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DPNR Calls on Virgin Islanders to Use Turtle-Friendly Lighting Near Beaches to Protect the Endangered Species

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The Department of Planning and Natural Resources is inviting the public to help protect threatened and endangered sea turtles throughout the U.S. Virgin Islands by using sea turtle friendly lighting options near beaches.

According to D.P.N.R., the U.S. Virgin Islands is currently in high nesting season for Green Sea Turtles, which are the most common sea turtles in the region. Nesting females and baby hatchlings use the moonlight to help find their way to the ocean, but bright lights from buildings can confuse and disorient the turtles which makes them crawl away from the water and into possible danger, such as busy roads. Virgin Islands' beaches will see hundreds of female turtles laying nests and thousands of hatchlings will be making their way to the ocean in the next couple months.

All sea turtle species are protected both locally and federally as threatened and endangered species and it is illegal to injure, kill or harass any individuals or their nests. To help protect and assist sea turtles, D.P.N.R. recommends that homeowners and businesses follow guidelines provided by the Sea Turtle Conservancy for shoreline lighting such as the use of bulbs that are amber or red in color, placing shields over bulbs to direct the light away from beaches or to place lights low to the ground.

For lighting guidelines and other information about how to support sea turtle conservation around the globe, including here in the Caribbean, go [here](#). If you wish to have a consultation at your property, contact the Division of Fish and Wildlife by phone at 340-773-1082 x2203 or by email at DFWElectronic@usvi.onmicrosoft.com.

D.P.N.R.'s Division of Fish and Wildlife works to support and protect sea turtle populations with many collaborators across the U.S. Virgin Islands, according to the release. Many of these trained professionals are also part of the local Sea Turtle Assistance and Rescue (STAR) group that can be contacted at anytime for any issues with sea turtles in the water or on land throughout the territory.

Call STAR 340-690-0474 to report stranded, injured or disoriented sea turtles. Be sure to keep an eye out for future opportunities for residents of the U.S. Virgin Islands to participate in conservation, outdoor recreational and educational experiences funded by the Department of Natural Resources, Division of Fish and Wildlife.