

Loggerhead Sea Turtle Protection Program

Boa Vista Island – Cabo Verde

15th of June to 31st of October

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Boa Esperança Camp

1. About Turtle Foundation

The Turtle Foundation was founded in 2000 in Germany. It is a non-profit organization, funded primarily through private donations, foundations and grants.

The Turtle Foundation started with a nesting ground protection program for Green Turtles (*Chelonia mydas*) in Indonesia. Our project is located in the Derawan islands, Berau regency, off the coast of East Kalimantan. Today, we are protecting two uninhabited islands with a total number of nests of approximately 3.500 per year. The nesting activity of sea turtles in the Derawan islands is distributed all over the year and we work with Indonesian employees here.



Information hand out for participants

Turtle Foundation's Cabo Verde project on the island Boa Vista was initiated in 2008 in response to large-scale slaughter of nesting female Loggerhead sea turtles (*Caretta caretta*).

On Boa Vista, we are working with Cape Verdean and international volunteers. Each year, throughout the nesting season from mid of June until end of October, volunteers are working hand in hand with our employees to protect the nesting sea turtles. The volunteers play an extremely important role in our project, and without their dedication and hard work the project wouldn't exist. The Turtle Foundation highly appreciates their contribution to the protection of sea turtles and is very grateful to all former, present and future volunteers and team members.

Additional information regarding Turtle Foundation's history, personnel and projects may be found on our website at www.turtle-foundation.org and on our Facebook- and Instagram-profiles.

*Our **vision** is a future where sea turtles and their habitats are sustainably protected, healthy, and safe from threat of extinction and destruction.*

*Our **mission** is to contribute to sea turtle conservation at our own project sites by cooperating with local communities to create a future where both sea turtles and people can thrive.*

2. General description

The sea turtle conservation project on Boa Vista operates on a number of different sites to protect and monitor the population of the Loggerhead sea turtles (*Caretta caretta*), for which Cape Verde is the 3rd biggest rookery in the world.

The coordination of the whole program is done by our project management team based at the Turtle Foundation's headquarter in Sal Rei, the capital of the island. There are five different camps around the island where teams are deployed to ensure the protection of several nesting beaches. These are: Lacacão Camp, Boa Esperança Camp, Canto Camp, Cruz do Morto Camp and Curral Velho Camp. The latter three camps are mainly open for Cape Verdean volunteers, since you need to speak fluent *kriolu*, the national language of Cabo Verde.

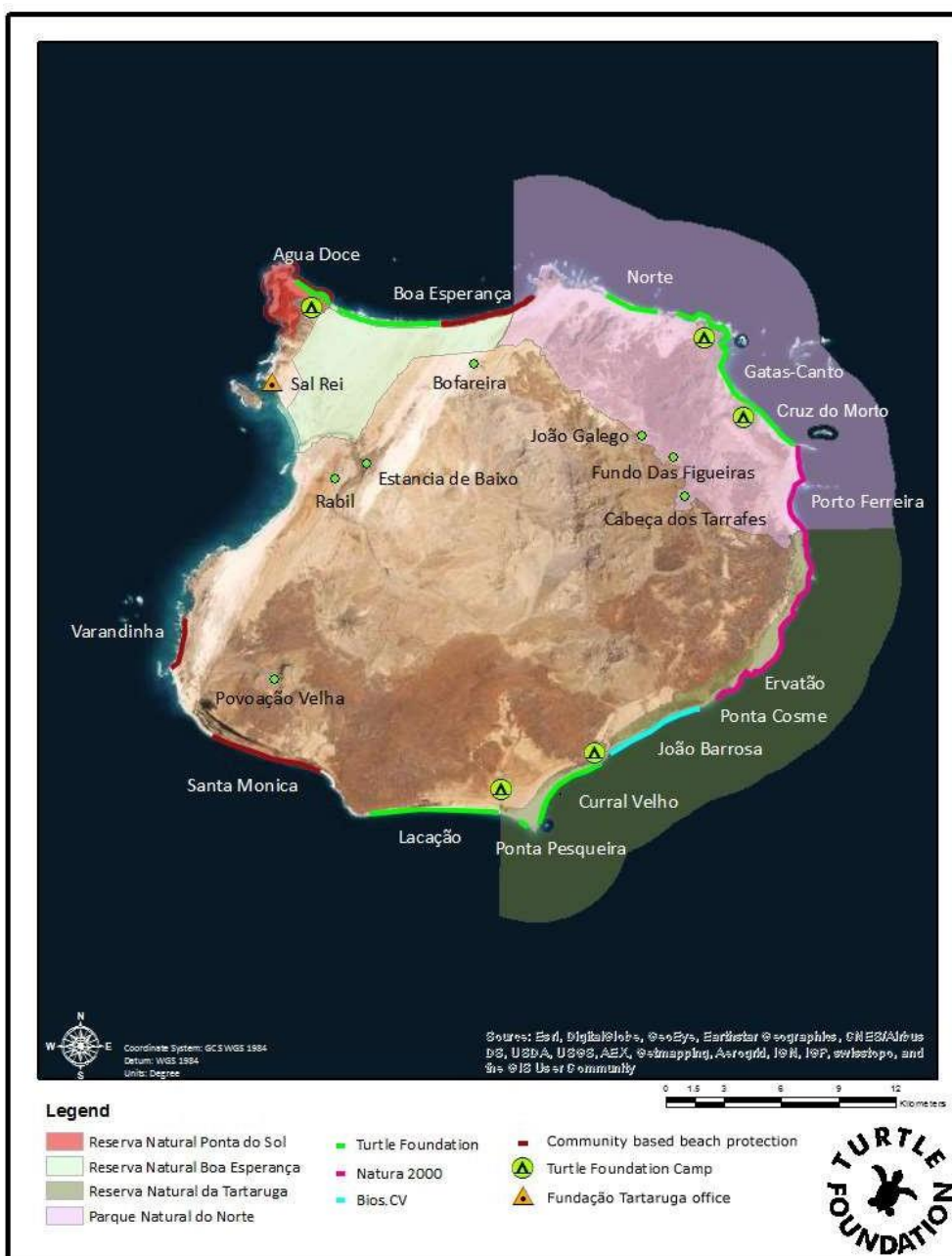
There are currently 9 nesting beaches that are fully protected and monitored by our teams between 1st of June and 31st October (the exact date of the end of the season is dependent on turtle activity).

Information hand out for participants

Each camp is locally managed by two coordinators. They are in charge of ensuring that the camps are well maintained, food and water are supplied, patrols are scheduled and data is collected in an appropriate manner. Local assistants and rangers are hired to help with the patrols. Turtle Foundation relies on national and international volunteers to help increasing the patrol area, night coverage and data collection. Typically, a night patrol team is formed by one local ranger and one volunteer, it is scheduled to last between 4-6h each night.

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Map of Boa Vista



Information hand out for participants

3. Participation options and requirements

Turtle Foundation offers three different options for participation:

- 1. Short Term Volunteer:** *minimum stay of 2 weeks, limited responsibility*
- 2. Long Term Volunteer:** *minimum stay of 8 weeks, more specific work and more responsibility*
- 3. Employment:** *paid position for the whole nesting season with specific job description, high responsibility and clear requirement for applicants*

All participants will work alongside local and international volunteers and project staff, in assisting the program in all aspects of conservation and education.

All participants are expected to fulfil certain requirements. Work is extremely demanding, both at a physical and mental level, and these requirements are just to ensure you bring the right expectations and enjoy your experience in Boa Vista.



Sea turtle hatchlings



Nest relocation

Requirements:

- Minimum age of 18
- Available for a minimum of 2 weeks (short term volunteers), 8 weeks (long term volunteers) or for the whole season, if applying for a paid position
- Able to converse, receive and understand instructions in English; Portuguese language skills are an advantage and are required for paid positions
- Need to be fit, motivated and enjoy working outdoors; able to walk long distances on soft, sandy beaches and nature trails, often working in all weather conditions, and keep smiling!

Information hand out for participants

- Being able to work in remote areas under extremely basic conditions (very basic sanitation in campsites!)
- Flexibility to adapt to changing schedules as required and able to adapt to work nights and sleep days
- Previous experience in other sea turtle conservation projects is an advantage and might be a requirement for paid positions
- Medical insurance

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Beach clean-up in Boa Esperança



Poaching victim

Applicants must understand that this is partly an overnight position, resulting in lack of sleep.

Applicants should be physically fit and must be able to sit, stand and kneel for long periods of time.

Working conditions are often extreme with temperatures ranging from 17°C at night to 40°C during the day. Nonetheless cool winds during the night (particularly in June and July) can mean warmer clothing is required.

In the rainy season (Sept-Oct) work is sometimes required in adverse conditions, and bugs and flies can be extremely abundant

You are not required to swim for the purposes of work, however, as work is on the beach, applicants need to be aware of the risks associated with the ocean and act with the appropriate respect at all times.



Information hand out for participants

4. Short Term Volunteers: Duties and responsibilities

Short term volunteers are required to stay for a minimum of 2 weeks and participate in all aspects of the work. Applicants from any background are accepted and basic training is provided.

Your daily duties will include monitoring nesting beaches either during the night or early in the morning. In the afternoon, other activities such as beach clean-up from plastic debris washed ashore, help with cooking, preparing materials or camp maintenance will be carried out. The Lacacão camp is sometimes visited by turtle watching groups. Volunteers should expect to work up to 40 h per week.

- *No experience is needed for short term volunteers, basic training will be provided.*
- *However you must be willing to work hard as the patrols require long walks (up to 15 km) in warm and humid conditions.*
- *You also need to be friendly and communicative, be able to work in a group and live in a beach camp setting (no running water, basic toilets, and shared tents!)*

General duties will include:

Beach patrols are undertaken each night at varying hours and in the early morning. Our beaches range 3 km - 5 km (one way). The patrols may last between 4 - 6 hours and serve several functions:

- Searching for nesting activity and nesting turtles and collecting data
- Helping with tagging post-nesting turtles, carapace measuring and other data collection
- Searching for any evidence of nests hatching and checking nests already laid
- Searching for any stranded turtle, whether sick or dead
- Looking out for illegal poachers on the beach and report them to the patrol leader
- Maintenance and preparation of equipment

Short term Volunteers are not expected to conduct these patrols on their own and will be accompanied at all times by an experienced volunteer or staff member.

5. Long Term Volunteers: Duties and responsibilities

Long term volunteers are required to stay for at least 8 weeks and are welcome to stay several months or even the whole season. Applicants from any background are accepted, however this placement is especially suitable for gap-year students, undergraduates or recent-graduates who wish to gain more experience in wildlife monitoring techniques or conservation work. Long term volunteers will work more closely with the camp and field coordinators and the core staff and might receive extra training for specific tasks.

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Carapace measuring



Camp life

Long term volunteers have to choose one out of three specific work fields:

a) Leader of night patrols

We are looking for individuals to teach short term volunteers the skills necessary to patrol at night. Experience is not necessary but helps, more important is enthusiasm and commitment. The skills you will learn are tagging and measuring sea turtles.

b) Leader of morning patrols (census)

You will spend around 75% of your time doing morning census and the other 25% doing night patrols. In this position you will gain valuable experience in track identification and nest finding. Ideal candidates should have a real interest in analysing tracks and reconstructing turtle behaviour and should not mind getting up early and working in hot weather conditions.

Information hand out for participants

Nest excavations and relocations: Occasionally turtles lay their eggs in unsuitable places. In such cases, the nest is relocated to a new site and the eggs are carefully moved and reburied. After the nest has hatched we do a survey of the hatching success rate, which involves nest excavation of the nest and analysis of the shells left.

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c) Hatchery guard

Long term volunteers will ensure that the biometric data of all hatchlings and of the nests are collected correctly and that all hatchlings will be accounted for. You will gain experience in night and morning patrols, learn how to relocate nests and identify tracks. However, the main objective will be to work in the hatchery waiting for hatching events, processing data on site and ensure that the hatchlings are looked after and released in suitable positions on the beach.

Ideal candidates should be practical oriented people who do not mind working at night most of the time. This is a great opportunity to learn valuable techniques in turtle conservation.

Since the incubation time of sea turtle nests is about two months, hatching will not start before august.

Therefore we receive long term volunteers for the hatchery from 1st August onwards.



Working in the hatchery



Information hand out for participants

6. Camp and Field Coordinators: Duties and responsibilities

For the management of each of our beach camps a team of two coordinators will be in charge:

- **Coordinator for Camp Organization (= Camp Coordinator)**
- **Coordinator for Turtle Conservation Work (= Field Coordinator)**

They are responsible for the running of the camps and will work under the supervision of the project management team. Applicants should be capable of managing the camps with little supervision. They need a high level of physical and mental energy and be resilient and determined. The job carries a lot of responsibility, and work can be extremely demanding.

Tourism (especially mass tourism) is growing fast on Boa Vista since a few years. This brings new opportunities and challenges to the island and also to nature conservation. Turtle Foundation advocates a sustainable tourism development respecting the local culture and nature and benefiting the communities. You should be prepared to interact with visitors and have a keen and genuine interest in conservation and ecology.

*With five project sites on Boa Vista and two coordinators for each site we have ten coordinator positions available (5 camp coordinators + 5 field coordinators).
Preference is given to returning candidates.*

Open positions will be published on our website (www.turtle-foundation.org).

Please also check our website for other job opportunities!

a) Camp Coordinator

Applicant's profile:

The position would suit an ambitious individual with very good organization and people skills. You will work in an intercultural environment with a mixed team of international and Cape Verdean volunteers and rangers. Your core responsibilities are the organization of camp maintenance, daily duties like planning schedules for the preparation of the meals and the supervision of the volunteers and the camp cook. You are working closely together with the field coordinator.

Information hand out for participants

Specific duties:

- Maintain camp in proper functioning order in terms of hygiene and general organization
- Maintain camp equipment (tents, kitchen equipment etc.)
- Communicate with the supply coordinator and the cook to update shopping lists and to ensure that there is enough food and drinking water at all times, as well as general camp supplies (cleaning material, toilet paper, cooking utensils, etc.)
- Maintain good coordination with the camp team and report feedback to project management staff
- Maintain good communication with volunteer coordinator, field coordinator and other staff

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Fundo das Figueiras



Beach in the South of Boa Vista

b) Field Coordinator

Applicant's profile:

The position would suit an ambitious individual who wishes to pursue to a career in turtle conservation. Previous expertise in turtle conservation projects is mandatory. Your core responsibilities are the supervision of the conservation work, for example the planning of the night patrols and data collection, the maintenance of the data collection material and data entry. You will work in an intercultural environment with a mixed team of international and cape verdean volunteers and rangers. You will work closely together with the Camp Coordinator.

Specific duties:

- Manage all aspects of field work carried out on the beach (scheduling of the patrols, task allocation, equipment maintenance and data collection)
- Train newly arriving volunteers and rangers
- Participate in night patrols and lead morning surveys
- Oversee specific data collection activities such as: tagging and measuring of the nesting turtles, nest relocation and subsequent exhumation, hatchery functioning
- Maintain good communication with Camp Coordinator and project management staff
- Report to the field supervisor with updated data every week.



Information hand out for participants

General duties:

Both coordinators are also expected to participate actively (although to a lesser extent) in beach patrols, nest excavations and relocations as well as Beach Clean ups.

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Requirements:

Additionally to the general requirements for participants mentioned in section 3. of this document, applicants are expected to fulfil the following requirements:

- Available for 5 months (June 1st - October 31st)
- Fluent in both, English and Portuguese
- Experience in working with turtles in nesting beaches (for Field Coordinator)
- Experience in managing camps (for Camp Coordinators)
- Experience in working in an intercultural environment
- Should be a team player with proven leadership skills
- Be a calm and extremely responsible individual, that withstands difficult and sometimes adverse living and working conditions
- Should have up to date First Aid Certification

7. Living on Boa Vista with Turtle Foundation

You will be staying on very remote beaches and communities, and need to be prepared to live without nightlife, shops, television, etc. You will have free time during the day to walk and explore the beauty of the island or to read a book. All members of the camp are expected to take active part in camp maintenance, cleaning and cooking.

Time-off is generally equivalent to 1 day off per week; however, the precise scheduling of this is decided by the Camp Coordinator during the season and depends on the number of people in camp so as not to preclude work.

You should be open and prepared to live respecting Cape Verde culture and habits. It is only in the last few years that tourism has been growing. You might find the local's daily habits different from yours, but please consider that we are all different and you should respect the culture of the country we are in. The exchange of culture and different ways of seeing things enriches ourselves and brings positive effects.

- *Campsites will be extremely basic and rustic, and volunteers share the tent with several other colleagues of the same gender (though you are welcome to bring your own tent).*
- *Since 2018 we have rustic **biogas toilets** in the camps to improve the situation, as we did not have any sanitation at all in previous years.*

Information hand out for participants

- There are bowzers for storing **water** for drinking, washing and cooking, which should always be used responsibly. There is no running water. There are private areas for having bucket showers.
- **Food** is basic and can be repetitive at times. Our Cape Verdean camp cooks are doing their very best to be creative with basic ingredients. Daily duties for everybody include assisting the cooks with preparing the meals, washing dishes and cleaning the kitchen area. It is possible to cater for vegetarians, but not for vegans. Applicants with specific diet requirements/food allergies should contact the project staff prior to applying.
- The **activities** of the project are mainly conducted on sandy tropical beaches, which are very isolated. Participants should have a keen and genuine interest in conservation and ecology and respect the surrounding environment.
- **Swimming** is done at the individual's choice and should always be done with a 'buddy'. Waves, particularly in Lacacão, can be extremely strong, and there are days when even the most capable swimmer should think twice about going in.

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*Are you considering to participate but you are afraid that the living conditions might be too rustic for you? Then our **sleeping upgrade** option might be the right choice for you!*

For an additional fee of € 5 per night, we offer a place to sleep in a spacious tent for two people, equipped with comfortable stretchers and mosquito nets.

Since there are only two tents / four places available in each camp, we recommend to book this option together with your online application. However, you can still decide after arrival to go for the sleeping upgrade, if places are still available.

First comes, first serves!



Information hand out for participants

8. Project site descriptions

Participants are given the choice to apply specifically to one camp. Turtle Foundation staff will do their best to respect participants preferences. Long term volunteers might be asked to change project sites throughout their stay if needed.

a) Lacacão Camp

Located on the Southeast coast of Boa Vista, the Lacacão beach camp, first set in 2009, is the base monitoring this corner of the island. It protects three important nesting sites: Lacacão, Ponta Pesqueira, and Curral Velho and a hatchery.

The primary purpose of the work on these beaches is the protection of the nesting females against poaching on Lacacão and Curral Velho beaches as well as the protection of females and hatchlings from artificial lighting coming from the hotel RIU Touareg, which disorientates both adult turtles and hatchlings. Further threats that may result in the loss of nests are inundation by high tides and motorized vehicles on the beach which may drive over nests.

Turtle Foundation believes in minimizing the human impact on an otherwise natural process, however, this is not always possible due to anthropogenic factors. As a result a hatchery is built on Ponta Pesqueira beach for nests relocated from Lacacão. Such mitigation, as well as a tagging program and collection of biological data on nesting females, was initiated in 2010. Further scientific studies on the biology and behaviour of sea turtles are conducted here by researchers from Queen Mary University London (QMUL) in cooperation with the Turtle Foundation.

LACACÃO AND PONTA PESQUEIRA BEACHES

- Length: Lacacão 7 km (3 km monitored) / Average walking time: 45 minutes (each way)
- Ponta Pesqueira 450m / Average walking time: 10 minutes (each way)
- Number of nests per season: 300-1000

CURRAL VELHO BEACH

- Length: 4.5 km / Average walking time: 1h 15 minutes (each way)
- Number of nests per season: 400-1.200



Curral Velho Beach with turtle track

Information hand out for participants

Turtle Foundation also offers information to hotel guests, quad bike tours and other visitors to create more awareness for an ecologically responsible tourism. The Turtle Foundation also assists small, selected local Tour Operator businesses to conduct turtle watching tours that meet our conservation standards.

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The campsite is located on top of a dune overlooking Lacacão beach, and a short walk away from Curral Velho and Ponta Pesqueira beaches. In Curral Velho you will find the ruins of the oldest human settlement in Boa Vista island, thus of cultural importance, and next to an important wetland, which is unique on the island. It is also a popular site for surfing but is mostly untouched and not regularly visited by tourists, despite being considered by many one of the most beautiful beaches on the island. The island off Curral Velho is an important breeding site for the magnificent Frigate bird, brown boobies and shearwaters. In contrast, Lacacão, another beautiful sandy beach, is where the largest tourism development in the country is currently being constructed, and the impact of artificial light is notorious on the nesting females and emerging hatchlings.

Participant profile:

Interest in participating in data collection and hatchery management. Must be very comfortable living in a very remote area in a self-catering camp setting with basic sanitation and limited water supply for at least 2 weeks. Must endure extreme hot weather. High level of fitness and independence required. Bear in mind that the surf can be extremely powerful in the south of the island. Transport to town will be organized several times per week; daily transport for days off is not possible, though. For security reasons, we do not recommend hitchhiking to town.



Lacacão Camp

b) Boa Esperança Camp

Located on the Northwest tip of the island, this is the camp closest to the island's capital, Sal Rei, and therefore under pressure from poachers.

Visited frequently during the day by tourists who come to see the impressive wreck located at the beach and swim in the beautiful water it is also frequented at night by locals who bring tourists to see the nesting turtles.

Information hand out for participants

Turtle Foundation's work on this beach started in 2010. The camp is located in the main entrance of this beach to accommodate rangers and volunteers. The main beach is protected regularly, while the nearby beaches of Água Doce and Ponta do Sol are patrolled frequently depending on the number of volunteers available.

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A hatchery is built on Boa Esperança to monitor the high level of predation through ghost crabs.



Wreck of the "Santa Maria"



Boa Esperança Beach

Participant profile:

Interest in participating in night patrols, data collection on nesting turtles and hatchery work. Must be comfortable living for at least 2 weeks in a very remote area in a self-catering camp setting with basic sanitation and limited water supply. On days off participants have the possibility to walk to town in small groups. Walking alone is not permitted for security reasons!

Medium level of fitness is needed.

BOA ESPERANÇA BEACH

- Length: 2.9 km
- Average walking time: 45 minutes (each way)
- Type and Location of camp: Beach Camp on west access to the beach
- Number of nests per season: 250 - 500



Beach patrol



International volunteers



9. Costs and benefits

Living costs are covered by a participation fee charged to the volunteers. Project site logistics are complex due to the remoteness of the sites and high living costs in Boa Vista. Project funds are limited and cover costs associated to local salaries, vehicles, maintenance and high running costs. Therefore we rely on volunteers to contribute towards their participation costs. These fees cover 3 daily meals, drinking water, accommodation in camp, airport pick-up and travel to project site, in-country support. Airfare, medical insurance and personal expenses ARE NOT included in the costs and have to be paid on your own as well.

Food and accommodation is provided during the time at the project sites only. Personal expenses incurred during volunteer's free time are not covered by Turtle Foundation (days off, hotel stays, meals or snacks in town, etc.). Expect similar prices to European cities.

For camp and field coordinators Turtle Foundation will incur with the costs towards food and accommodation during their time in the project. Additionally, a small salary of € 450/month will be offered. Travel costs for a return flight to Boa Vista will be reimbursed up to € 500. On free days Camp Coordinators cover their own expenses.



Boa Esperança Camp

Information hand out for participants

HOW MUCH TO PAY?

SHORT TERM VOLUNTEERS

Initial payment of € 280 (2 weeks; € 20/day) + € 20 for each additional day.
Additionally, there is an administration fee of € 50 to pay.

LONG TERM VOLUNTEERS

Initial payment of € 672 (8 weeks; € 12/day) + € 10 for each additional day.
Additionally, there is an administration fee of € 50 to pay.

SLEEPING UPGRADE

For an additional fee of € 5 per night, we offer a place to sleep in a spacious tent for two people, equipped with comfortable stretchers and mosquito nets.

Fees can be either paid upon arrival to Boa Vista (EUROS) or transferred to Turtle Foundation's bank account in Germany.

10. Travel information and how to apply

WHEN TO COME?

NIGHT PATROLS: Start around June 1st and may last until mid/late October. We do recommend coming at the 15th of June if you want to see more turtles and don't stay long. Additional work after mid/late October will resume to morning surveys, nest exhumations and hatchling releases, and other activities organized in the communities.

NESTING: Turtles are recorded from early June and the peak-nesting season runs from mid-July to mid-September. After this time the number of nesting females starts to decrease.

HATCHLINGS: Hatchlings start emerging in August, most nests will hatch from late September to November.

RAINY SEASON: Heavy rainfalls over the period of a few days are usually expected between September and October. After the rains mosquitoes can be abundant on the beaches. The good news: This is also the peak hatching period!



Information hand out for participants

VACCINATIONS: No specific vaccinations are required to travel to Cape Verde. It is always recommendable to have all standard vaccinations of your home country up to date.

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VISA: No visa is needed anymore (< 30 days) for EU-, EFTA- and ECOWAS-citizens. However, if you are staying longer than 30 days, you will need a visa. We will organize it during your stay here. For non-EU-, EFTA- and ECOWAS-citizens a visa is necessary, we will pre-arrange a visa for your stay and send you the necessary papers to present when entering the country. **PLEASE NOTE that we can only pre-arrange a visa when your flight arrives in Cape Verde by Boa Vista first!** Participants who travel to Boa Vista via Praia/Santiago, Sao Vicente or any other Cape Verdean destination have to arrange their visa themselves. For all travellers it is necessary to register over the following website: <https://www.ease.gov.cv/> and to pay the TSA. It costs about 30 Euros.

INSURANCE: It is mandatory for you to take out medical insurance that will cover any medical expenses during your time in Boa Vista, for the duration of your stay.

FLIGHTS: Since Boa Vista is a fast developing tourist destination, new flight routes are emerging every year. Direct connections to Boa Vista are offered in various cities in Germany (Tuifly) and Great Britain (Thompson) as well as in Prague, Lisbon and other European cities.

CORONA VIRUS PANDEMIC

With the uncertainties of the pandemic, the Turtle Foundation can not guarantee that the volunteer program will continue without disturbances and restrictions in 2021. We could not receive any volunteers in 2020.

We can also not predict, which international flights will be available in summer.

However, we are processing applications and hope that we can resume our volunteer program this year.

THINK POSITIVE!



Information hand out for participants

HOW TO APPLY

Did you read and understand all the information in this document? Do you fulfil all requirements and feel ready to apply? We are looking forward to receiving your application!

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For volunteers (short term and long term), here is what you have to do next:

- Please go to our website (www.turtle-foundation.org) and fill in the online application form.
- Please upload your CV and a photo of you if you like.
- For long term volunteers: please don't forget to choose the specification of the position you are aiming for.
- If you have questions please don't hesitate to contact us at volunteers@turtle-foundation.org
- Applicants will be notified no later than 2 weeks after application.
- The project staff will do their best to attend your preferences in terms of participation periods and project types. In case your choice is not available anymore, we will contact you and offer alternatives.
- Once your application is accepted you will need to book your flight and take out your medical insurance.
- You will be asked to provide Turtle Foundation with medical insurances' company name and policy number.
- There is no application deadline, however August is usually a quite popular destination both for Boa Vista and the project, and you are advised to book your place and flight early.
- Before departure, please read the Packing List which is available for download on our website.
- Please remember that we cannot fully confirm your place until we have received your flight and insurance details!

For coordinators:

Please check out our website and send your CV and motivation letter to info@turtle-foundation.org if positions are available. We will get in touch with you no later than 2 weeks after application.

See you in Boa Vista!

PROTEJAMOS AS TARTARUGAS – JUNTE-SE A NÓS!