



## KEEPING FORT LAUDERDALE BEACH SAFE FOR SEA TURTLES

The City of Fort Lauderdale actively cleans the beach on a regular basis. This provides a safe and clean place for sea turtles and other marine wildlife. By removing plastic bags, bottles, cigarette butts and other trash we help sea turtles avoid being entangled in or ingesting these items.

### Ingestion

Sea turtles, birds, fish and other animals often mistake plastic for food. Sea turtles mistake plastic bags and balloons for jellyfish, one of their favorite foods. The plastic can become lodged in their stomachs, causing starvation and death.

### Entanglement

Common items like fishing line, nets, and six-pack rings can easily become wrapped around sea turtles and other marine wildlife. Once entangled, animals have trouble eating, breathing, or swimming, all of which can have fatal results. Plastics also take hundreds of years to break down and may continue to trap and kill animals.



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## GREEN

**Scientific Name: *Chelonia mydas* | Status: Endangered**

Named for the green color of its body fat, adult Green sea turtles eat mainly sea grasses and algae. They stay fairly close to the coastline, where they can find more vegetation to eat.

While Green sea turtles are an endangered species, they still nest in decent numbers on the east coast of Florida.

## LOGGERHEAD

**Scientific Name: *Caretta caretta* | Status: Threatened**

Of all the sea turtles that nest in the United States, the Loggerhead is the most common.

Named for its large head and jaws, the Loggerhead feeds mostly on shellfish. In addition to its large head, the top of the Loggerhead's shell and flippers are a reddish-brown color, making it easy to identify.

The coast of the southeastern United States is one of only two main areas in the world where Loggerheads nest.



## LEATHERBACK

**Scientific Name: *Dermochelys coriacea* | Status: Endangered**

Named for its unique shell that has an outer layer of thin, tough, rubbery skin, which looks like leather. Leatherbacks feed almost entirely on jellyfish, which makes them at high risk of eating plastic bags by mistake. The Leatherback grows the largest, dives the deepest, and travels the farthest of all sea turtles.

Leatherback nesting is seriously declining at all major beaches throughout the Pacific. However, there has been a recent increase in Leatherback nesting on the central and southeastern coast of Florida.



## Keep Sea Turtles Safe from Marine Debris

- Properly dispose of your trash, fishing line and cigarette butts.
- Please refrain from bringing plastic bags or balloons to the beach since they easily blow away and can be ingested by sea turtles.
- Pick up debris left by others.
- Participate in a beach cleanup event.

## Other Important Ways You Can Help Sea Turtles

- Fill in any holes that you dig so turtles and hatchlings don't become trapped in them.
- Leave marked nests as you found them. It is against the law to disturb nests per Florida Statute, Chapter 370.
- Nesting sea turtles should not be disturbed. Please refrain from approaching or shining lights on them.

## For an educational tour, please contact:

John U. Lloyd State Park  
(954) 923-2833

Gumbo Limbo Nature Center  
(561) 338-1473

Museum of Discovery & Science  
(954) 713-0940

## To report a turtle emergency, please call:

(954) 328-0580