
General Sea Turtle Information

Sea turtle populations were drastically reduced by hunting in the past. Although hunting has almost been eliminated, sea turtles remain threatened for several reasons. Turtles (and other marine organisms, such as whales) sometimes eat discarded plastic bags and other trash, and may die as a result. They also become entangled in trash and fishing nets, although turtle excluder devices in shrimp nets help reduce accidental drownings. Beach development (sea walls, jetties, lights, off-road vehicles, loud noises, etc.) may confuse females coming to shore to nest. Once the eggs hatch, the hatchlings may become disoriented by artificial lights or be trapped in tire tracks as they head for the sea, leaving them vulnerable to predators. While five species of sea turtles (loggerhead, green, kemp's ridley, leatherback, and hawksbill) have been reported in the waters off the coast of North Carolina, only two are detailed in this volume: the loggerhead sea turtle, which nests in several counties along the coastline, and the green sea turtle, which has been known to come ashore to bask and nest.