



Natural Resources Department Coastal Engineering Division

2024 Sea Turtle Nesting Season Kicks Off March 1st

The sea turtle nesting season officially begins in Indian River County on March 1st and runs through October 31st. During these months, three different types of sea turtles typically crawl ashore at night and select a sandy location to deposit their eggs. The first species to arrive are usually the leatherback sea turtle, followed by the loggerheads and then the green sea turtles. A few nests have already been observed in counties to our south, with Indian River County still awaiting the arrival of these marine reptiles.

The previous 2023 nesting season proved to be fantastic as several records were broken. There is no way to predict how many nests the 2024 season will bring; however local trends are looking positive for a good upcoming season.

Nesting Totals within Indian River County

Season	2023	2022	2021
Leatherback Nests	27	101*	24
Loggerhead Nests	8,639*	7,431	5,629
Green Nests	4,105*	1,823	1,514
TOTAL	12,771	9,355	7,167

* Indicates a new record.

During the 2023 nesting season the beach within the Town of Indian River Shores received a total of 3,128 nests. Broken down by species: 1,627 loggerhead nests, 1,495 green turtle nests, and 6 leatherback nests.

All species of sea turtles, their eggs, hatchlings, and nests are protected by State and Federal laws because they are either endangered or threatened. Only individuals that have a permit from Florida Fish and Wildlife are allowed to handle sea turtles. If someone finds a sick, injured, or dead sea turtle they should call the FWC Wildlife Hotline at 1-888-404-3922. The FWC biologist will provide directions and coordinate pickup.

With thousands of nests being laid on the 22.4 miles of Indian River County shoreline, not all nests are marked with wooden stakes and flagging tape. Only about 10% of nests are marked for data purposes, with most nests incubating in the sand unmarked.

Local sea turtle protection ordinances, which include regulations on nighttime lighting along the beach, go into effect March 1st. Check with your local code enforcement office to learn more.

To help sea turtles thrive please keep our beaches **CLEAN, FLAT, and DARK.**

Visit [https://IndianRiver.gov/Services/Natural Resources](https://IndianRiver.gov/Services/Natural_Resources) to learn more.