

Sea turtle conservation, Greece

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During the summer I had the opportunity to take part in a two-week volunteering opportunity in August to become a Field Research Assistant. In this role I had the responsibility to research and conserve the local population of sea turtles in Kefalonia. I was able to do this through the organisation Wildlife Sense contacted via email

kefalonia@wildlifesense.com or through a contact form on their website:

<https://wildlifesense.com/en/>.

During my time volunteering I was required to fulfil a variety of jobs that had been timetabled each week to allocate each volunteer a vital role. My typical day ranged from 5:30am bike rides to surrounding beaches to check for signs of hatchlings through turtle tracks and collect GPS readings at both ends of each beach, to 7:30am or 10am minibus trips to the harbour to take observations of adult turtles interactions with each other, fisherman, and tourists; along with educating tourists about Kefalonia's turtle population. Due to the climate in Kefalonia during August most afternoons were allocated free time as the heat was too hot to work however, some days I was called to beaches as the tourists had contacted the organisation that hatchlings had begun to make their way to the sea. Also, I had to input data collect on beach surveys and harbour shifts into excel spreadsheet, I did this as a pair working with someone to input the data on the computer as they read the information to me.



Other days, I enjoyed relaxing by the beach or pool, exploring the Kefalonia culture in the centre in my free time during the afternoons. Also, I was allocated one day off during my two weeks of which I took the opportunity to explore the island on a boat cruise with three other volunteers, this was a brilliant opportunity to learn about the island and appreciate the beautiful landscape and beaches.

During the evenings I was allocated various tasks including cooking dinner for over 40 people, cleaning beaches and evening inventories. The inventories were completed to understand what stage of development the turtles made and look for any signs of bacteria. Also, some evenings I would be required to sleep on the beach with one other volunteer in order to check for signs of any hatchlings everyone hour taking it in turn every two hours to check. If there was a hatchling then it was my responsibility to put the turtle into the trench (sand-built path) and watch to make sure the turtle makes its way to the sea without being disorientated by light pollution from beach bars and surrounding properties.

This experience allowed me to enhance my skills using GPS, communication skills meeting new people from different countries and backgrounds to work together to protect vulnerable turtles hatchlings and adults; all of which help develop my career through enhancing my CV to demonstrate key skills including team working and time management.