

Get involved in a citizen science program in your neighborhood, community, or around the world!

Citizen science programs place people of all backgrounds and ages in partnerships with organizations and scientists to collect important biological data. There are many great programs focused on turtles available to the public. Below we highlight citizen science programs from North America and around the world with which you can become involved. We thank everyone who has contributed information on their citizen science programs to the Year of the Turtle thus far. We also greatly thank Dr. James Gibbs' Herpetology course at SUNY-ESF, especially students Daren Card, Tim Dorr, Eric Stone, and Selena Jattan, for their contributions to our growing list of citizen science programs. **Are you involved with a turtle citizen science program or have information on a specific project that you would like to share?** Please send information on your citizen science programs to yearoftheturtle2011@gmail.com and make sure your project helps us get more citizens involved in turtle science!

Archelon, Sea Turtle Protection Society of Greece

This volunteer experience takes place on the islands of Zakynthos, Crete, and the peninsula of Peloponnesus, Greece. Volunteers work with the Management Agency of the National Marine Park of Zakynthos (NMPZ), the first National Marine Park for sea turtles in the Mediterranean. Their mission is to "implement protection measures for the preservation of the sea turtles." Volunteers assist in protecting nests from predation and implementing a management plan for nesting areas. Volunteers also have the opportunity to assist in the treatment of rescued sea turtles that may have been caught in fishing gear or help with public awareness at the Sea Turtle Rescue Centre. Families are welcome to participate on "volunteer vacations."

Contact Information

Archelon, the Sea Turtle Protection Society of Greece
57 Solomou Street, GR-104 32, ATHENS, Greece

Phone/Fax: + 30 210 5231342

E-mail: volunteers@archelon.gr

<http://www.archelon.gr/eng/volunt.php?row=row2>



Beaches Sea Turtle Patrol

Beaches Sea Turtle Patrol serves Atlantic, Neptune, and Jacksonville Beaches in Florida. This organization works to preserve endangered sea turtles in this geographical area. The group tries to reduce disturbance and harassment of nesting sea turtles by educating the public, increasing hatching survival rate (by educating the public about the dangers of lighting, human intervention, and pollution), and contributing

data to the Sea Turtle Stranding and Salvage Network and Florida Fish and Wildlife. All work is done by unpaid volunteers.



Contact Information
Beaches Sea Turtle Patrol, Inc.
P.O. Box 50723
Jacksonville Beach, FL 32240-0723
<http://www.bstp.net/>

Protecting the Marine Turtles at Colola

This project is located in Marquelia, Guerrero State, Mexico. The goal of this project is to protect the turtles and to help run preservation activities focused on protecting endangered species, at the same time promoting international cooperation and international solidarity. Volunteers patrol the beach at night and collect eggs to be moved to a protected site. When hatchlings emerge, volunteers assist in leading them to the ocean. Statistical data from the nests is recorded during these times. Volunteers also help in educational workshops about conservation biology for children in the local schools.

Contact Information
353-1350 Burrard Street
Vancouver, British Columbia,
V6Z 0C2, Canada
Phone: 310-882-7400 or 617-841-0400
Fax: 604-998-1356



Blanding's Turtle Research

If you find yourself in Great Meadows, Massachusetts, keep an eye out for Blanding's turtles! The species is threatened in the state and has declined by 50% in the past 30 years. If you see one, take a note of where and when. If there is a radio transmitter on the turtle, record the number on the transmitter. Take a photo if you can and submit it to the contact information below. Every sighting gives scientists a better understanding of how many turtles there are and where they live. This knowledge can help conservation efforts for this threatened species.



Contact Information
Bryan Windmiller
Phone: 978-367-5507
E-mail: bwindmiller@gmail.com

Ecovolunteer

This program is located on the Phra Thong Island, Thailand. The objective for the program is to aid Leatherback, Olive Ridley and Green sea turtles. This is done through monitoring and protection of turtle nesting sites. Behavioral habits such as foraging of the juvenile turtles on and near the island are also monitored to increase the knowledge of sea turtles. Along with working with sea turtle research, volunteers have the chance to learn about Thai wildlife, help with rehabilitation of the Mangrove Forest and restoration projects of the coral reef, teach children in a local school English and about the environment, and aid tourist awareness about the conservation efforts taking place on the island.



Contact Information

Ecovolunteer Program

Meijersweg 29

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Netherlands

Chamber of Commerce, Twente, # 06087803

Phone: +31.74.2508250

Fax: +31.74.2506572

E-mail: info@ecovolunteer.org

<http://www.ecovolunteer.org/>

(Click on "Reptiles: Sea Turtles")

Gopher Tracker

Volusia County, Florida uses volunteers to help protect the gopher tortoise. These "Gopher Trackers" document sightings of gopher tortoises and their burrows. All trackers have to do is to submit the location of the tortoise or burrow. An address or GPS waypoint associated with each turtle is preferred, but any precise location description works. Volunteers are also welcomed to submit photos, descriptions, and accounts of any gopher tortoise's activity. These efforts help to protect and understand this endangered species.

Contact Information

Danielle Dangleman

Phone: 386-736-5927 ext. 2734

E-mail: ddangleman@co.volusia.fl.us

<http://www.volusia.org/environmental/gophertortoise/gophertracker.htm>

Hawksbill Sea Turtle recovery Program

This volunteer program seeks to assist biologists in the Hawaii Volcanoes National Park in protecting and collecting baseline data about the nesting hawksbill turtles. Volunteers are asked to monitor sea turtle nests, assist with research activities on adult sea turtles, record field data, as well as provide outreach to the local community. The volunteers also remove non-native predators, such as mongooses, rats and feral cats. The

program asks volunteers to make at least a 10-week commitment to camp out 4 to 6 nights per week on remote beaches around the island from May to December. Volunteer contributions are critical because Hawksbill turtles are quite rare in Hawaii.

Contact Information

Will Seitz, Wildlife Research Supervisor
Pacific Cooperative Studies Unit - Hawksbill Turtle Project
Resources Management Division
P.O. Box 52, Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, HI 96718
Phone: 808-985-6090
Fax: 808-985-6029

International Sea Turtle Observation Registry

In an effort to aid sea turtle biologists and conservationists, iSTOR and seaturtle.org collect information on turtle sightings. Anyone can report a sighting online and live turtle sightings are used by biologists and conservationists to understand the distributions of sea turtles around the world. Dead turtles can also be reported so that cause-of-death can be determined and authorities can be notified (if needed). The organization keeps an online map of recent turtle observations for the public.

<http://www.seaturtle.org/istor/>



Lake George Turtle Monitoring Program

The Lake George Watershed in New York is home to five different species of turtles: northern map turtle, painted turtle, wood turtle, stinkpot, and snapping turtle. This program seeks to achieve a greater scientific understanding of the turtles in the area through compiling citizen volunteers' observations. Volunteers count turtles in their chosen location during one day "snapshots" similar to a Christmas Bird Count. This is an exciting opportunity to possibly find a sixth species in the region...the spotted turtle.



Contact Information

Lake George Association, Inc.
PO Box 408
Lake George, NY 12845
Phone: 518-668-3558

Linking Landscapes for Massachusetts Wildlife

The Linking Landscapes mission is “to minimize the impact of the existing road network on rare and nongame wildlife, while improving highway safety, through cost-effective research, planning, and implementation of partnerships with citizens and communities of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.” This initiative results from collaboration between the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, the Massachusetts National Heritage and Endangered Species Program, University of Massachusetts, and the Vernal Pool Association. The group monitors turtle and other wildlife “roadkill” throughout the state and even has a specific initiative focused on native turtles. The study hopes to identify turtle road-crossing “hotspots” and prioritize sites that should have transportation infrastructure improvements. Connecting natural landscapes is the overall goal of the group.

Contact Information

Tim Dexter, MassDOT Environmental Analyst
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USGS Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Unit
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Malama Na Honu Foundation

This foundation is a non-profit organization run by more than 60 volunteers (“Honu Guardians”) working to protect Hawaiian green turtles. The goal of this organization is to protect the sea turtles through education, public awareness and conservation efforts. The Honu Guardian volunteers patrol the Laniakea Beach, located a few miles north of Haleiwa on Oahu's North Shore, every day of the year and provide educational outreach to beach visitors. The Malama Na Honu Foundation is the successor to the "Show Turtles Aloha" campaign, started by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Marine Turtle Research Program in 2005.



For more information or to volunteer email:
info@malamanahonu.org

To learn more about the Malama Na Honu Foundation,
please visit: <http://malamanahonu.org>

North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences Neighborhood Box Turtle Watch

The Neighborhood Box Turtle Watch is one of several citizen science initiatives that involve citizens monitoring their resident box turtles. The goals of the program are to follow the movements of individual turtles and better understand how the species adapts to human pressures. Likewise, the Museum hopes to make people more aware of the box turtles and herpetofauna and increase conservation awareness. This will allow for future initiatives that will make areas more “turtle-friendly”. Volunteers simply have to take clear photographs of turtle shell pattern, take measurements, note the location the turtle was found (using an aerial map), and release the turtle before sending data to the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences.

Contact Information

Jerry Reynolds
NC State Museum of Natural Sciences
11 W. Jones Street
Raleigh, NC 27601
Phone: 919-733-7450, ext. 522
E-mail: jerry.reynolds@ncdenr.gov



North Carolina Sea Turtle Project

This project is facilitated by the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission’s Division of Wildlife Management. The goal of the initiative is to monitor North Carolina’s sea turtle population using volunteers, organizations, and agencies. Volunteers have many ways they can help, including walking a beach in search of turtle tracks and nests, guarding nests, especially near hatching time, responding to turtle strandings, and transporting injured turtles to rehabilitation centers. Data gathered by participants is made available to biologists for study. Turtle conservation is facilitated directly by interactions between participants and by biologists.



Contact Information

Matthew Godfrey
Phone: 252-728-1528
E-mail: matt.godfrey@ncwildlife.org
<http://www.seaturtle.org/groups/ncwrc/index.html>

Parismina Turtles

This volunteer program is offered in Costa Rica. The Asociacion Salvemos Las Tortugas De Parismina (ASTOP) has worked since 2001 to save nesting sites of Leatherback, Green and Hawksbill sea turtles from nightly poachers who once

destroyed 98% of the nests. With the nightly patrols of ASTOP, local residents and volunteers there have decreased poaching to 38% of nests. Although this has been a huge success, there is still a need for volunteers to continue this work. Volunteers have the chance to work with local turtle guides, go on nightly patrols, and protect nesting turtles. They also learn how to identify tracks, count the number of eggs laid, record tag numbers of nesting females, and assist with relocating the eggs to the hatchery. Volunteers also have the chance to monitor the hatchery, as well as other nests left on the beach, and safeguard the hatchlings on their first journey to the ocean.



Contact Information

Volunteer Turtle Program

Phone: 506-2798-2220

Email: info@parisminaturtles.org

<http://parisminaturtles.org/>

Sea Turtle Volunteer Patrol

This program was set up to involve volunteers from Manatee and Sarasota counties, Florida and has been in existence for the past 29 years. The program covers approximately 35 miles of beach in total. Volunteers are asked to walk a one-mile-long stretch of beach one or two days a week from May 1 to October 1. The volunteers look for signs of nesting and hatching activity every morning. There is a yearly one-day training session, usually in April, which every volunteer must attend to be able to participate.

To become a sea turtle patrol volunteer, e-mail turtles@mote.org with your contact information and they will let you know when the next training session is.



For other volunteer opportunities, contact the volunteer office at volunteer@mote.org

Share the Beach

Share the Beach is a partnership in Alabama among the Alabama Gulf Coast Convention and Visitors Bureau, Bon Secour National Wildlife Refuge, Mobile Bay National Estuary Program, ADCNR State Lands, Coastal Section, and NOAA. This organization educates the public on sea turtles and their conservation and recruits volunteers to aid in sea turtle conservation efforts. Citizen scientists patrol assigned stretches of beach, observe and protect nests when hatching time is near, and perform

maintenance. Annual statistics on turtle nesting activity are compiled using volunteer observations.



Contact Information

Phone: 1-866-SEA-TURTLE

Fax: 251-948-3813

<http://www.alabamaseaturtles.com/>

Ontario Turtle Tally

If see a turtle in Ontario, Canada, go to the Turtle Tally website and complete and submit a form. The program's purpose is to collect, record, and store location and species information on Ontario turtles, including species at risk. The information that is collected in this database is submitted to the Natural Heritage Information Centre and used to learn more about turtle distributions in Ontario. Information on turtle species and location is useful to identify areas of concern and threats to turtles.

Contact Information

Email: aap@torontozoo.ca

<http://www.torontozoo.com/adoptapond/turtletally.asp>

The Presence, Absence Monitoring Project

This project was initiated to monitor the populations of Western pond turtles (*Emys marmorata*). This project was set up by the researchers of the Chelonian Science Foundation to collect long-term data about the species' population stability and trends, as well as stressors and the success reintroduction efforts. Private land owners, land preserves/conservancies, watershed management/restoration organizations, environmental consultants, government agencies and public volunteers that live in the Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties of California are all encouraged to participate and contribute data. The volunteers' data are vital to the monitoring of the populations of this species - California's only native freshwater turtle.

Contact Information

Stephanie Pappas

Chelonian Science Foundation (CSF)

PO Box 3432

Ventura , California 93004

E-mail: csf@att.net



Roadkill Monitoring

Brought to you by “Dr. Splatt,” the purpose of this project is to give students an awareness and understanding of the natural world around them. Often, humans and wildlife come into conflict. Roadways have divided habitat and natural corridors of travel for many species of wildlife, and roadkill statistics are evidence of this phenomenon. Conceived in 1992, this program creates opportunity, especially for students and teachers (although participation is not limited to schools), to study how many local and migratory animals are killed on their local roads. Participants collect roadkill data in their community and compare it to other participating areas over the internet.



Contact Information

Brewter Bartlett, aka “Dr. Splatt”

E-mail: drsplatt@comcast.net

<http://roadkill.edutel.com/>

Texas Turtle Watch

The Fort Worth Zoo created the Texas Turtle Watch in 2010 using a grant from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. The goal of the program is to use citizen science to collect data on three native turtle groups whose population numbers are poorly understood. The three target groups are Sliders (*Trachemys*), Cooters (*Pseudemys*), and Softshells (*Apalone*). Participants just have to recognize these types of turtles and submit detailed information online. This partnership among the Fort Worth Zoo, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, the Fort Worth Nature Center, Texas Master Naturalists, Texas State University, Turtle Survive Alliance, and the University of Texas – Arlington hopes to better understand these species based on many years of data collection.

<http://www.fortworthzoo.org/conservetxturtlewatch.html>



Watamu Turtle Programme, Kenya

The Watamu Turtle Programme offers a variety of opportunities through the United Nations Biosphere Reserve’s Watamu Marine Park located in Kenya. Volunteer opportunities usually last 4-8 weeks (extensions available) and cover conservation and research, education and awareness, and community development. Conservation and

research include beach patrols, nest excavations, net releases and rehabilitation, among other tasks. Education and awareness includes producing signs, assisting at the Local Ocean Marine Centre, and helping with “Awareness Days.” Community development consists of working on ideas for alternative income to help fishing communities with unsustainable marine resource exploitation, working on local crafts, and creating awareness in recycling and composting.



Contact Information

Volunteer Turtle Program Coordinator

Email: Victoria.mcneil@workingabroad.com

<http://www.workingabroad.com/page/180/watamu-turtles-kenya.htm>