

SEA TURTLE REPORT

August Beach News

By Maria Lamb

Some 20 volunteers gathered at South Beach for the monthly beach cleanup on August 17, organized by Marco’s Beach and Coastal Resources Advisory Committee. The volunteers picked up over 60 pounds of litter, most of which was plastic. A big thank you to iTrip, the August Beach Sponsor. iTrip is owned and operated by Mark and Sarah Morze. Mark is also a board member of the Beach and Coastal Resources Advisory Committee and the organizer of the monthly beach cleanup.

Common plastic items found on Marco’s beach during the August cleanup were single-use plastic grocery bags, plastic beverage bottles, plastic food wrappers in all sizes, and deflated mylar balloons. Most of these were found at the edge of the dune vegetation.

According to Ocean Conservancy’s Director, Nicholas Mallos, “Over the years, we have seen plastic creeping into the top 10 list, displacing items like rope, beverage cans, and paper bags.”

Deflated mylar balloons – which are nondegradable - were found with their ribbons snagged by the dune vegetation. According to the Ocean Conservation Society, “Balloons used for entertainment, when released, pose a serious danger to wildlife, including seabirds, sea turtles, and marine mammals. They can be easily mistaken for food as they float on the surface of the water, and seabirds can become entangled in the balloon strings.

Florida law prohibits the intentional release of balloons inflated with a gas lighter than air as of July 1, 2024. The legislation reclassifies intentional bal-



A monofilament recycling bin for used fishing line is being used as a plastic bottle bin!

loon releases as a form of littering. An intentional release is classified as a non-criminal infraction and treated similarly to littering, with a civil fine of \$150. Exemptions to the state law include balloons released by governmental agencies for scientific or meteorological purposes, such as weather balloons. Hot-air balloons are also exempt, provided they are recovered

Beach continued on A/14



On Sand Dollar Island, a sea turtle metal cage washed down from the top of the berm.

Sea Turtle Activity Update August 12 - 18 , 2025

Beach	Nests		False Crawls		Hatched Nests		
	This Year	Last Year	This Year	Last Year	This Year	Last Year	Disoriented
Barefoot	300	222	280	187	168	83	32
Delnor Wiggins	65	55	99	75	47	21	0
Vanderbilt	274	221	205	198	172	107	26
Parkshore	217	213	188	188	134	64	42
City of Naples	268	244	224	277	156	69	35
Keewaydin Is.	546	419	740	658	257	142	0
Sea Oat Island	19	10	24	17	5	0	0
Marco Island	117	97	310	231	35	32	7
Kice and Cape Romano	187	135	216	190	31	31	0
10,000 Islands	154	129	171	134	71	44	0
Collier County Totals	2147	1745	2457	2155	1076	593	142

To report dead, injured or disoriented sea turtles on Marco call 239-289-9736 or 239-289-9687

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