



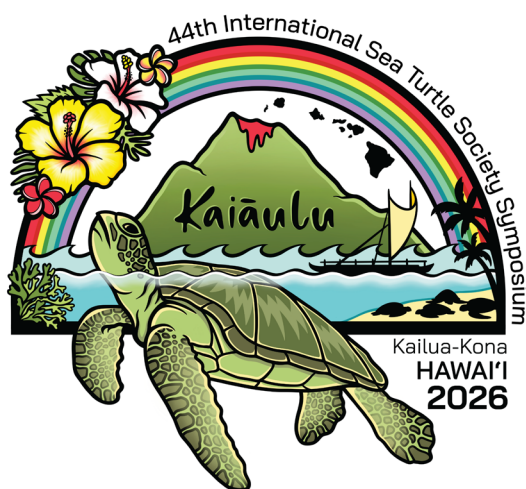
ANNOUNCEMENTS

44TH INTERNATIONAL SEA TURTLE SOCIETY SYMPOSIUM, 28TH FEBRUARY TO 6TH MARCH, 2026, KAILUA-KONA, HAWAII, USA

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Aloha kākou!

On behalf of the International Sea Turtle Society (ISTS), we extend a warm and heartfelt invitation to the 44th International Sea Turtle Society Symposium (44th ISTS Symposium)- a global gathering of sea turtle biologists, conservationists, researchers, practitioners, and advocates from over 80 countries. For the first time ever, this premier event will take place in Hawai'i, from 28th February to 6th March, 2026, just south of the stunning coastal town of Kailua-Kona (Hawai'i Island).

Why Hawai'i?

Hawai'i holds a deep and unique connection to sea turtles- known locally as *honu*- which are not only an iconic part of the islands' marine ecosystems but are also deeply revered in Hawaiian culture. Despite this strong connection, the ISTS Symposium has never been hosted in Hawai'i- until now! This event presents an exciting opportunity to highlight *honu* and their cultural significance across the Pacific and Oceania. With the Pacific Islands at the epicenter of global conservation challenges, this symposium arrives at a crucial time to foster meaningful discussions and inspire action for sea turtle research and conservation

worldwide.

Symposium Theme: "Kaiāulu" - Community

The theme of the 44th ISTS Symposium is "Kaiāulu," a Hawaiian word meaning community, neighbourhood, and village. This theme reflects the close-knit, collaborative nature of the sea turtle research and conservation community, honouring our shared commitment to understanding and protecting these incredible animals and their habitats through knowledge exchange, capacity building, and global cooperation.

A Breathtaking Venue

The symposium will take place at the stunning Outrigger Kona Resort and Spa, perched atop the cliffs of Keauhou Bay on Hawai'i Island's west coast. This breathtaking venue provides an ideal setting for insightful and engaging symposium sessions, fostering collaboration and knowledge exchange. It also offers the perfect backdrop for reconnecting with 'turtler' friends and colleagues from around the world.

Kailua-Kona, often simply called Kona, is a charming seaside town located approximately 20km from the airport that is known for its stunning sunsets, world-famous Kona coffee, historic sites, and incredible snorkeling spots. The relaxed island atmosphere, combined with the wealth of cultural and natural experiences, makes it an ideal destination for both professional engagement and personal adventure.

Extend Your Journey

If time allows, we highly encourage you to explore beyond Hawai'i Island. Each of the main Hawaiian Islands boasts its own unique personality, landscapes, and cultural heritage, offering an unforgettable experience that will deepen your appreciation of this extraordinary region.

Start Planning for the Meeting

Registration and abstract submission for the 44th ISTS Symposium is currently slated to open on October 1st, 2025, so start thinking about the impactful research and conservation efforts you want to share during the conferences oral and poster presentation sessions. Prior to those presentations we will hold two days of workshops, so if you're considering organising one, keep an eye out for the request for workshop proposals scheduled to be released in late 2025. We will also host a full day of regional meetings, so start planning your meetings now. You can also prepare your videos to share during video-night, hone your stories for our Origin-stories session, and collect unique items to donate to the symposium *silent and live auctions* to support travel grants.

Save the Dates and Begin Arranging Your Trip

The 44th ISTS Symposium in Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i, will occur between 28th February and 6th March, 2026, and promises to be an unforgettable experience, where science, culture, and conservation come together in one of the most breathtaking settings on Earth. Mark your calendars, book your flights, and don't forget your swimsuit, reef-safe sunscreen, and "slippahs" (local name for flip-flops or sandals)! We can't wait to welcome you to Hawai'i in 2026!

Stay tuned for updates and learn more details by visiting the 44th ISTS Symposium website: <https://www.ists-symposium44.org>