Cape Romano Sea Turtle Program Internship Posting 2022

About: Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve provides a basis for informed stewardship of estuaries in Southwest Florida through research and education. The Reserve is managed by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection’s Coastal Office in cooperation with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and Florida International University. Additional support is provided by the non-profit Friends of Rookery Bay.

Description: Rookery Bay Research Reserve is foraging ground to three listed species of sea turtle, the Kemp’s ridley (Lepidochelys kempii), Atlantic green (Chelonia mydas), and the loggerhead (Caretta caretta). The loggerhead is the most common species of sea turtle that nests along Reserve beaches. Rookery Bay Research Reserve staff work in cooperation with U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and the Conservancy of Southwest Florida to preserve this threatened species. Reserve staff, interns and volunteers patrol the beaches to locate and cage nests, protecting them from predation by raccoons. They then document the number of hatched eggs to get a better understanding of nesting success.

Friends of Rookery Bay is seeking intern(s) to assist Rookery Bay Research Reserve staff monitor nesting activity and hatching success along the Cape Romano Complex, contributing to a multi-year data set. The intern(s) will be responsible for scheduling and supervising volunteers. The intern(s) will also work closely with the Friends of Rookery Bay to assist with the Adopt-A-Nest program. The intern(s) will also present the results of a project related to sea turtle nest monitoring at the Rookery Bay NERR Environmental Learning Center for the staff and volunteers.

Qualifications: Applicants must have a B.S. or B.A. in an environmental science related field. They must be competent in basic boating skills, including navigation in shallow estuarine/ocean tidal conditions, basic boat and engine maintenance, and boating safety. In addition, they must have a valid driver’s license, be able to swim, and have basic First-Aid skills. Good field observation and data gathering skills are required, as are good people skills. Must be physically able to work in southwest Florida’s summer outdoor conditions that include summer heat and humidity, biting insects, and rain. GIS and GPS skills are a plus but not required.

Internship Dates: April 18 – September 30; Interns are expected to stay through September 30th with the understanding the internship could end early or be extended into October, this is dependent on nesting activity and tropical storm system activity

Internship Schedule: Tuesday – Saturday 7AM - 3 PM. Times may vary depending on weather and nesting conditions, intern must be flexible and be able to adjust as needed.

Number of Intern Positions: One - two

Compensation: $300/week and housing provided

Last date to Apply: Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis

How to apply: Send a resume, cover letter and contact information for three professional references to Sarah Norris (sarah.v.norris@dep.state.fl.us) by February 11th