

# Sea Turtle Warriors

## Introducing Sea Turtle Camp

Story by Melissa Page Jones | Photos by Ken ????

Living in and around beach communities, we all have something in common...a love of our coastal environment. Among the amazing creatures that call our coast home are the sea turtles. We have five species of sea turtles that migrate in the Atlantic Ocean off the coast of North Carolina—loggerhead, green, Kemp's Ridley, leatherback and the rare Hawksbill.

Rick Civelli (owner and operator of Surf Camp, Inc.) and his wife, Jen Civelli (longtime volunteer of the hospital and local Chemistry Professor at CFCC and UNCW), along with Jean Beasley of the Karen Beasley Sea Turtle Hospital, have taken their love of the sea turtle into a new

joint adventure . . . Sea Turtle Camp.

Over the years, Rick and Jen have made sea turtles a priority in their lives. Surf Camp's Wrightsville Beach overnight camp has made the turtle hospital a regular stop, and a portion of every student's tuition was given to the hospital. They also make sea turtles a family affair by involving their two sons, Dominic and Vincent. In fact, neither child has ever missed a turtle release since they were born! The last release, Vincent (age 3) was so excited to be chosen to carry the sign down the beach announcing the name of the turtle being released . . . Onslow.

"In our Surf Camps, we have been bringing people of all ages to the sea turtle hospital for many years, to educate them about sea turtles and in turn, the sea turtles have actually taught us many things. But we



### Where is this camp being held?

Sea Turtle Camp will be held in the coastal community of Wilmington, North Carolina, and will involve other coastal cities including Wrightsville Beach, Topsail Island, and the Masonboro Inlet area, home to many sea turtle species.

### What are the camps program dates?

They offer two options. The first option runs eleven days, and will be held for two sessions: June 19th – 29th for ages 13 – 16 and July 10th – 20th for ages 15 - 17. The second option runs for six days and will be held July 3rd – 8th for ages 13 – 16 and July 24th – July 29th for ages 14 – 17. Camps are filled on a first come/first serve basis. Please check [SeaTurtleCamp.com](http://SeaTurtleCamp.com) for current session availability.

### How many participants will there be?

Sea Turtle Camp will accept up to 12 participants for each session. The student to instructor ratio will be 6:1, insuring maximum safety for all campers. They also carry a comprehensive insurance package including general liability. They will continue to take registrations until the camp is full. A waiting list will be taken and accommodated if available spots open.

### How can I sign up?

Please visit [SeaTurtleCamp.com](http://SeaTurtleCamp.com) or call 910.686.4611.





wanted to give back even more,” says Rick.

So they created a camp especially for the sea turtle. Sea Turtle Camp has set itself apart because of the opportunity for campers to work at the Karen Beasley Sea Turtle Hospital. It’s very unique in its hands-on, feet-wet educational activities while allowing teens ages 13-17 to give back their time and energy to the environment.

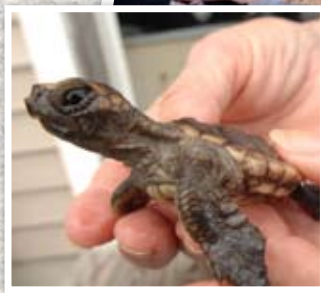
Not only will the campers learn about the sea turtle “patients,” but they will work alongside their staff to care for these endangered animals.

Coastal conservation is a compelling mission of this camp, so they’ll spend up to 20 community service hours working on eco-service projects that will directly improve the health of our coast, such as local sea oat planting and sand dune/oyster bed renourishment.

Understanding that not all children can afford the camp, Surf Camp, Inc. has also been generous with providing scholarships. They soon hope to offer sponsorship opportunities to the community and local businesses.

When asked what he hopes to accomplish, Rick’s answer was sincere and honest. “If our accomplishments included educating and empowering people to be stewards of our coastal environment while helping the sea turtle population recover, we would be proud! I believe that we are defined by our actions; how we live our lives and most importantly how we treat other people. This camp teaches so many things but most importantly it teaches compassion for other living things.”



BIO



*The Civelli Family*



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So, you don't fit into the right age group for the Sea Turtle Camp but you still want to get involved?

The hospital, under the direction of Jean Beasley, is one way you can take part in helping our coastline and saving the turtles.

“The sea turtle hospital came about not because of my vision or anyone else's, it came about because of the sea turtle,” says Jean. “They look you in the eye and when they do if you get a little twinge it's because you are looking into their soul and they are looking into yours.”

The Sea Turtle Hospital has been 100% dependent on donations and powered by volunteers. Currently not one penny goes towards administration; it all goes to food, medicine, and the turtles! Recently, they broke ground on construction of the new hospital to be built by supporter donations.

The Sea Turtle Camp has set up an annual membership program with different levels of membership: student, individual, family, business supporter, or business donor. 100% of all donations go to the Karen Beasley Sea Turtle Hospital and are tax deductible. Visit SeaTurtleCamp.com for more membership and volunteer information.

Volunteer or buy your family a membership or have your company become a sponsor because “. . . change has to start at the grass roots level. This is how changes are made, one small step at a time!”



The Karen Beasley

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