



Bald Head Island Conservancy's Turtle Walk Program

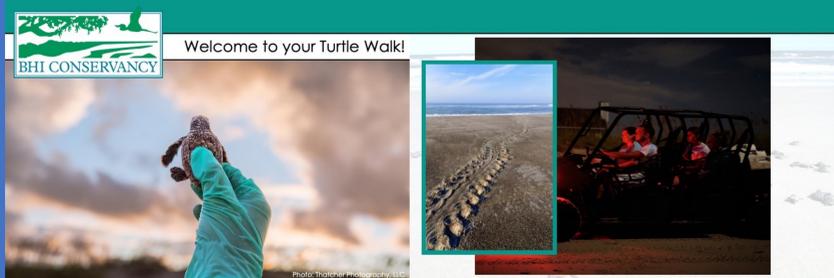
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Introduction

The Bald Head Island Conservancy (BHIC) is a non-profit organization founded in 1983 whose official mission statement is:

We Discover, Learn, Conserve, and Preserve.

In collaboration with our Sea Turtle Conservation Team, we host nightly Turtle Walks during our nesting and hatching season which educate participants about the importance of sea turtle conservation practices.



Turtle Walk Program Design



TURTLE WALK RULES

Please Do:



Stay Together on the Beach • No White Light
Listen to BHI Conservancy Staff!

Please Don't:

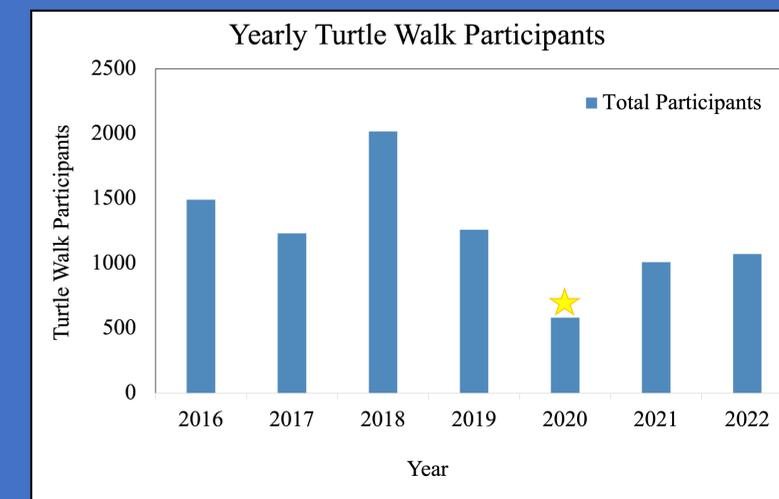


No Flash • No White Light • No Yelling • No Alcohol

- The program begins with a classroom presentation on sea turtle biology and Turtle Walk Rules.
- It then transitions to the beach where the educator leading the Turtle Walk awaits word from the Sea Turtle Protection Team regarding sea turtle activity (nesting or hatching).
- Once an activity has been located the group moves to that location to observe the nesting/hatching process.

Turtle Walk Participants

Since the Summer of 2016, we have had 8660 visitors participate in our Turtle Walk program with an average of ~1200 people each summer



★ = Limited programming due to Covid-19

Sea Turtle Protection Program

COLLECTING DATA



COLLECTING DATA



RETURNING TO THE OCEAN



RELOCATIONS



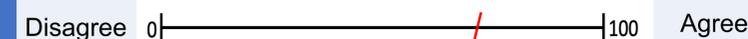
- Our Sea Turtle Protection Program conducts saturation tagging to intercept & identify every nesting turtles.
- Run nightly patrols (9PM – 6AM), and when a turtle is encountered, apply a passive integrated transponder (PIT), a flipper tag, acquire a DNA sample, and take both straight and curved carapace measurements.
- After the nesting female returns to the ocean, our team buries a predator exclusion cage around the nest to prevent predation, while allowing the hatchlings to later emerge unimpeded.
- Three days after a nest hatches the team excavates the nest to take an inventory and to release any “stragglers” that may still be in the egg chamber.

Next Steps: Qualitative and Quantitative Data Collection

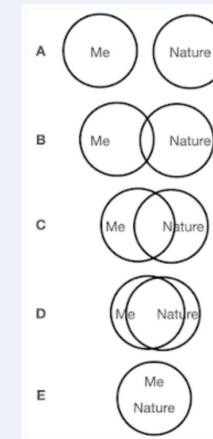
- Qualitative and Quantitative Data Collection: Interviews, Demographic/Location Data and Practitioner Guide to Assessing Connection to Nature
- The Connectedness to Nature Scale (CNS): measures an individual's emotional and experiential response to nature (Mayer & Frantz, 2004).
- Specifically, the tool measures the extent to which an individual feels a sense of community, equality, kinship, embeddedness, and belongingness to nature. The CNS can also be used to predict whether or not a person is likely to engage in behaviors that support the environment.

Interview Responses: “Seeing a sea turtle nest hatch was the most amazing thing I have ever experienced!”

Quantitative Data (CNS): I think of the natural world as a community to which I belong.



Qualitative Data (CNS): I often feel a sense of oneness with the natural world around me?



References: Mayer, F. S., & Frantz, C. M. (2004). The connectedness to nature scale: A measure of individuals' feeling in community with nature. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 24(4), 503-515..

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*Photos taken during conservation work authorized by NC Wildlife Resources Commission (Permit 22ST14)