



Hatchling Season volunteering with sea turtles in Sal Island, Cabo Verde 2020

The islands of Cape Verde constitute the world's third most important nesting site for the Loggerhead turtle (*Caretta caretta*), one of seven marine turtle species found worldwide. This incredible species is a critical link in marine ecosystems, helping to maintain the health of sea grass beds and coral reef systems that provide food and shelter for a vast array of other marine life.

Unfortunately, human exploitation of this amazing species has brought them to the brink of extinction. In 2007 it was estimated that the Loggerhead population in Cape Verde would be extinct by 2015 if immediate actions weren't taken to halt the illegal hunt and trade of turtle meat. Also, the quick tourist and urban development on the shore of Sal Island is threatening the fate of newborn turtles, where most of them are predated by dogs or disoriented by the artificial lighting.

For the last 10 years, both international volunteers and members of the local community have worked tirelessly to ensure protection of the female turtle – by patrolling the beaches nightly throughout the nesting season, protecting the threatened nests, educating members of the community about turtle conservation, and working with the government to improve regulations. While the number of turtles killed has drastically reduced, illegal poaching and trafficking persists.

If you are looking for your first experience working in conservation, are taking a career break or just wish to spend your holidays doing something meaningful, this is the opportunity for you! We only take a limited number of volunteers each season and are looking for people who want to do something really worthwhile during their free time and who are prepared for some challenging, but very fulfilling work.

During the hatching season, volunteers are responsible for the monitoring of Loggerhead nests in the hatchery and on the nesting beaches. Under the supervision of the coordinators, volunteers will take part in different activities:

- Morning patrols on the main nesting beaches of Sal Island looking for nests that hatched during the previous night.
- Overnight shift in the project hatchery monitoring the nests that are due to hatch and releasing the hatchlings on nearby beaches.
- Excavation of nests that hatched on the previous night and collection of important scientific data. During those excavations volunteers will also be releasing any hatchlings left inside the nests.
- Taking part in outreach activities with the local community and tourists.
- Maintenance of material used throughout the nesting season.

With this experience you'll learn about turtle conservation techniques and will have the opportunity to make a real difference to the survival of marine turtles.

Volunteers are based in an apartment in Santa Maria. You will be sharing a bedroom with one or two more volunteers. Volunteers work six days each week and will have 1 day/night off to explore the island, enjoy diving, surfing and other watersports, or just lay on the beach and relax! The project has agreements with different businesses that do a very good discount for our volunteers.

Living under these conditions can be challenging, extremely tiring and stressful, 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. Shift patterns vary but you will have 1 day of rest per week.

Requirements:

- Desire to participate in conservation;
- At least 18 years old;
- Must understand written and spoken English;
- Good level of physical fitness;
- High level of energy and flexibility;
- Able to cope with physically challenging conditions (sleeping on the beach, long walks, late nights, hot weather, insects);
- Ability to work and live with people of different backgrounds and nationalities.

Volunteer Contribution: Volunteer contributions cover accommodation and utilities such as water and electricity. **Meals are not provided.** Food is not cheap here, but you will be able to save some money by doing communal cooking. Volunteer contributions

also provide critical funds needed to support basic but essential needs of the project, allowing us to patrol the beaches more effectively, and ultimately protect more turtles.

One week: €220

Two weeks: €270

Three weeks: €320

50€ for each additional week.

At your arrival you will be required to pay a €100 refundable security deposit against loss or damage of project equipment and you should bring sufficient funds for any other activities that you would like to do. Once a volunteering period has been agreed you will be asked to pay via bank transfer 100€ of your fees in advance. This payment will ensure that your place is booked as we have limited spaces and the demand is big. The payment will not be refunded if you cancel your volunteering. If you decide to leave the project before the agreed date, your total contribution will not be refunded (this does not apply for the security deposit, which will be refunded).

Benefits: Volunteers will be provided with accommodation during their stay in an apartment in Santa Maria. You will also be able to enjoy discounts in dive clubs, surfing schools and nature excursions!

In addition to accommodation, spending time on the project will give you an incredible opportunity to work closely with marine turtles and directly contribute to their conservation. You will gain valuable fieldwork experience and be exposed to a wide range of cultures and backgrounds during your time with us.

Timing: We recommend a stay of 2 weeks. The period when you can participate runs from the **20th of October until the 9th of December**; Volunteers can apply at any point throughout the season.

For more info, contact volunteerinsal@gmail.com.