

SEA TURTLE REPORT

Preliminary Numbers for Sea Turtle Season Looking to Set Records

By Maria Lamb

These preliminary numbers were provided by FWC as of August 31, 2026:

Loggerheads have reached a preliminary 136,972 nests statewide as of August 31, already exceeding the previous annual record of 134,930 nests set in 2023. These numbers are still preliminary and will need to be verified before we can officially call 2026 a new record year, but it's an exciting milestone!

Green turtles continue to keep things interesting, with 50,815 nests documented statewide. Their nesting numbers can vary widely from year to year, and 2026 is shaping up to be another strong season. Since standardized nest surveys began in 1989, Florida's green turtle population has increased 80-fold.

Leatherback turtles could also break their nesting season record in Florida, with more than 2,000 nests tracked so far this year. Preliminary data suggests 2026 could set a new



Photo by FWC

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Sea Turtle Activity Sept. 28- Oct. 4, 2026

Beach	Nests		False Crawls		Hatched Nests		
	This Year	Last Year	This Year	Last Year	This Year	Last Year	Disoriented
Barefoot	247	300	257	280	200	256	13
Delnor Wiggins	61	65	63	99	61	63	0
Vanderbilt	204	274	228	205	165	236	26
Parkshore	240	217	182	272	191	188	49
City of Naples	316	268	291	224	247	229	31
Keewaydin Is.	632	558	851	735	509	439	0
Sea Oat Island	37	19	36	24	24	12	0
Marco Island	170	118	251	310	120	77	17
Kice and Cape Romano	183	187	305	214	138	67	0
10,000 Islands	138	155	165	171	97	115	0
Collier County Totals	2228	2161	2629	2534	1752	1702	136

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

record for leatherback nesting in Florida.

Kemp's ridley turtles remain rare visitors to Florida's beaches, with 15 confirmed nests documented so far this season. This remains one of the most remarkable sea turtle events of the 2026 season. The majority of

Kemp's ridley nesting occurs on the western Gulf coast, making sightings in Florida uncommon.

Hawksbill: 0 nests – According to FWC, this is the rarest sea turtle that are found primarily on reefs in the Florida Keys and along the southeastern Atlantic coast.



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Come to the Esplanade on Saturday, November 7 to taste some of the best chili on the island - and vote for your favorite! Happy Hour drinks and sides from CJ's On The Bay with live music for dancin' or toe-tappin'.

First 800 adult attendees will receive a \$25 gift card for Phelan Family Restaurants, compliments of CJ's On The Bay.

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Anyone is welcome to enter their chili in the cookoff! Professional chefs, home cooks, civic organizations, first responders - more entries equals more tasting fun!