

Dear Sea Turtle Friends and Supporters,

2024 was our 4th highest nesting season overall, surpassing the previous year by just one nest.

- 80 loggerhead nests, 1 green
- 6,901 hatched eggs (78 nests evaluated)
- 83 false crawls (abandoned nesting attempts)
- 3 nests were lost to water events.

Due to the massive Shore Protection Project, 77% of our nests were relocated outside of the construction zone. Hanna Park received 66% of our relocated nests, in coordination with park staff. Such large nest concentrations makes them more vulnerable to predation attempts. Each relocated nest was outfitted with protective screens which limited the loss to an estimated 42 eggs. Foxes were the primary predator. Several nests were predated at their original locations prior to our morning survey. The nests lost to water events were in situ, meaning they were in their original location (not relocated). Read on for more information about relocating nests.

Five nests experienced minor hatchling disorientation. One nest was vandalized but the egg chamber was not reached.

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



Some relocated nests Eggs removed by fox Lost to tides

In other work, our outreach team participated in 30+ presentations and table events throughout the community. We also conducted 30+ sea turtle classroom sessions reaching 100 students per session.

Our favorite events included Beaches Parade, the inaugural Trunk or Treat in Jax Beach, and Springing the Blooms at Beaches Museum. We were also honored to participate as "Celebrity Chefs" for the Salvation Army of Northeast Florida Women's Auxiliary annual fundraiser.

Our partnership with Beaches Energy Services continued with a new version of the #CleanDarkFlat turtle-friendly awareness campaign. It now offers free window decals at additional outlets to include all three city hall offices and most of the coffee

shops that participated in the immensely successful mug campaign. While the limited edition mugs have been discontinued, the new decals feature the most popular design from the 2022 edition.

The new format allows us to offer the decal free of charge at more outlets. The campaign has been expanded to feature a short educational video in guest rooms at participating oceanfront hotels which will reach visitors from out of town who may be unaware that this is a nesting habitat.



FWC Statewide Report

Final nest numbers from Florida Fish and Wildlife (FWC) are very solid, with a couple records broken:

- 110,122 loggerheads
- 14,308 greens
- 1,799 leatherbacks (record)
- 34 Kemp's Ridleys (record)

While green turtle numbers dipped from their record-setting 2023 season, it was expected since they typically alternate between high and low years. Meanwhile, leatherbacks and loggerheads both had encouraging counts (leatherbacks broke their record on the Gulf Coast), and Kemp's Ridleys made history right here in Florida!

While these are excellent numbers, remember it is only part of the picture. Production of viable hatchlings with a balanced sex ratio is what will determine the future of all species. Large numbers of nests today are wonderful, but if the eggs do not hatch (or produce mostly females) it will have a negative impact on future generations.

Nest productivity is the term for the other important part of the equation. Locally, our hatch success rate was 75%, which is a very good percentage and in line with regional data. We obviously have no way of knowing the gender ratio.

Statewide, it is impossible to assess each individual nest for productivity so a subset of each species is identified for inventory. Based on the sampling as of January, 19,974 nests accounted for 1,329,892 hatched eggs, representing about 16% of the total nests in Florida.

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

Loggerhead Genetics Project Update

As we noted last year, this important research project conducted by the University of Georgia was in danger of losing its primary funding source, which has now come to pass. As a result, there is a large backlog of unprocessed samples

(including all of ours from last season and some from 2023) so we have no updates to share. The future of the project in northeast FL remains uncertain but we hope to continue the research on a condensed scale.

2025 Calendar of Events

- Apr. 5**, 10-1. Springing the Blooms, Beaches Museum.
Apr. 27, 2pm. Beaches Parade.
May 1 Official start of nesting season.
June (TBD) Annual fundraiser/anniversary celebration.
June 16 World Sea Turtle Day
July 5, 7-9 am. Annual 5th of July beach cleanup.
Sept. 20, 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. Volusia County broke their record on March 9 for earliest nest in the county. By the time you read this, we will have already started our pre-season surveys to catch any early-bird nesters of our own.

Only time will tell if the mama turtles like the new sand from the Shore Protection Project. Historically, we have noted increased nesting totals in the seasons following each of the last three projects.

In closing, we sincerely thank you for your unwavering support, advocacy and education. 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. FL Dept of Motor Vehicles lists the turtle tag as the #2 best-seller from more than 100 choices.

~ 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 authorized by FWC under Marine Turtle Permit #111.

HISTORICAL DATA

Number of years recorded	37 (Data n/a for '89, '92, '93)
Overall total nests	1,687
Overall annual average	50
10 year average	74

Turtle Tidbits: Nest Relocation

Moving sea turtle eggs creates many opportunities for adverse impacts. Movement alone can kill developing embryos by disrupting delicate membranes that attach to the inside of the egg. Because the incubation environment greatly influences the developing embryo, nest relocation is considered a management technique of last resort. This activity is only allowed under very narrow and specific circumstances, such as the recent Shore Protection Project. The decision is made in careful coordination with FWC, US Fish and Wildlife Services, the Army Corps of Engineers, and biologists. You may then wonder why these projects are allowed during nesting season. The simple answer is that there is only a finite number of companies able to do this work and they are in high demand across the entire country. Due to the very high nesting density in south FL, beach construction is prohibited there during nesting season. Being low density beaches, our region is better equipped to manage relocations for these projects.

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.

