



Bald Head Association ~ “The voice for BHI property owners”

910-457-4676 • 111 Lighthouse Wynd, Bald Head Island • www.BaldHeadAssociation.com

BHI Questions?

How Can I Help Sea Turtles on BHI?

Turtle Season is here! Every year, Turtle Season is May 1 through November 15. This is the time when loggerhead sea turtles visit Bald Head Island beaches (and if we’re lucky, perhaps a Ridley’s kemp or leatherback sea turtle). There are many ways property owners and visitors can help sea turtles, including preventing hazards.

Flat Beaches

BHI beaches are great for building sand sculptures. But did you know that those holes kids love to dig and any structural mounds can impede the path of a nesting sea turtle? **DO NOT ASSUME** that the water from high tide will level the sand back to “normal.” **YOU** must fill those holes back in and level any mounds back to flat. Help the sea turtles! Even if you didn’t create the hole or mound of sand and pass one on the beach, do your part for the sea turtles and level the sand back to normal.

Practice the backpacker’s philosophy of “pack it in, pack it out” at all BHI beaches. All beach gear, including litter, should be removed from the beach when you leave. Anything remaining could potentially tangle up a sea turtle or other sea creature.

Dogs

Per Village ordinance, all dogs must be “physically restrained by a leash” from sunset to sunrise during turtle nesting and hatching season. Pet owners are encouraged to keep dogs under control at all times. Dogs should never be allowed near a protected sea turtle nest. Don’t be a distracted dog owner who isn’t aware of what your dog is doing behind you.

“Lights Affect Us”

Nesting sea turtles and their hatchlings need darkness so that they are not distracted from their path to the water, which unfortunately occurred on BHI last summer from beach-facing houses’ interior lights not being shielded with darkening shades (required by BHA’s Design Guidelines). It is critical that homes facing the ocean are frugal in using exterior lighting, to prevent disturbing nesting females and hatchling sea turtles. These homes must install AND USE room-darkening window treatments to block interior lighting in the evenings. This is essential information to share with your guests and renters.

No white flashlights should be used on the beach at night during Turtle Season. Use a flashlight with a red filter, which gives you viewing ability without affecting the turtles (the BHI Conservancy has these). **NEVER** disturb sea turtles in any way. This includes flash photography and shining cell phone lights on them. It is illegal to touch or disturb sea turtles. And harassing a threatened species, which is a federal crime (U.S. Endangered Species Act), can carry a fine of \$10,500 and possible jail time.

If you see a nesting sea turtle, call the BHI Conservancy at 910-457-0089, ext. 5 and leave a message. For more information about sea turtles on Bald Head Island or to be a part of the BHI Conservancy’s Sea Turtle Protection Program, visit bhic.org.