



Indian River County
Board of County Commissioners

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Coastal Engineering Division

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First Leatherback Nests of 2020

Indian River County has received the first handful of sea turtle nests this year. Of the three species that nest along our shores, leatherbacks nest first, then loggerheads, followed by green turtles. Sea turtle nesting season officially started on March 1st and continues through October 31st in Indian River County.

This year the leatherbacks started nesting earlier than in previous years. On March 10th, 2020 a leatherback nested in Indian River Shores, marking it as the first nest of the 2020 nesting season. Soon after that 3 more nests were laid in the southern part of the County and 1 more in the Shores for a total of 5 nests as of mid-March. Leatherbacks are Federally- and State-designated endangered species. If interested in helping all species of sea turtles, beach-goers can always keep the beach clean, dark and flat.

In 2019 the first leatherback nest was laid on March 26th.

In 2018 the first leatherback nest was laid on April 6th

In 2017 the first leatherback nest was laid on April 1st 2 nests

In 2016 the first leatherback nest was laid on March 11th

It is extremely difficult to infer if early nesting equates to a bumper nesting season. However the outlook is looking good. Indian River County doesn't have nearly the same amount of leatherback nests when compared to the loggerheads and green turtles that nest on our shores. Our neighboring counties have historically had more leatherback nesting activity. On average, IRC receives 51 leatherback nests a year, in 2019 we received 37. We are extremely hopeful that we observe an increase of leatherback nesting this year.

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