

MARINE TURTLES

Sea turtles are among the largest living reptiles. They are cold-blooded, breathe air, and lay their eggs on land. The loggerhead sea turtle is the official state reptile of South Carolina and is protected by the Endangered Species Act.

The loggerhead sea turtle nests on the beaches of Seabrook Island. She has a reddish-brown shell and a yellow underside. The loggerhead has a large skull with strong jaw muscles for crushing whelks and crabs. A hatchling loggerhead weighs less than an ounce and its shell is less than two inches long. An adult loggerhead can weigh as much as 300 pounds and reach up to four feet in shell length.

The nesting season runs from mid-May to mid-August with the average nest containing 120 eggs. Each female will nest during the night about three or four times per season with about two weeks between each event. She then does not nest for two or three years. Average nest incubation time is 50-60 days. Nests start hatching in mid-July and may continue until early October. On average, only one out of 1,000 hatchlings will survive to maturity.

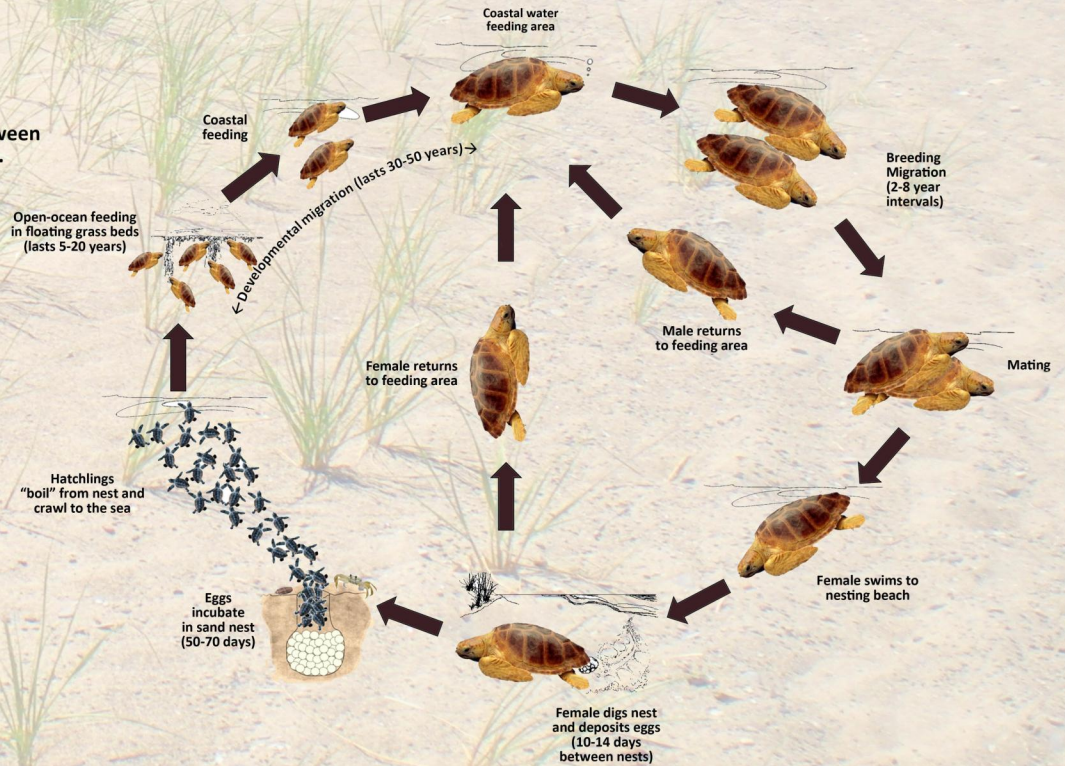


WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP SEA TURTLES ON SEABROOK ISLAND:

PLEASE...

- + DO stay away from nesting turtles and hatchlings.
- + DO keep dogs on leashes at all times from May through October.
- + DO fill in all holes on the beach at the end of the day.
- + DO turn off all lights visible from the beach.
Close blinds or drapes on windows that are visible from the beach by 10:00 PM from May through October.
- + DO NOT use flashlights or flash cameras around turtles or hatchlings.
- + DO NOT leave beach chairs, floats, tents, or toys on the beach or the dunes overnight.
- + DO NOT leave trash on the beach. Plastics can look like food to turtles.

SEA TURTLE LIFE CYCLE



Provided by:
Seabrook Island Turtle Patrol
Seabrook Island Natural History Group