

Dear Sea Turtle Friends and Supporters,

With 98 nests, 2022 was our third-highest season (behind 2012 and 2019). There were 33 more nests in '22 than in '21. Another contrast between the two seasons was the rarer species that nested here: a green in 2021 but no leatherbacks, and leatherbacks in 2022 but no greens.

- 98 nests (94 loggerheads, 4 leatherbacks)
- 8,507* hatched eggs (91 nests evaluated)
- 41 false crawls (abandoned nesting attempts)
- 3 nests washed out (TS Ian)
- 2 nests had hatched but all were found deceased due to submersion
- 4 nests fate could not be determined

* includes deceased hatchlings

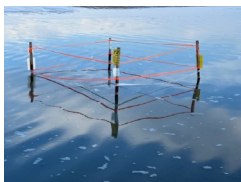
The nests fared well overall. We had a few isolated predation events (mostly by domestic dogs) which accounted for a loss of about 45 eggs or hatchlings. There were a handful of hatchling disorientations but only 4 were confirmed deceased. One nesting adult was also disoriented. A few minor vandalism incidents were documented but no eggs were damaged.

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/FWC-lights

TS Ian created major dune scarps, and washed out several sections of the protective rope barrier, pushing them ashore in St. Johns County. While this is not a BSTP initiative, our turtle population certainly benefits from dune growth. To that end, we were happy to assist in retrieving the lost sections.

You might have noticed the nest nursery at our southern border. We hosted nests from Ponte Vedra that were affected by the St. Johns County berm restoration project. Because of the dense cluster of nests in that location many of them also sustained some level of loss from foxes.



Submerged during
TS Ian



Dog predation
exposed hatchlings



Dune rope bundle
retrieval

In other work, we documented 5 stranding incidents and assisted with transport of turtles from other areas to rehab facilities. Our community outreach programs were less hampered by Covid restrictions and we were able to resume our educational

exhibits. Several were held in tandem with the Clean Dark Flat mug campaign, when we visited participating coffee shops. The mugs sold out in 12 days, even faster than expected, and raised over \$9,700 for our conservation program.

We could not be more grateful to the shops, customers who purchased mugs and our partners at Beaches Energy Services. BES spearheads this initiative to educate residents and visitors about the harmful effects of artificial lights on nesting and hatching sea turtles. We would like to thank the shops for their enthusiastic participation, and look forward to working with them again: Bold Bean, Breezy Coffee & Wine Bar, Cup of Jöb, Jax Beach Brunch Haus and Round Bird Coffee Shop. The 2023 campaign will kick off on World Sea Turtle Day (June 16) with an exciting new design. Watch the BSTP and Beaches Energy websites for more info as details are confirmed. These mugs are wildly popular and will sell out quickly. Stay tuned for details so you don't miss out.

2022 design



??? 2023 design ???



Our delayed-by-a-year 30th anniversary celebration was held at Slider's in June. We raffled off five coveted items by artists Houston Brown and Brette Petway, and celebrated with a custom cake. Visit our Facebook page for photos.

Statewide Report

Florida Fish and Wildlife (FWC) reported higher nest numbers in '22 than the previous year for all three major species: 116,765 loggerheads; 37,028 greens; and a record year for leatherbacks with 1,848. This was the second-highest year for loggerheads (2016 has the record). This was also a good year for greens, but not a record. Greens typically nest on a biannual high/low pattern. In keeping with that pattern, 2021 was a high year. But the turtles ignored the rule book in 2022, resulting in a second consecutive high year.

While these are great numbers, it's important not to assume it means that the populations are recovering. For example, of the six Regional Management Units in Florida (north, central and south for each coast), the data show that only four are trending upward for loggerheads. But the two that are not following that trend (CE and SE) account for 82% of nests for that species. And total nest numbers only tell half of the story.

Nest productivity is the other part of the equation. A large number of nests does not always mean a large number of viable hatchlings. However, the most recent productivity data

are encouraging. These numbers represent 92-95% of hatchlings that emerged unaided statewide.

2021 Hatchling production (up from 2020. Data from 2022 still being analyzed)

Loggerheads: 6,315,336

Greens: 2,461,460

Leatherbacks: 66,129

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

Since 2016 we have contributed data to the Northern Recovery Unit Loggerhead DNA Project conducted by UGA researchers. One of our local turtles defied the conventional wisdom that turtles return to their natal beach to nest. Her range spanned 5 states and 500+ miles! The project's funding source is no longer available so researchers are seeking other avenues, including private donations, to continue this important research. Our fascinating turtle is just one example of how this research will shape future conservation efforts and policy. To learn more about this project please visit bit.ly/cc-dna-project.

2023 Calendar of Events

Apr. 1, 10-1. Educational exhibit & panel discussion. Springing the Blooms, Beaches Museum.

Apr. 12, Pints for a Purpose: exhibit, raffle, Kevin Brown guest bartender. Legacy Ale Works, Jacksonville.

May 1 Official start of nesting season.

May 20 Educational exhibit, Dancing In The Street

June 16 World Sea Turtle Day & Clean Dark Flat mug sales kick off

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

Sept. 16, 7-9 am. Annual International Coastal Clean Up Day.

Oct. 31 Official end of nesting season.

Check bstp.net and Facebook page for more details and new events.

Dates are subject to change or cancellation without notice.

On The Horizon

Leatherback nesting has already started in south and central FL, including a very early one in Flagler County on February 27. Only time will tell what this means for our region. By the time you read this, we will have already started our early-season monitoring. Our full team will be on the beach beginning May 1.

In closing, we sincerely thank you for your unwavering support and advocacy. Your donations provide the tools we need to continue our conservation work. Donations are tax deductible and many employers have implemented matching donation programs. On a broader scale, purchase of a sea turtle specialty tag for your vehicle helps fund marine turtle research projects across the state.

Fingers crossed that the dune scarps do not significantly impede the turtles. 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.

All conservation activities are approved by FWC under Marine Turtle Permit #111.

HISTORICAL DATA

Number of years recorded	35 (Data n/a for '89, '92, '93)
Overall total nests	1,526
Overall annual average	48
10 year average (2013-2022)	72

Reference Links

BSTP Online

bstp.net

facebook.com/beachesseaturtlepatrol

youtube.com/user/bstpjax

instagram.com/bstpjax

linkedin.com/in/bstp

Clean Dark Flat Campaign

beachesenergy.com/protect-sea-turtles

Local Lighting Ordinances

Atlantic Beach: bit.ly/AB-ordinance

Neptune Beach: bit.ly/NB-ordinance

Jax Beach: bit.ly/JB-ordinance

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.

*You can help protect the turtles
just by keeping the beach
Clean, Dark and Flat!*

Pick up trash, keep lights off, fill in holes,
knock down sandcastles.

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.

