

## Dear Sea Turtle Friends and Supporters,

2016 was a busy season, as expected, and we predict another busy one this year. Here's how last year went:

- Total nests were 76 (1 green, rest loggerheads. We evaluated 75. We were unable to determine a final status of one nest.
- There were a total of 6,558 hatched eggs from the evaluated nests.

We are happy to report no major losses from predation events by either domestic or wild animals, weather conditions, or human disturbances. But despite our best efforts, 3 nests experienced hatchling disorientation events. We estimated roughly 70 hatchlings were negatively impacted (some mortally).

**A disorientation event occurs when the turtle is influenced to travel in the wrong direction (away from the ocean) by any kind of artificial light source. This includes lights on homes/buildings, in parking lots & landscaping, flashlights and camera flashes.**

To learn more dangers from artificial lights please visit the FWC resource at <http://bit.ly/2nFBHsd>.

Last year we told you about the near-death of a nesting turtle that tumbled into a 4-foot deep man-made pit in 2015. But beach pits and artificial lights are not the only dangers to sea turtles. Objects left on the beach overnight are also very hazardous. In 2016 we recorded two obstructed nesting events on the same day from the same obstruction! A large catamaran was left near the dune and not one, but two, nesting turtles came ashore at that exact place and deposited their nests beneath and next to the vessel. The vessel had to be carefully moved before we could tend to the nests, which caused a lengthy delay. Because of the renourishment project the nests needed to be relocated, and FWC rules require the relocation be completed no later than 9 a.m. That is not just an arbitrary time limit. About 12 hours after deposition, the potential for movement-induced mortality in sea turtle eggs increases rapidly. The hatch success rate of these nests were below the average for all the nests.



*Nest beneath rudder*



*Nest next to hull*

**BSTP is the only FWC-permitted turtle patrol in Atlantic, Neptune and Jax Beaches.** Our name is clearly visible on our work shirts and ATVs. If you observe anyone touching a turtle or a nest that is NOT identifiable as a BSTP volunteer, please notify the appropriate local law enforcement agency immediately. Similarly, there are no other groups who are authorized to accept donations or sell items on behalf of BSTP.

**Nest watching or "nest-sitting" violates FWC protocol as it is highly illegal to interfere in any way with a nest or the turtles themselves. Please report any human disturbances immediately to the local police department and FL Wildlife Alert line at 1-888-404-3922, or #FWC from cell phone.**

*You can help protect the turtles by keeping the beach clean, dark and flat!*

## Statewide Report

Overall, 2016 was a good year statewide. Preliminary FWC reports include 122,706 loggerhead nests – the highest year ever recorded! As expected, green nests were down from the previous high year (5,393 vs. 37,341). Greens typically nest on a biennial pattern alternating high years with low years. So we are hopeful that 2017 will be a very high year for greens again. Leatherbacks racked up 1,054 nests which is an average but still respectable number.

For additional 2016 statewide nesting information please visit FWC's research section at <http://bit.ly/2nAjOyi>.

## Calendar of Events

- Feb. 18**, 10-4. Educational table at Jacksonville Zoo.
- Mar. 25**, 8-11am. Beach cleanup: Atlantic Blvd., Beach Blvd., and 16<sup>th</sup> Ave. S.
- May 1**. Virtual annual pre-season meeting at [bstp.net](http://bstp.net).
- May 1**. Official start of nesting season.
- May 20**, 11-4. Exhibit table at Dancing in the Street.
- May 25 through July 4**. Annual sea turtle art show/benefit at First Street Gallery. Opening reception **May 26**, 7-9 pm.
- July 5**, 7-9 am. Annual 5<sup>th</sup> of July beach cleanup.
- Sept. 16**, 7-9 am. Annual International Coastal Clean Up Day.
- Oct. 31**. Official end of nesting season.

Check our website and Facebook page for new events.

## New in 2017

- Online pre-season meeting
- New logo
- Online volunteer application system
- Donation structure update
- Online nest success reports
- Beach access signage

This year we're excited to be able to include more of our supporters in the annual pre-season meeting! We have supporters from all over the country and they are always left out of the local on-site meeting (along with local supporters who are

not able to attend). We've been wanting to do this for a few years now so we're happy to finally reach more interested parties. The link will be posted May 1 on the website and Facebook page and will be permanently available for viewing.

We're also excited to introduce our brand new logo, which is the image on the enclosed window decal. We love the fresh new design but our beloved hatchling mascot isn't going away entirely. He will still make an appearance every so often.

In another effort to leverage technology for a more efficient process, we have implemented an online volunteer application system which has proven extremely successful.

A long overdue update to our donation structure has been implemented and simplifies the nest adoption process. The new levels include nest adoptions along with options for donations without adoptions. This is the first time the donation levels have increased since 1991, when BSTP was initially granted non-profit status.

Also, nest success results for adopters will now be available online as soon as we post them. No longer will you have to wait weeks or even months after we evaluate the nests to learn the status of your adopted nest! Your nest adoption letter will include the link for future reference, so be sure to keep it handy.

The beach access signage project to show beach-goers how they can help the turtles is nearing completion and we anticipate installation to begin soon.

### *On The Horizon*

As you may know, the beach renourishment project was not completed last year and will recommence in April, along with the dune replenishment. That means that we will be relocating many nests again this year.

In closing, we wish to thank all of you for your continued support. Without your donations we would be unable to provide the protections that are so vital to keeping these wondrous creatures alive for future generations. All donations are tax deductible (receipt provided upon request), and many employers have implemented matching donation programs. Please also consider purchasing a state-issued sea turtle license tag. It is the second-most popular Florida tag and the proceeds are used to fund research projects, provide educational materials and promote sea turtle conservation throughout the state.

Thank you again, and we'll see you on the beach!

### *BSTP Directors*

*BSTP, Inc. is a registered 501(c)(3) and 509(a)(2) organization under the U.S. Internal Revenue Service Code. We are a 100% volunteer organization and receive no direct government funding.*

### *Reference Links*

#### **BSTP Online**

[bstp.net](http://bstp.net)  
[facebook.com/beachesseaturtlepatrol](https://facebook.com/beachesseaturtlepatrol)  
[youtube.com/user/bstpJax](https://youtube.com/user/bstpJax)

#### **External Resources**

Donate while you shop on Amazon!  
[smile.amazon.com/ch/59-3100324](https://smile.amazon.com/ch/59-3100324)  
[myfwc.com/wildlifehabitats/managed/sea-turtles/](https://myfwc.com/wildlifehabitats/managed/sea-turtles/)  
[myfwc.com/research/wildlife/sea-turtles](https://myfwc.com/research/wildlife/sea-turtles)  
[myfwc.com/conservation/you- conserve/lighting/](https://myfwc.com/conservation/you- conserve/lighting/)  
[oceanconservancy.org/our-work/marine-debris/](https://oceanconservancy.org/our-work/marine-debris/)  
<http://conserveturtles.org/>

#### **Special Events**

[firststreetgalleryart.com](http://firststreetgalleryart.com)  
[jacksonvillezoo.org](http://jacksonvillezoo.org)  
[tinyurl.com/coj-cleanups](http://tinyurl.com/coj-cleanups)

#### **Local Lighting Ordinances**

[bstp.net/PDFs/JaxBch\\_Ord\\_202000-7789.pdf](http://bstp.net/PDFs/JaxBch_Ord_202000-7789.pdf)  
[bstp.net/PDFs/NepBch\\_Ord\\_201999-01.pdf](http://bstp.net/PDFs/NepBch_Ord_201999-01.pdf)  
[bstp.net/PDFs/AB\\_Resolution.pdf](http://bstp.net/PDFs/AB_Resolution.pdf)

*Did You Know . . .*

*Sea turtles don't nest every year,  
 but they make multiple nests  
 in their active years!*



#### ***How your donations are used***

- Utility vehicle (maintenance, gasoline)
- Nest protection materials
- Office supplies and administrative support
- Educational materials
- Volunteer support (training materials, etc.)

Full color newsletter PDF version is available at [www.bstp.net](http://www.bstp.net)