



**Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC)  
Fish and Wildlife Research Institute (FWRI)  
INDEX NESTING BEACH SURVEY (INBS) PROTOCOL**

1. **Survey Consistency:** Standardized data collection is crucial to the long-term success of the program. Deviations from the protocol outlined here must be relayed to project leaders and explained in detail on the data report forms so that the data can be properly interpreted.
  2. **Survey Period:** All index beaches are surveyed **15 May - 31 August** of each year.
  3. **Survey Time:** Surveys must be conducted in the early morning hours, preferably beginning at dawn.
  4. **Survey Frequency:** Index nesting beach surveys are conducted seven days a week on all beaches. All crawls are marked or "erased" daily to avoid duplicate counts on subsequent survey days.
  5. **Survey Zones:** Crawl data are reported by beach zone (typically 1 km or 1/2 mile). Zones are identified with a unique numbering and marked with permanent markers. **Beach zones must remain the same from year to year, do not add or delete survey zones or change their length.** If you "lose" a zone boundary marker, it must be replaced in the exact location. Contact FWC/FWRI for help with this.
  6. **Missed Survey Days:** If a morning survey is not completed (for whatever reason) the following protocol is to be followed. You may follow either "A" or "B", but "A" is the preferred method:
    - A. All crawls present on the missed day are "erased" prior to sundown of the same day. Data are not reported from the missed survey day. "Fresh" crawl counts and data reporting resume the day following the missed survey day. This will result in 6 daily counts reported for the week.
    - B. No one is able to "erase" crawls on the missed survey day. The following day the entire survey area is "erased". Data are not reported from the missed survey day or from the survey day when old crawls were erased. "Fresh" crawl counts and data reporting resume on the morning after crawls were erased. This will result in 5 daily counts reported for the week.
- Submit daily reporting forms, clearly indicate missed survey days, and explain in the remarks section how the situation was handled.
7. **Crawl Identification:** All fresh crawls are identified to species and as either nests or false crawls based on observable crawl characteristics. Crawls are counted only if they extend **ABOVE** the most recent high tide line.
  8. **Data Reporting:** Data are recorded on Index Nesting Beach Survey Daily Report Forms provided by FWC/FWRI. Please enter "0" if no crawls were recorded in a zone. **Updated Excel (electronic) survey forms must be submitted on a monthly basis to: Beth.Mongiovi@MyFWC.com. Submit updated forms by the first week of June, July, August, and September. Please submit INBS data directly to FWRI, do not upload them to the FWC online permit system**
  9. **Significant Events:** If significant events occur that may affect turtles or their nests on an INBS beach, please let FWC/FWRI know about them. Significant events include habitat alterations such as beach nourishment, the placement of armoring or beach-access ramps, or erosion due to storms. Indicate date(s), type of event, and the zone location(s) in the comments section of the data form.
  10. **Assistance:** Should questions arise or problems occur, contact Beth Mongiovi (Brost) at 727-502-4738, Beth.Mongiovi@MyFWC.com; or Simona Ceriani at 727-892-4119, Simona.Ceriani@MyFWC.com.

**YOUR EFFORTS ARE GREATLY APPRECIATED!**

Revised: 8Dec2017