

Turtle Walk Guest Guidelines



Barrier Island Sanctuary

Bonsteel Park

8455 Highway A1A, Melbourne Beach, Florida 32951

The turtle walk begins with a presentation on sea turtle biology and conservation in the Barrier Island Sanctuary theater at 9:00 p.m. Please plan to arrive by 8:45 p.m. and park at Bonsteel Park immediately to the south of the Barrier Island Sanctuary and access the building from the 500 foot boardwalk connected to the park's beach crossover. See *directions and map*.

Health Information: Please stay home if you are showing any health symptoms. A guest or party who is symptomatic on arrival during a verbal health assessment by our walk leaders will be asked to leave. Symptoms include: runny nose, coughing, sneezing, headaches, or a temperature over 100.4 F.

Bathrooms:

Bathroom access is available at the Barrier Island Center during the presentation portion of the program, after which the only bathroom will be the outhouse at the public beach access.

Weather:

Walks are usually only cancelled for thunder and lightning events or for extremely heavy downpours. Refunds will not be issued if the cancellation is due to weather. Please check the weather the night of the event and dress appropriately.

What to bring:

Bring a raincoat if necessary and a water bottle to stay hydrated. If there are any issues with blood sugar also bring a snack. The turtle walk is in a remote area and there are no convenience stores nearby.

Procedure the Night of the Walk

- While guests enjoy the indoor presentation, trained scouts will head to the beach to begin searching for a nesting loggerhead sea turtle. The scouts will communicate to the walk lead when they locate a turtle.
- Following the presentation, guests will have one last opportunity to use the restrooms after which they are to wait outside on the observation deck while the lead secures the building.
- The lead will then guide guests on the boardwalk back to Bonsteel Park and out onto the beach crossover.
- Once a nesting turtle has been located by the scouts, the lead will guide guests down onto the beach to observe the turtle.
- Flashlights, flash cameras, video recorders emitting light, cell phones and smoking are NOT allowed on the beach. Only the lead and scouts are permitted by FWC to have red

LED flashlights to illuminate the turtle's egg chamber and guide guests on and off the beach crossover during the walk.

- After the observed sea turtle returns to the ocean, hopefully by around midnight although walks may last until 1 a.m., the lead will guide guests back to Bonsteel Park and this will conclude the turtle walk.
- Guests must be able to walk 1 mile, which represents approximately 45 minutes of walking. Bringing a water bottle is recommended to keep hydrated in the heat of summer.
- Guests must be prepared to stay on the beach with the group and may not leave on their own so as not to risk disturbing emerging or nesting turtles.
- Guests must wear darker colored, light weight, long sleeve shirts and pants and comfortable walking shoes for walking in soft sand and possibly water. Bringing insect repellent is recommended for biting insects on the beach.
- Participation in the walk is at the guests own risk. Children must be a minimum of 8 years of age to participate. The walk may not be suitable for some children given the distance and duration of the walk.
- The probability of a sea turtle sighting is very good, although it can not be guaranteed. The walk will not be cancelled due to rain, although it may cause delay. If severe weather conditions persist the nesting observation may be cancelled. Fee is non-refundable.

Map & Directions

- From Melbourne Beach travel south on Highway A1A towards Sebastian Inlet. After passing the yellow flashing light at Floridana Beach the Barrier Island Sanctuary is 3 miles on the left.
- From Wabasso Beach travel north on Highway A1A towards Sebastian Inlet. After crossing the bridge at Sebastian Inlet the Barrier Island Sanctuary is 3 miles on your right.
- Park at Bonsteel Park (red marker), immediately to the south of the Barrier Island Sanctuary, and access the building (yellow marker) from the 500 foot boardwalk (in green) connected to the park's beach crossover. *Do not park at the Barrier Island Sanctuary as all gates are closed and locked by dark.*
- Safely secure belongings and vehicle in the park.

