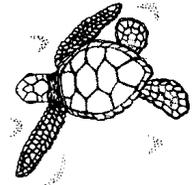


Turtle Tracker



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Sea Turtle Donation

The Turtle Patrol recently received a generous donation from an unexpected source. WCI Communities Inc., the company that is building luxury condominiums in the Hammock Dunes Community of Flagler County, donated \$5000.00. The money was used to help purchase a new ATV for patrolling Flagler County beaches.

The beaches of Flagler County provide critical nesting habitat to several hundred loggerhead sea turtles each year, as well as the rarer green and leatherback turtles. This new ATV has been an incredible help for the volunteers that monitor the eighteen miles of Flagler County beaches. It has enabled the patrol to split the beach into smaller sections, which allows the volunteers to cover the beaches faster. This extra time allows them to find and mark nests that may have otherwise been missed and to relocate any nests in danger of tidal inundation. Relocating nests is time consuming and nests must be moved by 9:00 am, so time is of the essence. We greatly appreciate this donation. **Thank you WCI !!!**

Anyone wishing to make a donation to the Turtle Patrol may do so by contacting Beth Libert at 386-767-5257 or e-mail VFturtlepatrol@aol.com



Flagler Turtle Patrol's new ATV

On the Flip Side

It has always been a great comfort and somewhat personal reward to me to know how much the Turtle Patrol is respected and appreciated. Our volunteers work very hard to protect sea turtles, as well as other creatures and the environment. They don't do it for glory or recognition, they do it because they truly care and want to make a difference.

However, some people do not appreciate us, and actually even dislike us. Fortunately, they are in the minority. Earlier this year, I and another volunteer went to a local establishment for dinner and were refused service because we are members of the Turtle Patrol. What a surprise! In my twenty years of working with the turtles, I have never been thrown out of anywhere.

If you support the Turtle Patrol, then the next time you are hungry or thirsty you may want to choose some place other than the . . .

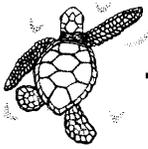
Ø (CENSORED) in Ponce Inlet

Lighting Reminder

It's that time of year again. Turtle season is almost in full swing. Soon the little hatchlings will be emerging from their nests and making their trek to the ocean.

Every nesting season thousands of sea turtle hatchlings are lured to their death by lights illuminating the beach. On naturally dark beaches the brightest light is the glow of the sky on the ocean. Even when there is no moon, this illumination is present and helps hatchlings find their way to the water. If other lights are present, the hatchlings will instinctively crawl toward the brightest light. Hatchlings wandering the beach are weakened and often die of dehydration or fall prey to predators such as ghost crabs. Others may end up on roadways or in storm drains and never make it to the sea.

You can help by drawing your drapes, using motion sensor lights on a short timer, low pressure sodium lighting, bug lights for one or two light fixtures and low profile lighting along walkways. For more information on "turtle friendly lighting" contact Bill Sorentino at 386-239-6414 ext. 37.



TEDS and Turtles

The shrimping industry was first required to use turtle excluder devices known as TEDS in 1990. This rule came after numerous studies documented an alarming number of sea turtle deaths from capture in shrimp trawl nets. An estimated 14,000 sea turtles were being killed each year. This is more than all other human activities combined.

A TED is basically a trap door installed in a shrimp trawl net, which allows sea turtles and other larger marine life to escape safely, while capturing shrimp in a pocket at the end of the net. When shrimp nets are pulled across the bottom of the ocean they pick up anything and everything they encounter. Sea turtles often forage and rest near the ocean floor and are easily swept up into the nets. The turtles swim frantically trying to escape the net, eventually tiring themselves out and end up at the trap door of the TED. The use of TEDS has proven to be very effective in reducing sea turtle mortality.

However, the original TED design has never been adequate enough to release all sea turtles. Leatherback turtles and large loggerheads, particularly older males and sexually mature females, can not get out of the 35"x12" opening of the TEDS used in Atlantic waters. There were other emergency rules in place to temporarily close shrimping in areas where migratory leatherbacks were known to be. Most of the time these closures were not put into effect until dead turtles started washing ashore.

According to the National Marine Fisheries Service 2,300 leatherback turtles and 62,600 loggerhead turtles are killed annually by the shrimping industry in this country. In February 2003 the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration issued new rules requiring shrimpers to use larger TEDS to protect leatherbacks and larger loggerheads. The new TEDS would reduce leatherback mortality by 97% and loggerhead mortality by 94%. The new rules were set to go into effect in April 2003, until Congressmen from the Gulf states filed legislation to block the new TEDS. So now it's another battle to protect these threatened and endangered creatures.

*You can help by contacting your U.S. Congressional representatives asking them to support the new TED rules and oppose delay of their implementation.
(Excerpts of this article reprinted from CCC's Velador)*

A Turtle Success Story *by Beth Libert*

In the Winter 2001 issue of TurtleTracker, I told you the story of a very sick loggerhead turtle that was rescued from the river in Ponce Inlet, May 2001.

After two long years of recuperation at Sea World in Orlando, she is free to roam the seas once more. The young turtle was severely emaciated and covered with leaches and barnacles when she was pulled from the river. Her digestive system was also impacted with shells and other debris. She was the kind of turtle that doesn't usually survive. For the first couple of months she had to be tube fed and developed a series of infections which had to be treated with antibiotics. When she was healed and had reached a normal body weight it was time for her to return home.

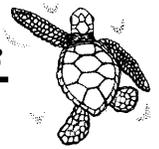
On March 12, 2003, Sea World brought the turtle back to Ponce Inlet. What an exciting day for me and the turtle! We carried her to the edge of the surf and she acted like she didn't want to leave, especially when that first chilly wave hit her. She crawled around in circles as if she thought she was still in her round tub at Sea World. Soon she figured out where she was and swam strongly through the surf looking nothing like the sickly turtle I remembered.

So many of the turtles I rescue do not survive, and it's very disheartening. This success story is one of the many rewards I receive for all the hard work I have put into the sea turtle conservation effort.

Please remember if you see a dead or injured sea turtle to call the Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission at 1-888-404-3922



Plump and healthy loggerhead returning home



ADOPT A SEA TURTLE NEST



Help Save a Threatened Species!

Sea turtles have been nesting on our beaches for over 100 million years. The population of these ancient mariners has been greatly depleted by loss of nesting habitat, incidental catch by fisheries and exploitation for sea turtle products. Without the help of people like you, they could face extinction in the near future.

By adopting a sea turtle nest, you will provide funding to the nonprofit Turtle Patrol and show your support for the protection of an endangered species.

Sponsorship Fee \$25.00

Adopter Name _____

Address _____

City, State _____

Zip _____ Phone # _____

Please make check payable to:

Volusia/Flagler Turtle Patrol

4738 S. Peninsula Drive

Ponce Inlet, FL 32127

Here's what you will receive when you adopt a sea turtle nest:

- * official adoption certificate
- * one year subscription to the Turtle Tracker
- * sea turtle educational packet
- * nest watching guidelines (**hands on adoptions**)
- * nest success evaluation report
- * 1 bumper sticker

If you really want to get involved, you can do a "Hands On" adoption!

This actually involves babysitting a sea turtle nest. You will go to the beach in the evening to check "your" nest and report back to the Turtle Patrol if there are any problems. You will provide valuable protection for the nest, and you may even be lucky enough to see the hatchlings emerge from their nest and crawl to the sea!



Regular Adoption _____

Hands On Adoption _____

