Turtle False Crawls on Marco Beach

By Maria Lamb

For the good news – Two loggerhead mommas deposited their clutch successfully on Marco's Beach for the week of April-May 6th.

But for the NOT So Good News – according to The Sea Turtle Weekly Update for April 3-May 6th, five loggerheads came ashore but false crawled back to sea without deposing their clutch.

How can we tell? According to sea turtle experts, each species of sea turtle leaves a unique visible track pattern on the sand. Every morning as our sea turtle surveyors go out, they look for signs of loggerheads coming ashore and follow their tracks.

The loggerheads crawl by alternating their flippers leaving behind a staggered comma or v-shaped track markings in the sand. In addition, the loggerhead also has a wavy and smoothed track center with no tail drag markings. That v-pattern is a big clue to surveyors on the beach giving them the exact direction the sea turtle came from and where it is heading.

In a false crawl, the big momma heavy with eggs returned to the water. According to experts, it could be a number of things such as trash on the beach, lights, people on the beach or loud noises at night. Sea turtles can't reverse so, they have to go over trash or around it.

For 2024, let's decrease false crawls in Marco Island.

Tip of the Week: Fill in holes and knock down sandcastles before you leave the beach.



Submitted Photo

Five loggerheads came ashore on Marco but false crawled back to the water. This photo shows their unique track pattern on the sand.



Submitted Photo

It is a sad irony that this gopher tortoise was hit right next to the sign warning drivers of its presence. Drive carefully. Pay attention to road signs and help protect Marco's wildlife!

Sea Turtle Activity Update April 30 - May 6, 2024

Beach	Nests		False Crawls		Hatched Nests		
	This Year	Last Year	This Year	Last Year	This Year	Last Year	Disoriented
Barefoot	6	5	5	4	0	0	0
Delnor Wiggins	0	1	0	2	0	0	0
Vanderbilt	3	5	5	9	0	0	0
Parkshore	3	1	3	3	0	0	0
City of Naples	3	3	11	5	0	0	0
Keewaydin Is.	3	4	5	7	0	0	0
Sea Oat Island	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Marco Island	2	0	5	0	0	0	0
Kice and Cape Romano	4	2	3	2	0	0	0
10,000 Islands	4	2	2	6	0	0	0
Collier County Totals	28	23	39	38	0	0	0

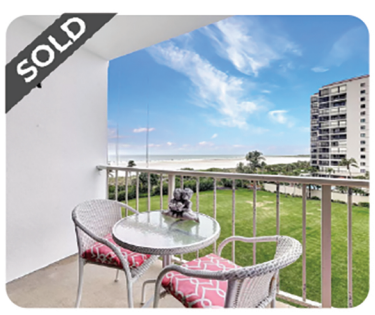
To report dead, injured or disoriented sea turtles on Marco call 239-289-9736 or 239-289-9687

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