

Dear Sea Turtle Friends and Supporters,

[Our apologies for the delay of this issue due to disruptions from COVID-19. We wish you and your family all the best during these unprecedented times.]

As you're probably already aware, 2019 was a record year for sea turtle nesting in many areas of Florida, and our beaches were no exception:

- 116 total nests (114 loggerheads, 2 greens)
- 7,629 total hatched eggs (from 96 evaluated nests)
- 91 false crawls (aborted nesting attempts)
- 3 unproductive nests (infertile eggs, submersion)
- 11 nests partially or completely washed out (confirmed)
- 15 nests final status unknown (possible washouts)

While some eggs were lost due to storm activity, they fared relatively well during Dorian, considering the number of nests still on the beach at the time. Sea turtles have adapted their nesting strategy to accommodate for natural events such as hurricanes. Each nesting female deposits several nests throughout the duration of the season – essentially “hedging her bets” to make sure that even if a storm hits at some point there is a high probability that at least a few of her nests will incubate successfully.

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

With increased nesting, we recorded more disorientation events. There were 14 events – three involved nesting adults and the rest were emerging nests. We also recorded three obstructed nesting attempts – two involving man-made structures (dune walkovers) and the other from a previously marked turtle nest. This was the only obstructed crawl that resulted in a nest. This nest was placed only inches away from the existing clutch of eggs. It was amazing that she didn't dig them up!

There were no remarkable predation or vandalism events, although one nest in a high traffic area needed additional protection from human encroachment.

Not all of our time was spent digging in the sand. In August, BSTP was extremely honored to present at the National Environmental Monitoring Conference, the largest conference focused on environmental measurements in North America. The conference brings together scientists and managers from federal and state agencies, the regulated community, academia, and laboratory and engineering support communities.

We are also very proud to have been recognized by Folio Weekly in their Best of the Beaches Reader's Choice poll. BSTP was voted First Place as Best Nonprofit and Third Place as Best Volunteer Effort. Our team of 40+ volunteers works hard for the turtles and we appreciate the love!

Statewide Report

Florida Fish and Wildlife (FWC) reports for 2019 include 106,652 loggerhead nests (2nd highest year after 2016); 53,015 green turtle nests (115 short of the record number in 2017); and 1,105 leatherback nests. That's a higher number than the previous year but not a record. Rare species numbers are expectedly low – 11 confirmed Kemp's ridley nests (6 are still pending genetic identification), and zero Hawksbill nests. Statewide hatchling numbers for 2019 are still being calculated as of this writing.

It is expected that 2020 will be a lower nesting year for greens since they typically nest in a high year/low year pattern, but they've been known to nest off-pattern now and again. Leatherback nesting started very early in south FL (Feb. 6th, earliest one ever documented!) and continues moving northward, so there's a pretty good chance it will be a high year for them. As for loggerheads, it's anyone's guess what they will do, but they may have given us a clue by already depositing an early nest on March 20 in south FL.

For additional 2019 statewide nesting information visit FWC's research section at bit.ly/2nAjOyi

2020 Calendar of Events

Mar. 28, 8-11. St. Johns River Keeper Beach cleanup, Atlantic Blvd. *[cancelled]*

Apr. 5, 10-2. Exhibit table, Marineland Dolphin Adventure Sea Turtle Eggstravaganza *[cancelled]*

Apr. 18, Exhibit table, Beaches Earth Day, Jarboe Park *[cancelled]*

Apr. 18, Exhibit table, International Migratory Bird Day, Ft. Caroline *[cancelled]*

Apr. 25, 10-5. Exhibit table, Artist Meet & Greet and (BSTP) Fundraiser, Atlantic Beach Arts Market *[cancelled]*

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 16, 11-4. Exhibit table at Dancin' in the Street. *[cancelled]*

July 5, 7-9 am. Annual 5th of July beach cleanup. Beach & Atlantic Blvds.

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 new events.
Dates are subject to change or cancellation without notice.

On The Horizon

BSTP continued to develop new ongoing partnerships:

- House of Leaf and Beach month-long Earth Day fundraiser
- Star Warriors Robotics Club from River City Science Academy fundraisers and nest protection prototype
- Courtyard by Marriott Jax Beach Oceanfront educational program for hotel guests

On a very sad note, our joy at record nesting numbers was tempered by the loss of our beloved founder, Mort Hanson, in July. Mort was the heart and soul of BSTP and we will strive to carry on his legacy. Please visit our Facebook page for photos and video tributes to this wonderful man. If you get a chance, please visit Mort's memorial bench at 19th St. in AB that was donated by volunteers of BSTP.

We also lost long-time volunteer Donna Christensen in November. She was a kind and gentle soul and dedicated team member. Donna and Mort will forever hold special places in the hearts of all who knew them.



In closing, we thank all of you for your continued support and advocacy. 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.

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.

Reference Links

BSTP Online

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

External Resources

Donate while you shop on Amazon!
smile.amazon.com/ch/59-3100324
 Donate while you buy or sell on eBay!
charity.ebay.com/charity/Beaches-Sea-Turtle-Patrol--Inc-/2168244
myfwc.com/wildlifehabitats/managed/sea-turtles
myfwc.com/research/wildlife/sea-turtles
myfwc.com/conservation/you- conserve/lighting
oceanconservancy.org/our-work/marine-debris
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)

How your donations are used

- Utility vehicles, maintenance, gasoline
- Nest protection materials
- Office supplies and administrative infrastructure
- Educational materials (activity books, exhibits, brochures)
- Volunteer support (training materials, work shirts)

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.

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

Pick up trash, fill in holes,
knock down sandcastles



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.