



Turtle Conservation



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📍 Cape Verde - Tarrafal

Join us in our program to conserve sea turtles on the Islands of Cape Verde and directly involve in making a difference to save these species from extinction.

Your participation on this program will have a long term impact on the marine ecosystem with hands-on work with wild nesting sea turtles.

You will get the chance to travel to an exotic destination, work on beaches famous for its splendid scenery and at the same time gain fieldwork experience in sea turtle conservation.



Program Description

The Cape Verde island's beaches are one of the most visited sites by the Loggerhead sea turtle (*Caretta caretta*) for nesting during the months of July to October and extending until December. These species play a critical link in the marine ecosystems and in the marine food chain by maintaining the health of sea grass and coral reef ecosystems that provide food and home for a wide variety of other marine life.

The greatest threat to these sea turtles' survival is loss of nesting habitat due to coastal development, predation of nests, and human disturbances (such as coastal lighting and housing developments) that cause disorientations during the emergence of hatchlings. Other major threats include incidental capture in longline fishing, shrimp trawling and pollution. Incidental capture in fisheries is thought to have played a significant role in the recent population declines observed for the loggerhead.

Through this program you and members of the local community will be working to ensure protection of the female sea turtles –

- by patrolling the beaches at night during the nesting season,
- transporting the eggs into a safe hatchery to protect them from animals and humans,
- educating the community and the children about the importance of the turtles in the marine ecosystem,
- working with the government to improve regulations,
- and also feeding, cleaning, and taking care of hatchlings until they are fit and strong enough to be released into the ocean.

We aim to empower the local young community to take action by protecting nesting females, through direct beach protection, as well as grassroots education at local schools. As critical part of the team, you will have the opportunity to directly contribute to the conservation of Loggerhead sea turtle species, and ultimately help to build a more sustainable Island.

The program encompasses,

- patrolling beaches (night and morning) to monitor nesting and deter hunting,
- data collection,
- operation of hatcheries,
- education and outreach activities and
- beach clean-ups.

The work is undertaken by local field assistants and participants. Although there is a wide scope of activities within the project, protection of nesting turtles continues to be the main focus and this can be stressful and tiring, but ultimately highly rewarding.

As a participant on this program, your primary role will be to patrol the beaches at night with other assistants in order to deter hunters and ensure the turtle can nest safely. During patrols, you will also assist with important fieldwork activities, including tagging and measuring turtles,

and relocation and excavation of nests. You may also get involved with other aspects of the outreach activities. Through this experience you'll learn about sea turtle conservation techniques and will have the opportunity to make a difference to the survival of marine turtles. Living under these conditions could be challenging, tiring, and will include work both at night and during the day. A good level of fitness and physical and mental energy is required as patrols are long (possibly all night), conducted on foot and may be as long as 5 to 6 km. The normal nesting season is from July until December with hatchlings being born from mid-August until late December. The program is located at Ribera Das Pratas. You will be based in field camps with very basic accommodation facilities during night patrols as there is no electric power at the beach. This opportunity will not only provide you with good experience of turtle conservation techniques, but also will allow you to make a real difference to the survival of marine turtles. Your participation on this program will be directly saving numerous nesting sea turtles and hatchlings.

Program Duration & Availability

Min duration (weeks): 1

Aims & Objectives

To protect and conserve the loggerhead sea turtles and their nesting habitat by various means such as providing protective hatcheries, treating injured or wounded turtles, conserving their beaches from pollution, and collection of data to better understand the species and their habitats.

Schedule

Monday to Friday

During June to December

- 1830 to 1900 - Clean the beach
- 1900 to 1930 - Orientation for the day with station positions along the beach
- 2030 to 2230 - Shift 1 - Night patrol
- 2230 to 0030 - Rest
- 0030 to 0200 - Night Patrol
- 0200 to 0400 - Night Patrol
- 0400 to 0600 - Patrol to clean up the beach

During January to May

- 0900 - Travel to the beach
- 0930 to 1000 - Orientation for the day
- 1000 to 12:00 - You will be doing one or two of the following tasks cleaning and maintenance of the turtle project site, tree plantation at the beach or awareness program at the local school or designing pamphlets or distributing printed pamphlets or making awareness wooden boards and placing it at the beach, and promoting the importance of sea turtles in the villages around the beach through paintings and drawings and beach clean-up activities.
- 1200 to 1400 - Lunch at the centre
- 1400 to 1430 - Travel to beach
- 1430 to 1630 - Continue with hour activities planned for the day
- 1630 to 1800 - Join the locals to play beach football or volleyball.

This schedule can be changed and/or amended depending on weather conditions, local conditions and unforeseen circumstances.

Starting Dates

During 2020

This program starts every week.

During 2021

This program starts every week.

Participant Criteria & Requirements

Minimum age:	-
Maximum age:	-
Minimum English level:	Basic
CRB required:	On Signup
Passport copy required:	On Signup
Resume copy required:	No
Required qualification:	None

Additional Requirements

- Yellow fever vaccination is a mandatory requirement for all participants arriving in Cape Verde.
- Participants below 18 are required to provide parental consent letters and participants above 65 should have the medical clearance.
- Understand written and spoken English
- Good level of physical fitness
- High level of energy and flexibility
- Able to cope with physically challenging conditions (camping, long walks, late nights, hot weather, insects)
- Ability to work and live with people of different backgrounds and nationalities

Additional Equipment

No Additional equipment required.