

# Celebrating 35 Years



*Then and now, the Sea Turtle Preservation Society accomplishes its mission to help sea turtles survive through education and conservation programs.*

This month, the Sea Turtle Preservation Society celebrates 35 years of protecting sea turtles and their habitat in Brevard County.

On May 6, 1986, the Sea Turtle Preservation Society was incorporated as a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization. This date marks the formal beginnings of an organization that had started four years earlier with a small group of dedicated volunteers.

The story begins in 1982 when Peter Bandre stopped by an Indian Atlantic beach on his way to work and discovered dead and disoriented hatchlings in the parking lot and street. The event had quite an impact on him, and he sought out

others helping these hatchlings. When he couldn't find other agencies or conservationists, he obtained permits to allow the morning rescues to continue and began work along with others to address lighting issues.

Today, STPS continues to fulfill its mission to help sea turtles survive through both education and conservation programs. Let's celebrate the dedication of our many volunteers as we look forward to realizing the vision of a world where sea turtles thrive.

To learn more about the history of the Sea Turtle Preservation Society, visit [Our History](#) on the website.

To find out more about the organization today, take a look at the [2020 STPS annual report](#).

To mark the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the STPS online store has special offers available. The STPS vintage logo shirt is available for preorder as part of a special adoption package. Current logo shirts and stickers also are available as well as symbolic adoptions. All proceeds support our local sea turtle conservation programs.

**Celebrate and support STPS now**

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*The first two loggerhead nests of the season in the STPS survey area were recorded on April 30, 2021.*

## It's Nesting Season

Nesting season has arrived here in Brevard County. On May 1, lights out ordinances went into effect and will continue through Oct. 31.

Residents and visitors can help to make our area as turtle friendly as possible by remembering to keep beaches clean, flat and dark during this time. County ordinances prohibit visible lights of any type, including cellphones, at night during this time. It's also important to remove beach chairs and other obstacles each night as well as to knock down sandcastles and fill in any holes that may block or trap both nesting sea turtles and hatchlings.

To find out more about how you can help during nesting season, please take some time to read and share the information found on the [STPS website](#). By talking to your family, friends, and neighbors about how to protect sea turtles and their habitats, you are making a difference.

STPS also created a short video, "Sharing the Beach with Sea Turtles" that is available on our YouTube channel.

[Watch "Sharing the Beach with Sea Turtles"](#)

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## Night Walks Return in 2021

The Sea Turtle Preservation Society will offer educational night walks on Brevard County beaches during the 2021 sea turtle nesting season.

The STPS Night Walk program takes guests onto the beach at night to witness a loggerhead sea turtle lay her eggs. Participants start the evening with an informative presentation about sea turtles, and once a nesting turtle has been located, participants will be able to watch the loggerhead sea turtle lay her eggs, cover her nest, and return to the ocean.

This STPS program is conducted by volunteers through a permit issued by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

STPS will offer walks four nights a week in June and July at several Brevard

County beaches. Reservations are required and may be made beginning May 1 on the [STPS website](#). Cost: \$16 donation per person. Participants should be able to walk up to a mile on a dark beach and expect to get sandy and possibly wet. The event can run as late as midnight, depending on when a nesting turtle is found. Children must be at least 7 years old to participate and must be accompanied by adult.

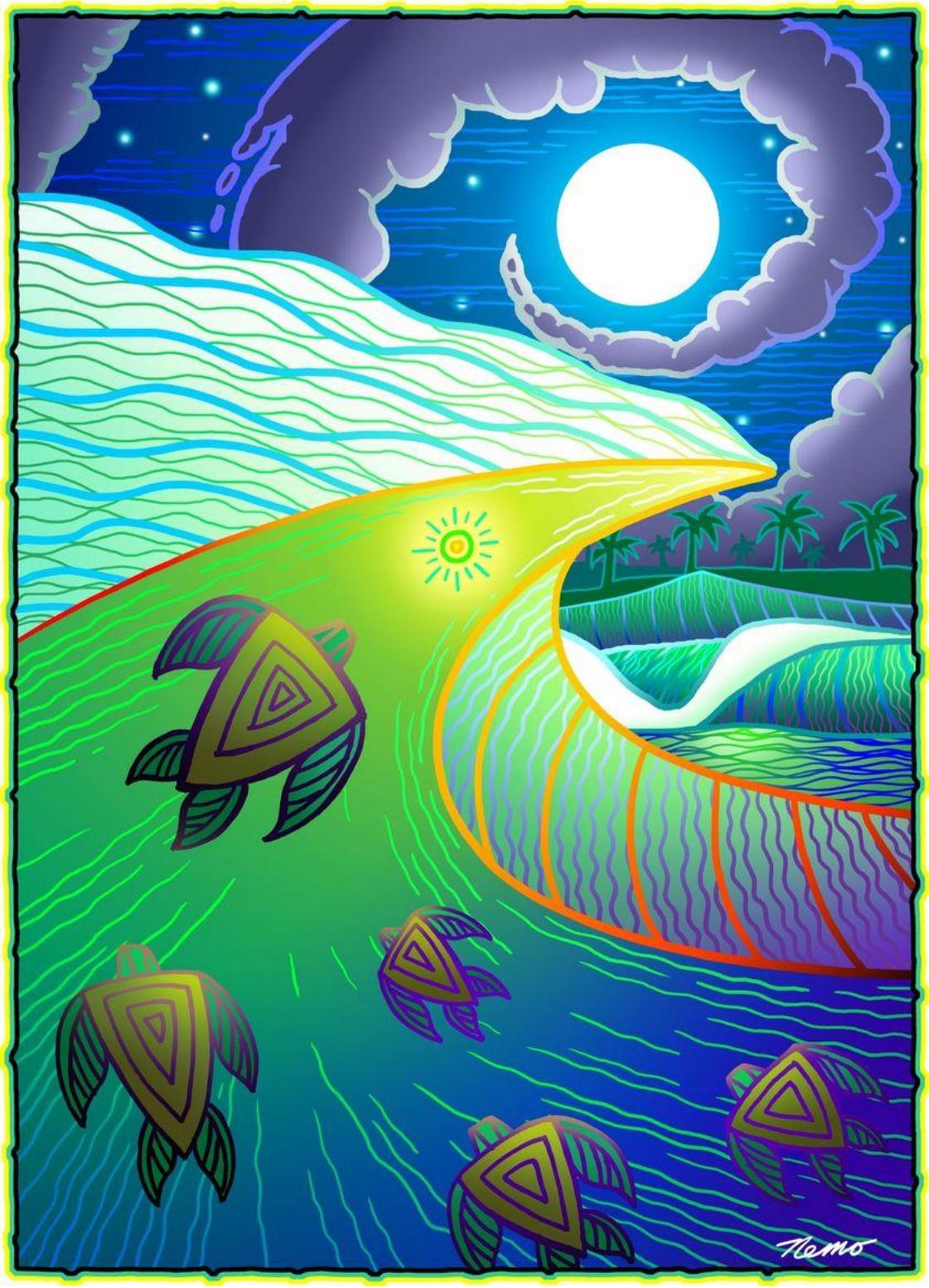
With continuing Covid-19 concerns, the number of participants will be limited for each walk. Masks and temperature screenings will be required.

For questions, please contact [walks@seaturtlespacecoast.org](mailto:walks@seaturtlespacecoast.org) or call 321-676-1701.

The STPS volunteer coordinator will be sending out information about orientation for new night walk volunteers and practice walks for all. Volunteers, keep an eye on your inbox.

[Register to Attend an STPS Night Walk](#)

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# Ready, set... Turtle Krawl 2021

The annual Turtle Krawl 5K event returns to the streets of Indialantic, Florida, on Sept. 11, 2021, with both live and virtual options to participate.

Registration is now open for the Sea Turtle Preservation Society's family friendly fundraiser, which also will be the second event in the 2021 Space Coast Runner of the Year series.

Registration for the 2021 Turtle Krawl includes a race shirt with artwork by Nemo, and participants may choose to add a special 2021 finisher medal to their registration. The 2021 live event will begin and end at Nance Park in Indialantic, FL.

The Turtle Krawl adoptions and donations program provides an opportunity to support local sea turtle conservation for those who do not wish to register for the race.

Sponsorship opportunities also are available for those wishing to show their support of STPS and sea turtle conservation.

To register, sponsor, or donate to this year's Turtle Krawl event, please go to the [Turtle Krawl website](#).

All race proceeds benefit the Sea Turtle Preservation Society's mission to protect sea turtles and their habitats. In past years, funds raised have supported the Brevard Zoo's Sea Turtle Healing Center as well as STPS programs and activities, including rescue and transport of injured sea turtles, nesting surveys, night walks and other educational outreach programs as well as satellite transmitters for the UCF marine turtle research program.

**Register for the 2021 Turtle Krawl 5K**

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## What's happening in STPS

### **World Sea Turtle Month coming in June**

This year, STPS has so many ideas to celebrate World Sea Turtle Day on June 16 that we have decided to expand the fun to World Sea Turtle Month. Open house events are planned at both locations as well as virtual events and presentations, story times, an online auction, and special events like Painting with a Twist parties. Please check the STPS website calendar in the coming weeks to see what will be happening. STPS also will once again join the international virtual celebration [#seaturtleweek](#).

### **STERP Training**

If you'd like to be part of the Sea Turtle Emergency Response Program, commonly called STERP, please note the following training dates: 6:30-8:30 p.m. Tuesday, May 25; 9-11 a.m. Saturday, June 5; and 9-11 a.m. Saturday, June 12. Training will be offered as a webinar. Register on the [calendar on the STPS website](#).

This program falls under the stranding permit and allows trained volunteers to work under a letter of consent from FWC to search for washback sea turtles after storms and other wind events. When an emergency event is called, volunteers walk the beach to search for washback sea turtles and transport them to collection points.

To participate in the STERP program, you must be an STPS member and have

completed Turtle Talk 101 and Volunteer Orientation as well as the annual STERP training. These requirements must be met by June 5.

### **Nesting Surveys**

Volunteers are on the beach conducting daily surveys of nesting activity. The number of volunteers able to participate continues to be limited this season. On April 30, the first two loggerhead nests of the season were recorded. Earlier in the month, two leatherback nests were recorded in the survey area.

### **Membership**

Through March, STPS had 796 memberships and 1,024 total members. STPS logo magnets are being sent out with all new and renewing memberships this year.

### **Haiti Ocean Project Update**

In February, Jamie Aquino spoke at the monthly meeting about her organization, Haiti Ocean Project. STPS collected needed items for the group through a donation drive at the Turtle House. She would like to thank all of you for the generous donations that were made to the Haiti Ocean Project.

### **Texas cold stun event**

In response to the record-breaking Texas cold-stun event in February, the STPS Board of Directors approved a \$1,000 donation to Sea Turtle, Inc. in South Padre Island to help with the sea turtle emergency.

### **New business partnership**

STPS has partnered with Fiesta Bar and Grill in Melbourne. The newly opened restaurant features a sea turtle theme throughout and uses eco-friendly and

sustainable practices in its operations. STPS will receive a portion of the restaurant's proceeds through this agreement, and in return will support the business with educational materials.

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## Photo Calendar Contest

The Sea Turtle Preservation Society is looking for skilled photographers — both amateur and professional — for our calendar contest. Our sea turtle calendar will help remind people throughout the year to help sea turtles survive.

Entries must be submitted no later than June 18, 2021. For more information and complete details, click the link below.

The top 30 photos will be posted on our Facebook account to determine the top 12 with the most “likes.” Winners will then be announced on STPS’s website and social media accounts on June 30, 2021.

[Find Out More about the Photo Calendar Contest](#)



*Dan Schaller, left, now holds the STPS stranding and salvage permit, and Ken Smith, right, now holds the STPS transport permit.*

## **Meet the new STPS permit holders**

In the past two months, STPS has welcomed two new permit holders to the organization: Dan Schaller and Ken Smith.

Effective April 8, 2021, Dan Schaller took over as the stranding permit holder from Roger Pszonowsky, who held the permit for the previous 11 years.

The Board of Directors recognizes Pszonowsky's many years of dedication and service to STPS. He is listed on the permit as a volunteer and will continue as a member of the stranding team.

Schaller has been active on the stranding permit in recent years, completing more than 45 sea turtle strandings in 2020, and already has carried out two dozen strandings this year. He also is involved with STPS as a nest survey permit listed volunteer and actively participates in the organization's fundraising activities. He looks forward to working with the stranding permit volunteers, coordinating with FWC's stranding offices, and contributing to the STPS Board for the future development of the organization.

Effective May 1, 2021, Ken Smith was granted FWC approval to succeed Dave Cheney as the Marine Turtle Transport permit holder. Dave Cheney had held the permit since its inception, and he worked closely with FWC and Roger Pszonowsky to create the successful system STPS has in place today. Dave Cheney is now formally listed on the transport permit as second Qualified Individual, designating him as Ken Smith's formal backup. The board also thanks Dave Cheney for his years of dedication and service to STPS.

Ken Smith and his family have been involved with sea turtles for decades. Since January 2018, he has been active in STPS as a permit listed volunteer for both transport and nesting as well as volunteering at Brevard Zoo's Sea Turtle Healing Center. He actively supports the STPS Board as requested on special projects and represents STPS as their liaison to the Brevard Zoo's Sea Turtle Healing Center. Ken Smith looks forward to working with all our volunteers within STPS with continuing support to the board of directors and his FWC counterparts. Ken Smith and Dan Schaller are working together to bring efficiencies and commonality into the STPS emergency response process.

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## STPS Competes to Win New Vehicle

The Sea Turtle Preservation Society recently was named a semifinalist in the Marine and Coastal Conservation category of the Defender Above and Beyond Service Awards. Members of the stranding and transport team recently worked together to create a three-minute video entry for the competition to win a new Land Rover Defender vehicle. Although STPS was not a finalist in the contest, our organization's website and the video entry are on the company's website. Congratulations to the volunteers who worked on this project. [You can check out the video and learn more about the contest here.](#)

[\*\*Learn more about the Defender Above and Beyond Service Awards\*\*](#)

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## Turtle House Education Center to Get New Look

The STPS education program has been awarded a \$7,500 grant through the Sea Turtle Grants Program to update and modernize the current education center at the Turtle House in Indialantic.

The redesign will begin later this summer and will feature interactive displays that guide visitors through the life cycle of a sea turtle and the ways in which STPS helps sea turtles survive.

The Sea Turtle Grants Program, funded by the sale of Florida's "Helping Sea Turtles Survive" specialty license plate, awarded more than \$415,000 to 26 different projects benefiting Florida sea turtles as part of the 2021-22 grant funding cycle. The sea turtle specialty license plate is also the primary source of funding for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's Marine Turtle Protection Program.

To learn more about the grants program, [go to their website](#).



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The Turtle Times is a quarterly newsletter for members of the Sea Turtle Preservation Society,  
a not-for-profit 501(c)3 organization based in Brevard County, FL.

For more information about the organization, please visit the STPS website, [seaturtlespacecoast.org](http://seaturtlespacecoast.org).

### **Stay connected with STPS**

**Website:** [seaturtlespacecoast.org](http://seaturtlespacecoast.org)

Here you'll find our Loggerhead Lowdown blog, calendar of events and other information for members and volunteers.

On social media, you can keep up with STPS, the Turtle House Gift Shop, and the Turtle Krawl 5K on Facebook and Instagram.

Facebook: Sea Turtle Preservation Society.

You can also keep up with what's happening at the gift shop by liking STPS Turtle House Gift Shop on Facebook.

Instagram: [seaturtleps](https://www.instagram.com/seaturtleps).

For questions, contact [news@seaturtlespacecoast.org](mailto:news@seaturtlespacecoast.org)

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