

LOGGERHEAD FAST FACTS

- ◆ Loggerhead sea turtles are the SC State Reptile and are named for their oversized heads.
- ◆ Adults weigh >200 lbs. and are often more than 36" long. Hatchlings are the size of a cookie.
- ◆ They can slow their heart and respiration rates to remain underwater for long periods of time, but they must surface to breathe.
- ◆ Loggerheads have thick shells for protection and their jaws can crush with the force of 500-700 lbs.
- ◆ Predators include: Adults—killer whales and large sharks and Juveniles—anything larger than they are.
- ◆ They eat hard-shelled marine animals like horseshoe crabs, whelks, and blue crabs.
- ◆ Females begin nesting around the ages of 20-30 years and lay 3-5 nests in a season. Then they take 2-3 years off to prepare for the next nesting cycle.
- ◆ Nests are laid at night and average 100-120 ping-pong ball sized eggs which incubate 45-60 days.
- ◆ Hatchlings emerge at night, when fewer predators are present, then race to the water. Once there, they swim 24-48 hours until they reach the Sargasso Sea where they ride ocean currents and hide from predators among the sargassum weed for several years.
- ◆ Only 1 in 1,000 hatchlings survive to adulthood.



WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP

- ◆ **STAY OFF TRACKS / NESTS.** Keep your distance from possible new nests so that nesting signs aren't disturbed. Don't walk on / allow pets near nests.
- ◆ **REMOVE OBSTACLES.** Remove beach items at the end of each day, fill in holes and knock down sand castles. These are obstacles for sea turtles.
- ◆ **LIGHTS OUT.** Local ordinances forbid lights that can be seen from the beach at night. Keep lights off or close beachfront curtains at dusk. On the nighttime beach, use red filter flashlights sparingly and do not use flash photography. Adults and hatchlings are disoriented and disturbed by light.
- ◆ **DO NOT DISTURB** a turtle crawling on the beach. Stop and remain still UNTIL she begins laying eggs. Lights, movements, and noise may cause her to abandon nest efforts and she may drop her eggs in the water vs a nest.
- ◆ **SKIP THE STRAW / SINGLE USE PLASTICS.** 98% of hurricane-stranded sea turtles were found to have ingested plastic.

IF YOU SEE A NESTING, INJURED OR DEAD SEA TURTLE OR HATCHLING...

- ◆ CALL HARBOR ISLAND SECURITY AT
843.838.4890
- ◆ Do not touch / move a turtle or hatchling. Allow them to return to the water undisturbed.



Photo courtesy of Chris Kirk

HARBOR ISLAND SEA TURTLE PROJECT INC.

A 501(c)3 supporting Harbor Island sea turtle conservation efforts.

CONTACT US AT:

Email: HarborTurtleTeam@gmail.com

CHECK US OUT ON FACEBOOK:

Harbor Island Turtle Program



It's Sea Turtle Season! What does that mean?

Loggerhead sea turtles nest and / or hatch May through October. Loggerheads are the most likely sea turtles to be seen on our beach; however they are not the only sea turtles found in local waters. Each May, female loggerheads navigate back to natal region beaches to nest. They travel here from their foraging grounds, lay 3-5 nests in a season and then take 2-3 years off to prepare for the next nesting cycle.

Loggerheads make their way onto the beach under the cover of night to nest and nesting continues through July / early August. It's very important not to disturb nesting turtles on the beach as they've traveled far, do not eat during the nesting cycle, and the nesting cycle itself is physically demanding.

Hatchlings begin emerging under the cover of darkness in mid-July. We rarely see male loggerheads as they usually do not "beach" unless sick or injured.

Loggerhead sea turtles are listed as threatened and protected under the Endangered Species Act. Please do not touch, disturb or harass nesting turtles, nests, eggs or hatchlings.



THREATS TO SEA TURTLES

- ◆ Boat strikes are the leading cause of sea turtle death in SC.
- ◆ Sea turtles often entangle in fishing nets or are caught on fishing hooks. (Never cut the line! Contact Harbor Island Security immediately for help. Ph. 843.838.4890)
- ◆ Plastic ingestion.
- ◆ Loss of habitat due to coastal development.

TURTLE TALK

Every Monday at 5 pm during the summer (Memorial Day to Labor Day), we host a weekly Turtle Talk in the Community Center.

It includes great information, lots of pictures and videos, and fun activities for kids!

HARBOR TURTLE TEAM

Our all-volunteer turtle team patrols the beach every day at sunrise from 1 May to mid-October. Look for us on the beach. We'd be happy to answer questions.



Our sea turtle protection, conservation and education efforts are funded solely by donation.

Tax deductible donations may be mailed to:

Harbor Island Sea Turtle Project Inc.

162 Harbor Drive N

Saint Helena, SC 29920