

# Into watching horseshoe crabs have sex? Florida needs your help

February 20 2020, by David Fleshler

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Arthropod passions will soar along Florida's coastal waters in March and April as we reach peak mating season for horseshoe crabs.

The state wildlife service is requesting reports of any mating horseshoe crabs so it can track these primitive but important creatures.

Just as Spanish moss is neither Spanish nor a moss, horseshoe crabs aren't actually crabs. They're more closely related to spiders and scorpions. Ancient survivors from the period before the dinosaurs, they have declined in the past few decades from the loss of coastal habitat to construction.

Mating pairs and clusters can be easily recognized. The male hooks onto the larger female, often joined by other [males](#) hoping to help in fertilizing her eggs. They're most easily seen at high tide within a few days of a new or full moon.

You can report sightings to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission at [horseshoe-crabs](#)"  
target="\_blank">myfwc.com/research/saltwater/c ...  
aceans/[horseshoe-crabs](#).

Horseshoe crab eggs are an important food for migrating birds. The adult [crabs](#) are food for fish, [sea turtles](#), alligators and other creatures.

And if you see one on its back, you can help it. Never pick them up by the tail. Just grip it gently on its sides and flip it over.

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