Beach Lights from A/1

Total False Crawls: 429 (last year – 214).

■ Total Eggs: 9,318.

On July 6th, Marco's first set of hatchlings emerged from Nest Number One and according to Sea Turtle Monitor Tyler Beck, it was "massively disoriented." On August 16th, beach walkers found a wandering hatchling on the Gulf side of Residents Beach. It crawled from Nest 77, which was 1.8 miles to the south.

Hatchling disorientations were running at 60% for the 2023 season and preliminary numbers recorded 47 hatchling disorientations out of 82 hatched nests, a record high for Marco.

Artificial lighting on nesting beaches and distant sources of illumination (city glow) and other sources of light can interfere with the normal nesting behavior of sea turtles and cause hatchling orientation problems, according to sea turtle experts.

On August 29, 2023, Tropical Storm Idalia's waves collapsed the newly constructed berm on Sand Dollar Island and according to Kraus, 18 nests were washed out.

In May 2023, for the start of sea turtle season, female loggerheads returning to

Sand Dollar Island encountered the ongoing reclamation project. For the first month, 294 false crawls were recorded and according to experts, obstacles on the beach such as pipes, dredging equipment, ATVs, human disturbance, lights and altered beach nesting habitat, may have contributed to the rejection of nesting sites on Sand Dollar Island.

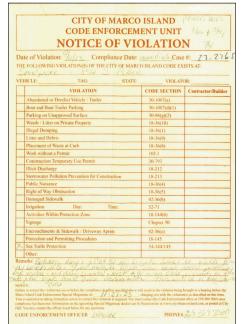
Kraus also reported that 33 nests were depredated on Sand Dollar Island with 31 attributed to coyotes and the other two from ghost crabs and fire ants.

From May through September 27, 2023, according to Monica Lora, MIPD Police Records, "this season there were 94 sea turtle violation cases. These cases include both sea turtle lighting violations and sea turtle protection violations. There are 14 cases pending to go to the Code Magistrate in December."

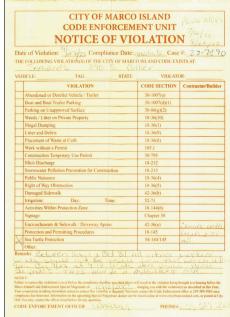
Under Marco's Sea Turtle Lighting Ordinance, "after one warning in a calendar year, excluding an irreparable event (a sea turtle dies) the following shall apply:"

- * First Offense: minimum of \$150, not to exceed \$500 for each offense.
- * Second Offense: minimum of \$500, not to exceed \$1,500.
- * Third Offense: minimum of \$1,500, not to exceed \$2,000.

In addition, as per sea turtle ordinance, "after an appropriate period to correct the violation, each day such violation continues, shall be considered a separate offense. Additionally, each sea turtle or eggs that are killed, injured or molested shall constitute a separate violation."



In other parts of Florida, the 2023 season saw a trend that kept on going higher and higher in terms of total nests and emerged hatchlings. Unfortunately, for Marco, due to beach lighting visible from the beach, sea turtle disorientations were a big disappointment this year.



Submitted

Repeat Offenders scheduled for December Code Magistrate, obtained through Public Records Request.

23-2177	850 S Collier Blvd.	Sea Turtle Protection
23-2397	174 S Collier Blvd.	Sea Turtle Protection
23-2555	5000 Royal Marco Way	Sea Turtle Protection
23-2556	850 S Collier Blvd.	Sea Turtle Protection
23-2557	890 S Collier Blvd.	Sea Turtle Protection
23-2680	870 S Collier Blvd.	Sea Turtle Protection
23-2682	930 Cape Marco Dr.	Sea Turtle Protection
23-2685	840 S Collier Blvd.	Sea Turtle Protection
23-2687	890 S Collier Blvd.	Sea Turtle Protection
23-2765	850 S Collier Blvd	Sea Turtle Protection
23-2887	960 Cape Marco Dr.	Sea Turtle Lighting
23-2890	890 S Collier Blvd.	Sea Turtle Lighting
23-2891	870 S Collier Blvd.	Sea Turtle Lighting
23-2892	850 S Collier Blvd.	Sea Turtle Lighting

Pending Magistrate cases for December.



Photo by Tyler Beck

The last nest on Marco was excavated on October 19th, yielding 101 eggs.







