someone disturbing a nest or turtle, call the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission 1.888.404.FWCC (9322) or *FWC from your cell phone.



Matthew Toth, The Ritz-Carlton Residences, Singer Island pool attendant, during the McArthur Park beach clean up.

Get involved - Local Turtle Conservation Groups

Loggerhead Marinelifelife Center
14200 U.S. Highway One, Juno Beach FL 33408
Phone: 561.627.8280 | Fax: 561.627.8305.
info@marinelife.org

Sea Turtle Conservation League of Singer Island
P.O. Box 848, Jupiter, Florida 33458-0848
http://singerislandseaturtles.com

Turtle Walks

Guided sea turtle walks are available from May – June. Participants are able to view a nesting sea turtle with a trained guide permitted by the FWC. Individuals are encouraged to participate in these walks. They provide the viewers with additional information and are conducted under strict guidelines to reduce disturbance to sea turtles.

For information on participating in a guided walk and to learn more about sea turtles, contact these nature centers:

Loggerhead Marinelifelife Center
Juno Beach
561.627.8280

John D. MacArthur Beach
State Park Nature Center
North Palm Beach
561.624.6952

Gumbo Limbo Nature Center
Boca Raton
561.338.1473



On May 13, "Kate", a 400 pound Leatherback turtle nested on our beach.



With some assistance from the experts, Kate made it back to sea.

THE RITZ-CARLTON

LIFE

The Ritz-Carlton Residences™, Singer Island Environmental Update: The Endangered Sea Turtle

"For most of the wild things on earth the future must depend upon the conscience of mankind." The late Dr. Archie Carr, a scientist and author who almost singlehandedly began to turn the tide on the extinction of sea turtles.

There are no words to describe the incredible majesty of nature when we witness a sea turtle instinctively emerge onto the shore of our beach and purposely make her way towards our property to find a nesting spot for her eggs. She is focused and drawn by her memory as she has been here before. Most sea turtles return to the same spot where they were hatchlings 20 to 30 years earlier. Scientists call this imprinting.

On May 13, 2011 our beach was visited by a Leatherback Turtle who required the assistance of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Rescue team to maneuver it back into the ocean after she laid her eggs. The rescue was humbling and reminded us of the importance of our role in protecting these endangered sea turtles.


Armando Guardiola
General Manager

Nearly 25% of all Sea Turtles Nests in Florida occur on Palm Beach County Beaches

Each year thousands of sea turtles journey to Palm Beach County, making it the second largest sea turtle nesting area in the United States. The largest is at the Archie Carr National Wildlife Refuge in Brevard County, FL. Singer Island is an important high-density nesting beach for sea turtles, including loggerheads, green and leatherbacks. It has been estimated that approximately 57,789 loggerhead, 16,638 green turtle, and 500 leatherback hatchlings could be expected to enter the water annually along Singer Island.

Sea Turtle Nesting Season is from March 1 – October 31

Nesting on our beaches begins as early as March. Early nesters are usually leatherbacks with the more numerous loggerheads arriving in significant numbers in May. Nesting continues into August and tapers off in early September. The female sea turtle crawls ashore at night to dig a nest, deposit her eggs, cover the nest and return to the water. While on the beach, sea turtles are timid and vulnerable and can be easily frightened away if disturbed. It takes between one to three hours for the female turtle to lay her approximately 110 ping pong ball-sized eggs.

Why Sea Turtle Survival Matters

Each sea turtle species plays a unique and critical role in sustaining the health of different marine and coastal habitats. For example, where healthy numbers of green turtles graze on sea grass, species such as shrimp, lobster, fish, and sharks thrive because the grasses are healthier and more productive. The decline of sea turtle populations has serious implications for countless marine animals as well as our own species. In short, sea turtles are an important strand in the web of ocean life. Sea turtles help to sustain the oceans, and the oceans sustain life on the planet. Whether sea turtles vanish from the planet, or whether they remain a wild and thriving part of the natural world, will speak volumes about both the general health of the planet and mankind's ability to coexist in a sustainable manner with the diversity of life on Earth.

Why Our Role is Important

The Ritz-Carlton Residences, Singer Island has the distinct opportunity to set an example as an active supporter of sea turtle protection. Our commitment will include the completion of property changes as indicated by the local and state ordinances as well as the increased awareness of visitors and residents about the vital role that sea turtles play in the environment. We hope that our actions will inspire other community members to participate in this important environmental initiative.

Meet the Sea Turtles of Palm Beach County



LOGGERHEAD

Weight: - 250 to 350 pounds
Diet – Shellfish
Annual Nesting – 12,000 PBC * 61,000 FL



LEATHERBACK

Weight: - 550 to 1,545 pounds
Diet – Jellyfish
Annual Nesting – 250 PBC * 700 FL



GREEN

Weight: - 300 to 400 pounds
Diet – Sea Grass and Algae
Annual Nesting – 1,200 PBC * 6,000 FL



HAWKSBILL

Weight: - 100 to 150 pounds
Diet – Sponges
Annual Nesting – Few in PBC or FL



About Sea Turtles

- They are air breathing reptiles, but can spend hours submerged in the ocean.
- Adult females must return to land in order to lay their eggs. Many species return to the same beach where they were born to lay their eggs.
- They are found in oceans all over the world, except the Arctic Ocean.
- Sea turtles migrate hundreds or thousands of miles. It is believed that they use the earth's magnetic forces to navigate throughout the oceans.
- They mostly prefer open water, but they are also encountered in coastal waters near reefs and estuaries.
- They hear through eardrums below their skin and are sensitive to smells and sound.
- Most sea turtles are mainly carnivores and feed on jellyfish, tunicates (ascidians, sea squirts), sponges (one of a few animals that eat them), soft corals, crabs, squids and fish. Green turtles are herbivorous, feeding primarily on sea grasses and algae.
- All 4 species of marine turtles are listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

Why Sea Turtles are Endangered

- Human harvesting of turtles and their eggs.
- Destruction of nesting habitats.
- Commercial fisheries who use longline fishing practices or gill nets and do not use Turtle Excluder Devices (TEDS).
- Pollution affecting nesting habitats and/or species: such as entanglement in marine debris; plastic debris, and commercial and industrial ocean water pollution from oil spills and chemical waste.
- Global Warming.

Nesting Threats

- Artificial light visible from the beach may deter sea turtles from nesting or disorient sea turtle hatchlings. Each year approximately 11,000 sea turtle hatchlings in Palm Beach County are disoriented.
- Sky glow, the brightening of the night sky over inhabited areas, can also disorient adult and hatchling sea turtles.

Did you know?

Sea turtles can be found in our waters year round, but in the spring and summer, large numbers of adults congregate off our beaches and along the reefs.

The Ordinance

Sea Turtle Protection and Sand Preservation

Section 6: Jurisdiction

F: Beach obstructions shall not be exempt during sea turtle nesting season (March 1 – October 31) unless the structures are removed daily from the beach from sunset until two hours following sunrise or after completion of a dedicated independent sea turtle nesting survey by a Marine Turtle Permit Holder. Beach obstructions shall be removed from the beach or placed in a single row as close to the toe of the dune as possible in an area that does not impact native vegetation or significantly affect sea turtles.

Exemptions under this provision are not intended to authorize any violation of F.S. 379.2431 or any of the provisions of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as may be amended.

Section 11: Standards for Essential Lighting

D. Use of Window Treatments
To prevent interior lights from illuminating the beach, window treatments shall be required on all windows visible from the beach within jurisdictional boundaries. Blackout draperies or shade screens are preferred. Alternatively or additionally, window tint may be applied to beachfront windows. The turning out of all unnecessary interior lights during the nesting season is strongly encouraged.

The Solution



Photo Barbara B. James

Beach Furniture

What we can do

- Remove furniture and other items from the beach and dune area, when not in use, between the hours of 9 p.m. and 7 a.m. Items left on the beach — including beach furniture, toys and trash — may provide barriers to nesting or result in entanglement and predation of hatchlings.

- In order for our property to be in compliance with the Palm Beach County sea turtle protection ordinance during turtle season, we will replace the wood base lounge chairs and hoods for a lighter strap chair and umbrellas during turtle season. This temporary measure will allow us to remove the "obstacles" from the beach every night reducing the possibility for sea turtles to get trapped on our beach while looking for an area to nest.

Exterior Lighting

What we can do

- Go out to the beach at night and identify what lights on your property are visible from the beach. If the lights are not needed for safety, simply turn them off. If the lights cannot be turned off, shield, redirect or lower the height of the lights so they are no longer visible from the beach.
- Reduce interior lighting problems by applying window tint at a 15% light transmittance level or close opaque curtains or blinds after dark to reduce the amount of visible light reaching the beach.
- Only light for safety, avoid decorative or uplights during the nesting & hatchling season.

Turtle Friendly Fixtures & Lights

What we can do

1. **Keep it low** – Low mounting height and low bulb wattage. Flood Spot and pole lighting are highly discouraged.
2. **Keep it shielded** – Use full cut-off fixtures that direct the light down to the ground. Shield fixtures so you cannot see the bulb, lamp or glowing lens.
3. **Keep it long** – Sea turtles are less disturbed by the long wavelengths of light (570 nanometers or longer), such as lights that are yellow, amber, or red in color.

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission has found 30 lighting violations on our property; each violation represents thousands of dollars in fines. With the assistance of local environmental organizations and lighting experts, we are currently working on implementing the appropriate solutions for our property to be in full compliance with the government requirements.

External Communication

Raising awareness about sea turtle conservation issues in the community, encourage residents and local businesses to follow turtle-friendly best practices and promote stewardship activities for the protection of sea turtles.



Leatherback hatchling perished due to disorientation