

# Horseshoe crab "kill zone" at Delaware Bay beach thwarted by fencing

By [Katie Peikes](#) • 18 hours ago



A wildlife conservation group worked last spring to eliminate a "kill zone" for horseshoe crabs at a Delaware Bay Beach. As spawning season winds down, the group says its effort was highly successful.

At the north end of Pickering Beach near Little Creek in Kent County, there's an area that slopes away from the beach and into a ditch. If horseshoe crabs go back that far, they don't see when the tide starts to recede and they die

right-side up in the sun.

[Ecological Research and Development Group](#) installed a 350-foot fence there in April to block the crabs from crawling back that far.

ERDG founder and president Glenn Gauvry says he's been delighted by the success.

"I mean there's not one animal on the other side of the fence obviously," Gauvry said. "Last year there was probably 10,000 over there and they were all dead."

In May and June, Gauvry checked the fence at least three times a week, and flew a drone to get an aerial view of the tide lines.

Gauvry says he hopes the fence solution can be used in the future at other beach areas that don't have the most ideal spawning conditions.

ERDG will talk with Delaware's Division of Fish and Wildlife next week to discuss the performance of the fence and whether they should remove it or keep it up through the winter.

Although ERDG worked to resolve a mortality issue in the area behind the fence, Gauvry said hundreds of horseshoe crabs are still dying when they crawl ashore at Pickering Beach and end up upside down because of the high volume of animals in the area.

The crabs can't flip themselves over, which is why ERDG leads an initiative called "Just Flip 'Em", encouraging beachgoers to flip struggling horseshoe crabs over – "a simple act of compassion" as Gauvry calls it.



However, Pickering Beach is more secluded than other beaches and there are less people walking the beach to give horseshoe crabs a helping hand.

“You only have the hearty that come up this way and there’s an awful lot for maybe one or two people to do, it’s sometimes overwhelming,” Gauvry said.

ERDG has been working with the Pickering Beach community to increase awareness of the problem.

They’ve even reached out to the birding community as birds that feed off of horseshoe crab eggs are attracted to the area.

“There’s more people going there than there ever have been before, but there’s a lot of crabs,” Gauvry said.