

Take Action

Stay off sand dunes

Pack in and pack out

Observe, don't disturb

Explore

Tybee Island Marine Science Centerwww.tybeemarinescience.org**Jekyll Island**www.jekyllisland.com**Cumberland Island National Seashore**www.nps.gov/cuis**Sapelo Island National Estuarine Research Reserve**<http://sapelonerr.org>

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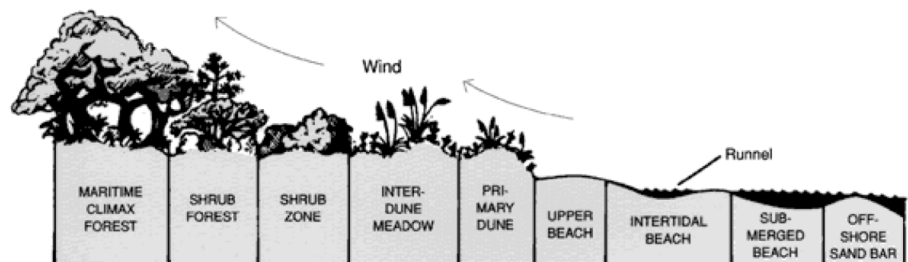
Wildlife Resources Division, Georgia Department of Natural ResourcesGeorgiawildlife.com**Ogeechee Audubon**ogeecheeaudubon.org**Caretta Research Project**CarettaResearchProject.org**Georgia Sea Turtle Center**gstc.jekyllisland.com**Keep Golden Isles Beautiful**KGIB.org**STEWARDSHIP SHORT:**
Beach Behavior

Georgia beaches are inviting places to play, relax and view wildlife. Use these basic etiquette tips to keep beaches safe and enjoyable for people and wildlife.

Action 1 | STAY OFF SAND DUNES

Dunes are formed when sand deposited by wind accumulates above the high tide line of the beach. Vegetation that grows there helps hold sand in place with strong, intricate root systems. Dunes protect coastal areas from erosion and flooding during storms and harsh weather events. Insects, birds, reptiles and small mammals depend on dune vegetation for food and shelter. Walking on dunes can cause erosion, damage fragile plants, and disturb wildlife.

- Use the provided boardwalks when crossing to the beach.
- Never pick sea oats or other plants growing on the dunes.
- Know what is permitted under the Georgia Shoreline Protection Act.

**Action 2 | PACK IN AND PACK OUT**

All marine debris comes from people. One of the most common forms is plastic, which never degrades, and instead breaks down into smaller and smaller pieces. Birds, marine mammals, and other ocean creatures can be negatively impacted by marine debris through ingestion or entanglement.

- Properly dispose of your garbage and don't leave any items behind.
- Deposit cigarette butts in receptacles.
- Ask your servers to skip the straw when ordering beverages.
- Choose a reusable cooler and water bottle.

Action 3 | **OBSERVE, DON'T DISTURB**

It's important to remember that we share the beach with animals that rely on this habitat for food, shelter, resting and nesting. Disturbing these animals or their habitat can be detrimental to their health.



Invertebrates

- Take only empty shells from the beach. Please do not remove living animals.
- Flip over horseshoe crabs that are stranded upside down on the beach.
- Learn to differentiate between live (fuzzy and brown) and dead (smooth and white) sand dollars. Leave brown ones on the beach.

Shorebirds

- Leave your dogs at home to avoid disturbing birds resting on the beach.
- Observe from afar with binoculars and encourage others to do the same.
- Walk in wet sand below the high tide line. Many shorebirds nest directly on the beach above the high tide line.
- Avoid posted nesting sites.



Sea turtles

- Turn off beachside lights during nesting season (May to August). Lights confuse hatchlings, baby sea turtles, and make it hard for them to find the ocean.
- Fill in holes and flatten sandcastles before you leave the beach. Human-made obstacles can slow a hatchling's journey from the nest to the ocean and increase its likelihood of being eaten by birds or small mammals.
- Don't disturb turtle tracks. Researchers use them to identify species and mark nests for protection.
- Avoid marked nesting sites.



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Beach Behavior References

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