

The City of Marco Island is considering the adoption of a new Sea Turtle Ordinance

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The current Marco island Turtle Lighting Ordinance was passed by the City in 2013

<https://www.cityofmarcoisland.com/ordinances/ordinance-amending-code-ordinances-chapter-54-article-v-sea-turtle-protection-update>

Since 2013, there have been advances in the science and understanding of anthropogenic factors that might impact the behavior of Sea Turtle nests. One consequence has been to change the focus of lighting concerns from the absolute intensity of light from human sources, towards more consideration for the color, or wavelength of that light. Specifically, it is now generally accepted that light with shorter wavelengths (from purple and blue through green) is more distracting compared with longer-wavelength light (yellow through orange and red).

The exact circumstances that cause a particular hatchling to exhibit disorientation (crawling in a direction other than directly from their nest to the water line) are unclear. However, data show that turtles hatching on beaches unaffected by anthropogenic lighting rarely, if ever, disorient. Clearly then, installed lighting DOES have the potential to impact Sea Turtles' behavior. This draft ordinance attempts to address those concerns.

To summarize, there are two overarching principles: [1] beaches hosting nests should be kept as free of artificial lighting as possible and [2] where lighting is required, keep the light restricted to 'low wavelengths' and minimize the light straying on to the beach.

#### OTHER COMMENTS

1. In 2019, the University of Florida promulgated a 'model draft ordinance' for sea turtle lighting. Devised by the Levin College of Law, with review by Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission, this document provides a template for Florida jurisdictions hosting turtle nesting.
2. The model ordinance template was used by the Town of Fort Myers Beach to craft a new local ordinance which was adopted by Town Council in February, 2020.
3. The draft represents a further review of the FMB document, and has much in common with that document, with some changes and additions appropriate to the local environment.
4. The Marco Island draft does NOT attempt to regulate street lighting. The Sea Turtle Conservancy presenters at a City-organized Workshop in February, 2020 suggested that Florida Dept. of Transportation were formulating new guidance for street lighting with potential to impact lighting on beaches. As of today, that guidance has not been forthcoming. The City has been shrouding lights on Collier Boulevard, the main road along the Island, and this has been quite effective.
5. At present, there are no 'piers' on Marco Island.