



Collier County Government

Public Services Division
Coastal Zone Management & Parks & Recreation Departments
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

County Prepares for Sea Turtle Season

Sea Turtle Season May 1 to Oct. 31

The Collier County Coastal Zone Management Department has finished tilling Collier County beaches in preparation for the beginning of the 2009 Sea Turtle Season, which begins May 1. The Parks and Recreation Department's Sea Turtle Program staff monitor sea turtles throughout the season and protect nests in an effort to help the recovery of this endangered species.

Coastal Zone Management is the department in charge of beach renourishment, beach and boat access and infrastructure planning for the coastal areas. Additionally, the department assists with the preparations for Sea Turtle Season by tilling or loosening up compact beach sand so sea turtles have an easier time creating nests.

"We are hoping for a better year this year," said Parks and Recreation Principal Environmental Specialist Maura Kraus. "In April we have had eight stranded sea turtles, and the season hasn't officially begun."

Of the eight stranded sea turtles, six were dead and two were rescued on April 16 and April 20. Kraus and her staff transported the live sea turtles to rehabilitation facilities for potential recovery.

During the 2008 season, there were 755 false crawls, an increase from 2007. Sea turtles laid 657 nests last year with 338 of the nests hatching. Weather destroyed approximately 161 nests.

It is imperative to remember to turn beach side lights off by 9 p.m. from May 1 to Oct. 31. Lights disorient sea turtles which prevent them from finding the Gulf of Mexico.

If the public needs to report a sea turtle stranding or other issues, individuals should call pager at (239) 890-6486. For more information about sea turtles, visit www.seaturtle.org or www.colliergov.net/parks.