

WRIGHTSVILLE BEACH SEA TURTLE PROJECT

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Dear Wrightsville Beach Turtlers,

First of all, let me begin by welcoming you as a volunteer with Wrightsville Beach Sea Turtle Project! Thank you so much for helping protect our nesting sea turtle population and their nests at Wrightsville Beach. They are truly amazing creatures that are deserving of our respect and protection. I hope by the end of the summer you are a firmly dedicated turtle person!

Please begin walking your designated zone & day beginning on Sunday, May 15th, and continue to walk through Wednesday, August 31st.

When people ask you about your efforts you may tell them that you are working under a permit issued by the NC Wildlife Resources Commission Non-game and Endangered Wildlife Program in an effort to protect endangered sea turtles. The loggerhead sea turtle, *Caretta Caretta*, is the most common sea turtle to nest on the NC coast. Federal laws protect the turtles and prohibit the harassment of nesting turtles, or disturbing nests. Please read some of the information offered about sea turtles at our meeting. You are now a spokesperson and a voice for these awesome and amazing creatures!

Please fill out and send in your volunteer application form, then complete a volunteer activity report each month and submit all of this to: **Matthew Godfrey, Sea Turtle Program Coordinator, NCWRC, 1507 Ann St., Beaufort, NC, 28516**. Your hours are an important contribution which helps fund our state program through an in-kind matching program.

Last summer, we found **15!!!!** loggerhead sea turtle nests and **9** false crawls on Wrightsville Beach. It was a higher than average year for nesting turtles statewide, and we are hoping for a return of the turtles in even greater numbers this season! The largest number of nests we have ever had during one summer was 16 loggerhead nests in 1999. While we never know what surprises the turtles may have in store for us, we are always hopeful for an exciting and successful summer for the turtles and turtle nests on Wrightsville Beach!

Sometimes it takes a few summers to finally find a nest, but don't give up--it is well worth the effort. Finding a sea turtle nest is a very exciting and unforgettable experience! Just being on the beach at sunrise is a peaceful and enjoyable way to start your day. Good luck to all!

The following are some guidelines to help in your efforts to locate turtle nests on your morning walks. Thank you so much for your willingness to participate in this important, yet fun, volunteer effort!! Before summer is over you will probably hear anything and

everything you ever wanted to know about sea turtles, and then some!

The procedure for monitoring for nests is as follows:

- 1) Be on the beach just before sunrise. If you need a substitute, give them a couple of days notice. Call me if you are unable to walk. If you oversleep, walk as soon as possible. If your schedule won't allow it, call me & let me know. Please keep in mind that missed nests mean unprotected nests and stray hatchlings at hatching time. An unsupervised emergence often means disoriented hatchlings that end up lost in the dunes or run over in the roadway. Wrightsville Beach does not have an overabundance of nests. It is important that we locate, protect, and account for each and every one! Please make sure your zone is always covered!!!
- 2) Be prepared for all kinds of weather. If you are coming from town remember that it could be raining at the beach and not at your home, or just the opposite. If you feel that the weather is too bad to walk in please be sure to let me know.
- 3) Walk in the soft sand at the high tide mark. This enables you to see the tracks above the area where the water may have washed some of them away.
- 4) **Call me when you find tracks at 910-612-3047.** Please be sure to take this number with you when you walk.

If you have a nest in your zone, please check on it as you walk by. If you notice anything out of the ordinary, or if the nest area or the stakes marking it off appear to have been disturbed in any way, please let me know right away.

If you are not one of the lucky volunteers to find a nest, be patient. When hatching season begins you will have plenty of chances to get in on the action. With an average of 120 eggs per nest we will need lots of volunteers out there to help watch over the hatchlings. Three days after the main hatching event we will be excavating each nest. At the excavation, we will conduct a nest analysis and collect information and data from the nest all of which will be reported to the state. We will also release any live hatchlings trapped in the nest. These events always draw large crowds and we will need the help of volunteers at the excavations, as well. We will have a meeting in July to sign up for nest sitting activities. I will notify you later this summer of a date and time for that meeting.

During your beach outings this summer you may find a stranded sea turtle. A stranded turtle can be a live or dead turtle that has washed ashore, or into shallow water. Please call me right away if you encounter a stranded turtle. Any dead turtles must be reported to the NCWRC. Live animals will be transported immediately to the Karen Beasley Sea Turtle Rescue and Rehabilitation Center on Topsail Island. There, the turtles receive the needed medical care and TLC to return them to health, and eventually to release them back into their ocean home.

The hospital is a wonderful refuge for the turtles. It is run entirely by volunteers, and depends totally on the donations of our generous supporters. If you are interested in volunteering at the hospital, or donating supplies, or money, please let me know. I will be glad to give you all of the information you may need. You can also visit the hospital

web-site at www.seaturtlehospital.org. It is full of lots of interesting information, and the story and history of each turtle that has ever been admitted, or is currently a resident of the hospital.

WBSTP has an awesome facebook page designed and managed by volunteer, Susan Miller. Be sure to check out and "Like" our page. It is chockfull of fun information, facts, and updates, so you won't want to miss out!

There is an active, online NC sea turtle list-serv available for NC volunteers. The purpose of this list-serv is to provide a forum for sharing information about NC sea turtle activities. It is very informative and fun to keep up with all of the other projects' activities and updates. If you are interested in signing onto the list you can do so by adding your email address to the sign-up list and I will pass it on to Matthew Godfrey, the state coordinator. If you want to sign on at a later date just let me know.

Remember--dogs are not allowed on the beach so please leave your pet(s) at home comfortably snoozing in the air conditioning.

Sadly, you may find lots of trash on the beach on your morning walks. Many of our volunteers generously pick it up as they walk. If you do decide to gather up the trash that so many others carelessly leave behind, let me thank you in advance for your efforts. It does not go unnoticed, nor is it unappreciated!!!

Once again, thank-you for being a volunteer with Wrightsville Beach Sea Turtle Project. You are now officially one of the "turtle people". Remember, we are out there not only to protect the turtles, but to be a voice for them as well. The turtles need all of the friends and supporters they can get. Please don't hesitate to call me if you ever have any questions or concerns.

Best,

Nancy Fahey
Coordinator
Wrightsville Beach Sea Turtle Project

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS:

***WB & Wilmington Sea Turtles, Nancy Fahey: M: 910-612-3047/Emergency: 910-791-9136**

***NC Sea Turtle Emergency Hotline: 1-252-241-7367**

***Audubon, Lindsay Addison: 1-239-784-2251**

***Skywatch Bird Rescue, Amelia Mason: 910-274-8479**

***WB Police, non-emergency: 910.452.6120**