**Sea turtle nesting survey volunteers (May—October)**

During sea turtle nesting season, dedicated turtle lovers (team members are all volunteers) patrol the sand dunes every few days to report to auditors for data entry, and help protect the fragile nests. Nests are monitored by the Sea Turtle Forum (STF) and Volusia Sea Turtle Society (VSTS) volunteers have led the efforts toward the conservation of the species. Several organizations mentor volunteers who can dedicate at least one morning a week during spring and summer through October to monitor sea turtle nesting seasons. This work is physically demanding and can be hard and buggy. Weekly meetings aren’t long, but you will support these volunteers and officers in their efforts.

For more information about volunteering with the STF, please contact VSTS at (386) 295-0317 or visit stf.org.

**Washback Watchers (August—November)**

An all-volunteer club who is interested in saving more than just seashells at the beach! EVW is a part of the Washback Watch program. The team of permitted volunteers is trained to find and rescue young sea turtle hatchlings alive in the surf. From August through November, these volunteers will be out to catch these hatchlings that have accidentally blown onto the beach and need to be rescued. For more information about the Washback Watchers, contact Volusia County Environmental Management at (386) 246-4111 or visit volusiacounty.org.

**Other environmental volunteer opportunities**

Volusia County Environmental Management has a variety of other programs that are in need of volunteers year-round and during annual events like Sea Turtle nesting season. Please visit volusiaenvironment.com or call (386) 246-4111 for more information.

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**Beach tips for sea turtle nesting season in Volusia County May 1—Oct 31**

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**Reducing artificial lighting for sea turtles**

Light is a serious threat to nesting at-risk sea turtles.酶

Sea turtles, in particular loggerhead turtles, are bioluminescent to see their surroundings.酶

Research has shown that bioluminescence helps them navigate through the darkness, and often confused and destroyed artificial lighting.酶

When sea turtles come ashore, they follow natural cues like the moon, ocean currents, and shoreline.酶

The presence of artificial lights can lead to disorientation, as sea turtles are not born with knowledge of the natural cues.酶

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**Beach wildlife emergency contacts**

When an animals that live in the sea washes ashore, it is called a strand. Stranded animals are usually in a sick or injured condition, but they can be long-term survivors if the conditions are not too severe. Enormous brown pelican and disturbed sea turtles, call 386-246-4111 or visit beachvolusia.com for more information.

**Volusia County beach seasons**

The coastal ecosystem is an important habitat for sea turtle nesting. Over the last season, some small turtles were rescued from the nests due to unsafe conditions. The team of permitted volunteers is trained to rescue these sea turtle emergencies.

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**Sea turtle conservation volunteer opportunities**

Volusia County’s program is always in need of volunteers year-round to monitor their habitat and make the beach safe for sea turtles. For more information about conservation volunteer opportunities, please visit volusiaenvironment.com.
Sea turtles 101

All species of sea turtles are considered endangered or threatened and are protected by state, federal, and international law. Sea turtles spend the better part of their lives under the sea, except when they nest along our shores. After leaving the water, a sea turtle puede by laying its eggs in a sandy nest. The eggs are buried in the sand and hatch after about 60 days. The young turtles emerge from the eggs and make their way to the ocean. Sea turtles are highly migratory and may travel thousands of miles between nesting and feeding grounds.

The beach environment

Dunes are grassy, sandy areas that are highly susceptible to erosion. Coastal erosion can be caused by a variety of factors, including storms, waves, and human activities such as beach widenings and fill projects. Dunes provide a natural barrier to storm surges and help to protect coastal communities from erosion and flooding. Dunes also provide habitat for a variety of plant and animal species. The beach environment is home to a diverse array of species, including sea turtles, birds, and mammals. Beaches are also important for coastal tourism and recreation. The beach environment is a fragile ecosystem that is vulnerable to disturbance and degradation.

A guide to coastal wildlife in Volusia

County from sea to shore

For information on sea turtle and other coastal wildlife, please visit www.volusiacounty.org.

Did you know?

- Atlantic ridley turtle is the most numerous of the world’s sea turtles.
- The sea turtle has no external ears.
- Female sea turtles lay their eggs in the sand, and the male sea turtles do not return to the shore.

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