

Guidelines to protect sea turtles on Masirah Island from lighting pollution

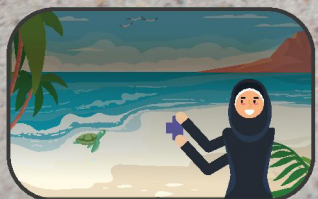
Masirah Island hosts some of the most important nesting beaches in Oman. Four different species of sea turtles can be found nesting on the island including: Green, Loggerhead, Hawksbill and Olive Ridley. The Olive Ridley and Hawksbill sea turtles can be found nesting on the southern side of Masirah Island between February to May with the hatchling period observed until July. Green and Loggerhead sea turtles nest on the island between May to September and their hatchling season extends to November. Masirah Island hosts one of the largest nesting population of Loggerhead sea turtles in the world, and this population has been in decline for various reasons including natural and human induced threats from land and sea. Nesting female turtles that approach beaches to nest, as well as hatchlings that try to make their way to sea are impacted by artificial lighting and can get disoriented. In order to minimize the impact of lighting pollution on Masirah's sea turtle nesting beaches during the nesting and hatchling season, we recommend the following guidelines to be observed between February to November:



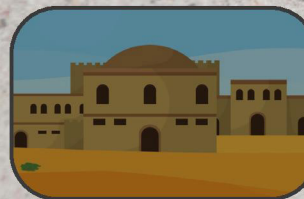
- Switch off or turn down your headlights when driving close to nesting beaches.



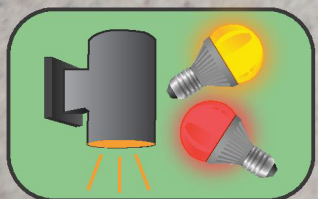
- Switch off external house lights, and boundary lights that face the beach during the nesting and hatchling season.



- Do not use flashlights or flash photography if taking photos of turtles on your camera or mobile device.



- Switch of unnecessary lights inside the house, especially for rooms facing nesting beaches. For rooms with lights on, ensure that the curtains remain closed to keep the light from reaching the beaches.



- Turtle friendly lights such as amber or red lights with long wave lengths, and low-pressure sodium are recommended for less impact to sea turtles.



- When using boundary lights, use lights that are downward facing and placed inside the boundary wall and ensure that the lights are not visible from outside the home.



www.eso.org.om