

Volunteering in Costa Rica

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**EDGE
PROJECT**

Project Summary

For two weeks I worked in the Santa Rosa National Park in Costa Rica. Sea turtles come up on shore during the night to lay their eggs and the hatchlings make their way across the beach back to the sea during the day. In the morning I had responsibilities ranging from raking new pathways to removing rubbish from the beach. At certain times I dug up sea turtle nests and collected the baby turtles inside. This act helps ensure their survival to the water so they don't get buried alive. During the nights I would walk the beach (about four miles a night) looking for turtles. Once a turtle was spotted I would measure its shell size, tag it, and count the number of eggs it laid. Gathering this data will help scientist further understand sea turtles.

Project Highlights

One of the best parts of my project was meeting new people and getting to know them. I became exceptionally good friends with two sea turtle researchers. On one occasion they took me to see a massive crocodile launch out of the water. During the night walks for sea turtles they would catch baby crocodiles on the beach and let me pet them. We would also play intense soccer and volleyball games on the beach.

Learning about the turtles was another highlight. My favorite fact was the temperature the eggs are laid at determines the sex (male or female) of the sea turtle.

From My Journal

"Today, an olive ridley sea turtle came on the beach in plain daylight, an event that is only known to occur during the arribadas (where thousands of sea turtles come ashore)! None of the researchers had seen anything like it before."



The beach sea turtles come ashore to lay their eggs. The men are sea turtle researchers.



After an excavation (digging up a nest) the sea turtles are released as a group and head for the ocean.