

U.S. Coast Guard Advisory

The U.S. Coast Guard has issued the following advisory with regard to 4th of July events that are staged in coastal areas. These events have the potential to impact endangered species and/or a critical habitat. Please make sure to heed the following directions:

- Spectator vessels should not anchor on a coral reef. If a vessel anchors in the Elkhorn/Staghorn coral critical habitat, it should anchor over a sandy bottom that is free from coral or Johnson's sea grass.
- All vessels should maintain a lookout for endangered species, especially sea turtles and manatees. Vessels should proceed at a safe speed, especially at night, in order to avoid striking any marine mammal or sea turtle.
- REPORT ANY COLLISION WITH, INJURY OR DEATHS OF MANATEE(S) OR MARINE TURTLE(S) IMMEDIATELY TO THE FLORIDA FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION COMMISSION'S LAW ENFORCEMENT HOTLINE, **1-888-404-FWCC** FOR RESCUE AND/OR RECOVERY.
- Spectators should refrain from utilizing flashlights or shooting fireworks on the beach. This could cause a distraction to nesting sea turtles. In addition, spectators are reminded not to disturb sea turtle nests. Also, spectators are encouraged to leave the beach at the conclusion of the fireworks display and throw away all of their trash. Additional information may be obtained from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.
- A federal or state agency may impose a civil fine of \$25,000 and/or a criminal penalty of \$50,000 and/or up to 1 year in jail for violating the Endangered Species Act or state statute by "taking" an endangered or threatened species or damaging coral.
- A "take" is defined as harassing, harming, pursuing, hunting, shooting, wounding, killing, trapping, capturing, collecting or attempting to engage in such conduct.
- REPORT SIGHTINGS OF ANY INJURED OR DEAD PROTECTED SPECIES IMMEDIATELY, REGARDLESS OF WHETHER THE INJURY OR DEATH IS CAUSED BY YOUR VESSEL.

Report marine mammals to the Southeast U.S. Stranding Hotline: 877-433-8299

Report sea turtles to the NMFS Southeast Regional Office: 727-824-5312