

Loggerhead Lifeline

By Ken Benson

Pine Knoll Shores has been designated a Sea Turtle Sanctuary by North Carolina. Peggy Sagniller is our Sea Turtle Coordinator. She and her husband Gene know as much about turtles as anyone. If, after reading this story, you have any questions about Loggerhead Turtles or want to be a volunteer, give Peggy or Gene a call at 222-0237.

Some folks call Peggy and Gene the PKS Turtle Police. But their goal is far more benevolent and important than that. They have organized more than 40 volunteers to help them accomplish this goal. What do we need to do to protect this precious endangered species?

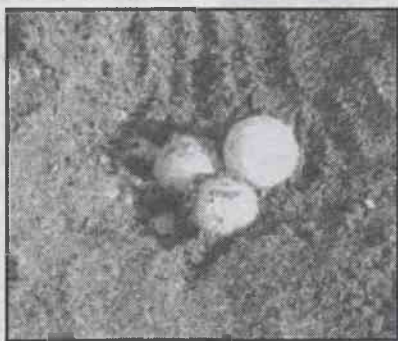
1. We must make the turtles welcome.
2. We must protect the loggerhead turtle nests on the beach after the eggs have been laid.
3. We need to make sure the hatchlings get safely into the ocean.

The work starts in May and doesn't end until the end of October or early November. Volunteers walk the beach looking for turtle tracks and they also pick up any trash that might otherwise be washed into the ocean and ingested by the turtles. The volunteer calls Peggy if crawl tracks are spotted. If Peggy determines that an actual nest exists on the beach, the data is recorded and a metal grate is pinned over the nest for protection.

One important resource that Peggy uses in

accomplishing her many tasks is in Beaufort. Matthew Godfrey is the North Carolina Sea Turtle Project Biologist and Wendy Cluse is his assistant.

Once an existing nest has been identified it must be protected from people, dogs, ghost crabs and whatever else might destroy it if there is to be a successful hatch. Mamma turtle is not sexually active until she is about 25 years old and only lays her eggs every three years. She is also shy and sensitive about whether or not she will go ashore to lay as many as ten dozen eggs in each nest. Shore lights will keep her away. She may start as many as three nests in a season.



Hatching is not a spectator sport. The hatchlings are super sensitive to light, infections and just about any kind of disturbance. When they burst from their nest and head toward the moon and the stars over the ocean a few might survive. But any bright lights from the shore will set them off course away from the ocean and certain death. Hatchlings are vulnerable to predators such as ghost crabs, dogs, people and whatever else might be out there. Volunteers are on daily protective patrols at hatching time.

Peggy writes "Turtle Time" for the Shoreline which includes detailed information about turtles and the work of her PKS volunteers.

Bits and Bites

By Sigrid Schneider

"Anybody seen any 'bars' lately?" Don't be surprised – there are actually more bears along the coast than in any other parts of the state! Do you remember the bear that was roaming and looking into homes just south of Route 70 in Morehead City and then disappeared? The black bears, which can weigh up to 500 pounds, are most active from April to October in pre-dawn hours. They generally avoid people but can still be dangerous. A West Virginia woman ended up with \$8000 damage to her sports vehicle when she struck a bear on I-40. In May a black bear attack left an 18 year old injured and his dog killed after encountering a bear and two cubs in the woods of Beaufort County. Anyone who encounters a bear should not turn and run (which one is inclined to do) but avoid eye contact with the animal, back away slowly, pick up any small children and keep dogs under control.

And talking about bears—the British Army's towering fur hats are bearskin! The hats are worn by members of five regiments—the Grenadier, Welsh, Irish, Scots and Coldstream Guards (who protect Buckingham Palace and other royal sites). It is believed that these regiments have used bearskin hats since the 1815 Battle of Waterloo when soldiers took the hats directly off the heads of Napoleon's Imperial Guards. Bearskin is a durable and luxurious fur but difficult to duplicate. The hats cost \$1218 each and last through 20 to 40 years of wind, rain and sun exposure. Animal rights activists are not happy about this and are demanding that the fur be replaced. The Ministry of Defense recently began a two year test of a new artificial fur, the latest attempt in a decade long search for a replacement that so far has been unsuccessful.

About three years ago a 720 pound black bear was hunted and killed in the vicinity of Vanceboro. It seems that the bear was eating dead pigs left by a pig farmer and was so heavy he could not climb a tree.

In conclusion if you are taking a trek in the woods, needless to say, be careful!!

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