



Reducing artificial lighting for sea turtles

Bright lights can disorient and confuse sea turtles on the beach. On a natural beach, females choose dark beaches lit only by the moonlight to lay their nests. As hatchlings emerge from the nests 45 to 70 days later, they orient themselves toward the water using the dark silhouette of the natural sand dunes behind them and the open, lighter horizon over the water in front of them. Other wildlife, especially nocturnal animals, are also often confused and misled by artificial lighting.

Lights from homes, condominiums, businesses, signs, streetlights and other structures near the beach can be managed effectively without a great deal of effort, expense or compromise to personal safety, security and convenience. In many instances, good light management improves the appearance of the property and reduces energy costs.

To help protect turtles from artificial lights on the beach, Volusia County developed a sea turtle lighting ordinance. Habitat Conservation Plan staff members work with our beachfront property owners throughout the year to reduce lighting problems along our beaches.

The Volusia County lighting ordinance has three main components for beachfront properties:

- 1) No light source from any part of your property shall be visible to a person standing on any part of the beach, regardless of the light's color.
- 2) No light from any part of your property shall directly or indirectly illuminate any part of the beach.
- 3) No reflective surface of a fixture shall be visible to a person standing on the beach.

Check to see if your property is compliant by looking at your home or business from the beach at night. Turn on all your lights and walk on the beach to the north, south and east of your property.

Can you see any sources of lights or reflective surfaces? Can you see your shadow on the beach? If you answered yes to these questions, you may be out of compliance with the lighting ordinance. To request staff assistance with bringing your property into compliance or to schedule an on-site meeting, call Volusia County lighting staff at 386-238-4773.

To read the entire ordinance and get more information on compliant lighting, visit our website at volusiaseaturtles.org.

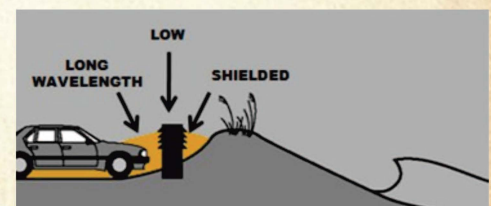
To read about effects of artificial light on other wildlife, visit darksky.org or myfwc.com (and search "wildlife lighting").

Off the beach you can help wildlife by participating in "Earth Hour" annually and by turning out lights not in use.

Reducing your energy consumption also lowers carbon emissions affecting climate change.



Examples of sea turtle friendly exterior light fixtures from the manufacturer Electro Elf. No one fixture fits all situations with lighting compliance, so make sure to inspect your property at night!



Keep it low (to the ground), long (wavelength) and shielded!

Illustration courtesy of Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC)