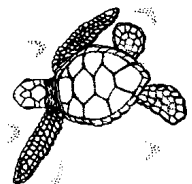


Turtle Tracker



Volume 6 – Issue 2

Volusia Sea Turtle Volunteer News

Summer 2000

Turtle Permit Holders Honored

On June 13, 2000, Governor Jeb Bush and his Cabinet recognized the Florida Marine Turtle Permit Holders and volunteers for their efforts in sea turtle conservation. Local Marine Turtle Permit Holders Beth Libert and Marye Marshall, attended the signing of the resolution and met the Governor and Cabinet.

RESOLUTION

Whereas, over ninety percent of all sea turtle nesting in North America takes place in Florida; and

Whereas, Florida houses the most important loggerhead sea turtle nesting beaches in the western hemisphere and, therefore, is in a unique position to protect, conserve, and manage threatened and endangered marine turtles, five species of which live in Florida; and

Whereas, a diverse network of volunteer individuals and organizations known as Florida's Marine Turtle Permit Holders, aid and abet the efforts of the State of Florida to ensure the safety and health of Florida's marine turtles, their nests and hatchlings; and

Whereas, each year Marine Turtle Permit Holders willingly donate thousands of hours and walk countless miles of Florida beaches during marine turtle nesting season to document and protect marine turtle nests; and

Whereas, Marine Turtle Permit Holders volunteer their time to prevent threats of harm and to rescue and rehabilitate injured and stranded marine turtles and hatchlings; and

Whereas, the Marine Turtle Permit Holders donate hundreds of hours to develop and distribute educational material and programs to Florida's citizens about threatened and endangered marine turtles; and

Whereas, these volunteers work within their local communities in Florida's coastal counties to minimize the harmful impacts to marine turtles caused by lighting, pollution and other human activities; and

Whereas, Marine Turtle Permit Holders often work closely with state, county and local governments for the protection and conservation of threatened and endangered marine turtles; and

Whereas, many Marine Turtle Permit Holders work in facilities in Florida that donate staff time and materials for the display of rehabilitation and educational efforts on behalf of Florida's marine turtles; and

Whereas, many Marine Turtle Permit Holders at Florida educational institutions are involved in research and conservation activities for the protection of threatened and endangered marine turtles.

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved that the Governor and Cabinet of the State of Florida do hereby acknowledge and applaud the volunteer individuals and organizations that are

Florida's Marine Turtle Permit Holders for their service to the State of Florida, working to protect and conserve Florida's threatened and endangered marine turtles.

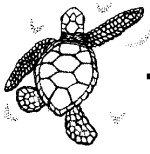
Be It Further Resolved that the months of June through October are hereby designated as Sea Turtle Protection Months in an effort to assist the Marine Turtle Permit Holders in their work of protecting Florida's endangered and threatened sea turtles.



River Clean Up Poster

Every Spring the Halifax Indian River Task Force organizes a river clean up. As part of this effort, local school children are encouraged to enter the clean up poster contest. The winner's poster then becomes the tee shirt design for the volunteers.

This year's winner was Phyllis Burns of Ortona Elementary with her beautiful flamingo design. The second runner up was Kathryn Malony, who made this wonderful poster about sea turtles.



International Sea Turtle Update

Hawksbill Victory

At the 11th Conference of the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), held this April in Nairobi, Kenya; the hawksbill turtle was the hot topic of discussion. Cuba was making two proposals that would drastically effect hawksbill conservation. The first proposal sought permission for Cuba to ship six tons of stockpiled hawksbill shell to Japan. The second proposal was to allow Cuba to make annual shipments of 500 harvested shells thereafter. Thankfully, both Cuban proposals were defeated. Hawksbill turtles are critically endangered because of the demand for their beautiful shells, which are used for tortoise shell jewelry, etc.

Oil Drilling in Costa Rica

The Costa Rican government has approved offshore oil exploration along its Caribbean coast and drilling could begin as early as October of this year. Several environmental groups, scientists, communities and business owners are opposing the oil drilling because of the hazards to the environment. They feel that oil exploration and drilling are not compatible with Costa Rica's eco-tourism, fishing, and recreational industries.

The entire Caribbean coast is an important migratory path for three species of sea turtles, as well as critical nesting habitat. An oil spill in this area would be a disaster for the diverse environment of Costa Rica.

Trinidad's Leatherbacks

Trinidad has always had leatherback turtles nest on its beaches, but in years past there have only been a few nests laid a season. This year there has been an incredible increase in nesting, with over 300 hundred nests laid by July. This increase is a direct result of successful conservation efforts, which outlawed the slaughter of leatherback turtles. Only a decade ago, one in three nesting females were being killed.

There are approximately 50,000 nesting females in the world, which is 50% less of the population than 20 years ago. Speculation is the leatherbacks may be flocking to Trinidad because the other beaches they have been nesting on have become unsuitable habitat, due to construction and erosion. Whatever the reason, the people of Trinidad are embracing their new turtle population. [Excerpts of these articles are from CCC News Letter and the Daytona Beach News Journal]



Green sea turtle nest in Volusia County

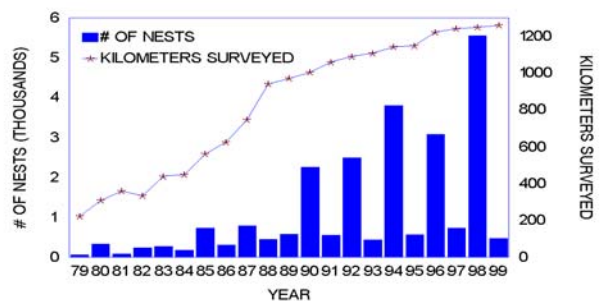
Great Greens

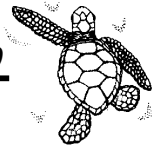
Historically, green sea turtle nesting fluctuates drastically from one year to the next. In Volusia County we have never had more than 7 or 8 green turtle nests a year, with the following year producing none. So far this season, we have 16 nests in Volusia County north of Canaveral National Seashore and 31 in Flagler County. Canaveral National Seashore has 488 nests and Gamble Rogers Memorial State Recreation Area in Flagler County has ---nests. The Marine Life Center in Juno Beach has an astounding 465 green nests on 5.5 miles of beach. There is no doubt this is a record year for green turtle nesting, with an increase being seen all over the state.

It's difficult to be sure why this is such a great year, and too early to tell if this trend will continue. Several years of nesting data must be reviewed before any concrete conclusions can be determined.

In the mean time we are enjoying their visits. The beautiful tracks they leave on the beach, and their incredible body pits, make for a pleasant change from the same old loggerhead.

GREEN TURTLE NESTING AND NESTING SURVEY EFFORT IN FLORIDA 1979 - 1999





Thank You Lowe's Store

At the beginning of the 2000 sea turtle nesting season our organization decided to purchase three new ATVs for daily sea turtle monitoring patrols. One for north Volusia County, to replace the unsafe, unreliable and dangerous piece of junk the county had provided us, and two for our new territory in Flagler County. These ATVs were expensive and we wanted to make sure they were well protected from the elements.

Turtle Patrol volunteer George Keaton, researched various storage solutions and we all decided the best bet was the vinyl storage sheds at Lowe's Home Improvement Store. Beth sent a letter to Robert Walls the store manager at the new Lowe's in Port Orange and asked for donations. In a very short period of time Mr. Walls contacted us back and said he had permission from corporate headquarters to help us out.

Thanks to the generosity of Lowe's, the assistance from Mr. Walls and his competent employees, we were able to purchase two of the vinyl storage sheds, accessories, and supplies to get the 2000 turtle nesting season up and running.

Lowe's is great store and most of our volunteers shop there. Also, I can tell you the vinyl storage buildings they sell are wonderful for any type of storage facility and are easy to install. Thank you again Mr. Walls and Lowe's!!



New storage building at Malacompra Fire Station

We would also like to express our great appreciation to the Flagler County Fire Chief for allowing us to store our ATV at the Malacompra Fire Station and the Flagler Beach City Commission for storage of the Flagler Beach ATV next to City Hall.

WOW! Those Volunteers Work Hard

It's been a busy nesting season with record nesting numbers. Turtle patrol volunteers have been working their tails off marking new nests, relocating nests in danger of tidal inundation or storm water run off, documenting hatchling disorientations, doing nest evaluations on hatched nests and maintaining public relations. It's HOT out there and everybody is tired, but we keep on doing it because we love those turtles.

I can't adequately thank all the hard working volunteers for all their efforts, but I really do appreciate them and I could not continue this work without them. THANK YOU SO MUCH!

Your Turtle Mom

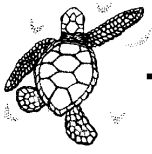


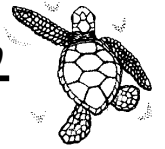
Ted and Jane Knopf at first nest evaluation of season

Rocky Beach Turtles

Over the years we have seen sea turtles do a lot of strange things, but not until we started nest monitoring in Flagler County had we seen rock climbing turtles. The natural coquina rock formations in northern Flagler County tend to discourage most nesting females. However, there are those few determined ladies that put on their mountain climbing boots and crawl over huge rocks to lay their eggs.

In Washington Oaks State Park a loggerhead turtle crawled into the big coquina rocks and successfully deposited a nest. A little further up the beach a green sea turtle made an amazing crawl through steep rocks to lay up against the dunes. It's a wonder neither of these turtles got stuck. The big question is how are the hatchlings going to get to the water?





Ask the Turtle Lady

Beth Libert earned the title "Turtle Lady" for her dedication to sea turtle protection. She holds a marine turtle permit from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.



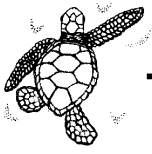
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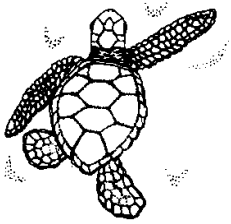
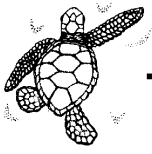
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