

April 30, 2010

Media contact: Curt Preisser, 941-861-5884; cell 941-650-2883; cpreisser@scgov.net

Project contact: Keri Ferenc Nelson; cell 941-232-6788; kfnelson@scgov.net

Sea Turtle nesting season begins May 1

Sarasota County Natural Resources officials are reminding residents and visitors that sea turtle nesting season begins May 1 and several local beaches are prime spots for mature female turtles to lay their eggs.

To protect sea turtles and their nests beachgoers should:

- Avoid areas marked with small flags
- Minimize beachfront lighting by turning off, shielding, or redirecting lights away from the beach
- Replace incandescent and fluorescent bulbs with amber or red LEDs
- Close blinds and draperies in oceanfront rooms at night
- Remove lounge chairs, cabanas, umbrellas, and boats, from the beach at night
- Do not walk dogs on the beach unless permitted
- Use your natural vision and moonlight when walking on the beach at night
- If you encounter a turtle on the beach at night, remain quiet, still and at a distance.
- If you encounter a sea turtle nest or hatchlings, leave the eggs and baby turtles alone
- Properly dispose of your garbage. Turtles may mistake plastic bags, styrofoam, and trash floating in the water as food and die when this trash blocks their intestines.

All sea turtles, including those frequent Sarasota County beaches like loggerhead, green and Kemp's Ridley turtles, are protected by the Endangered Species Act, and Sarasota County's Marine Turtle Protection Ordinance.

For more information, contact the Sarasota County Call Center at 941-861-5000 or visit www.scgov.net.

-end-