

Assistant Coordinator with Sea Turtles in Sal Island, Cabo Verde 2018

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.

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, 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, the illegal poaching and trafficking persists.

In 2018, we aim to further empower the community to take action against the slaughter of nesting females, through direct beach protection, as well as grassroots education and engagement. As critical part of our team, you will have the opportunity to directly contribute to the conservation of this endangered species, and ultimately help build a more sustainable Cape Verde.

The project encompasses patrolling beaches (night and morning) to monitor nesting and deter hunting, data collection, research, working with tourists and local businesses, operation of hatcheries, education and outreach activities and beach clean-ups. This work is undertaken by local and international assistants and volunteers. 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.

The usual nesting season is from June until October with hatchlings being born from mid-August until late December. The project is based in Santa Maria, a popular tourist destination known for its beaches and water-sports. Participants are based in field camps, with self-catering accommodation in Santa Maria provided on rest days. This opportunity will not only provide you with good experience of turtle conservation techniques, but also allow you to make a real difference to the survival of marine turtles. Your participation will allow for opportunities to be directly responsible for saving numerous nesting turtles and hatchlings, and to experience a high level of satisfaction from being able to rapidly affect the declining situation in Cabo Verde.

The position of **Assistant Coordinator** is open to candidates with a commitment to a career in conservation and a particular interest in working with marine turtles. You will gain valuable field experience in the field conducting the following:

- Track identification
- Collection of biometric data
- Tagging and identifying previously tagged females
- Nest relocations and excavations
- Training Field Assistants and International Volunteers

Project Biodiversity's strategy for the sea turtle protection campaign is to put together the motivation and the strength of international volunteers and local Cabo Verdeans. During the nesting season, the international participants are an important asset for the patrolling of the nesting beaches, and are the biggest part of the field camp team. As Assistant Coordinator your main duties are to assist in the logistics of the field camp and the supervision of this team.

More specifically your duties will be:

- Maintaining a safe and clean camp environment.
- Coordinating pickup of weekly food shopping and daily bread pick ups.
- Organising group activities/challenges aimed at maintaining the wellbeing of camp mentality.
- Welcoming new volunteers and introducing them to camp protocols.
- Transporting teams to and from patrol beaches situated away from camp.
- To assist the Coordinators with tasks such as;
 - Maintaining camp equipment.
 - Ensuring proper care of patrol equipment.
 - Organising and monitoring adherence to camp duties/cleaning schedules.
 - Assisting patrols during the night and morning with any needs such as relocation of nests, lost turtles etc.

In addition to these specific duties, you will also participate in night patrols to deter hunters, data collection, track identification, tagging of turtles and assisting with the training of the field assistants and volunteers. There will also be day patrols to relocate nests to the hatcheries or other locations on the beach. Following the end of the season, you will also be responsible for monitoring and excavating nests and releasing hatchlings.

You will work under the supervision of the Camp Coordinators. You will also have the opportunity to gain valuable cross-cultural experience by assisting other associations with various small short-term projects related to improving social and economic welfare within the community.

We need motivated, enthusiastic and flexible people with a strong desire to make a difference. You must have previous fieldwork experience on a turtle project. You will be based in a camp on the beach for six days per week, with the opportunity to spend your rest day in an apartment in Santa Maria.

After a probationary period you will be expected to pass a written and practical test. Following your training period we would like you to lead patrols & supervise assistants, volunteers and local monitors.

This is not a volunteering position and will give you solid work experience that will help you to continue your career in conservation, but living under these conditions can be challenging, extremely tiring and stressful: you will work during the night as well as 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 15km. Shift patterns vary but you will have 1 day of rest per week. Read the FAQs for more information.

Requirements for Assistant Coordinator

- Understand written and spoken English.
- At least 21 years' old.
- Hold a full driving license with experience in off-road driving conditions.
- Desire to work in conservation.
- Previous fieldwork experience on a turtle project.
- Experience in similar working conditions.
- High level of energy and flexibility.
- Good attention to detail.
- Good level of physical fitness.
- Used to physically challenging conditions (long walks, late nights, hot weather, insects).
- Ability to work and live with people of different backgrounds and nationalities.
- Able to work independently and show initiative.

Other Desirable Skills

- Other spoken languages including Portuguese, Spanish or Cape Verdean Kriolo.
- Experience organising group dynamics activities.
- Relevant qualification.
- Previous experience managing volunteers in a similar project.

Salary and Benefits for Assistant Coordinator

The Assistant Coordinator will be provided with accommodation (field camp & apartment in Santa Maria for rest days) and meals in camp. The meals during the days off are not provided. You will have a monthly salary of 300€. See FAQs for camp conditions.

The Project request the payment of a deposit of 100€ to cover any costs of breaking or damage for misuse of project equipment. As an Assistant Coordinator, you will not be requested to pay this, but any cost derived of breakage or damage of material due to misuse or lack of responsibility will be deducted from your salary.

Timing

The Assistant Coordinator position is for the entire nesting season from 8 June (the latest start date) until 20 October (the earliest end date)

Deadline for applications: **25th of March 2018**