

## Efforts pay off, sea turtle population grows

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Beachgoers will likely see more sea turtles along Central Florida's east coast.

Wildlife experts say their numbers are on the rise, especially in Brevard County.

More than 20,000 sea turtle nests have been accounted for on the Space Coast.

Those numbers haven't been recorded since the late 1990s.

Wildlife experts say it's because people are being more careful on the beach.

"We have some of the best nesting levels anywhere in Florida and that's made possible by people keeping their lights dark during the nesting season, they limit the disturbance on the beach, they're always good at cleaning their garbage," said David Godfrey, executive director of the Sea Turtle Conservancy.

Although on a smaller scale, sea turtle numbers have also increased in Volusia and Flagler counties.

Dave Cheney, with the Sea Turtle Preservation Society, said his group is called out almost every day to find struggling hatchlings.

Thankfully, he said people know to leave sea turtles alone.

"Since humans almost resulted in their extinction in almost 50 years, I feel very good we're now seeing positive trends and the population is growing so they'll be around for other generations to see," Cheney said.

If you do see a struggling sea turtle, you're asked to call Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission or the Sea Turtle Preservation Society.