

The frost is still on the ground some mornings, but the members of EI Sea Turtle Patrol are already emerging and excited, looking forward to the 2018 season!

This year we welcome our new Coordinator Dale Baquer (252-646-8292) and Co Coordinator Ruthie Gomez-Stuart (eiseaturtlepatrol@gmail.com). We recently achieved our non profit status. Anyone wishing to make a donation to our program can mail a check (made out to the "Emerald Isle Sea Turtle Patrol") to Dale Baquer at: 312 West Firetower Rd. Peletier, NC 28584.

Emerald Isle has 13 Zones within the city limits. Each Zone is approximately a mile long. Last year we had 19 Loggerhead Sea Turtle nests in Emerald Isle. Happily, 1394 hatchlings successfully made it into the water from those nests. Each year we look forward to adding to the number of hatchlings that make it into our beautiful ocean. Being able to help with this effort is a wonderful, albeit, humbling experience.

We're proud of the work that we do here in EI and the tireless efforts of so many volunteers. Early in the season, calls about female turtles nesting on our beach, usually long after dark, require scrambling to get to the location to protect the turtle and the nesting site (if you see a nesting turtle, call the EI police, (non emergency number 252-354-2021), dont use any type of lights, sit back and quietly watch the turtle and wait for Resonders to arrive). Mornings will find at least 13 volunteers walking every bit of the 13 miles of beach, looking for signs that other female turtles, during the night, emerged from the ocean to make the hard crawl up towards the dunes to dig her nest and deposit eggs. Once a nest is found to contain eggs, Nest Response Team members and volunteers will mark off the area with tape to protect the nest for the season. Much more happens later in the season, but we'll save that for another month!

We look forward to a busy year this year, and we are always looking for eager and excited new volunteers. Look for our booth at the St. Patrick's Day Festival, volunteers there can supply you with meeting information. If not at the Festival, please check the Emerald Isle town website (emeraldisle-nc.org), or the local papers, to find the date for the first meeting of the season. New volunteers are asked to attend this meeting to get information about joining our wonderful team, meet current volunteers, and find out lots of interesting information about Sea Turtles.

Valerie Rohrig