

Dear Sea Turtle Friends and Supporters,

2017 was a challenging season: the second consecutive year with both a beach renourishment project AND a hurricane! We know that 2018 will bring yet another renourishment project but we are crossing fingers and flippers for no hurricanes. Here's how last year went:

- 61 Total nests (58 loggerheads, 2 greens, 1 leatherback)
- 4,606 Total hatched eggs (from 46 evaluated nests)

Hurricane Irma was the reason we could only evaluate 46 nests. She took 14 that were still incubating, plus one that had already emerged but not yet been evaluated. There is no way to know for certain how many eggs were lost, but 3 of the nests had been relocated so we know they had 263 eggs between them. One of the lost nests was a green, the rest were loggerheads.

Want to see what a nest evaluation entails?

Watch our video at bit.ly/2tRGgTb

We are happy to report no losses from predation events by either domestic/wild animals, or humans. But despite our best efforts, 3 nests experienced hatchling disorientation events. At least 125 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 about dangers from artificial lights please visit the FWC resource at bit.ly/2nFBHsd

It seems that every season brings at least one special story to center stage: 2016 had the 2 turtles who nested simultaneously under a catamaran left on the beach; 2015 brought our poor turtle mama who fell into the man-made pit and nearly died. In 2017 we were visited by a very determined mama turtle who was missing part of her left rear flipper. Since they use both rear flippers to dig their egg chamber, this poor lady had to work extra hard just to dig her nest, in addition to more laborious crawling. Because of her distinctive crawl marks, we know that "Stumpy" made 6 attempts (with 16 body pits!) before finally achieving a successful nest on her 7th try. Because she was unable to properly crawl and dig her egg chamber, it was low on the beach and shallow. Some of her eggs were found uncovered atop the nest. We carefully relocated the eggs to a safe location. Sadly, Stumpy's nest was not meant to be – it was destroyed by Hurricane Irma. For many on the BSTP team, this was the heartbreak of the season. We look forward to seeing her nest successfully in future years.

Statewide Report

Overall, 2017 was a good year statewide. Preliminary FWC reports include 96,902 loggerhead nests (down from 2016 which was the highest year ever recorded). Green nests had a record high of 53,102! Leatherbacks accounted for 663 nests which was just over half the number from 2016.

For additional 2017 statewide nesting information visit FWC's research section at bit.ly/2nAjOyi

2018 Calendar of Events

Feb. 24, 10-2. Exhibit table, Jacksonville Zoo Manatee Festival

Mar. 17, 8-11 am. Beach cleanup: Atlantic Blvd., Beach Blvd., and 20th Ave. N.

Apr. 15, 11-4. Exhibit table, YMCA Healthy Kids Day, SeaWalk Pavilion, Jax Beach.

Apr. 28, 10-2. Exhibit table, International Migratory Bird Day at Fort Caroline National Memorial.

First week in May. Virtual annual pre-season meeting at bstp.net. Recorded, attend at your leisure.

May 1. Official start of nesting season.

May 19, 11-4. Exhibit table at Dancin' in the Street.

May 19, 2-5. Exhibit table at Green Market Jarboe Park

July 5, 7-9 am. Annual 5th of July beach cleanup.

Sept. 15, 7-9 am. Annual International Coastal Clean Up Day.

Oct. 31. Official end of nesting season.

Check bstp.net and Facebook page for new events. Event/Exhibit dates are subject to change or cancellation.

Coming soon to a beach access near you!

Our sea turtle-awareness sign project has been a long time in the making, but is finally finished and awaiting delivery and installation! This project began after the 2015 season when the turtle fell in the pit but we could only work on it sporadically. At the time of this writing, the signs are being manufactured and we expect them to be installed at every beach access in Atlantic, Neptune & Jax Beach before the end of May. This project was made possible by Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens, The American Association of Zookeepers, CustomSigns.com, and BSTP donors like you. Our thanks to the cities of Atlantic, Neptune and Jacksonville Beaches for their willingness to install them.



On The Horizon

As you may know, the beach renourishment project will continue for the third consecutive year, which means that we will again be relocating many nests. This is labor-intensive and has the potential to negatively impact egg development but it's a necessary component of maintaining suitable nesting habitat.

Only our most seasoned and specially trained volunteers will be working directly with nest relocation. This, and all conservation activities, are conducted under Marine Turtle Permit #111.

We would like to take this opportunity to give a special shout-out to JoAnne Adams and the artists of First Street Gallery. For the past 15 years, the Gallery has hosted their sea turtle art show with a percentage of proceeds donated to BSTP. It was always our favorite event and we are saddened the Gallery has closed. We are very grateful for their support these many years and wish them all the best.

In closing, we thank all of you for your continued support, as well. 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. The newest promotional video features a BSTP volunteer! Check it out at bit.ly/2GZSDH4.

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
facebook.com/beachesseaturtlepatrol
youtube.com/user/bstpJax

External Resources

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

Local Lighting Ordinances

[bstp.net/PDFs/JaxBch Ord 2000-7789.pdf](http://bstp.net/PDFs/JaxBch%20Ord%202000-7789.pdf)
[bstp.net/PDFs/NepBch Ord 201999-01.pdf](http://bstp.net/PDFs/NepBch%20Ord%20201999-01.pdf)
[bstp.net/PDFs/AB Ord 95-17-114.pdf](http://bstp.net/PDFs/AB%20Ord%2095-17-114.pdf)

Did You Know . . .

The city of Atlantic Beach now has a mandatory lighting ordinance to protect sea turtles!
Way to go, CoAB!

How your donations are used

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

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 just by keeping the beach clean dark and flat!

Pick up trash, fill in holes, knock down sandcastles