Research & conservation Programme

join us in Kefalonia...!

Volunteer information brochure
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Wildlife Sense is a research-based sea turtle conservation project on the island of Kefalonia, Greece. Volunteer tasks range from daily morning patrols to locate and protect new nests, turtle identification and behavioural research surveys in areas where sea turtles swim and informing locals and visitors about the island’s biodiversity.

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Hands-on learning is emphasized throughout the project, so that volunteers acquire practical experience on a wide range of wildlife research and conservation practices, including their legal and social aspects, which are often the most controversial aspects of conservation.
What to expect

Most mornings begin by either cycling to the nesting beaches at sunrise to identify and record fresh sea turtle tracks and nests or observing the behaviour of sea turtles swimming in the bay. On some late afternoons, you’ll be on the beach measuring beach width and slope, which change through the season. During your free time, you can take advantage of the beach near the accommodation and enjoy the sea. You will spend some evenings and late nights on the beach to measure light pollution, tag nesting turtles, or rescue hatchlings in danger.
Volunteers will gain...

...valuable research experience, increase their knowledge in wildlife conservation and develop their interpersonal skills while exploring new places, experiencing a new culture and making lifetime friends. Most importantly volunteers will be helping save the sea turtles of Kefalonia from extinction.
Knowledge in turtle conservation

Hands-on research experience

Discover Kefalonia

Lifetime friends
When to join us

- Light pollution
- Beach profile
- Nest finding and protecting
- Hatchling rescue and nest inventories
In the summer, females lay up to 5 nests, 2 weeks apart. Each nest has an average of 90 eggs.

Sea turtles mate with several partners in late spring. After mating, the female stays in shallow water close to the nesting beaches.

During developmental migration, juveniles forage in the open ocean for 15-25 years, until they can reproduce.

After incubating for 55 days, hatchlings cooperatively dig out of the nest for 2-6 days to reach the beach surface.

Loggerheads mainly eat crabs, mussels and jellyfish. Fish are not a natural part of their diet.

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Requirements

• 18 years of age or older
• Minimum stay of 2 weeks
• Comfortable riding a bicycle on hilly terrain
• Able to walk and cycle during a hot day

Volunteers do not need prior experience but should be enthusiastic about conservation and committed to the cause. All volunteers are trained on protocols and techniques to ensure quality data collection and the welfare of the turtles.

Volunteers must be able to cycle to the nesting beaches with their team and walk along the beach for field surveys. Volunteers should be comfortable in a communal living environment with shared responsibilities.
Loggerheads are threatened by extinction and are protected by Greek and European law. Loggerheads lay 3-4 nests every 2-3 years, with each clutch having around 90 eggs in it.

Studies have shown that loggerhead eggs incubated at 29°C or higher develop into females, lower into males.

More than 100 species of animals from 13 phyla, as well as 37 kinds of algae, live on loggerheads’ backs. More than 100 species of animals from 13 phyla, as well as 37 kinds of algae, live on loggerheads’ backs.

Male turtles have thicker and longer tails as well as shorter plastrons than females.

Sea turtles are solitary animals unless they are breeding or in a popular foraging ground.

Sea turtles rub against the bottom of boats to remove foreign objects such as barnacles.

The most common sea turtles around Greece are the loggerhead and the green turtle.
what’s included

• Accommodation in shared rooms
• Trained field leaders with 24-hour support
• Cookware and research equipment
• Transportation to and from Kefalonia’s airport/bus station on project start & end dates.

what’s not...

• Food
• Flights and transport to the island
• Travel insurance
• Personal expenses.
Dining

Shared food kitty €20-€25 / week

Use shared groceries and kitchen to prepare your breakfast and lunch, but dinner is communal and cooked by a rotating volunteer team of two. Volunteers occasionally visit local restaurants or order souvlaki for their evening meal on the beach.
Rory Findlay

“Volunteering and working with Wildlife Sense over the past three years has opened my eyes not only to conservation science but also the work of every single team member in contributing towards such an important cause. On top of this making new friends and enjoying island life are two aspects that kept me coming back every year.”

Audrey Bourdais Paull

“My favourite shifts were the nest inventories... and from a zoologist’s point of view this was so interesting! I made some amazing like-minded friends every year, and I wouldn’t have traded these past three summers for anything else!”
Testimonials

Nick Miller

“It took nearly a week before I saw my first turtle, but as I watched over 60 pour out of a nest one night, I knew I was involved with something bigger and more important than me. I made several lifelong friends, and I’m thankful I got to spend so much time doing something I love with people who felt the same way.”

Francesca Fearnley

As a Geography student, I was not sure what skills I could offer the project, but the training and presentations that you are given ensured everybody is at the same level, with the same responsibilities – eventually taking the role of leading on some shifts! We had so much fun, made so many new friends from all over the world and can’t wait to go back again one day!