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 Teachers on the Estuary

Georgia Sea Turtle Conservation Teacher Workshop

The beaches and estuaries of the southeastern coast provide critical habitat for five of the seven species of sea turtles. Though these magnificent creatures have travelled the planet for millions of years, not only witnessing, but adapting to climate change time after time, many of today’s populations are in decline due to current threats and challenges. All are listed as threatened or endangered, including Georgia’s primary nesting turtle the Loggerhead.

Join the Sapelo NERR along with biologists and scientists from Georgia DNR, and Armstrong Atlantic State University to learn about the role of sea turtles in the vast estuarine and ocean habitats. Lectures and activities will address the Estuary Principals and Concepts and include life history, anatomy and morphology, threats and rehabilitation, and current projects relevant to marine turtle and estuarine research; followed by nightly walks to look for nesting mother turtles along Sapelo’s Nannygoat beach.

**On-Island Accommodations:**  UGAMI (University of Georgia Marine Institute) dorms, 2 beds per room, central A/C, community kitchen, extra fridge space for snacks, beverages, etc. All meals are included.

**Physical Activity:** nightly beach patrols for nesting turtles, transportation: open, flatbed truck with board seats

The Georgia Sea Turtle Conservation Teacher Workshop is held each June for 2-3 days and is open to current formal and non-formal educators of all grade levels.

2 PLU’s are available and participants receive curriculum and resource materials.

For questions please contact:

Georgia Graves, georgiabeachwalk@gmail.com



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Sea Turtle Conservation Teacher Workshop

Sample Agenda:

Varies year to year based on tides and instructor availability

**Day 1**

8:30 Ferry departs for Sapelo

10:30 Welcome, Island Orientation, and Mark Dodd, GADNR Sea Turtle Biologist: Management Conservation of Sea Turtles on the Georgia Coast, lecture

Noon Lunch

To the beach~~ for a closer look at the nesting beach, nest site monitoring, and our estuary’s role in maintaining healthy dune systems

The “Ins and Outs” of a Sea Turtle~~ Loggerhead Necropsy with Adam Mackinnon, Education Coordinator, Sapelo NERR

Dinner

9:00 Night patrol with Adam

**Day 2**

Breakfast: Breakfast is self-serve and includes coffee, tea, juice, cereal, bagels, fresh fruit

Sunrise-ish: Encounters with a Turtle Tech! Early risers may observe our turtle tech at work on newly laid nest

8:00 Dr. Brian Shamblin, University of Georgia: Genetics Analysis-Mothers, Daughters, and Granddaughters Nesting along the SE Coast!

9:30-11:30 Lecture, Dr. Kathryn Craven, AASU: Georgia’s 5 species, Sea Turtle Anatomy and Special Senses, Research on Embryonic development

12:00 Lunch

1:00-2:15 Anatomy lab utilizing preserved unhatched eggs and hatchlings from the previous nesting season to observe anatomy and identify various stages of arrested development

3:30 – 6pm Epibiont Lab- A Closer Look At the Thriving Ecosystem on the back of a Loggerhead. Utilizing an estuarine dock lab to explore sessile organisms typically found on a nesting female’s carapace followed by a low tide seine for loggerhead feeding resources

Free Time

7:00 Dinner

8:30 Sea Turtles and Estuaries: An Introduction to the 6 Estuarine Principles & Concepts

9:15 Night patrol, Nannygoat beach

**Day 3**

Breakfast see above

Sunrise-ish: Encounters with a Turtle Tech! Early risers may observe our turtle tech at work on newly laid nest

9-10:30Sea Turtles in the Classroom: Estuaries 101 overview and Introduction to System Wide Monitoring Program

Wrap up and Evaluations

Pack and clean-up

11:30 depart for Noon ferry off island