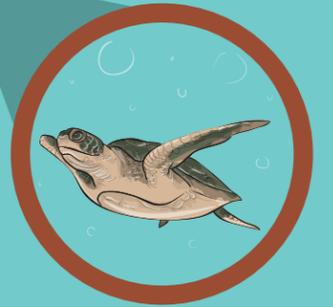


KIAWAH ISLAND

Turtle Patrol



Turtles begin coming to Kiawah in May to lay their eggs—loggerhead turtles are the most common species, but green and leatherback turtles come here, too.



Sea turtles don't always return to the same beach where they hatched, but they do come back to the same area.

Each nest has 100–150 eggs, which can take 50–80 days to hatch, depending on temperature.



With our help, about 75% of hatchlings make it from the nest to the ocean. Only 1 in 1,000 hatchlings will return as adults.

What do we do?



Nesting Patrol

- Find new nests and provide anti-predator protection.
- Move nests when necessary to safer locations.
- Gather genetic samples from turtles for tracking.



Hatching Patrol

- Clean sand from nests.
- Report nest disturbances.
- Evaluate the nests for activity and safety.
- Release struggling hatchlings.

Who are we?

- Trained volunteers who work with the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources to protect and manage turtle nests and hatchlings on Kiawah Island
- One of the largest patrol volunteer programs in South Carolina, and we've been protecting turtles since 1972

Why do we do it?

Kiawah Island sees about 200–400 turtle nests per season. Nests laid on beaches without a nest protection project have low hatch rates—typically under 10%.

With our help, hatch rates for nests are over 70%.

How can you help?



DO

- Keep an eye out for fresh turtle tracks and notify a Kiawah Island Turtle Patrol member.
- Report nest disturbances.
- "Lights Out for Sea Turtles!"—artificial lights at night along the beach can disorient turtles.
- Volunteer for the Turtle Patrol! We'd love to have you join us!
- Donate to the Turtle Patrol to help provide equipment that keeps turtles safe.



DON'T

- Harass, handle, or disturb nests, eggs, or hatchlings—it's against the law!
- Handle hatchlings—they need to imprint on the beach and crawl to the ocean on their own.
- Litter—remove all trash from the beach to protect the turtle's habitat.
- Interfere with stranded turtles—contact the Turtle Patrol; we're specially trained to handle these situations.

For strandings

843-670-7063

SCDNR Stranding Hotline,
nest disturbances

843-633-1639

For fresh tracks on the beach,
get in touch with the patrol