

Dear Sea Turtle Friends and Supporters,

2025 was right on target with our 10 year average of 76 nests.

- 76 loggerhead nests, 1 leatherback, 0 green
- 5,818 hatched eggs (64 nests evaluated)
- 44 false crawls (abandoned nesting attempts)
- 10 nests were lost to water events

Sadly, our lone leatherback nest was washed over repeatedly and did not produce any live hatchlings.

Our beach success rate was an outstanding 64%. This is the percentage of total crawls resulting in a nest. The general average is about 50%. This was the first full nesting season following the Duval County Shore Protection Project in 2024, so it's a good indicator that the new sand is turtle-approved.

Each season includes losses from predators and disorientation events, in addition to the tidal losses noted above. Despite installing FWC-approved predator barriers, we documented 20 predated nests, resulting in an estimated loss of nearly 300 eggs and hatchlings. Canine predators—primarily persistent foxes—were the most common cause. While no device can prevent all predation, these barriers significantly reduced losses compared to having no protection.

We identified 18 disorientation events — one involving a nesting mother, while the rest affected newly emerged hatchlings. Each of our three beach towns has a lighting ordinance in place (see the Reference Links section at the end of this newsletter).

A disorientation event occurs when the turtle is influenced to travel in the wrong direction (away from the ocean) by any type 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

In other work, our outreach team participated in more than 50 presentations, table events and classroom sessions throughout the community. We're thrilled to announce that our educational program now includes dynamic, hands-on learning materials developed by the incredible team at Inwater Research Group. To request this free "Turtles To Go" program for your class or organization, please visit our website.



Leatherback nest washed over



A rare treat to see a mama after nesting



Nearly lost to erosion but it hatched

Our "Clean Dark Flat" initiative continued last year with support from Beaches Energy Services, and while the campaign is winding down, we're proud of the impact it has made. After four great years, the coffee mugs were replaced by window decals, and now the decals are being phased out as well. The good news is that we still have a small supply available at our outreach events, so you can grab one while they last.



FWC Statewide Report

Final nest numbers from Florida Fish and Wildlife (FWC) are very solid. Loggerheads remained the dominant nester, a bit below recent years, but still a strong showing. Green turtles had a standout year, making 2025 the second-highest season on record (the record was 77,042 in 2023). Leatherbacks set a new statewide record, breaking the previous high of 1,848 in 2022. Kemp's ridleys remain rare but remarkable.

- Loggerhead: 100,951 nests (down from 2024)
- Green Turtle: 66,476 nests (2nd highest on record)
- Leatherback: 2,012 nests – New Record!
- Kemp's Ridley: 12 confirmed nests (21 pending confirmation)

Large numbers of nests are great to see but production of viable hatchlings with a balanced sex ratio will determine the future of all species. If the eggs do not hatch (or skew female) it will have a negative impact on future generations.

Nest productivity assessments collect important data to paint the picture for future success. A hatch success evaluation involves the excavation and inventory of a marked nest to determine the fate of each egg. Locally, our hatch success rate for 2025 was 73%. This is a very good percentage and in line with regional data, especially considering that 10 of our nests were completely lost to tidal events. We obviously have no way of determining the gender ratio of hatchlings that survived.

It is impossible to assess each individual nest in the state for productivity, so a subset of each species is identified for inventory. Across 211 beaches, 24,981 nests were inventoried accounting for 1,758,629 hatched eggs.

For additional statewide nesting information visit FWC's data page at bit.ly/FWC-statewide

Southeast Regional Report

The Southeast Regional Sea Turtle Network documents sea turtle nesting totals for the Southeast US and territories. Preliminary totals yielded a combined 187,451 nests, which is over 40,000 more nests than recorded in 2024. This network is

composed of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia, and Virgin Islands.

Research Projects

As we noted last year, funding for the University of Georgia's Loggerhead Genetic Tagging Project had dried up for the Florida component so we are no longer collecting data for that. FWC's Research Institute is expanding how it studies sea turtle nesting and reproduction across the state. One project tracks whether hatchlings are mostly male or female, and now includes examining deceased hatchlings to determine their sex. Another new project looks at how many male turtles are fathering each nest and how many males are active on different beaches. Together, these efforts will give Florida a clearer picture of sea turtle populations and how they are changing over time. BSTP will contribute data to both of these projects.

Plans are also underway to collaborate on sand-temperature research with biologists from the U.S. Geological Survey and Loggerhead Marinelife Group. We look forward to sharing early results in next year's newsletter.

2026 Calendar of Events

- Apr. 11**, 10-1. Springing the Blooms, Beaches Museum.
- Apr. 14**, 6:30pm. Beaches Go Green panel discussion, Ink Factory Brewing.
- May 1** Official start of nesting season.
- June 30** Annual fundraiser/anniversary celebration at Strings Sports Brewery.
- June 16** World Sea Turtle Day
- July 5**, 7-9 am. Annual 5th of July beach cleanup.
- Sept. 19**, 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.

You Make A Difference!

In closing, we sincerely thank you for your continued support, advocacy, and outreach. Your donations provide the tools we need to continue our conservation work. We also recognize that money is tight for many families, which makes your generosity even more meaningful. All contributions are tax-deductible, and many employers offer matching gift 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. That is over 113,000 tags as of January 31, 2026.

~ BSTP Directors ~

HISTORICAL DATA

Number of years recorded	38 (Data n/a for '89, '92, '93)
Overall total nests	1,764
Overall annual average	50
10 year average	76

Reference Links

BSTP Online

bstp.net
facebook.com/beachesseaturtlepatrol
youtube.com/user/bstpJax
instagram.com/bstpjax
linkedin.com/in/bstp

Partnerships

Beaches Energy Clean Dark Flat Campaign
beachesenergy.com/protect-sea-turtles
 Turtles To Go program
inwater.org

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 UTVs. 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.



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.