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Sea Turtle Activity on Blackbeard Island NWR

Reported by Kimberly Hayes

The 2015 Blackbeard Island National Wildlife Refuge sea turtle (*Caretta caretta*) nesting season began with the first nesting female arriving on May 11th. From that point forward it has been a busy record setting season on the island with a total of 321 nests to date. The sea turtle crew monitors the beach each morning looking for possible new nests, false crawls and nest emergences. Daily nest inventories are done on each emerged nest to determine the success rate of each nest. This year's Blackbeard Sea Turtle Crew consists of 4 team members: Nancy Hickey - Supervisory Biological Technician, Melissa Roark - intern, Tyler Buckley - intern (2nd year), and Melisa Jeffers, volunteer.

Mark Dodd, GA DNR sea turtle biologist, recently announced that loggerhead nesting hit a new all-time high record in GA with a newly laid nest on Little Cumberland Island on August 27th. Final statewide totals are predicted

to be between 2, 330-2,350 nests. The staff on Blackbeard Island NWR maintains a high level of scientific integrity through their quality, detailed work. We are fortunate to have a dedicated staff that goes over and beyond for sea turtle conservation. You can follow the progress of Blackbeard Island NWR sea turtle nesting and other locations along the coast on seaturtle.org.



Photo by Nancy Hickey, USFWS