



Kiawah Island Diamondback Terrapin Project

About: Venture into South Carolina's tidal salt marsh, where winding creeks are alive with turtles, birds, crabs, fish, and stingrays. Join our team as a volunteer and take part in the longest-running study of this species in the United States: boating out to brackish creeks, dragging seine nets through the water with teamwork and determination while pushing through thick, often deep mud, working together to capture turtles, and assisting with processing, measuring, weighing, marking, and recording the vital data that keeps this decades-long research going. The work is grueling but deeply rewarding, muddy, memorable, and meaningful.

Where: Kiawah Island, South Carolina, USA

Samplers: As we will be pulling large seine nets through muddy tidal creeks, sampling can be grueling, and it's critical that you listen carefully to instructions and are always looking for ways you can help. **You MUST be able to swim** to actively pull seines and work in the water.

Samplers will need:

- **Old, but sturdy, laced tennis shoes or athletic cleats.** Sandals, Crocs, water shoes, and boots will come off in the mud, and you will likely slice your feet on oysters. Double-tied and tight!
- Tall socks (to reduce oyster nicks and cuts)
- Appropriate clothing recommendations:
 - Swimsuit
 - Long- or short-sleeved polyester or polyester-blend shirt
 - Polyester or synthetic blend shorts or leggings
 - "Old" clothing (heavy clothing is not recommended)

Samplers are recommended to have:

- 1-2 towels
- Sunscreen
- Insect repellent
- Hat
- Sunglasses
 - Sunglass strap
- A personal camera, if you want to document your experience
- Change of clothes (after getting wet and muddy)
- Water or electrolyte beverages and snacks (these should be left in your car or a cooler, not brought out while sampling)

Turtle Processing: The processing center for marking and measuring turtles will be designated for each sample and provided to you by the Point of Contact. Direct participation in this process is limited to a

few experienced people, but others will have opportunities to learn and assist. Everyone is welcome to observe.

Turtle processing assistants and observers are recommended to have:

- Appropriate clothing recommendations:
 - Long- or short-sleeved polyester or polyester-blend shirt
 - Polyester or synthetic blend shorts or leggings
 - “Old” clothing (heavy clothing is not recommended)
- 1-2 towels
- Sunscreen
- Insect repellent
- Hat
- Sunglasses
 - Sunglass strap
- A personal camera, if you want to document your experience
- Water or electrolyte beverages and snacks

Rental House Rules: To make this sampling effort possible, houses are rented on Kiawah Island. As such, it's important that we keep the rentals clean and respect the homeowners' rules. To do so, please follow these simple guidelines:

- **All shoes should be left outside**, not inside the house. Please place them under the house.
- **A strict rule** at Kiawah is that no towels, bathing suits, socks, underwear, or similar items are to be hung over porch railings (for appearance's sake) or on the boat docks.
- You may be asked to help with turtle care, including marking, changing water in turtle bins, getting gasoline for boats, releasing animals, and cleaning or repairing nets.

[Code of Conduct](#)

Point of Contact: Ratri Lerluksamipun <rlertluks@turtlesurvival.org>