

Loggerhead Sea Turtle Conservation Efforts at Myrtle Beach State Park



The loggerhead sea turtle is South Carolina's state reptile and a federally threatened species. Sea turtle activity is monitored daily for nesting adults mid May through mid August and for hatching nests late July through October. Trash is also picked up daily from the beach. Since Myrtle Beach State Park is located in the middle of the highly developed Grand Strand, there is not much annual sea turtle activity on our beach.



Do **YOUR** part! Help out loggerhead sea turtles. Have a positive impact on the beach every time you visit.

Stay off the sand dunes and do not pick the sea oats.

Sand dunes provide critical habitat for sea turtles and help prevent flooding during times of extreme tides and storms. Foot traffic kills plants and severely damages the sand dunes.



Help us keep our beaches clean! Sea turtles may mistake a plastic bag or other form of litter for a jellyfish.

Keep dogs on leashes at all times!



Please clean up all beach chairs, toys, etc. from the beach each day. These items may trap or hurt a turtle.

Fill in all holes and smash all sand castles when done playing. These can trap or confuse turtles.



Fireworks can **scare** off nesting sea turtles and leave behind trash that may be **mistaken for food** by marine wildlife.



Myrtle Beach State Park



Turtles may
be on the
beach for 1
to 2 hours

Guidelines for Viewing Nesting Turtles

- *Contact a park ranger
 - *Turn off all lights (lights scare them)
 - *No flash photography
 - *Remain quiet (noise scares them)
 - *Keep your distance
 - *Stay low and stay behind the sea turtle
- *Failure to follow these guidelines will result in a false crawl and a missed opportunity of witnessing nature at its finest!



In South
Carolina, they
lay an average
of 111 eggs.

Myrtle Beach State Park





Volunteers patrol the beaches every morning from mid May through mid August looking for the crawl or track left behind by a nesting loggerhead sea turtle.

If you observe a crawl, contact a park ranger and do not disturb the nesting activity.

Turtle crawls are like natural history crime scenes or Turtle Scene Investigations! (TSI)

Trained and permitted volunteers can carefully observe the crawl and figure out where the eggs were laid the night before.



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Nests are carefully probed by trained and permitted personnel to find the exact location of the egg chamber.



If the turtle nest is below the high tide line, the nest is carefully relocated to a sand dune by trained and permitted personnel. Sand dunes are critical nesting habitats for sea turtles.



Nests are screened to help protect the eggs from predators such as foxes and raccoons. An orange sign marks most nests in South Carolina. Please do not disturb the area!

Turtles emerge from the nest in an average of 50 to 65 days



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Hatching usually takes place during the cool of the night. Predicting the exact time is extremely difficult!



Sea Turtle
Hatchling Tracks

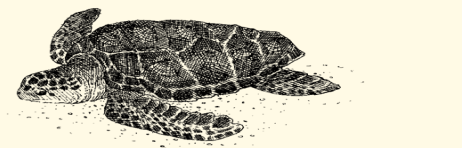
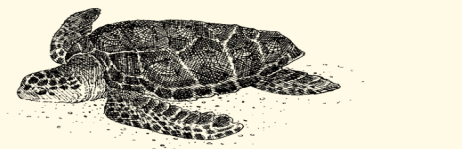


Guidelines for Viewing Hatchling Sea Turtles

- *Contact a park ranger
- *Turn off all lights (lights cause them to go the wrong way)
- *No flash photography
- *Let them crawl down the beach on their own
- *Be careful where you step!
- *Stay off the sand dunes
- *Do not remove the screen— they can get out just fine!

Summary of nests at Myrtle Beach State Park & Long Bay Estates (neighborhood just south of park)

YEAR	MBSP NESTS	FALSE CRAWLS*	LONG BAY NESTS	FALSE CRAWL*
94	7	12	5	3
95	1	2	0	0
96	6	12	2	3
97	0	0	0	0
98	2	3	1	1
99	4	3	1	0
00	3	9	1	0
01	0	0	0	0
02	0	1	0	0
03	5	11	4	1
04	2	1	0	0
05	3	0	0	0
06	0	3	0	0
07	2	0	0	0
08	6	2	1	1
09	1	0	0	0
10	1 (Green Sea Turtle)		0	0
11	4	2	2	1
12	3	0	1	0
13	4	1	2	0
14	1	0	0	0
15	2	1	0	0
16	2	3	3	0



*False Crawl- A turtle comes up on the beach, but does not lay any eggs due to a disturbance of some sort.