

**AusTurtle**  
SEA TURTLE RESEARCH  
AND CONSERVATION



# Volunteer Manual



Photo: Tayhia Casey

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## 1. Introduction

Thank you for your interest in our project. This manual will provide you with essential information, guidelines, and procedures to ensure a safe, effective, and rewarding volunteer experience. Please read through carefully and reach out to our team if you have any questions.

### 1.1 About us, AusTurtle

AusTurtle Incorporated are a non-profit association dedicated to the conservation and protection of Sea Turtles. Established in June 2004 by a team of concerned scientists, students and members of the public AusTurtle Inc., continues to actively conserve sea turtles in northern Australia through research, education and collaboration.



### 1.2 Purpose and scope

The objectives and purpose of AusTurtle are:

- To support sea turtle research and conservation;
- To support the objectives of the National Sea Turtle Recovery Plan through research, threat abatement and education;
- To support the preservation of sea turtle habitat and their associated biota;
- To support the continuation of the long-term research project at Bare Sand Island;
- To participate in discussions regarding sea turtle management, conservation and research at all levels including local, regional, national and international;
- To engage and facilitate fundraising to support the above aims; and,
- To collaborate and form partnerships with other organisations and institutions to apply for funds to support the above aims.

### 1.3 Project description

Since 1989, researchers have been dedicated to studying the small but significant nesting population of sea turtles on Bare Sand Island during the winter months (May-Sept). Of the six species of sea turtle that nest in Australia, two are recorded nesting on Bare Sand Island, the Flatback (*Natator depressus*) and the Olive Ridley (*Lepidochelys olivacea*) – see Figure 1. The waters around Bare Sand Island also support significant numbers of foraging Green (*Chelonia mydas*) and Hawksbill (*Eretmochelys imbricata*). This project was initiated and continues to be led by Dr. Michael Guinea, an Honorary Fellow of Charles Darwin University and President of AusTurtle Inc. With over 25 years of data, AusTurtle observe important trends, underscoring the project's vital role in local sea turtle conservation.



**Figure 1.** Top left – Adult female flatback, Top right – Adult Female Olive Ridley, Bottom right - Flatback hatchling, Bottom right – Olive Ridley hatchlings.

#### **1.4 Project location:**

Bare Sand Island (Ngulbitjik) is located in Fog Bay (NT, Australia), approximately 48.7 km northwest of Darwin (12.5374° S, 130.4198° E) - see Figure 2. The circumference of the island is approximately 1.7km and sits upon a rocky reef. There are five trees that stand on the island of what is mostly sand and low dunes, vegetated with endemic grasses and herbaceous flora. Human interference in the island remains minimal. The large tidal range (8 m) creates strong currents and high nutrient flows. The island is also subject to strong winds which occur predominantly throughout the dry season.

Bare Sand Island is part of the Kenbi Aboriginal Land Trust. This was the longest running aboriginal land claim in Australian history. The claim was successful in 2016 after 37 years. The island has two registered sites and is recognised as a cultural site in whole. We respectfully acknowledge the Kenbi People and the descendants of Tommy Lyons as the Traditional Owners and custodians of the land and sea of which we work upon.



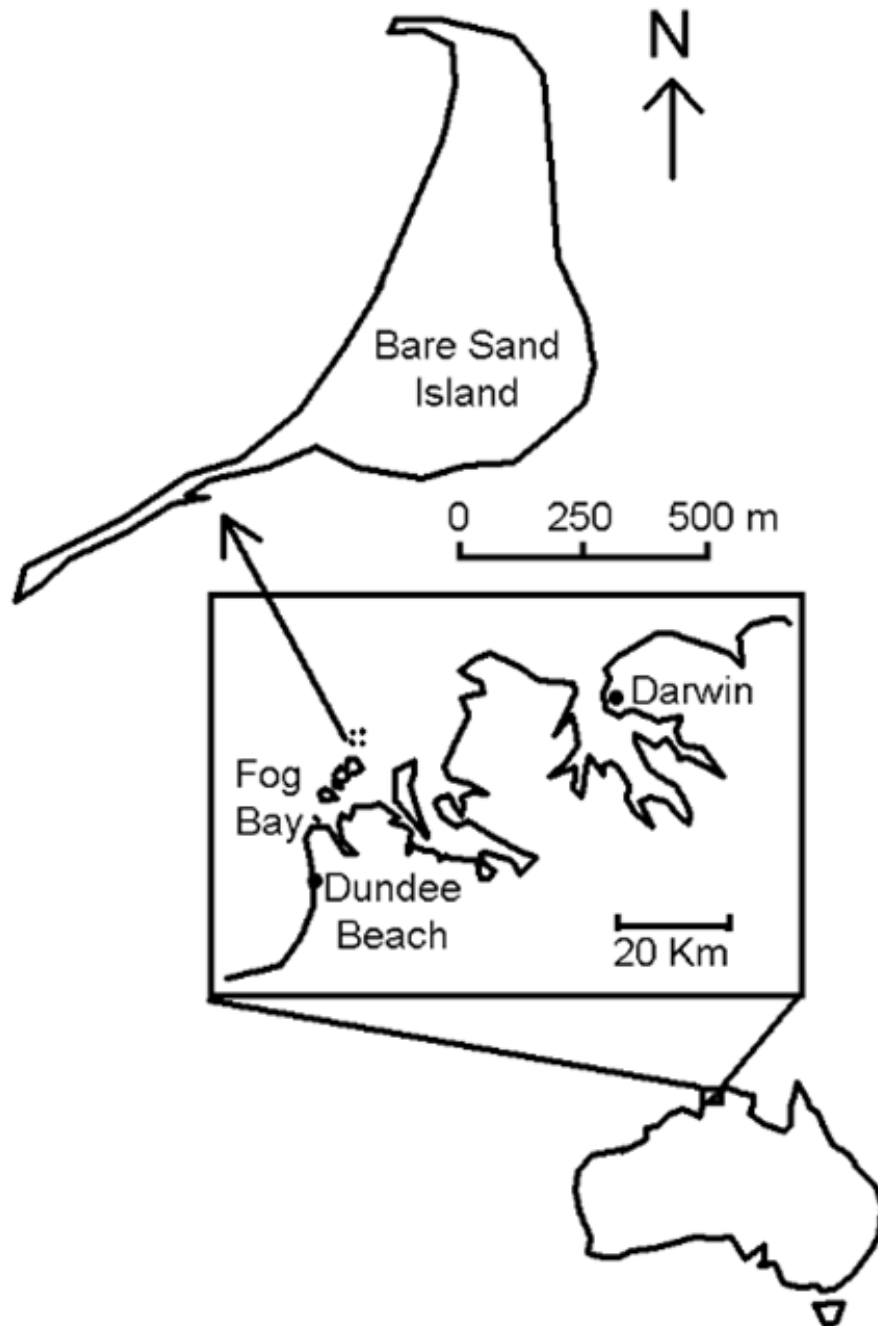


Figure 2. Location of Bare Sand Island

## 2. Volunteer Roles and Responsibilities

Since 1996, AusTurtle has hosted annual camps for researchers and volunteers to gather vital data on sea turtle ecology and biology. Each week, six volunteers join experienced researchers, gaining hands-on marine biology and ecology experience. The volunteer program involves camping on a remote island for one week, undertaking beach patrols to check for tracks, tagging and measuring adult females, and counting and measuring nest success. Volunteers are essential to Bare Sand Island's research.

The research activities take place throughout the night around the high tide and early in the early morning. Day time is spent keeping cool, resting and undertaking light camp duties (i.e. dishes, equipment maintenance and data collation). Team leaders and research assistants supervise all data collection, animal handling and camp duties. You will be inducted into the data collection process, protocols and equipment on arrival to the island.

### 2.1 Beach patrol

The beach is patrolled two hours either side of the high tide. Team members will walk along the mid-section of the beach. This is away from the waters edge and well below the dunes. Whilst walking the beach team members are looking for fresh turtle tracks. A fresh track will be on top of any bird or human tracks. Holding your red LED headtorch low, follow the track leaving your footprints in the centre of the turtle tracks. This will ensure you do not loose the turtle in a maze of turtle tracks. Additionally, the turtle will push all coral and rocks into the sand, so you are less likely to stub a toe. Locate the turtle using sound and light and identify its action. Sea turtle species differ in size, clutch size, time of nesting, preferred nesting beach, size of the eggs and hatchlings. However, they do follow the same nesting sequence:

- (1) **Approach the nesting beach:** Turtles move parallel to the shore waiting for the appropriate time and place to emerge. They can be deterred by moving shapes at the waters edge. Stay away from the water's edge, keep lights to a minimum and move slowly.
- (2) **Cross the beach:** Once the turtle had committed to coming ashore, she will crawl up the beach and select a nesting site above the highest high tide mark toward to dunes. If the turtle approaches you, sit down and remain still.
- (3) **Body pit:** The turtle will begin to make exaggerated movements with her front flippers and rear flippers and start to throw sand backwards over her track. Remain behind the turtle, keep quiet and lights to a minimum.
- (4) **Egg chamber:** The turtle will use only her rear flippers to carve a egg chamber to a depth of approximately half her length. She will alternate from left to right rear flipper to dig the opposite side of the egg chamber.
- (5) **Deposit eggs:** The turtle will do very little movement other than rhythmic raising and lowering of the carapace when she begins oviposition. She may take a deep breath and exhale periodically during this phase. Approximately 50 eggs will be laid by Flatbacks and 100 by the Olive Ridley.
- (6) **Filling in the nest:** The turtle will begin filling in the nest with her hind flippers. She will use her hind flipper to scoop sand and pat sand over the eggs. Once the eggs are covered it is safe to measure the turtle, record

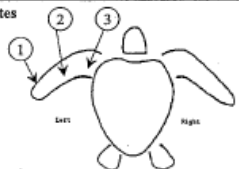
her flipper tags and a location of the nest. The turtle will then begin using all four flippers to cover the nest.

- (7) **Leaving the beach:** The turtle will fill in the nest for some time. When she has finished, she will head towards the waters edge. At this stage she is very photopositive and will move towards light. Do not stand in front of the turtle.

**2.2 Recording nesting data**

Nesting data is recorded while at the nest site – see **Figure 3**. Recorded data includes the time, date, location, tag numbers, measurements, species, activity, recorders and any other observations. *Team leaders and research assistants supervise all data collection. You will be inducted into the data collection process, protocols and equipment on arrival to the island.*



Tag No.		Posn.	SEA TURTLE RESEARCH				
Recapt			Latitude	Longitude			
New			Locality	Date	Time	am pm	
Clutch.....			<b>Nest Depth</b>	<b>Nest Location</b>	<b>Species</b>		
yolkless.....			Top.....	dune..... <input type="checkbox"/>	green..... <input type="checkbox"/>		
Egg diam	Mass		Bottom.....	slope..... <input type="checkbox"/>	logger..... <input type="checkbox"/>		
				below slope..... <input type="checkbox"/>	flatback..... <input type="checkbox"/>		
			<b>Temperature (°C)</b>	below HW..... <input type="checkbox"/>	hawksbill..... <input type="checkbox"/>		
			Sand.....	under shrub/tree..... <input type="checkbox"/>	ridley..... <input type="checkbox"/>		
			Air.....	in grass..... <input type="checkbox"/>	luth..... <input type="checkbox"/>		
			Water.....	in bare sand..... <input type="checkbox"/>			
			Egg.....		<b>Carapace</b>		
			Weight.....kg	No. egg ch.....	length.....		
<b>Notes</b> 				Why > 1 ?	width.....		
				Cause of disturbance		<b>Activity</b>	
						laid..... <input type="checkbox"/>	
						laid / dist..... <input type="checkbox"/>	
					no laying..... <input type="checkbox"/>		
					dist before laying..... <input type="checkbox"/>		
				<b>Barnacles</b>			
				Chelonibia.....	<b>Recorders</b>		
				Other.....	Measured.....		
					Recorded.....		

**Figure 3. Photo of research team recoding nesting data (left) blank datasheet (right).**

**2.3 Recording hatched nests data**

Nests that have hatched during the evening are excavated the following morning. The procedure allows for hatchlings to cross the beach undisturbed by researchers. The nests are dug by hand and content examined. The hatched nest data sheet is completed whilst at the nest site – **Figure 4**. Similarly to nesting data recorded data includes time, date, location, measurements, species, recorders and any other observations. *Team leaders and research assistants supervise all data collection. You will be inducted into the data collection process, protocols and equipment on arrival to the island.*



**HATCHED NEST**

**SEA TURTLE RESEARCH**

Latitude \_\_\_\_\_ Longitude \_\_\_\_\_  
 Locality \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_ am  
 pm

<b>Nest Contents</b>	<b>Nest Depth</b>	<b>Nest Location</b>	<b>Species</b>
shells.....	Top.....	dune.....	green.....
live in nest.....	Bottom.....	slope.....	logger.....
dead in nest.....	Temperature (°C)	below slope.....	flatback.....
undeveloped.....		below HW.....	hawksbill.....
dead embryo.....	Sand.....	under shrub/tree.....	ridley.....
dead embryo.....	Air.....	in grass.....	luth.....
-full term.....	Water.....	in bare sand.....	
depredated.....	Egg.....		
clutch size.....	<b>DNA Sample</b>	<b>Nest Tag</b>	<b>Recorders</b>
yolkless.....	ID.....	Turtle ID.....	Measured.....
		Date laid.....	Recorded.....

<b>Shells:</b>	Empty shells
<b>Live in Nest:</b>	Live hatchlings left among egg shells
<b>Dead in Nest:</b>	Dead hatchlings among egg shells
<b>Undeveloped:</b>	Unhatched eggs with no obvious embryo, no blood spot
<b>Dead Embryo:</b>	Unhatched eggs with obvious embryo (incl. blood spot). Does not include fully developed embryo
<b>Dead Embryo</b>	
-full term:	Unhatched apparently full term embryo in egg shell
<b>Depredated:</b>	Nearly complete shells containing egg residue. Evidence of vegetation, fungi, hole in egg...

Figure 4. Photo of appropriately dressed Turtle team (left) and hatched nest data sheet (right)

## 2.4 Equipment

The equipment for beach patrols includes a tagging belts and turtle musette (shoulder bag). Tagging belts are worn by team leaders and research assistants and contains turtle taggers, titanium flipper tags and pliers. The Turtle musettes are carried by any team members and contain a clipboard and data sheets, black ink pens, small hand torch, two-way radio, GPS, hatchling bag, spare batteries, flagging tape, infrared thermometer.

## 2.5 What to expect

Transport to the island is provided by fast boat, taking approximately 1.5hrs by boat departing Cullen Bay ferry terminal 9am unless informed otherwise. The camp is isolated, with limited mobile phone reception. The camp has a communal kitchen, with two solar powered fridges – cooking duties are shared amongst the volunteers. There are limited power outlets available during the day. There is a composting toilet set-up on the island. There is a limited amount fresh water available for a 'sponge bath'. Fresh water is reserved for drinking and cooking. All rubbish including sanity items are to be removed from the island on return.





## 2.6 What to bring

Personal equipment to carry includes a backpack, water bottle, snacks, insect repellent, LED headtorch with red and white light. The red light is used to prevent disturbance of nesting activity on the beach. Sea turtles are sensitive to white light and will return to the water before nesting if disturbed. For this reason, red light only is to be used on the nesting beach.

The island is subject to strong winds, a large tidal range of up to 8m and strong current, causing the island to be in a constant state of change. Personal protective clothing may change from day to day, night to night depending on the temperature and wind. Dress in your choice of longs or shorts, long sleeves or short sleeves. The soft sand on the island may cause discomfort. In these instances, a foot massage and or resting with feet elevated will bring relief. Please bring along footwear of your choice – safety boots, reef boots, crocs, runners, sandals or bare feet.

Full list below:

- Hat
- Sunglasses
- Sun protective clothing
- Sunscreen
- Shoes
- Camera (optional)
- Bathers
- Towel
- Head lamp with red light
- Water bottle
- Sleeping bag
- Pillow
- Battery pack/portable charger
- Personal toiletries
- Book (optional)
- Personal fishing gear (optional)
- Binoculars (optional)

### 3. Contact information

For any questions or concerns please contact:

AusTurtle President – Dr. Mick Guinea

Email: [austurtle@austurtle.org](mailto:austurtle@austurtle.org)

The project coordinator – Ella-Monique Mason

Email: [ella-monique@hotmail.com](mailto:ella-monique@hotmail.com)

Phone: 0428 441 639



## **AusTurtle Inc's Code of Conduct**

### **1. Purpose**

The purpose of this code of conduct is to establish guidelines for ethical behaviour and professional conduct. This code applies to all members of AusTurtle Inc, including volunteers, team leaders, the management committee, project coordinators, and research assistants. Each individual's role is vital in promoting and upholding our standards of ethical behaviour and professional conduct. Our goal is to create a positive, respectful, and productive environment.

### **2. Respect and Dignity**

Treat all individuals with respect and courtesy. Discrimination based on race, gender, age, religion, disability, or any other characteristic will not be tolerated. Promote a culture of inclusion and diversity. There is a zero tolerance for any form of harassment or bullying.

It is essential that respect and courtesy be maintained between team leaders, researchers, volunteers, and members of the public. Each interaction should reflect the values of our organization, fostering a collaborative and supportive atmosphere where everyone feels valued and heard.

### **3. Professionalism**

Fulfill your duties with integrity, honesty, and accountability. Represent the organization positively. Avoid all actions that could harm its reputation.

Education is a cornerstone of our conservation efforts. It is essential to share knowledge and raise awareness about the importance of preserving our natural environment. By educating others, we empower them to make informed decisions and take actions that contribute to conservation. Your experience with AusTurtle should not only enhance your knowledge but also inspire you to educate and advocate for conservation within your community.

### **4. Data Sharing and Confidentiality**

AusTurtle's data is to be considered confidential. It must not be shared or disclosed to any third parties unless formal data sharing agreements are in place. These agreements should clearly define the terms of data usage, ensuring that the integrity and proprietary nature of the data are maintained. Protect and respect the confidentiality of sensitive information. Do not disclose any private, confidential, or personal information without proper authorization.

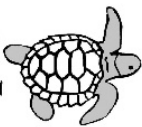
### **5. Compliance with Laws and Regulations**

Adhere to all applicable laws, permit regulations, and organizational policies. Report any illegal or unethical behaviour to the appropriate authorities.

This includes obtaining and adhering to parks and wildlife permits (NT), animal ethics permits and Northern Land Councils permits to access First Nations country. Such permits ensure that any interaction with wildlife or use of protected areas is conducted legally and ethically.

### **6. Health and Safety**

Prioritize the health and safety of yourself and others. Follow all safety protocols and guidelines. Report any hazards or safety concerns immediately. Familiarise yourself with risk assessment and any other health and safety policies or procedures applicable to your role. This proactive approach helps in identifying potential hazards and implementing measures to mitigate them.



### **7. Environmental Responsibility**

Promote and practice sustainable and environmentally friendly methods. Be mindful of your environmental impact and strive to minimize it. Respect and protect wildlife habitats. Avoid any activities that may harm or disturb the environment. Endeavor to coexist harmoniously with nature and contribute to the preservation of native species.

### **8. Accountability and Responsibility**

Take responsibility for your actions and decisions. Be open to feedback and constructive criticism. Strive for continuous improvement in all aspects of your work.

By adhering to this code of conduct, we can work together to create a respectful, safe, and productive environment for everyone. Thank you for your commitment to these principles.

## **AusTurtle Inc's Child Safety Policy**

### **1. Purpose**

This policy outlines our commitment to ensuring the safety and well-being of children involved in AusTurtle's Sea Turtle volunteer program. It aligns with the Northern Territory Care and Protection of Children Act 2007 and the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations. This policy was drafted considering the health, safety, & experience of all our volunteers, the integrity of the research project, and the workload on camp leaders.

### **2. Scope**

This policy applies to all volunteers, staff, and committee members in the sea turtle volunteer program. The term child applies to anyone under the age of 18.

### **3. Commitment to Child Safety**

We are committed to the safety and well-being of all children and young people involved in our program. We support and respect all children, as well as our volunteers and staff.

### **4. Legislative Framework**

This policy is guided by the Northern Territory Care and Protection of Children Act 2007 and the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

### **5. Principles**

- **Best Interests of the Child:** All decisions and actions concerning a child will prioritize their best interests.
- **Respect and Dignity:** Children will be treated with respect and dignity at all times.
- **Safety and Well-being:** Ensuring the physical and emotional safety of children is paramount.

### **6. Roles and Responsibilities**

- **Program Coordinators:** Ensure all volunteers have a valid Working with Children Clearance (Ochre Card) and are trained in child safety protocols.
- **Volunteers:** Adhere to child safety protocols and report any concerns or incidents to the program coordinators.
- **Children and Parents:** Encouraged to communicate any concerns regarding their safety and well-being.

### **7. Recruitment and Screening**

All volunteers must undergo a thorough screening process, including obtaining a Working with Children Clearance (Ochre Card). This applies to children over the age of 15 years old.

Volunteers under 18 years old will be considered on a case by case basis. Please contact AusTurtle Inc. by email before booking for an under-age volunteer.



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Ph: 0438 192 507

## **9. Reporting and Responding to Child Safety Concerns**

Any concerns or allegations of child abuse will be taken seriously and reported to the appropriate authorities in accordance with the Northern Territory Care and Protection of Children Act 2007.

## **10. Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains effective and compliant with current legislation and best practices.

## Fieldwork Risk Assessment Form

Activity (the scope of this risk assessment) Bare Sand Island Sea Turtle Research Camp Location Bare Sand Island, Fog Bay NT  
Risk assessment carried out by (name and position) Dr. Michael Guinea AusTurtle Inc. President

This document is only applicable for a maximum period of 12 months and the following conditions apply:

- i) Activity and participants must remain the same. *Any variation to the activity that significantly increases the level of risk will require the Onsite Activity Leader to revise and update the risk assessment and submit to the committee for approval.*
- ii) Risk Assessment must be revised/updated and submitted for approval if found to be inadequate. *Incidents and accidents in field or concerns expressed by anyone associated with the activity must trigger the Onsite Team Leader to review and resubmit the risk assessment for approval.*
- iii) Applicable for a period of 12 months. Annual review and updates are to be presented to the committee and team leaders prior to commencement of fieldwork annually.

The purpose of this document is to identify the risks associated with travel to and from the island plus on-island risks during your stay. This document is designed to encourage participant awareness of potential risks that may be encountered, what risks hazards might pose, and what protocols, procedures and equipment can be implemented to lessen the risk of damage or injury. It is the responsibility of all participants to maintain health and safety. Please read through this document carefully and communicate any additional risks to the camp leader and assistant.

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Hazards Identified</u>	<u>Risks Identified</u>	<u>Risk Level (initial)</u>	<u>Proposed Risk Control Measures</u>	<u>Risk Level (final)</u>
Detail the activity being assessed. Break into steps and give sufficient detail to allow identification of all hazards	The potential that an event or sequence of events will cause harm or damage. List all hazards associated with each of the listed steps of this activity	Assess the likelihood and severity of harm or damage that an event or sequence of events will cause. List all risks associated with each of the hazards listed	Using the attached <i>Risk Matrix</i> <sup>(1)</sup> , determine the risk level as it is currently presenting itself. If the risk level is determined as <i>Low</i> , this is the final risk level	Propose appropriate measures for each risk with a risk level of <i>Medium</i> <sup>(2)</sup> or <i>High</i> <sup>(2)</sup> to either eliminate the risk or reduce the risk.	Taking into account proposed risk control measure/s <sup>(3)</sup> , use the <i>Risk Matrix</i> to, re-assess the risk to determine the final (residual) risk level <sup>(2)</sup>
Pre-departure	Covid-19	Contracting and spread of Covid-19	High	Participants are to remain vigilant for flu-like symptoms maintain covid-safe practices prior to engaging with AusTurtle and activities.  RAT tests will be stored in camp fridges and available to those displaying symptoms.  See Covid-19 Safe Management Plan	Low
Transport to the Island	Vessel incident - fire/collision/grounding	Shipboard safety	Moderate	Crew will induct participants of vessel safety procedures and	Low

## Fieldwork Risk Assessment Form

				<p>management systems prior to departure from Darwin.</p> <p>Boats will be driven by coxswains or master V sea man. Stay seated unless advised by crew of skipper that it okay to move about the vessel. Follow directions of vessel crew at all times.</p>	
	Slips and falls	Tripping, slipping falling and immobilisation	Moderate	<p>Appropriate footwear, non-slip surfaces, grab rails installed in boat, low head clearance clearly marked.</p> <p>Stay seated unless advised by crew of skipper that it okay to move about the vessel</p> <p>Dispose of food in provided bins and clean up or notify crew of any spills during voyage. Notify crew of any slipping or tripping hazards</p>	Low
	Heat and wind	Sunburn and wind burn	Moderate	Shade provided on boat, hats secured on head and sunscreen applied.	Low
Leadership, governance and culture	Discrimination	Working in a cross-cultural setting, within a varied age group and with people of varied ability	Moderate	<p>No discrimination regarding any person's race, gender, religion or disability will be tolerated. Respect traditional owners and caretakers of the country where we work and operate (Kenbi). Ensure these programs are culturally sensitive.</p> <p>Communicate respectfully and honestly with team leaders, research assistants, volunteers, traditional owners and the public.</p>	Low



## Fieldwork Risk Assessment Form

	Lack of commitment to child safety	Working with children	Low	Ensure leadership demonstrates a strong commitment to child safety through policies, training, and regular communication. Align with the Northern Territory's Care and Protection of Children Act 2007. All persons working with children require a Working with children clearance (WWCC)	Low
Loading and unloading	Strain	Lifting gear and equipment	Moderate	<p>Loading and unloading will be by 'Human chain" so that items are passed along the chain there by reducing the need for participants to carry the item the required distance.</p> <p>Single items for a one-person lift will be restricted to 10 kg, heavier items will have two or more persons lifting so that no one person exceeds 10 kg in a lift.</p> <p>Personal and communal water bottles will be provided. Participants are encouraged to drink regularly throughout the day and night.</p> <p>Sunscreen will be provided. Personnel are required to provide their own wide-brimmed hat.</p>	Low
	Heat	Exposure to sun and high humidity			
	Exhaustion	Lengthy periods of physical activity			
Camp construction	Strain	Lifting gear and equipment	Moderate	Shade is the first structure to be assembled. Minor construction of and assembling gear will be conducted in the shade.	Low

## Fieldwork Risk Assessment Form

	Heat	Exposure to sun and high humidity		<p>Larger items will be constructed in the late afternoon and at night under spotlight.</p> <p>Scheduled breaks are set at 30 minutes for refreshment and rest.</p> <p>Single items for a one-person lift will be restricted to 10 kg, heavier items will have two or more persons lifting so that no one person exceeds 10 kg in a lift.</p> <p>Use of authorised ladder for overhead lifts to a maximum lift of 1.8 m</p> <p>First aid kits and EPIRBs are provided in the camp and in each boat.</p>	
Food preparation	Cooking injuries	Burns, scalds and cuts	Low	<p>Food preparation is on tables with cutting boards. Only designated cooks will be allowed in the cooking area during food preparation. Sharp knives will be housed separately to eating knives</p> <p>Food is stored as the item requires (i.e. refrigerator/dry, cool place)</p> <p>Hand wash station is provided at the kitchen tent and hand sanitiser provided.</p>	Low
	Exhaustion	Lengthy periods of physical activity			

## Fieldwork Risk Assessment Form

	Hygiene	Food Poisoning Bacterial Infection Fly infestation		<p>Dishes are washed in a four-stage process progressing from scraping, rinsing, washing and final rinse to avoid contamination of the cleaned items</p> <p>Dish washing will be away from the water's edge and above high tide mark conducted after breakfast.</p> <p>Non-burnable food scraps will be disposed of daily into the sea on the outgoing tide to eliminate flies from the camp</p> <p>Toilets (Composting Nature Loos) are situated 100 m from the camp. Odour is reduced by liquid trap, ventilation is provided by wind driven vent, flies are eliminated by the positioning of a BinKill fly control device. Fly traps will be positioned around the camp should flies become a problem.</p>	
Waste Management	Accumulation and clutter	Clutter will reduce the efficiency of the camp	Low	Camp and shared areas to be kept tidy and orderly during experimental season.	Low

## Fieldwork Risk Assessment Form

	<p>Disposal</p>	<p>Disposal proves a problem for health and cultural reasons.</p>		<p>Sturdy packaging is collected and bundled up for return to Darwin on the next boat.</p> <p>Small fires may be contained in a designated fire container</p> <p>Burnable paper and food waste is dried in the sun and burned daily in the fire drum.</p>	
	<p>Grey water</p>	<p>Ablution areas are determined by access to safe areas for washing bodies and clothes</p>		<p>Ablution is conducted away from the water's edge in either shallow tidal pools or by buckets of water carried from the sea to an appropriate position on the beach. Both reduce the risk of crocodile interaction. Biodegradable soaps and detergents will be used in sufficiently limited quantities to maintain human and environmental health.</p>	
	<p>Compost toilet waste</p>	<p>Composted toilet waste to be removed from the island by AusTurtle Inc. representatives.</p>		<p>Treated waste from composted toilets is removed from the island by AusTurtle Inc. representatives and deposited at sea on the outgoing tide more than 1 km from the island.</p> <p>Should weather conditions prevent launching the boat, the waste having been sterilized in the sin form more than two weeks can be buried below the high tide mark on a section of the beach at least 200 metres from the camp and boat mooring's.</p>	

## Fieldwork Risk Assessment Form

Research	Injury and fatigue	Foot injury	Moderate	Appropriate footwear will be worn. This may be bare feet or open sandals on soft sand to reduce blisters, or reef boots in rubble and amongst debris and while boating. Be constantly vigilant of your surroundings and the ground while walking at all times.	Low
		Eye injury		<p>A red-light headlamp is to be used outside of daylight hours. White-light is permitted around the camp.</p> <p>Beach Etiquette will be highlighted in windy conditions of the relative risks of being down wind when excavating nests, in moving over the dunes and arising from being seated. Safety glasses will be provided every night but will be required on windy nights.</p>	

## Fieldwork Risk Assessment Form

		Lengthy periods of physical activity in hot and/or cold climate		<p>Participants will carry water bottles at night and be able to rest as required during the evening. They can dress as appropriate for warm evenings.</p> <p>Cold nights are experienced with air temperatures dropping to below 15°C and drop even further with a chill from 60 km / hr winds. Beanies and longs and longs and jumpers are items the volunteers are told to bring.</p>	
		Disorientation		All volunteers will be in pairs when monitoring the beach and each pair/group will have a working UHF radio.	
Flora and fauna	Crocodiles	Encounter	Moderate	<p>Crocodiles do inhabit the waters around the island. They are avoided at all times. Crocodile watch is kept at night with participants able to scan the beach and water if they feel uncomfortable.</p> <p>Crocodile sightings are reported throughout the group and the animals are avoided. Troublesome crocodiles will be reported to Parks and Wildlife (0419 822 859 or (08) 8983 2475) and the Kenbi Rangers (0417817525).</p>	Low

## Fieldwork Risk Assessment Form

	Sea turtles		High	Flatback sea turtles will bite if given the opportunity. Participants are instructed on the safe procedures around nesting turtles. Turtles are not touched for any reason forward of the leading edge of the front flippers. The induction involves demonstration and group assessment of the procedures to be followed when near a nesting turtle. Participants will never stand in front of a turtle.	
	Sea snakes		Low	Sea snakes are rarely seen on the island with only one individual washed ashore in over 20 years of monitoring. Participants are reminded to be vigilant on the beach at night and to watch where they put their feet and to use low light to pick their way through obstacles.	
	Land snakes		Low	There are no land snakes on the island.	
	Biting insects		Moderate	Sand flies and midges are common. Participants are supplied with insect repellent and asked to bring their own medication to cope with the sand flies.	

## Fieldwork Risk Assessment Form

	Caltrop		Moderate	Caltrop has been noted on the western nesting beach. Participants will be notified of its location. Appropriate footwear will be worn in that vicinity and checked to prevent the spread of seeds	
Recreation/sleeping	Horse play	Physical injury	Moderate	Rough play in recreational activities including horse play is not allowed and the consequences of accidents through rough behaviour is stressed in the induction and in the Standard Operating Procedures. Medical evacuations are expensive and delayed because of the remote location.	Low
	Physical activities/exploring	Getting lost or isolated by the tide	Low	There are few places on the island to get lost during daylight but disorientation at night is possible. Solar lanterns are placed at the entrance to the camp and at beach markers so participants can find their way to camp. Handheld UHF two-way radios are supplied with each group and communication is encouraged.	



## Fieldwork Risk Assessment Form

	Games	Isolating individuals	Low	Group activities in down time are designed to engage individuals and participation is encouraged. Activities such as cards are suitable for some, but many activities and games are provided, such as Finska, hobby arts and crafts of debris and shells, fishing, boating, kite-flying and reading are available along with care of hatchling sea turtles.
	Solitude	Anxiety	Low	Some participants find the darkness and lack of familiar sounds disturbing at night. This can lead to insomnia and fatigue. Solar lanterns are provided beside tents to warn of a trip hazard and to provide security. Ear plugs are provided for those nights when the wind flaps the tent and sleep may be difficult. Quiet areas are provided during the day for participants to nap.

### Notes:

- (1) Refer to Attachment A
- (2) If a risk cannot be eliminated. Control measures must be implemented to reduce the final (residual) risk level to *Low*. Depending on specific circumstances, a low risk level may not be achievable, and a higher risk level (e.g. *Medium*) may be, as far as is reasonably practicable, acceptable. However, acceptance of a higher risk level should be discussed with and approved by AusTurtle Inc. committee.
- (3) Refer to Attachment B. Use of the *Action Plan* template may assist with the implementation of proposed (new) risk control measures.

## Fieldwork Risk Assessment Form

### Attachment A: Risk Matrix

STEP 1 Consider the CONSEQUENCES		STEP 2 Consider the LIKELIHOOD		STEP 3 Calculate the RISK LEVEL					
Consider what is known and what could reasonably be expected to happen.  Look at the descriptions and choose the most suitable.		What is the likelihood of the consequence identified in Step 1 happening?  Look at the descriptions and choose the most suitable.		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Select the appropriate column for Step 1 on the matrix below.</li> <li>Select the appropriate line for Step 2 on the matrix below.</li> <li>Circle the risk score where the two intersect.</li> </ol>					
<b>Consequence</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>CONSEQUENCE</b>					
					<b>Insignif.</b>	<b>Minor</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>Major</b>	
<b>Major</b>	Death or extensive injury	<b>A</b>	Is expected to occur	<b>LIKELIHOOD</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>High</b>
<b>Moderate</b>	Medical Treatment	<b>B</b>	Could probably occur		<b>B</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>High</b>
<b>Minor</b>	First Aid Treatment	<b>C</b>	Could occur, but only rarely		<b>C</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>High</b>
<b>Insignificant</b>	No Treatment	<b>D</b>	May occur, but probably never will		<b>D</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Medium</b>

### The Hierarchy of Controls

When assessing/selecting risk control measures, the following priorities must be applied:

1. *Elimination* of the risk
2. If it is not reasonably practicable to eliminate the risk, the risk must be reduced through:
  - a. *Substituting* the hazard with one that presents a lesser risk
  - b. *Isolating* the hazard from volunteers to contain the risk
  - c. Changing the design of camp or equipment to reduce the risk (referred to as *engineering controls*)
3. If there still remains a risk, administrative controls (procedures, signage, etc.) must be implemented
4. If there still remains a risk, the provision and use of *suitable personal protective equipment (PPE)* must be ensured.

**Note:** Risk treatment may consist of a combination of several risk control measures.

## Fieldwork Risk Assessment Form

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### DEFINITIONS

#### Reasonably practicable

When trying to establish during a risk assessment, if risk control measures are *reasonably practicable*, consider the following matters:

- the likelihood of the hazard or risk concerned occurring;
- the degree of harm that might result from the hazard or risk;
- what the person concerned knows, or ought reasonably to know, about the hazard or risk, and ways of eliminating or minimising the risk;
- the availability and suitability of ways to eliminate or minimise the risk; and
- after assessing the above, consider the cost associated with available ways of eliminating or minimising the risk, including whether the cost is grossly disproportionate to the risk.

#### Hazard

A hazard is a source or situation that has the potential to cause injury or disease to people, damage to the environment, equipment or property, or a combination of these. It can also be expressed in terms of unwanted or excess energy with the capacity to cause injury or disease.

Examples include the workplace environment itself (poor lighting or slippery floors), the work organisation (inappropriate work flow or inadequate procedures) or the equipment/plant used (noisy machinery or unsuitable PPE).

#### Risk

In the context of a risk assessment, risk is referred to as the combination of the frequency (or probability of occurrence) and the consequences associated with an identified hazard or hazardous event.

For example, the workplace hazard of poor lighting has associated risks such as injuries due to slips/trips. There could also be security related risks. The consequences of a fall related injury may, for example, range from 'minor' (some bruising – first aid) to 'moderate' (broken hip – hospital admission) depending on the particulars of the person who falls. The likelihood for this to occur may range from 'could probably occur' to 'could occur but only rarely'. Consider what is known about previous incidents, similar incidents elsewhere and/or what could reasonably be expected to occur.

## Fieldwork Risk Assessment Form

### Attachment B: Action Plan

Proposed (new) risk control measures (what and how)	Accountability (who is responsible for implementation)	Completion Date
<p>Pre-start meetings are held at the start of each night's research and each morning when participants are asked about hazards they encountered.</p> <p>Notes are made on the communal board along with the tides of the day, the activities planned and the meal preparation roster.</p> <p>The pre-start briefing will also include discussion of maintenance issues and warnings about equipment.</p> <p>There are also several short talks planned on various aspects of safety when working with animals at remote locations.</p> <p>Safety issues and changing conditions will be relayed to the Executive of AusTurtle Inc and the committee when deemed necessary by the camp leader and/or assistant.</p> <p>A check in with a delegated check-in person on the mainland will happen each night by the camp leader.</p>	<p>This will be the responsibility of the Camp Leader with the assistance of the Research assistant.</p>	<p>Daily</p>

## Fieldwork Risk Assessment Form

### DECLARATIONS

#### President of AusTurtle Inc.

As the President of the persons conducting the *Risk Assessment*, I declare that I have thoroughly checked this *Risk Assessment*. I declare that I have positively confirmed that the onsite leaders and assistants have thoroughly checked the *Risk Assessment*, and that I have ensured that appropriate resources are available for this activity to proceed safely.

#### Onsite Activity Leaders and assistants

I understand that it is my responsibility to ensure that all participants in this activity are sufficiently briefed about the hazards/risks identified and the risk control measures in place as documented above. I acknowledge that I have a responsibility as a supervisor to ensure that all risk control measures are in place.

I acknowledge that I am voluntarily participating in the fieldwork activity described above. I understand and agree to the following:

**Assumption of Risks:** I am aware that fieldwork activities involve inherent risks, including but not limited to physical injury, illness, property damage, and exposure to natural elements. I acknowledge all risks associated with this activity and have the right to not participate in any activity that I deem to be of a risk that has not been adequately mitigated

**Abiding by Safety Rules:** I agree to follow all safety guidelines, instructions, and rules provided by the organizers, instructors, or supervisors during the fieldwork. Abide by the provisions and conditions

#### Volunteers

I acknowledge that I am voluntarily participating in the fieldwork activity described above. I understand and agree to the following:

**Assumption of Risks:** I am aware that fieldwork activities involve inherent risks, including but not limited to physical injury, illness, property damage, and exposure to natural elements. I acknowledge all risks associated with this activity and have the right to not participate in any activity that I deem to be of a risk that has not been adequately mitigated

**Abiding by Safety Rules:** I agree to follow all safety guidelines, instructions, and rules provided by the organizers, instructors, or supervisors during the fieldwork. Abide by the provisions and conditions of the Department of Animal welfare, CDU Animal Ethics Approval, NT Parks and Wildlife Permits and the Permit to the Northern Land Council.

**By selecting 'Yes' on the booking system, I acknowledge that I have read and understood this form, and I voluntarily agree to its terms.**

## **AusTurtle Inc's Covid-19 Safety Plan**

### **1. Purpose**

To ensure the safety and well-being of volunteers and staff while undertaking sea turtle research and associated fieldwork activities. This plan is applicable to all volunteers, management and staff.

AusTurtle is a Northern Territory business that has submitted a comprehensive COVID-19 plan to adhere to the government's physical distancing measures and health and hygiene principles. This plan is designed to ensure the safety and well-being of volunteers, management, staff and the public.

### **2. Communication plan**

Send regular updates to AusTurtle contacts via message and or phone call. Local health authorities, emergency services and internal contact points:

Emergency response - 000

Northern Territory Covid Enquiries hotline – 1800 008 002

Northern Territory Mental Health Line – 1800 682 288

Top End Medical Centre – 08 8930 4900

AusTurtle President – Mick Guinea 0438 192 507

AusTurtle Project coordinator – Ella Mason 0428 441 693

### **2. Health and Safety Measures**

Handwashing stations will be provided in the communal area (toilet and kitchen) with hand sanitiser available in the toilet bucket, kitchen and dome.

Individuals will be provided their own sleeping mat and tent.

Masks and gloves will be stored with the first aid equipment if required.

Social distancing is advised.

### **3. Monitoring and Reporting**

Daily check-ins: general health of volunteers, management and staff to monitor and report any concerns daily. Any suspected covid-19 cases will be provided covid-19 RAT tests and be required to isolate. Contact AusTurtle President Mick Guinea and Project coordinator Ella Mason to report confirmed case(s). Support to vacate the island will be arranged.

### **5. Covid-19 restrictions**

There are no current Northern Territory Chief Health Officer directions in place. This plan will be reviewed to adhere to restriction updates and changes.

## **AusTurtle Inc's Refund Policy**

### **1. Overview**

At AusTurtle, we are committed to ensuring that our members and supporters have a positive experience with our programs and events. We understand that sometimes plans change and unforeseen circumstances arise. This refund policy outlines the conditions under which refunds will be issued for donations, memberships, volunteer and event registrations, and merchandise purchases.

### **2. Donations**

In the event of an error in processing your donation, please contact us within 30 days at [austurtle@austurtle.org](mailto:austurtle@austurtle.org). We will work with you to correct any issues.

### **3. Memberships**

Membership fees are non-refundable. If you wish to cancel your membership, please contact us at [austurtle@austurtle.org](mailto:austurtle@austurtle.org). Your membership will remain active until the end of the current membership period.

### **4. Volunteer and Event Registrations**

We require full up-front payment to cover the running costs of the Njulbitjik (Bare Sand Island) research camp. Refunds for volunteer registrations are available up until May 1<sup>st</sup>. To request a refund, please contact us at [austurtle@austurtle.org](mailto:austurtle@austurtle.org) with your registration details. Refunds will be processed within 14 days of receiving your request.

Refunds for fundraising events are available up until July 1<sup>st</sup>. To request a refund, please contact us at [austurtle@austurtle.org](mailto:austurtle@austurtle.org) with your registration details. Refunds will be processed within 14 days of receiving your request.

### **5. Merchandise Purchases**

If you are not satisfied with your merchandise purchase, you may return the item(s) within 30 days of receipt for a refund or exchange. Items must be returned in their original condition, with all tags and packaging intact. To initiate a return or exchange, please contact us at [austurtle@austurtle.org](mailto:austurtle@austurtle.org). Refunds will be issued within 14 days of receiving the returned item(s).

### **6. Contact Information**

If you have any questions or concerns about our refund policy, please contact us at:

- Email: [austurtle@austurtle.org](mailto:austurtle@austurtle.org).
- Phone: 0438 192 507 or, 0428 441 693
- Address: PO Box 405 Berrimah NT 0828 Australia