



TURTLE TIME

**It's the time of year when nesting sea turtles and their offspring need your help.
Make sure you keep lights out near the beach,
fill holes in the sand and remove all debris from the beach.**

Sea Turtle Protection

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SCUTE, or South Carolina United Turtle Enthusiasts, is a group of volunteers dedicated to sea turtle conservation in Georgetown and Horry counties. Organized in 1990, SCUTE is permitted by the S.C. Department of Natural Resources to protect and, if necessary, relocate turtle nests as well as record turtle deaths through the Sea Turtle Stranding and Salvage Network.

SCUTE coordinates volunteer efforts to preserve quality nesting habitats and to monitor nests. The group also works to control beachfront lighting, which disorients nesting female turtles and hatchlings. Thanks in part to the efforts of SCUTE, Georgetown County and the town of Pawleys Island have passed ordinances to limit beachfront lighting along their beaches. Beachfront lighting has been minimized in some areas of Horry County as well.

On average, SCUTE records over 100 loggerhead nests with more than 12,000 eggs along the beaches of Horry and Georgetown counties. Volunteers estimate that about 70 percent of the eggs hatch. A limited number of hatchlings reach adulthood, which takes over 30 years. These low odds make the SCUTE/Santee Cooper preservation effort essential to loggerhead sea turtle survival in South Carolina.

Santee Cooper has worked with organizations like SCUTE since 1990 to preserve and protect loggerhead sea turtles. Santee Cooper supports the efforts of SCUTE by shielding lights and working to raise awareness about sea turtles through a public education program.

Santee Cooper provides free colorful "Lights Out" bumper stickers to remind property owners and visitors to turn off beachfront lights after 10 p.m. during nesting season. Throughout the nesting and hatching season, SCUTE volunteers distribute information to beach users who express an interest in turtle conservation. For more information on the loggerhead sea turtle, contact SCUTE at 843-237-9821 or 843-235-8755 or Myrtle Beach State Park at 843-238-0874.

To learn more about Santee Cooper's involvement with SCUTE, contact your nearest Santee Cooper retail office.