

Beach Furniture and Other Obstacles Threaten Turtles

Sea turtles are not here on vacation. They visit our beaches to bring life to the next generation of sea turtles. Sarasota County is honored with this ancient ritual each summer when female sea turtles laboriously crawl onto our shores, select nest sites, and complete their instinctual mission to nest. Unfortunately, they are not always successful. For sea turtles, crawling even a short distance on land is a difficult and often dangerous task.

Most residents and visitors know how important it is to keep our beaches dark and free of litter since beachfront lighting confuses sea turtles, often with fatal results, and beach trash is unhealthy for all wildlife. However, many do *not* know that beach furniture, cabanas, toys, and other obstacles also pose a threat to turtles.

Some condominiums and resorts place so many chairs on the beach - and leave them there through the night when most sea turtle activity occurs - that little space remains for a sea turtle to lay her eggs. In such cases, a nesting female may be forced to select a less suitable nest site or none at all and instead drops her eggs at sea.

Sea turtles do not easily maneuver around things or crawl in "reverse". If they become entangled in or confronted by obstacles, these turtles may die of exhaustion on land or, if they can drag the object into the water, may eventually drown. Tiny hatchlings delayed by obstacles in their scramble to the water are more vulnerable to predators.

Sea turtles need *your* help!

Please remove beach furniture, cabanas, and other objects each evening during sea turtle nesting and hatching season from May 1st through October 31st.

If items cannot be removed from the beach, please consolidate them (e.g. stacking beach chairs and lounges) and store them in a designated "safe zone" or as far back on the beach as possible.



Sarasota County staff can help you help the turtles!

Our new Sarasota County Sea Turtle Awareness Tags attached to beach furniture and other items will remind you to remove these items to your designated "safe zone" nightly.

Please support your managers' efforts toward being a turtle-friendly establishment by helping to keep the beaches clean, dark, and free of obstacles during the annual sea turtle season. And please let them know you enjoy sharing the beach with sea turtles!

***Thank you from
Sarasota County staff and ...
from the turtles!***