

June 2020 Island Review Submission

Valerie Rohrig

As of this typing, the Emerald Isle Sea Turtle Patrol is already making their daily walks in each of the 13 zones in Emerald Isle. No signs of turtle tracks yet, but we did rescue a stranded sea turtle on May 1st...the first day of the 2020 season. Sadly that sea turtle didn't make it.

Fortunately all THREE of the sea turtles rescued the day before the season officially started are alive and receiving treatment at the Karen Beasley Sea Turtle Hospital. In addition to these stranded turtles still being alive is the fact that all 3 of them are green sea turtles...which are on the Endangered List!

We currently have 8 NRT members and I thought it would be interesting to let them explain to you how they became interested in sea turtles. We will catch up with Susan Smith, Ruthie Gomez Stuart, Liz Cox and Cindy Henry next month as they tell their stories too.

Dale Baquer Program Coordinator/NRT I grew up here in Cape Carteret. I've always had a love for animals and the beach. I fell in love with sea turtles while volunteering at the PKS Aquarium! I joined the EI patrol 12 years ago. Things changed when I met Pam Minnick. I credit her and all of the former NRT's for teaching me so much. Pam (RIP) was a great mentor and friend. Former NRT Kevin Geraghty continues to mentor me from afar. Sea Turtle Conservation has become a labor of love and my passion.

Heather Keever NRT About 10 years ago my children and I were lucky enough to stumble upon a nest in Emerald Isle that was about to hatch. From the moment I saw those tiny hatchlings make their way to the ocean I knew I had to find a way to help them. I joined the Emerald Isle Sea Turtle Patrol and eventually was asked to join the Nest Response Team. I am so grateful to be able to share my love for Sea Turtles with others and feel honored for the opportunity to work with such an amazing group of people.

Cheryl Balthrop NRT Taking the advice of a former principal, instead of "retiring", I "redirected" my time and passion. I looked for something I could do that allowed me to enjoy the environment we had recently moved to plus make a difference, whether small or large. I have enjoyed the early mornings as a walker finding tracks of a nester and the excitement as a late night nest sitter watching a nest boil. I've enjoyed the camaraderie of zone members as a co-coordinator and now enjoy the added responsibility of being part of the Nest Response Team. Still, my favorite part is seeing the expressions of those who witness a nest boil for the first time and knowing they understand how amazing the whole process becomes.

Valerie Rohrig NRT My passion for sea turtles was ignited when I snorkeled with them in Hawaii years ago. As I approached retirement in 2010, I already KNEW I was moving to EI and I found out about the EI Sea Turtle Patrol so I stalked then coordinator Pam Minnick for information about the program! I've loved the many jobs I've done in the EISTP but I'm most proud of being able to contribute to supporting conservation of Sea Turtles thru my position as an NRT, as one of the program photographers and thru these educational articles that I submit each month. As I approach my 11th season, I'm as excited now as I was that first season!

Regardless of whether you sit nests with us, you can certainly keep up to date on events happening within our program. We have a Facebook page : Emerald Isle Sea Turtle Patrol. In order to protect the sea turtles, we will not ever post where nests are laid, nor will we ever post information about nest hatchings until after the event has happened. We are proud of our webpage at: eiseaturtlepatrol.org We encourage you to check it out if you haven't already visited it. We try to keep it updated with new information, book titles, nest hatching statistics etc. Our

thanks to Wanda Verreault, our webmaster extraordinaire! The Facebook page and the website will reflect changes in our COVID 19 response as they happen, so please keep checking back!

PLEASE **LIGHTS OUT** on the beachside of ocean front properties May1- October 31. This time of year lights on the beach could scare away nesting females. Later in the season, as hatchlings emerge, the hatchlings could get confused by the lights and head toward the lights on the house instead of towards the ocean!!!

As always, don't leave anything behind on the beach but your footprints.