

TURTLE SEASON WRAP-UP

A Beautiful Ending to a Bumpy Ride

By Peggy Deneau

Our final loggerhead sea turtle nest to hatch, #11, weathered the storm tides well. Although frequently overwashed, it was never inundated and it was never compacted under a huge amount of sand.

This nest was laid on August 18, and we began sitting it on October 11. By October 21, after 62 days of incubation, it still had not hatched. We decided to give it one more week of watching, and set Sunday, October 29 (day 70), as an excavation date.

On Monday and Tuesday of that final week we had a tremendous thunderstorm with about three inches of rain. A hole that was attributed to a ghost crab appeared on the nest, and was filled in each time after reappearing several times during the next few days. As this nest was laid only inches from the grass, roots may have grown into the nest cavity. This could account for the crab hole becoming an exit hole for hatchlings as happened several years ago in a nest near Hammer Park where Nimbus, the popular white sea turtle at our local aquarium, was discovered during an excavation. A similar hole appeared on that nest a week before we dug it up.

One lone hatchling was also spotted on the beach, although it was quite a distance from Nest #11. There are three possible places this hatchling could have come from: it could have washed up in the storm from a nest on another beach; it could have come from a nest we never found, although this is highly unlikely because we have the Turtle Patrol vehicle as backup for our morning walkers; or it could have come from Nest #11.

On Wednesday, October 25, one dead hatchling and two empty shells were found on top of the nest. We knew something was happening. On Thursday evening, the nest caved in, but no hatchlings appeared until Friday evening, when two live hatchlings came out of the nest and were seen safely into the ocean.

We moved up the excavation date to Saturday, October 28, because rain and cooler weather were predicted for Sunday. The excavation was performed by Kay Howe and Jan Corsello, and Cary Spencer took the inventory. In the nest were 95 shells, five unhatched eggs, and one live hatchling that was released into the ocean. The emergence success of Nest #11 was 90%.

What a wonderful conclusion to our 2017 sea turtle season. After some crushing disappointments with three nests that were flooded or covered by up to six feet of sand, we had a great success with our last one. In 2017, a total of 776 loggerhead sea turtle hatchlings came off our beach in Pine Knoll Shores.

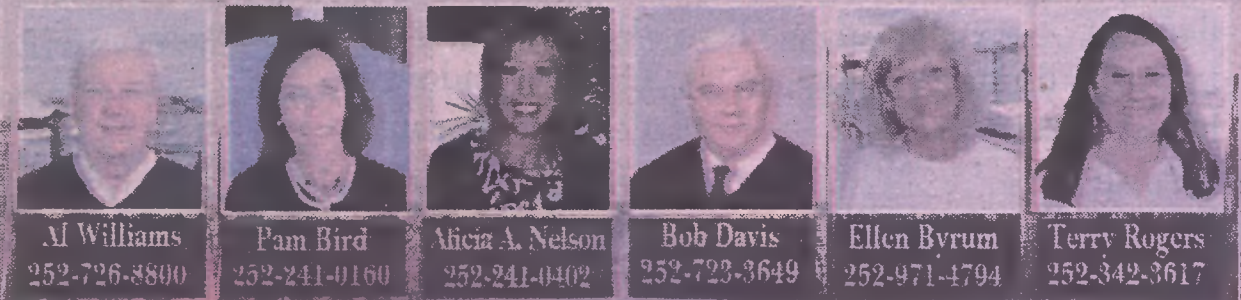
Thanks go out to all the wonderful volunteers in the Pine Knoll Shores Sea Turtle Protection Project. Without you, our program would not exist. I hope to see you all again when the 2018 season begins, if not before. Congratulations on a job well done.



From left, Jan Corsello, Cary Spencer, and Kay Howe prepare to excavate Nest #11 as Bryan Hurdle from Wilmington, grandson of Kay Howe, looks on.—Photos by Peggy Deneau

From Sound to Sea and Beyond...

AL WILLIAMS PROPERTIES
Real Estate Sales & Development



Our agents are professional, experienced and knowledgeable in the Crystal Coast real estate market. We take pride in providing our clients with the tools and resources they need to buy and sell real estate as well as provide attention to every detail while striving to go beyond and exceed buyers' and sellers' expectations. If you are looking to buy or sell in Atlantic Beach, Beaufort, Bunnell, Morehead City, Newport, Pine Knoll Shores or any of the surrounding towns, our agents are ready to assist you with all of your real estate needs. We offer a strong marketing package as well as a strong network of buyers and sellers to get the job done.

300 Atlantic Beach Causeway, Atlantic Beach, NC 28512
252-726-8800 / 800-849-1888 www.alwilliamsproperties.com

The Country Club of the Crystal Coast

GENERAL PUBLIC WELCOME
Memberships Available

- Golf - Sport - Social - Student
- 18 Hole Championship Golf Course
- Practice Short Game Area & Driving Range
- 4 HarTru Lighted Tennis Courts & Swimming Pool
- Private Dining Club: Weddings, Receptions, Banquets

For more information contact Chip Chamberlin at 252-726-1034 (Ext 12). Debt reduction fund and capital improvement fund are billed monthly. Annual food minimum must be spent within one year. Cash fee required to play golf for all members before 12 noon daily! Call and email for details.

152 Oakland Drive
Pine Knoll Shores, NC 28512
252-726-1034
chip@thecountryclub.com
www.thecountryclub.com

