

The beaches in Palmas del Mar are home to sea turtles that nest on them. Palmas Home Owners Association (PHA) has an agreement with the US Fish and Wildlife Service to conserve nesting habitat and protect the sea turtles that nest here. You can access the PHA-Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) at:

<https://www.fws.gov/caribbean/es/documents/PHAHABITATCONSERVATIONPLAN.pdf>

Sea turtles were very abundant throughout the Caribbean Sea, but are currently endangered or critically endangered (hawksbill sea turtle). In our main beach, Playa Candelero, hawksbill turtles and leatherbacks nests are recorded and protected every year. The hawksbill or Carey is the most abundant at Palmas beaches. Other beaches such as Shell Castle and Surfside also have hawksbill nests. In Playa Los Goyines, north of the main complex of Palmas, in front of the golf course also nest the green turtle.

Leatherbacks turtles nesting season is from March to July and usually we have about 12 nests of the specie in Candelero beach. The hawksbill nest year-round, but they have a nesting peak between July and October. Usually we have an average of 45 hawksbill nest in Candelero Beach, and about 5 in Shell Castle and Surfside.

We have a biologist monitoring turtles activities and a group of residents that works as volunteers and are under supervision of the biologist. In Palmas we are doing an effort to protect sea turtles and their habitat. When visiting the beach, PHA asks you to follow these suggestions:

## **Do's and Don'ts on sea turtle nesting beaches at Palmas del Mar**

### **Do's**

- Keep your dogs on leash at all times. Dogs may kill trapped hatchlings and may dig the nest. They also may chase and disturb other animals on the beach. Please also pick up their poo.
- Keep the beach clean of garbage.
- In your house or apartment use turtle friendly lights or turn them off during nesting season. Turtles get disoriented by artificial lights.

### **Don'ts**

- Do not disturb nests, do not remove flagging and caution tape from nests.

- Do not leave chairs and other equipment on the beach. Nesting turtles could get trapped on chairs left on the beach.
- Do not visit the beach during the night. Palmas beaches are closed from sunset to sunrise.
- Do not approach a nesting turtle, if you find a nesting turtle, stay behind the turtle at least 30 feet away. If you approach it your going to harass it and maybe she abandon nest attempt.
- Do not touch or pickup hatchlings. Do not carry them, do not put them on water, let them crawl safely to the water. They need to crawl to the water, that helps them identify the beach to return as adults.
- Do not drive golf carts or ATV's on the beach.
- Do not leave holes at the beach, hatchlings could get trapped in them. Please fill the holes when you leave the beach.
- Do not make bonfires.

**If you find hatchlings or a nesting turtle, please call Palmas Security (787) 930-9499.**

Federal and State law prohibits harassment, persecution, killing, transporting, selling, or buying sea turtle products or parts of sea turtles, disturbing nests or hatchlings is punishable with fines up to \$100,000 and or imprisonment.