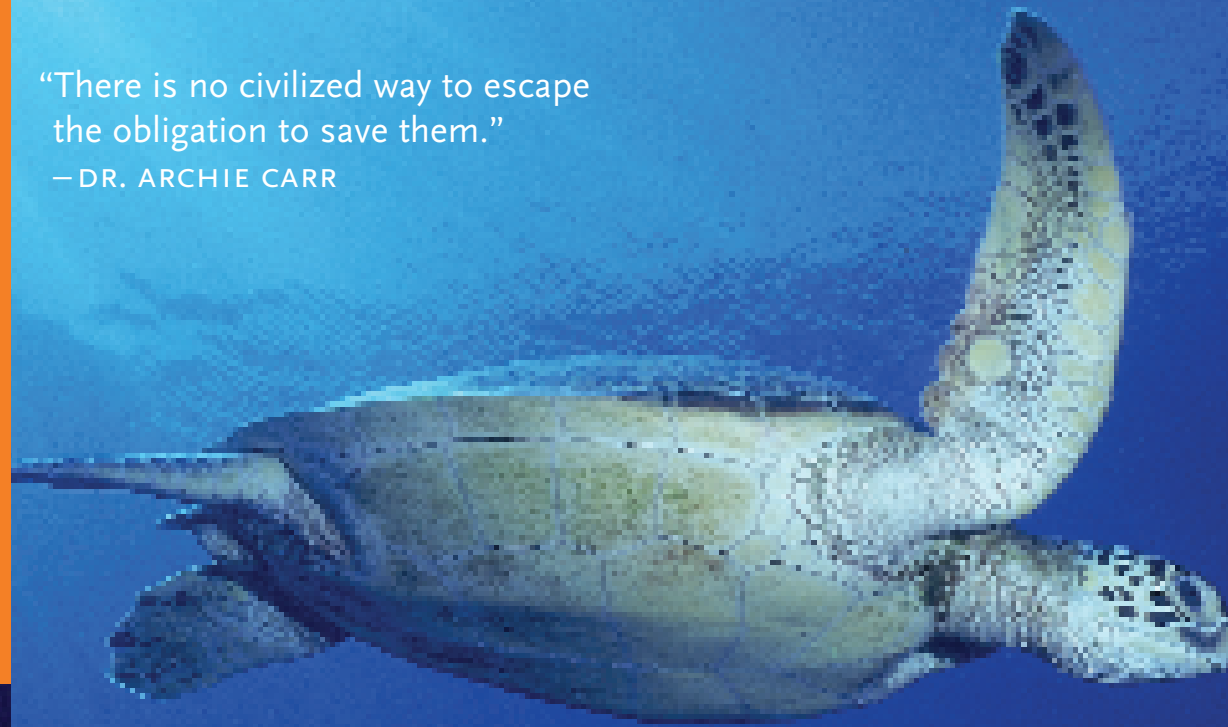


sea turtles are increasingly vulnerable to extinction. All species of marine sea turtles found in U.S. waters are protected under the U.S. Endangered Species Act.

Your actions—as a beachgoer, boater, fisher, or property owner—can make a critical difference in helping to save and protect sea turtles and the habitats upon which they depend.

“There is no civilized way to escape the obligation to save them.”

—DR. ARCHIE CARR



SEA TURTLES have been an important part of ocean ecosystems for over 100 million years. They frequent Atlantic and Gulf Coast waters, and during the summer months, female loggerhead, green, and leatherback turtles come ashore to nest. Yet because of dwindling nesting habitat, beachfront lighting and construction, entanglement in fishing line, injuries from boat propellers, and polluted coastal waters,



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## Help Save the Sea Turtles

A BEACHGOER'S GUIDE



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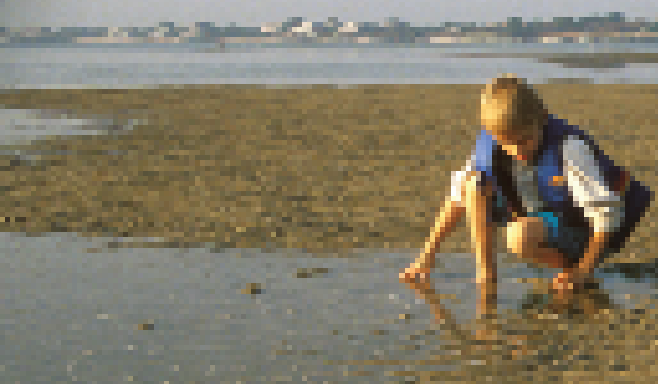
## Here's what you can do to help:

### 1. PROTECT AND RESPECT SEA TURTLES' NESTING AREAS.

- Avoid placing artificial lights in beach areas. Because sea turtle hatchlings use light and reflections to help them locate the water, artificial lighting on beaches can cause hatchlings to head inland instead of out to sea. Lights also discourage females from nesting.
- Pick up trash and debris that you see along beaches, and be sure not to leave your trash behind. Beach litter, debris, discarded fishing line, beach furniture, and fish traps can entangle sea turtles, causing injury or death.
- Preserve beaches in their natural state to provide nesting habitat for turtles. Beach plants help to hold dunes together, and sea walls and developed shoreline make it hard for turtles to come ashore and nest.

### 2. LOOK OUT FOR NESTING AND HATCHING TURTLES.

- Give nesting turtles plenty of space; if you'd like to observe, sit quietly in the dark at a distance, especially as the females emerge from the surf.
- Lights confuse nesting turtles and hatchlings, so keep the beach dark. Don't shine flashlights or take flash photos. Homeowners should shield, redirect, or turn off nearby lights.
- Leave nest markers and protective screening in place; nests are not only protected by law, they represent the next generation of sea turtles.
- Don't allow pets, children, or anyone else to disturb turtles or their nests.



- Avoid riding off-road vehicles in nesting areas; you may crush eggs in nests or create ruts that trap emerging hatchlings.
- Take care not to step on hatchlings heading to the water and let them crawl down the beach on their own.

### 3. WATCH FOR SEA TURTLES ALL YEAR.

- If you are a boater, remember that there is wildlife under the water. Each year, many animals are injured or killed by boat propellers and fishing gear.
- If you are an angler, handle fishing line with care. Do not cast around sea turtles, and properly discard or recycle used or broken fishing line. If you accidentally ensnare a turtle, cut the line as close to the turtle as possible.
- If you see a sea turtle that is stranded, injured, or dead, don't touch it, but please report it to the proper authorities. Some injured turtles can be rescued and rehabilitated.



Female turtles lay about 80–120 white, leathery eggs in one nest.

Adult leatherback turtles may weigh nearly 500 to 1500 pounds.

Sea turtles eggs incubate in the sand for about two months before hatching.

Nesting turtles lay tens of thousands of eggs each summer, but only one in 1,000 hatchlings survive.



## Here's who to call:

<b>Maine to Boston, MA</b> New England Aquarium	617.973.5247
<b>Cape Cod and southern MA</b> Massachusetts Audubon Society	508.349.2615
<b>Rhode Island</b> Mystic Aquarium	860.572.5955 x.107
<b>Connecticut</b> Mystic Aquarium	860.572.5955 x.107
<b>New York</b> Riverhead Foundation	631.369.9829
<b>New Jersey</b> Marine Mammal Stranding Center	609.266.0538
<b>Delaware</b> Meer Institute	302.228.5029
<b>Maryland</b> Department of Natural Resources	410.226.5901
<b>Virginia</b> Virginia Institute of Marine Science	804.684.7313
<b>North Carolina</b> <i>North of Bodie Island</i> Network for Endangered Sea Turtles	252.441.8622
<i>South of Bodie Island</i>	252.725.5308
<b>South Carolina</b> Department of Natural Resources	800.922.5431
<b>Georgia</b> Department of Natural Resources	912.264.7218
<b>Florida</b> Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission	1.888.404.FWCC (3922)
<b>Alabama</b> US Fish & Wildlife Service	1.866.SEA.TURTLE
<b>Mississippi</b> Department of Marine Resources	228.374.5000
<b>Louisiana</b> Aquarium of the Americas	504.378.2586
<b>Texas</b> NOAA Fisheries	409.766.3523

