

Beach Wrack

What Is It?



- Beach wrack is the line of debris that gets pushed onshore by ocean tides and is an important component in the beach/dune ecosystem.
- It forms a line parallel to the ocean providing habitat for animals that live on the beach and provides a substrate for new dunes to develop.
- Beach wrack consists of sea grass, seaweed, reeds, driftwood, tree and plant seeds, shell and egg casings, and decomposing marine life.
- Shorebirds and crustaceans patrol the wrack line to snack on insects and marine organisms and use materials in the wrack to hide from predators.
- Below the surface, marine worms and invertebrates survive on the nutrients from the decomposing wrack material.
- As beach wrack piles up, it will cover and stabilize sand allowing it to accumulate instead of being blown away by the wind.
- This mixture of decomposing beach wrack and sand gets pushed up toward the dune area providing a mat of nutrient rich organic material for dune plants to take root.
- Many times beach wrack is removed for aesthetic reasons creating an imbalance in the beach/dune ecosystem, especially the food chain.
- Removing beach wrack not only harms animals that live day to day on the beach, but also migrating birds that depend on these food and shelter stops as they make their long journey.
- Only remove manmade items (trash, plastics, fishing line, beach toys, etc.) off the beach and keep the natural wrack for a healthy beach.
- Protect Our Home - **DON'T** rake the wrack!



Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners
Environmental Resources Management



Royal tern



Ghost crab