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- Yakushima Town, Tourism and Commerce Division  
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- Nagata Sea Turtle Liaison Council  
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- Sea Turtle Association of Japan  
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- Nagata Village ● Kurio Village ● Nakama Village

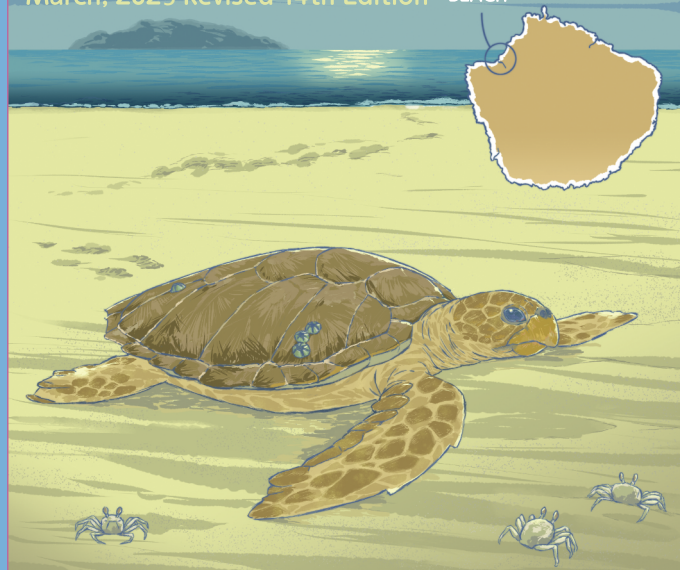
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Nagatahama Beach, Yakushima

# Sea Turtle Observation Rules and Guidelines

March, 2025 Revised 14th Edition

NAGATAHAMA  
BEACH



Sea Turtle Conservation Committee, Yakushima  
Eco-tourism Promotional Association

# Welcome to Nagatahama beach!



Nagatahama beach is a place where timeless nature and the life of the people unite.

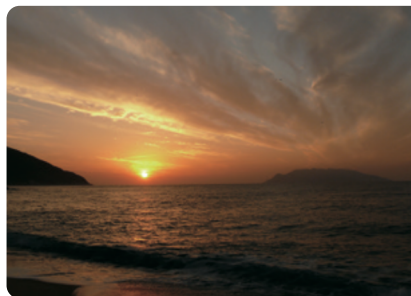
From Okudake (the far mountain), the white sand created from weathered granite travels down to the beach. In the flowing together with the stream of Nagatagawa River, the sand continues to find its way to the beach even now.

This beach is where the people in Nagata village have long been fishing, playing, and praying, while protecting their invaluable beach.

While migrating throughout the north Pacific, sea turtles have for a very long time been coming ashore at this beach to lay their eggs.

Within the north Pacific region, Nagatahama beach is the largest nesting ground for Loggerhead sea turtles.

This brochure outlines the rules we would like every visitor to Nagatahama beach to follow. We greatly appreciate your cooperation in preserving the beautiful environment of Nagatahama beach for future generations.



The sunset from  
Nagatahama beach



Sea turtle footprints

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# 1 Before Observing Sea Turtles the current status of sea turtles

In Nagatahama beach at night, sea turtles come ashore to lay and bury eggs from **late April to early August**. The eggs hatch from **early July to late September**, and baby sea turtles known as hatchlings head to the sea.

## ○An Endangered Species: Sea Turtles

There are seven species of sea turtles worldwide. The three species of sea turtles which come ashore to lay eggs in Japan are Loggerhead, Green and Hawksbill. These sea turtles are in danger of extinction due to many threats such as marine pollution or deterioration of nesting sites.

\*In accordance with the IUCN criterion

## ○Nagatahama beach is a Valuable Nesting Ground for Loggerhead Sea Turtles.

Nagatahama beach is known to have the highest number of nesting sites in the north Pacific region for Loggerhead sea turtles. With the beach being an irreplaceable region for sea turtle conservation, it was designated as Yakushima National Park (previously called Kirishima-Yaku National Park) in 2002. In addition, in 2005, it was designated as one of the Ramsar sites of the Ramsar Convention.

※Ramsar Convention: The Ramsar Convention is an international treaty with the mission of providing the framework for conservation and wise use of all wetlands including the species living in the area.

★Nagatahama beach is a collective term for the three beaches: Maehama beach, Inakahama beach, and Yotsusehama beach.



Nagatahama Beach

**It is vital to continue protecting both the sea turtles and the beaches!**

## ○Sea turtles are very delicate creatures.

Once a sea turtle senses light or the existence of a human, they stop their journey ashore. In addition, with more visitors, the sand will be stamped firm, making the hatching of eggs and the hatchlings ability to snuggle out of their nest difficult.



## ○Problems which Nagatahama beach is facing

The rate of sea turtle egg laying, and the hatching success (percentage of turtles that hatch from their eggs) has been decreasing in Nagatahama beach. After being designated as a National World Heritage Site, the number of tourists arriving to Nagatahama beach has increased immensely. Every year, approximately 5,000 people travel to Nagatahama beach at night to watch sea turtles laying their eggs. The adverse impact on sea turtles caused by the increasing human interference has become a concern.

## ○To preserve and protect both the sea turtles and Nagatahama beach

After a discussion with the related administrative organizations and local parties, rules for observing sea turtles in Nagatahama beach were defined. During the nesting season of sea turtles, we ask everyone to refrain from entering the beach at night.

**These rules are not legally binding. However, to preserve the sea turtles, we appreciate your understanding and cooperation in this matter.**

## 2 Nagatahama Beach Sea Turtle Observation

- Please do not enter the beach area at night.

**Period**  
**May 1<sup>st</sup> - Sept 30<sup>th</sup>**  
**8:00 PM to 5:00 AM**

- ※ Entering the beach areas in a disorderly manner may have adverse impact on both the sea turtles coming ashore and the hatchlings in the sand.
- An exception to the rule: Only the participants of the sea turtle observing tour and staff members are allowed to enter the nesting beach, during the restriction of nighttime access to the beach.

### Information on observation sessions

The tour is held by local residents in Nagata village for sake of sea turtle protection.

The Sea Turtle Observation Tours will start with an orientation which provides information on the basic rules and the biology of sea turtles. Then participants watch a video image of female sea turtles landing. Staff members will guide you to its nesting site when they start nesting.



Meeting Place: **Inakahama Beach Parking**

Dates: **Early May ~ Mid July 20:30~23:00** \* Check on HP

Admission Fee: **Check on HP**

\*The funds will be used for activities such as the protection and conservation of sea turtles.

Limit of Participants : **Up to 50 people/per day**  
**Reservation is required.**

**The observation tours may be canceled due to bad weather or infectious diseases. Please check in advance whether or not it will be held.**

Reservations are required for observation sessions. Please make an appointment using the contact information below

### Inquiries regarding sea turtle observation tour

#### ○Nagata Sea Turtle Liaison Council

1229, Nagata , Yakushima-town TEL:0997-45-2280  
URL: <http://nagata-umigame.com/>

[\[Reservation/Contact\]](#) 3/1~Last day of observation



HP

We ask for your kind understanding of the fact that there is always the possibility of not being able to observe the nesting scene as sea turtles are living creatures.

## Rules When Observing Sea Turtle Behavior at Nighttime:

### 1. Gain a full understanding of sea turtles beforehand.

- Before entering the beach area, please listen to the staff's sea turtle explanations.

### 2. Follow the staff's instructions at all times.

- To minimize disturbance to the sea turtles, please follow all instructions given by the local staff.

### 3. Turn off all lights.

- Sea turtles during nesting season avoid light. Also hatchlings instinctively head toward light.
- Please turn off all devices that may emit light including flash lights and cell phones.



### 4. Do not wander around or make noise.

- When sea turtles sense the presence of a human, they do not come ashore. Please also be on the lookout as there may be hatchlings wandering around the beach during hatching season.
- Please refrain from making loud noises at night and from walking around the beach.



### 5. Do not touch the sea turtles.

- Sea turtles are very sensitive to disturbance, so please refrain from touching them.
- ※ Capturing sea turtles or collecting their eggs at Yakushima beach is forbidden under the Ordinance of Kagoshima Prefecture and the Natural Parks Law.

### 6. No recording of any kind including cameras and video cameras, allowed.

- The intense light from a camera flash and even the dim light from a video screen can disturb sea turtles.



### 7. Do not bring any alcoholic beverages to the beach.

- As it may disturb others, please refrain from entering the beach area drunk or with any alcoholic beverages.

### 8. No smoking allowed.

- The light from cigarettes can disturb the sea turtles. Please also refrain from using any matches or lighters.



### 9. Take home your garbage.

- Any garbage remaining on the beach will be an interference both for sea turtles coming ashore and for hatchlings returning to the sea. Please do not litter, and be sure to take home all your garbage.



### 10. Do not enter the beach area after the Sea Turtle Observation Tour.

- After the Sea Turtle Observation Tour (after around 11pm), please do not enter the beach area. A quiet environment is important for sea turtles to lay their eggs as well as for baby sea turtles to hatch from their eggs.
- ※ On Nagatahama beach, research activity is conducted for the purpose of sea turtle preservation. This activity is undertaken during nighttime at the beach and is exclusive to research staff.



## Rules Which Apply throughout the Day:

### ●Do not enter the fenced off locations designated for sea turtle protection

- At Nagatahama beach, we have put in place a fence to protect the hatchlings in high nesting areas.
- Please do not enter fenced off locations, as you may accidentally step on the eggs or hatchlings.



A photo of the fence for sea turtle protection

### ●No campfires allowed

- There is no knowing where on the beach sea turtle eggs are buried.
- By building a campfire, you create the risk of eggs or hatchlings in the sand dying from the heat of the fire. There is the additional risk of hatchlings entering the fire.



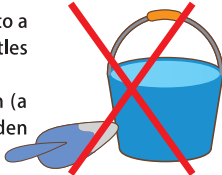
### ●No camping allowed

- The light originating from campsites may become a disturbance for sea turtles coming ashore or hatchlings returning to the ocean.
- ※Camping in Nagatahama beach (a special zone of the National Park) is forbidden under the Natural Park Act.



### ●Do not take sand home from the beach

- Taking sand home from the beach can lead to a decrease in optimal nesting areas for sea turtles to lay eggs and hatch.
- ※Collecting sand from Nagatahama beach (a special zone of the National Park) is forbidden under the Natural Parks Law.



## 4 Sea Turtle Conservation Activities

Year	Main events
1973	Former Kamiyaku-cho enacted the Kamiyaku Nature Conservation Ordinance.
1982	A monitoring service for Nagatahama and Issohama beaches has been started on consignment from the town.
1988	Kagoshima Prefecture enacted the Sea Turtle Protection Ordinance. →Puts a ban on trapping sea turtles and collecting their eggs.
2002	Nagatahama beach designated as a part of Kirishima - Yaku National Park.
2005	Registered as one of the Ramsar sites under the Ramsar Convention.
2006	The sea turtle registered as a designated animal in accordance with the Natural Parks Law.
2009	Establishment of the Yakushima eco-tourism Promotional Association established. The rules for observing sea turtles at Nagatahama Beach are formulated.
2019	Sea Turtle Conservation Committee, Yakushima Eco-tourism Promotional Association established.
2023	The overall concept for promoting Yakushima eco-tourism is decided.

### ■Regional activities

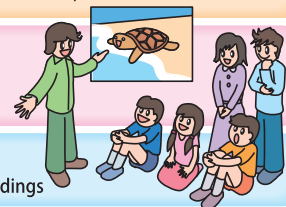
Admission fee is used for following activities and programs.

#### ① Sea turtle conservation activity

- Guidance to night visitors (Sea turtle observation tours held)
- Monitoring activity during night
- Installation of fences for sea turtle protection
- Transplantation of eggs, rescue of sea turtles, and other activities

#### ② Dissemination and enlightenment activity

- Environmental education



#### ③ Survey / Research activities

- Survey on the number of sea turtle landings

#### ④ Environmental protection of the beaches

- Beach cleanup activity
- Management of light-shielding forests

## 5 Home of Sea Turtles – Nagata Village –

The mountains soaring high in the center of Yakushima are called “Okudake (the far mountains)”. Nagata is the only place where Mt. Nagata (the Okudake mountain) can be seen from the central part of the village.



### ■ Nagatahama beach is indispensable to local belief and traditional events

“Takemairi” is a pilgrimage to a shrine in Okudake to pray for bountiful crops and fish catches as well as peace and prosperity in the household. Participants cleanse themselves in the sea and bring the sand from the beach to offer at the shrine located at the summit.



During the traditional performance known as “Inviting flying fish,” women offer prayers to Buddha enshrined at the beach and Ebisu enshrined at the river mouth, then try to invite into their nests flying fish while dancing and singing.

### ■ Sea turtles have long been a part of the villagers’ life

Sea turtle eggs used to be precious resources that contributed to the local diet as a food ingredient and benefitted the local economy. Even during those days when sea turtle eggs were taken, there was a belief summarized in this expression: “Be considerate not to take all the eggs. Leave some untouched so that they can hatch.”



**Why don't you stroll with local people and get to know a lot more about Nagata village?**

**Village strolling tour is conducted in Nagata village.**

Contact : 0997-42-2900 Admission fee : 1,500 yen

Booking should be made until 3 days before the tour date.

## 6 Nagatahama Beach Vicinity Map

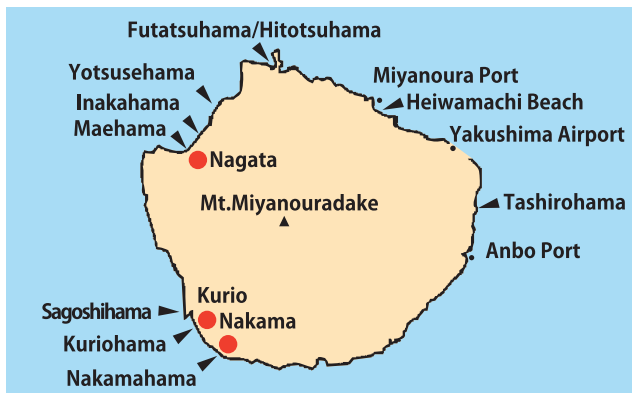


**⚠ To visitors coming by car at night**

Please slow down around the Nagatahama beach vicinity and set your **lights to low beam**. Also, please turn your lights off when you move in and out parking spaces. Thank you for your cooperation.

## 7 Other Nesting Sites in Yakushima

Sea turtles come to lay their eggs on other sandy beaches besides Nagatahama beach in Yakushima. Recently, the number and area of nesting sites got decreased partly due to loss of sand on nesting sites. Please follow the rules to protect remaining nesting sites and the endangered sea turtles.



Inakahama Beach, now and old times / Left:2009 Right:2019

### Kurio village

Sea turtles come to lay their eggs on Kuriohama beach. No observation tours such as in Nagatahama beach are conducted.

During the nesting period, sea turtle monitors lead visitors and disseminate rules about observing sea turtles on Kuriohama beach with assistance of supporting guides.

When observing sea turtles, make sure to follow all instructions from these people and do not wander the beach by yourself.

※The rules for observing sea turtles at Kurio Beach refer to page15.



### Nakama village

Sea turtles come to lay their eggs on Nakamahama beach. Please refrain from observing sea turtles at night on Nakamahama beach since there is no car-parking space around and no guardrail on the beach side.

In Nakama village, part of sea turtle eggs are transplanted into artificial hatching site and hatchling coming out there are released as educational activity by children in the village every year before summer festival.





## Rules for Protecting and Observing Sea Turtles on Kuriohama Beach

Observation tours similar to those at Nagatahama Beach are not held at Kuriohama Beach, but please follow any instructions from the sea turtle monitors and be mindful of the rules below when observing the sea turtles.



HP

At Kuriohama Beach, Kurio Village, Nakama Village, sea turtle monitors, support guides and administrative officials form the Kurio Beach Sea Turtle Liaison Council.

### 1. No observations after 11 pm.

- This is to prevent disturbing nearby residents.

### 2. No street parking on prefectural roads around Kuriohama Beach.

- Please use the beach swimming parking areas.

### 3. Be aware of your car lights.

- Please set your lights to low beam and away from the sea.  
Please do not use your car lights more than is necessary.

### 4. Follow any instructions from staff.

- Make sure to always follow instructions from the sea turtle monitors who are wearing the official armband and ID.  
Please do not go onto the beach unnecessarily, but wait in the resting area.

### 5. Listen to the lecture first.

- Please listen to the sea turtle monitors explain how light and sound can harm the sea turtles.



### 6. Do not enter certain areas unless instructed to do so.

- Unless instructed to do so by the sea turtle monitors, do not enter the embankment areas or the fishing facilities, etc., from the beach.

### 7. Do not bring any alcoholic beverages to the beach.

- This could disturb other people around you. Also, please do not observe the sea turtles while under the influence of alcohol.

### 8. No smoking on the beach.

### 9. Do not walk around unnecessarily or make excessive noise.

- Please observe quietly without walking around the beach unnecessarily, shining lights or making noise.



### 10. Do not get close to sea turtles coming to shore or burying into the sand.

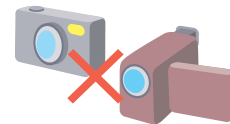
### 11. Do not touch the sea turtles or their eggs under any circumstances.



### 12. Do not take videos or photos.

### 13. Please check where the public restrooms are in advance.

- Please check where the public restrooms are in the parking area in advance.  
The entrances will be kept dark because light can be harmful to the sea turtles.



## Require more information?

## Inquiries regarding sea turtle observation tour

## ○Nagata Sea Turtle Liaison Council

1229, Nagata, Yakushima-town TEL: 0997-45-2280

URL: <http://nagata-umigame.com/>

[Reservation/Contact] 3/1~Last day of observation session



HP

## Information about lodging, car rental and taxis

## ○Yakushima Tourism Association

187-1, Ambo, Yakushima-town TEL: 0997-46-2333

Yakushima Tourism Association Official Website

URL: <https://www.yakukan.jp/>

HP

## Inquiries regarding rules for sea turtle observation on Nagatahama beach

## ○Sea Turtle Conservation Committee, Yakushima Eco-tourism Promotional Association

849-20, Koseda, Yakushima-town TEL: 0997-43-5900



HP

## Learn about sea turtles

## ○Sea turtle exhibition museum

NPO Yakushima Umigame-kan

805-1 Miyanoura, Yakushima-cho TEL: 0997-47-1800

&lt;Opening hours&gt; 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. \*Closed on Mondays

&lt;Admission Fees&gt; Free



Instagram

X  
(formerly Twitter)

## Special notices to mass media and researchers

When visiting Nagatahama beach for the purpose of research or news reports

## ① Advance notice is required for beach entry.

[Contact] The Yakushima Ranger Office for Nature Conservation of the ministry of the Environment (TEL: 0997-46-2992)

## ② Do not use any devices which emit light or flashes.

We ask for your understanding and cooperation.