

Code of Conduct for the NC Sea Turtle Nest Monitoring and Protection Project

The oceanside coastline of North Carolina is regularly used as nesting habitat by sea turtles in summer months. In addition, many people, both local and from far away, visit the beautiful beaches of North Carolina in summer and fall months. This creates a unique opportunity for sea turtle volunteers to help raise awareness and advocate for sea turtles, through their interactions with beach visitors. The attitude and demeanor of all sea turtle volunteers will influence the public's perception of sea turtles and sea turtle conservation. The following guiding principles are intended to reinforce respect and trust between sea turtle volunteers and beach visitors, and engender great support for sea turtle conservation in North Carolina

1. Each volunteer should act in a manner that promotes trust and confidence through their actions that should exude courtesy, civility, transparency, honesty, and kindness.
2. Each volunteer should remember that s/he is a trained professional and should present a professional demeanor and decorum.
3. Use each interaction with the public as an opportunity to provide education, as well as increase awareness and support of sea turtle conservation.
4. Beach visitors are encouraged, through example, to act courteously and respectfully of volunteers, and respond appropriately to volunteer requests/directions, in order to maintain the safety of the nest, hatchlings, and nesting turtles.
5. In cases where individuals are acting in a manner that could negatively affect sea turtles, remain professional and calm, and recommend actions that would minimize impacts on sea turtles.
6. Coarse, profane or argumentative language is unacceptable when interacting with the public. Avoid shouting or being overly loud.
7. If volunteers feel unsafe, they should remove themselves from the situation as quickly as possible and contact local law enforcement to report the situation and request assistance.
8. If someone is tampering with a nest, use best judgement to decide if it is safe to approach them and ask them to stop. If the situation appears unsafe, do not confront them. Watch from a safe distance and call local law enforcement for assistance.