

# What's New in 2022

In just a few short weeks, it will officially be sea turtle season on Florida's Atlantic coast. In fact, the first leatherback nest for 2022 already has been recorded to the south of us in Palm Beach County.

This is always an exciting time to be part of the Sea Turtle Preservation Society as we gear up for another summer of sea turtles nesting on Brevard's beaches. This year is no exception. In addition to the nesting survey and night walk programs, STPS will be improving and expanding our education and conservation programs with a redesigned education center at the Turtle House, more beach lighting education programs, and a weekly outreach program at the Brevard Zoo to teach the community about sea turtles and the need for conservation.

As an all-volunteer organization, STPS relies on each of our members, supporters, and volunteers to accomplish our mission to help sea turtles survive. The work that STPS does continues 365 days of the year, and opportunities to be part of the mission are available for everyone.

Please take a few minutes to read this newsletter as we recognize what STPS members and volunteers achieved in 2021 and what lies ahead in 2022.

Thanks for all you do,  
Susan Skinner  
STPS Board of Directors Chairperson

# 2021 Annual Membership Meeting

The STPS annual membership meeting took place online on Zoom on Dec. 2, 2021. The meeting included highlights of 2021, board elections, and awards for volunteer of the year and other special recognition.

Diana Forman and Noelle Villanueva were re-elected to two-year terms, and Kelly Etherton was newly elected to the board for a two-year term.

If you were unable to attend, you may view the complete presentation on the members only section of the STPS website:

[2021 Membership Meeting](#)

## *2022 STPS Board of Directors*

Susan Skinner: Chairperson

Kathy LeBresco: Treasurer

Lisa Littleton: Secretary

Amy Durham Shea

Diana Forman

Lori Loftus

Kelly Etherton

John Pechar

Noelle Villanueva

Dori Hughes: Nesting Survey Permit Holder

Craig Konkell: Night Walks Permit Holder

Dan Schaller: Stranding Permit Holder

Ken Smith: Transport Permit Holder

# Welcome Kelly Etherton



*Kelly Etherton, new STPS board member*

## **STPS welcomes its newest board member, Kelly Etherton**

Kelly joins STPS with a background in Environmental Science and Biology. She is an active participant in STPS monthly meetings, beach cleanups, and events like the Turtle Krawl and Boo at the Zoo. Kelly is also involved within our community, volunteering at Spacecoast Surfrider, Brevard County Schools, and the Beach Bucket Foundation.

When asked why she wanted to be a STPS board member, Kelly said, "I fully believe in the mission of the Sea Turtle Preservation Society in helping sea turtles survive through increasing education to the public, being an active voice in community ordinances, rescue efforts, and research. I have experience leading groups of volunteers in prior and current positions that I hold and understand the importance of representing a group at large. I would love the opportunity to serve as a leader on the board and be a part of the decision-making process pertinent to this organization."

We look forward to Kelly's involvement with the STPS Board this year.

# Volunteer Awards



*Sarah Tolson, STPS Volunteer of the Year*

## **Volunteer of the Year**

*Sarah Tolson, the STPS volunteer coordinator, was chosen as the 2021 Volunteer*

of the Year. Her tireless dedication to helping each of our volunteers succeed continues to amaze us.

### **Rookies of the Year**

*Brian Thomas* and *Louise Schuster* were recognized at the 2021 Rookies of the Year. This award recognizes the efforts and enthusiasm of volunteers new to the Sea Turtle Preservation Society. Brian Thomas jumped in and has helped with night walks as well as being a key part of the education center redesign team. Louise Schuster also has jumped in to help with night walks and education programs over the past year.

### **Special Recognition**

- *Richard and Patricia Franck*, for their longtime service as stranding team members and hotline monitors.
- *Roger Pszonowsky*, for longtime service as a permit holder and board member.
- *Dave Cheney*, for longtime service as a permit holder and board member.
- *Jax Maisto*, for dedicated service on the board of directors.

# Sea Turtle Release



On Jan. 26, 2022, STPS volunteers released Kringle, a subadult loggerhead sea turtle, at Spessard South Beach Park. Kringle had been at the Brevard Zoo's Sea Turtle Healing Center since Dec. 4 when the turtle had stranded at the St. Lucie Power Plant and was brought to the healing center by an STPS transport volunteer. Due to the timing of the release, it was not a public event.

## Countdown to Nesting Season

Sea turtle nesting season officially begins March 1 for the Atlantic coast of Florida.

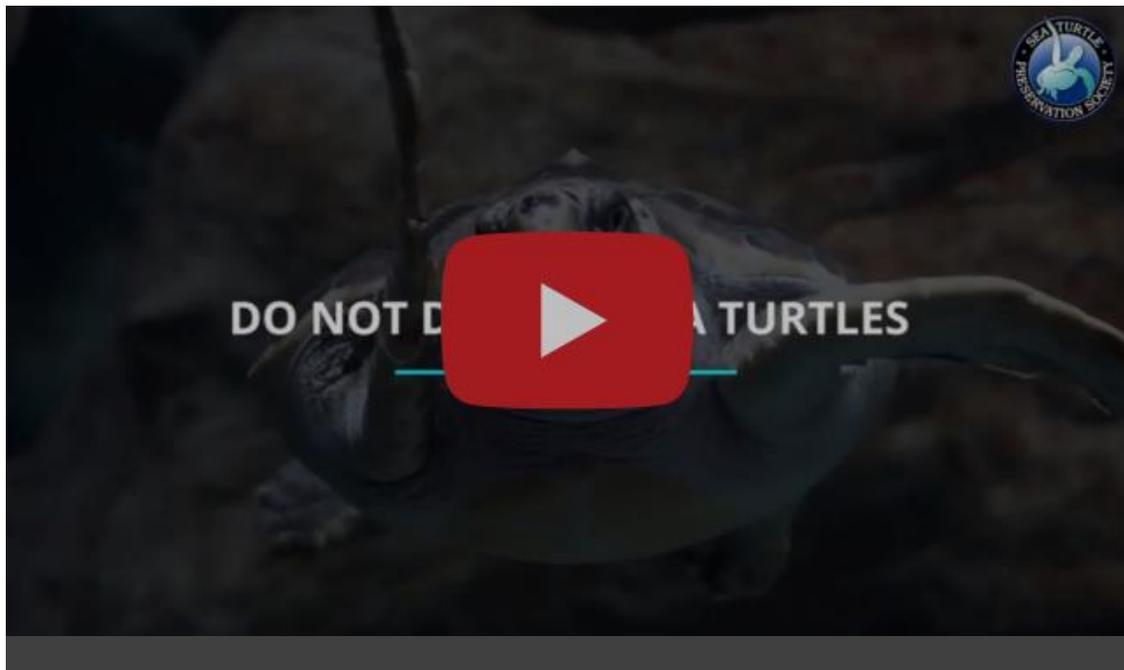
Florida hosts 90 percent of the sea turtle nests laid in the United States each season, and Brevard County's 72 miles of beaches are part of the largest nesting aggregation site of loggerhead sea turtles in the world. Three of the world's seven species of sea turtles nest regularly on our beaches.

The immense leatherback sea turtles typically are the first to arrive and begin nesting in March. The loggerhead sea turtles join the nesting activity a few weeks later, typically in mid-April. The green sea turtles are the last to the party and tend to arrive to nest in late May to early June.

Sea turtle nests incubate for roughly 50-60 days before hatchlings emerge from the sand and head toward the ocean.

Brevard County residents and visitors alike can help make this year's nesting season a success by learning to share the beach with sea turtles.

To learn how you can make a difference, please visit the [STPS website](#). Watch and share the STPS Sharing the Beach with Sea Turtles Video below as well.



# Program Updates

## **Nesting Surveys**

Training for returning volunteers will take place on Saturday, March 26. Survey teams will begin to monitor the beach on April 15. For more information, please contact permit holder Dori Hughes at [turtlesteward\\_20@bellsouth.net](mailto:turtlesteward_20@bellsouth.net)

## **Night Walks**

Educational public night walks are planned for June and July. Training will take place in May; details will be announced closer to the start of the season. For questions, please contact permit holder Craig Konkel at [walks@seaturtlespacecoast.org](mailto:walks@seaturtlespacecoast.org)

## **STERP**

Training for the Sea Turtle Emergency Response Program, which is designed to rescue post-hatchlings from the beach in fall months, is planned for May and early June. Dates and times will be announced on the STPS website and placed on the calendar. For questions, please contact the stranding and salvage program at [er@seaturtlespacecoast.org](mailto:er@seaturtlespacecoast.org)

# What's Happening in STPS



## **Volunteers**

- A March volunteer gathering is planned, and invitations are sent through VIC and email to our volunteers. January was canceled due to the spike in COVID.
- Our Volunteer Fair was held in January. We had about 20 interested volunteers who came by to learn about our programs, and quite a few current volunteers stopped by as well. I would like to give a special shoutout to the program coordinators/permit holders who were there to represent STPS and its programs: Dan Schaller, Jax Maisto, and Diana Forman.
- The next volunteer Orientation will be in early May.
- Current volunteers should be familiar with our STPS Volunteer Handbook which is posted in VIC. Please remember that we are requiring our volunteers to record at least one hour of service each year to stay active. Those who become inactive will need to reapply and go through our updated volunteer process.

*--Sarah Tolson, volunteer coordinator*

## **Help Wanted**

We are looking for volunteers in these areas: Turtle Krawl Race Director and committee volunteers; Monthly Meeting Coordinator; tech-minded volunteers to help with livestreams, hybrid meetings and Zoom; Membership Coordinator; Port Kiosk volunteers; and graphic designers. We also have opportunities for events posted in VIC. More information can be found on the STPS website, in Slack, and in emails sent from our volunteer coordinator, or you can email Sarah at [volunteer@seaturtlespacecoast.org](mailto:volunteer@seaturtlespacecoast.org) to find out more.

### **Beach Cleanups**

The next cleanup will be on Saturday, March 5. STPS has adopted Coconut Point Park in Melbourne Beach and Cherie Down Park and Beach in Cape Canaveral, as part of the Keep Brevard Beautiful Adopt-a-Shore project. Volunteers pick up litter on the first Saturday after the first Thursday of each month starting at 9 am and usually finish by 11 am. Volunteers can receive community service hours. Materials for cleanup activities are provided, including trash bags, gloves, sunscreen, and tools. For more information, please email coordinator Gerry Burke at [beachcleanup@seaturtlespacecoast.org](mailto:beachcleanup@seaturtlespacecoast.org).

### **Events Updates**

Events finished 2021 with 11 events! In February, we participated at Ocean Treasures Fest at the Barrier Island Center. In March we will be at the Samsons Island Open House in Satellite Beach.

Our Toys for Tots was a great success and we filled nearly 3 boxes! We appreciate everyone's help from donating to transporting toys.



## Fundraising Updates

2022 STPS Photo Calendars are still available! They are available at both of our locations and our online store! Make sure to get yours as there are limited supplies.

If you'd like the opportunity to have your photo featured in the 2023 STPS calendar, watch for photo contest information coming out this summer in conjunction with World Sea Turtle Day.

We are collecting donations for our silent auction in celebration of World Sea Turtle Day. If you have items that you would like to donate, please make sure they are new items. Items can be dropped off at either STPS location. We will also be looking for gift certificates, experiences or similar items.

We continue to receive partnership requests through our Partner with Us page. Make sure to check out all of STPS current supporters on our Support page.

We look to start some new fundraising events in 2022. Stay tuned and make sure to follow us on social media.



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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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