

**Adopt-a-Turtle Selection Process**  
Bald Head Island Conservancy  
Summer 2020

Through our Sea Turtle Protection Program, we monitor and attempt to tag all female sea turtles that are observed on the beaches of BHI. This monitoring program has been collecting data for +35 years, allowing us to thoughtfully and accurately select the right turtle for you. Turtles are selected for Legacy or Mom sponsorship if they show signs of great site fidelity to BHI. In other words, nesting mothers who have a strong history of consistently nesting on BHI. Legacy sea turtles are moms who consistently nest on Bald Head Island beaches over an extended period of time (4-6 years). We have many nesting females who not only nest on BHI, but also use our neighboring barrier islands. BHI even has some nesting females who use our beaches, neighboring barrier island and even South Carolina and Georgia beaches all in the same year! We try to stray away from these individuals and focus our attention on females who have a rich nesting history specific to BHI. This ensures that you are able to experience every possible nest that your Legacy or Mom lays.

**Adopt-a Process:**

- **Assigning an Adopt-a-Nest**
  - Nest is found and nesting female is not observed
  - Nest is found and nesting female is observed but not ID'd
  - Nest is found and nesting female is ID'd as a neophyte
    - 1st nesting season, never observed on BHI before
  - Nest is found and nesting female is ID'd as a remigrant and there are no Adopt-a-Moms or Adopt-a-Legacy sponsors
  
- **Assigning an Adopt-a-Mom**
  - Nest is found and nesting female is ID'd as a remigrant (2nd season) or consistent neophyte
    - Depending on site fidelity to BHI
      - Previously laid  $\geq 2$  nests on BHI
    - Nest is found and nesting female is ID'd as a remigrant (+3rd season)
      - Previously laid  $\geq 2$  nests on BHI in each nesting season
      - If nesting history is extensive ( $\geq 3$  nests on BHI each nesting season), the individual will be considered for Legacy sponsorship. Though, if there are no Legacy sponsors, the individual will be assigned as an Adopt-a-Mom
  
- **Assigning an Adopt-a-Legacy**
  - Nest is found and nesting female is ID'd as a remigrant (+3rd season) with an extensive and rich nesting history on BHI
    - Previously laid  $\geq 3$  nests on BHI each nesting season
  - If it is an individual we haven't seen in some time, a more in-depth assessment of their nesting history is done before they are assigned as an Adopt-a-Mom or Adopt-a-Legacy

**\*\*\*\*The BHI Conservancy cannot guarantee the assigned Adopt-a-Mom or Adopt-a-Legacy individual's nesting behavior will stay true to BHI. Site fidelity can fluctuate over time.**