Welcome Back, Teachers!

We hope you had a fantastic summer because we sure did with Sea Turtle Camp, Evening Turtle Walks, and a record-breaking nesting season for Georgia!

We're excited for a new school year, though. Many new activities, program updates and teacher resources are in the works, and we cannot wait to share it all with you. One concept we want to focus on this year is the idea that we are all connected to the oceans, whether you live near one or not, so September's newsletter is all about:

Mitigating Marine Debris!

Marine Debris Tracker
A tangible way to make a difference

Marine debris volunteers at the Georgia Sea Turtle Center walk Jekyll's beaches to pick up and properly discard litter. All marine debris found is recorded in an app called the Marine Debris Tracker. This program helps keep us informed about the types of trash we are seeing on our beaches as well as the locations in which they are often found.
However, you don't need to live by an ocean to make an impact or use the Marine Debris Tracker. A clean-up can be a great way to introduce students to the concept that everyone's actions impact local habitats, and ultimately, the oceans. This could also be turned into a student service project to inform the school or community about local litter issues.

If you can locate a nearby river, stream or other waterway to clean, even better! See the river basin activity below to supplement a debris clean-up by showing students how your school is connected to the ocean.

Visit our [Marine Debris Initiative](#) page to learn more about the Marine Debris Tracker and get directions for its use.

If you decide to do your own clean-up with your class, we would love to hear about it and share your experience/photos in an upcoming newsletter!

---

**Find Your Basin**

*How is your school connected to the ocean?*

*This is an easy way to help your students understand their connection to the ocean. Depending on the learning level of your students, you may choose to map out the path on your own, or have your students do the research.*
If you teach in Georgia, [Georgia River Network](#) is a great resource for learning more about our river basins. Check out their website to help you figure out the basin in which your school is located and learn a little more about its importance, resources and environmental concerns.

Using Google maps, see if you can find any creeks or streams near your school which eventually lead to your river. Can you follow the path of the river all the way to the ocean?

---

**An Educator's Guide to Marine Debris**
We've been getting a lot of inspiration from this fantastic educator's guide we were sent from NOAA. This guide offers marine debris lessons from Grades K-high school. We highly recommend trying some of these activities out and sharing with your fellow teachers: **An Educator's Guide to Marine Debris**

---

**Virtual Field Trips Are Back!**

Do you want to bring your students on a field trip to the Georgia Sea Turtle Center but find it difficult to travel here? Well, Virtual Field Trips will bring our turtle patients to your classroom! During this 45-minute video session via Skype (or a similar approved application) one of our educators will introduce your students to several of our turtle patients. You may choose up to three educational topics for your session as well. If it is available during the time of your session, we may be able to visit the treatment room. A few minutes will be left at the end for students to ask questions.

**Important Details**

*Virtual Field Trips are available from 2nd grade - college*
Patient Highlight - Marine Debris Cases

**Plastics**

A small green sea turtle recently arrived at our center after it had been bitten by a shark. Its wounds were extensive, and unfortunately this turtle did not survive. While shark bites are one of a few natural threats to sea turtles, we discovered a human-related one inside of this patient upon necropsy (an animal autopsy): lots of plastic.

Sea turtles often mistake bits of marine debris for food. This trash will become impacted in their stomachs, making them feel full though they are not eating. Eventually, the turtle may weaken, making it more susceptible to predators, illness, and starvation.
Stearns was found floating near Amelia Island with the left front flipper entangled in fishing line. While the line was able to be removed, it left a wound down to the muscle in his/her shoulder.

We're happy to say that, after about three months of rehabilitation, Stearns was able to be released. Not all patients are so lucky. While everyday trash and plastics can be big problems for sea turtles, discarded fishing gear, such as line and nets, make up a heavy proportion of debris as well.

---

**Kids in Action!**

Meet Meadowlark! This 8-year-old girl wanted to help our turtle patients, so she came up with her own business plan to raise money. Meadowlark created and sold her own bracelets and was able to raise $500 for the Georgia Sea Turtle Center!

She stopped by earlier this summer to deliver her donation to our hospital. Our staff and patients are so grateful for Meadowlark's caring heart and hard work.
Do you have an awesome student or class that is changing the world for turtles? To feature them in the next Kids in Action, please contact us at gstceducation@jekyllisland.com

To see a list of the many ways to help support our turtles, please visit our Support Page.

See you in November!

Invite your teacher friends to sign up so they can also receive an entire school-year's worth of resources!

In the meantime, we invite you and your students to follow the weekly happenings at the Georgia Sea
Turtle Center through the educational posts on our social media.

As always, if you would like to experience a field trip at our center, you can get started by sending us an email at gstcreervations@jekyllisland.com

Thanks again for your continued support.

Sincerely,

The Georgia Sea Turtle Center
Education Department and Sea Turtle Patients