



PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS



NESTS Coordinated By:



Funded by a grant awarded from the Sea Turtle Grants Program which is funded from proceeds from the sale of the Florida Sea Turtle License Plate. Learn more at www.helpingseaturtles.org



Sea Turtle Information

Loggerhead

Scientific name: *Caretta caretta*. The loggerhead's common name is derived from the size of its head.
Appearance: Adults and subadults have a reddish-brown carapace (upper shell) and a dull brown to yellowish plastron (lower shell).
Size: Most adults weigh between 250 and 350 pounds and have a carapace between 3 and 4 feet long.
Reproduction: Loggerheads return to their nesting beach at intervals of 2, 3 or more years during their nesting season, which runs from May through September. They lay 4 to 7 nests per season. The average number of eggs per nest is usually between 100 to 126. Eggs incubate for about 60 days.

Green Turtle

Scientific name: *Chelonia mydas*. The green turtle's common name is derived from the green color of the fat that lies just under the upper and lower shell.
Appearance: A single pair of scales on the front of its head distinguishes the green turtle.
Size: Adults weigh between 225 and 350 pounds and measure between 3 and 4 feet.
Reproduction: Green turtles return to their nesting beach in intervals of 2, 3 or more years. They lay an average of 3 to 5 egg clutches during the nesting season, which runs from June through September, but a female may lay as many as 10 clutches. Greens lay about 115 eggs per clutch, which incubate in about 60 days.

Leatherback Turtle

Scientific name: *Dermochelys coriacea*. The leatherback gets its common name because its shell is made of thin, tough, rubbery skin that looks like leather.
Appearance: Only sea turtle without a hard shell, its size and the ridges down its shell distinguish the leatherback.
Size: Adults can weigh between 500 and 1,300 pounds and measure between 4 and 8 feet in length!
Reproduction: Leatherbacks return to their nesting beach every 2 to 3 years. They lay an average of 6 to 9 egg clutches during the nesting season, which runs from March through May. Leatherbacks lay about 80 eggs per clutch, which incubate in about 65 days.

NESTS: Neighbors Ensuring Sea Turtle Survival

An introduction to the Neighbors Ensuring Sea Turtle Survival Sea Turtle Friendly Certification Program



Learn about Florida's sea turtles, their habitats and how you can get directly involved to help protect the sea turtles in your backyard.

For more information call (800) 678-7853 or visit www.nests-certified.org

What Is NESTS?

The Neighbors Ensuring Sea Turtle Survival (NESTS) certification program was developed by a group of organizations, companies and government agencies to help increase community involvement in protecting vitally important sea turtle nesting beaches and nearshore sea turtle habitat. Through participation in NESTS, homeowner associations and private homeowners can work to ensure sea turtle survival in their neighborhood.

How Does NESTS Work?

We've developed some simple activities designed for living on Florida's coasts that will directly benefit the survival of sea turtles and the protection of their nesting habitat. What better way is there to get to know your neighbors than working to build community interest and support, and gather everyone together to work toward an important conservation priority for the state of Florida – helping to save sea turtles one NEST at a time!

It's easy! Through three levels of certification: Partner, Guardian, and Champion, you will become more familiar with sea turtles and some of the challenges they are facing. At the Partner level, the activities are geared toward sharing information, becoming more informed, and making the right choices to assist nesting turtles and hatchlings. We will give you a list



of actions to choose from and all you need to do is complete most of the activities to become a NESTS partner.

Whether it is working to turn off lights that shine on the beach, learning more about sea turtles from a resident expert, or reducing the amount of litter found on our beaches, you will be part of an inspired community that is ensuring the survival of sea turtles. Once you are a NESTS partner, we will send you a decal and certificate that you can display to show your commitment!

But it doesn't end there. As a NESTS Guardian or Champion, you can demonstrate additional support for sea turtle conservation and you will receive recognition awards that can proudly be displayed to show your commitment to ensuring sea turtles survive!

How Do I Get Involved?

The life of a sea turtle can be challenging; we hope that you can help keep the neighborhood safe for turtles and ensure that the hatchlings are off to a good start!

For more information or to learn how you

can register and get started on your way to becoming a NESTS Partner, call 1-800-678-7853 or visit www.nests-certified.org.

Sea Turtles & Their Habitats

Sea turtles are large, air-breathing reptiles that have roamed the oceans for more than 150 million years. Female sea turtles return to the land only to lay eggs in a sandy beach.

Florida contains nearly 1,200 miles of coastline and hosts about 90% of sea turtle nesting in the continental United States. Coastal habitats are home not only to sea turtles, but to a wide variety of plant and animal species, including many endangered and threatened species. The beach and dune ecosystem covers approximately two-thirds of Florida's coastline.

Destruction of feeding and nesting habitats is taking a serious toll on sea turtles. There could be a time in the near future when sea turtles are just an oddity found only in aquariums and natural history museums.

It is possible that a world in which sea turtles can not survive may soon become a world in which humans struggle to survive. If, however, we learn from our mistakes and begin changing our behavior, there is still time to save sea turtles from extinction. In the process, we will be saving one of the earth's most mysterious and time-honored creatures. We might just be saving ourselves too.

