



WELCOME

2026 Info Session

Patrol Swap / Subs

- **If you will be out on your scheduled day, you *must* have a PISTP volunteer cover your zone.**
 - Communication with your patrol partner is important so they are aware of any changes/issues.
 - ✓ Your patrol partner may be able to help you find a sub.
 - No-shows with no communication are inconsiderate and unsafe for your partner (and can put your volunteer status at risk).
- **Patrol swaps must be documented in the Patrol Sub Request form.**
 - This form keeps up with all sub requests. It shows days/zones/contact info for the requester & the sub.
 - The form will be available on the login page of our website and will be linked on all patrol emails, so everyone has easy access to it at all times.
 - Once you have documented your sub request, keep an eye on the status. You can reach out to other patrollers to help find your coverage.
 - ✓ We must have coverage for each zone, each day... nests that are missed are in danger!
 - If both patrollers for 1 zone will be out the same day and you are having trouble finding coverage, look at the folks on zones next to yours... maybe they could cover both zones that morning (yours and theirs).
 - If you have a person to cover you, it still needs to be put on the sub request list.
 - ✓ This is for safety, so we know who is on the beach.

Patrol is one of the most important and exciting roles in the project!

- **Patrol starts at 6:00am**
 - This varies with sunrise, so do NOT go out while it's dark. This allows us to see turtle tracks before humans have been out to walk over them. **First light is the rule of thumb.**
 - **It is critical you notify us immediately about a crawl!** (We need pictures and your exact location.)
- **Time is of the essence! We need you on the beach by 6am!**
 - We have a very short window to relocate a nest... it is critical we are able to do this **immediately!**
 - People walking on the beach often don't notice tracks, and can unintentionally destroy them if the sand is dry and soft, potentially leaving a nest unidentified and unprotected.
- **Patrol down low (closer to the water or low tide line) on your 1st pass, then up high (closer to the dunes) walking back the other direction.**
 - This is important to avoid missing different views/perspective from each direction as the sunlight changes/rises. **Crawls are usually identified on the 1st pass (low) and should be reported immediately with pictures and exact location.**

- **If a nest is missed, it can not be protected, and is often destroyed by fox/coyote.**
 - Wild nest hatchlings end up in dunes, parking lots, or worse... most will not make it to the ocean.
 - The goal of patrol is simple... to identify sea turtle nests that need to be marked off for protection and monitoring.
- **Picking up trash**
 - Seeing trash all over our beach is frustrating, but picking up trash can distract you from noticing a faint possible crawl/nest. **It also lengthens the time your patrol takes... please patrol first!**
- **Checking Nests / Wild Nests**
 - Once the season is underway, patrollers will often be the 1st eyes on nests each morning.
 - Identifying depressions... some are obvious... some are not.
 - Evidence of a hatch v/s crab or fox predation may not always be clear.

*****Friends/Family are welcome... but please refer to the expectations and code of conduct before you invite the neighborhood or soccer team. We don't have the manpower to manage the crowds that show up when this happens.**

The next few slides show types of things you may see on patrol, and the importance of paying attention to patterns...

What do you see?







Ghost Crab Hole



Sea Turtle Nest Emergence

Remember that our loggerhead hatchlings will have more comma like tracks. The flipper marks will be somewhat rounded in comparison to a crab's tracks.

These are more obvious... sea turtle on left, crab on right.





Textbook depression in dry sand on left, wild nest depression in crumbly sand on right.

Look closely! The left appears to be tracks from a wild nest hatch, or hatchlings disoriented by light. The right is tracks straight down the runway (there are also crab tracks in there too)!

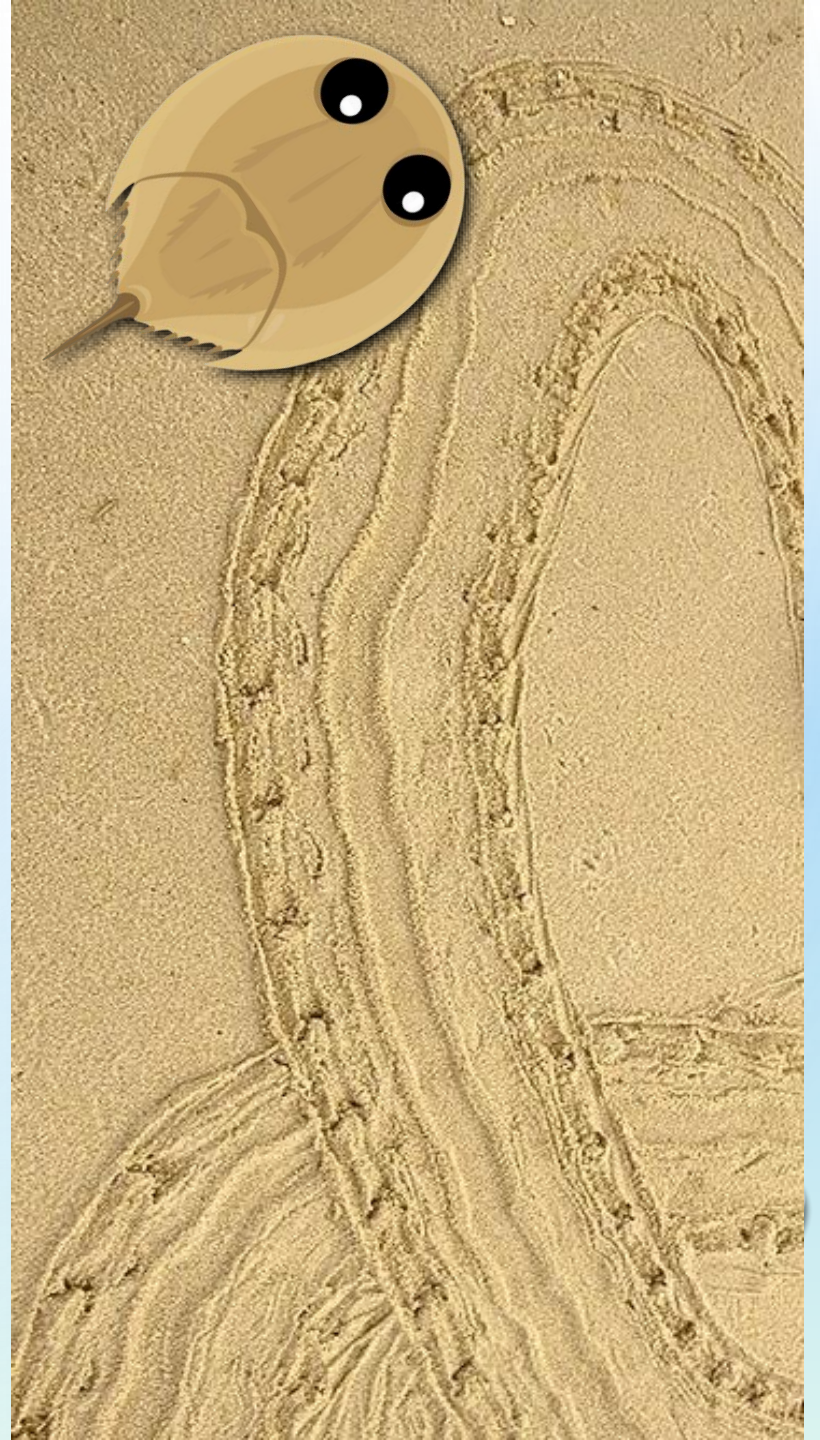


Can you spot the difference?



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Don't forget those exciting 1st timers tracks! The species known as the "Cooler Drag"!



Look closely! What do you see?





Shore birds nest right on the beach. Patrollers should use caution, as their eggs (and chicks) blend right into the sand.





Summer Storms



- We **DO** patrol in the rain
 - If there is nearby lightning, stay in your vehicle and check the weather on your phone (there are several weather apps have alerts for lightning in the area).
 - Stay safely sheltered, and use your best judgement to go out when lightning has moved off.

It is often more difficult to identify tracks in the rain, so patrol is critical in the rain!

- It is our job to ensure ALL nests are protected.
- A nest that has NOT been identified for protection is often destroyed by fox/coyote, or will have hatchlings that end up in the dunes (or worse) never making it to the ocean.
- The next few slides show some examples of tracks/nests that may not be obvious...



When storm/high tides wash over a nest, evidence of tracks and/or body pit can be lost. This was a nest in Freeman Park that Nancy discovered with almost no evidence!

Dry sand can be blown over, smoothing out clues that could lead to a nest.



*Rain or tides can make tracks harder to spot... so can the type of sand they are in.
Soft dry sand doesn't hold together as long, and hard sand doesn't give as easily.*

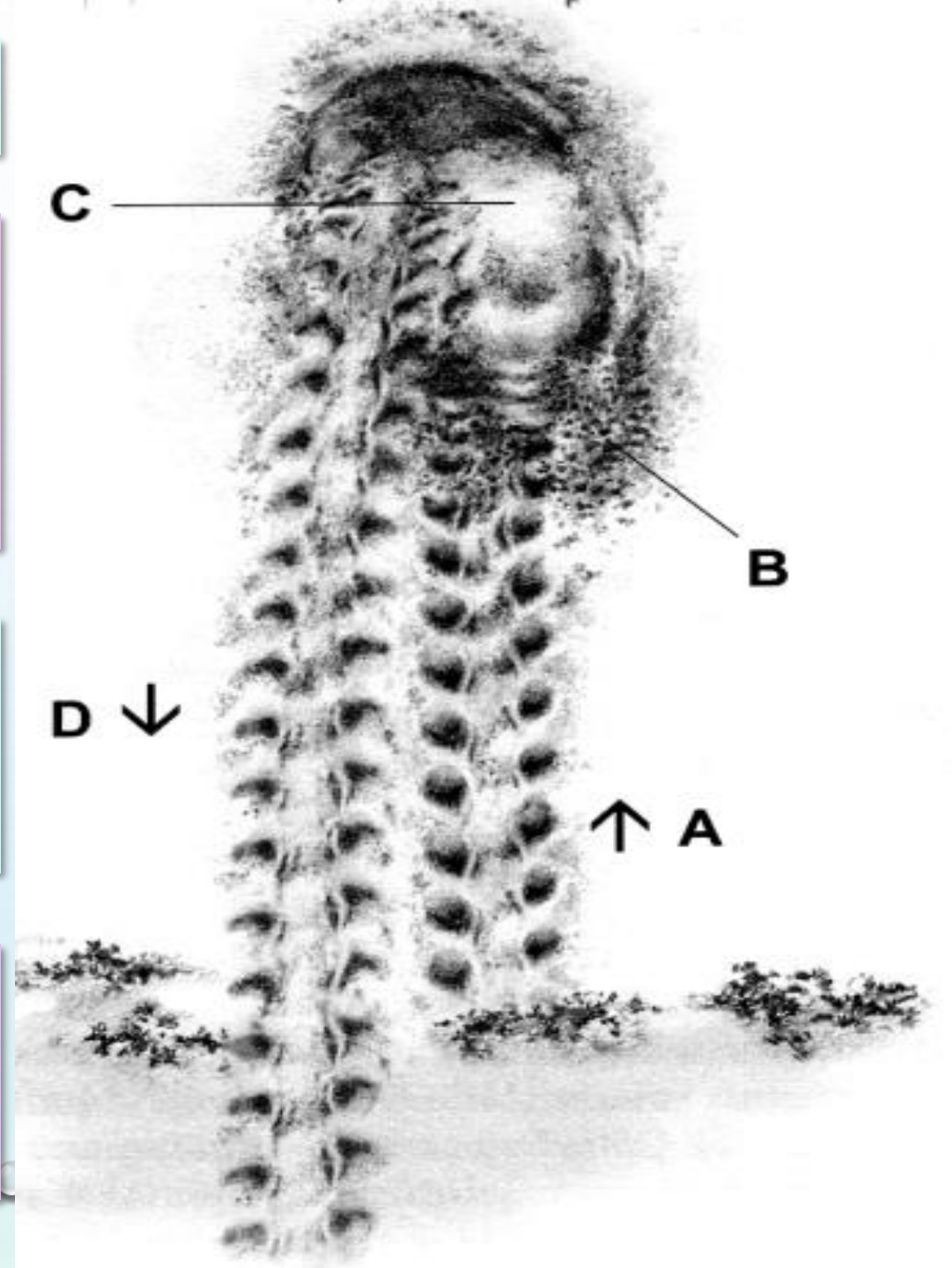


Verifying a Nest

When you find a crawl, take pictures of crawl and body pit, text to:
Jennifer - 910-622-6259

Please **do not touch** the crawl or body pit area... these give us clues to help determine where the eggs are hidden.

Pictures of nest locations are NOT to be shared outside of PISTP. If you want to share pictures with others, you must crop out landmarks.



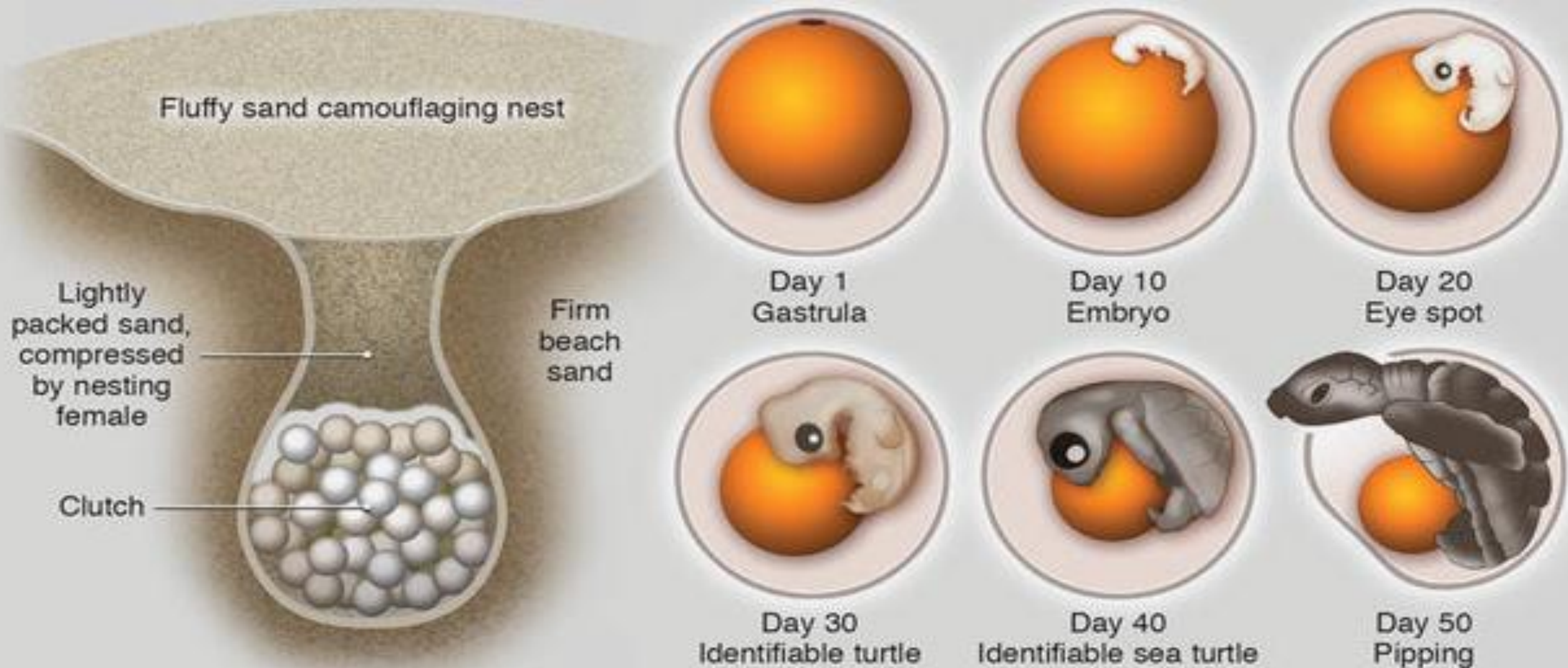






We are a CONSERVATION group... sometimes the things we do/see are not pretty, but learning about how to protect things means learning how they work.

- This includes things like sacrificing an egg from each nest to get moms DNA data to send to the state. This helps us learn about their nesting habits, giving us important information to share with people living on, or visiting the beach. *We know that people and light pollution have significant effects on adult nesting turtles, just as much as hatchlings.*
- This also includes investigating unhatched eggs after excavation to determine developmental stages and possible causes of death of the developing hatchling.*
- Strandings of dead turtles will sometimes have a necropsy performed to determine cause of death. This is a great opportunity to see firsthand how a sea turtles body functions. Those on the stranding team will tell you it's not pretty at first (and definitely sad), but is always fascinating!*
- Working together as a team you will learn from others experiences, and gain a wealth of knowledge. We are all learning together! *Nest etiquette is important for this... patience and communication are your friends here!*



As they are laid in the nest, sea turtle eggs are developmentally paused at the tiny “gastrula” stage. Hours after exposure to oxygen outside the female, development resumes. The nest

“breathes” as tides raise and lower groundwater, pumping atmosphere through the sand. Oxygen demand peaks as turtles pip and begin thrashing within the nest.

Questions?

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