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St. Vincent Island Supporters Group

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*In partnership with the
US Fish and Wildlife Service*

Shelley Stiaes,
Refuge Manager



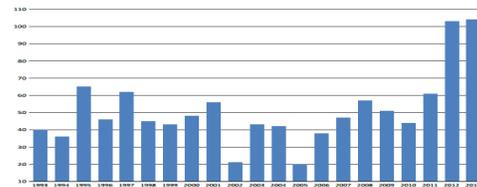
St. Vincent Island Supporters

FALL 2013 EDITION

NOVEMBER 21, 2013

2013 Turtle Nesting Sets New Record!

We had 104 nests this year which is a refuge record since we began surveying for turtles! The final data are currently being analyzed and will be included in the Winter edition of the newsletter.



St Vincent Island Turtle Nest Count 1993-2013



Florida beaches are of world-wide importance to loggerhead sea turtles. Approximately 80 percent of the global loggerhead population nests either on Florida beaches or in Oman, a country on the Arabian Peninsula. Florida accounts for more than 90 percent of U.S. loggerhead nesting.

View the internet article [Index Nesting Beach Survey Totals](#)

(1989-2013) for more information on how scientists at the FWC's Fish and Wildlife Research Institute collect nesting-trend data and for nesting trends of green and leatherback turtles.

Courtesy of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.



**Volunteer Lynda Smith
surveying a Turtle crawl**

ISLAND TOURS

The Supporters group conducts wagon tours of St. Vincent Island in October, November and January through May. The tours are open wagon and last approximately 4.5 hours. Depending on the time of year, the temperatures can be very warm and biting insects can be present. Dress accordingly and bring your own water, insect repellent, sun block and snacks. There will be a per person (round trip) charge of \$10 paid to the private company that operates the

shuttle from Indian Pass to St. Vincent. We also suggest a \$5 donation per person for the tour itself. Proceeds from these donations are given to the Refuge to help defray fuel and maintenance costs for the tour wagon and the tow vehicle. Sign Up at : www.stvincentfriends.com

Plan to arrive at the Indian Pass boat ramp by 8:45 a.m. EST. Tours may be cancelled due to adverse weather or sea conditions.

“The earth has music for those who listen.”
— George Santayana

TOUR DATES

Nov 27, 2013
Jan 8, 2014
Jan 22, 2014
Feb 12, 2014
Feb 26, 2014
March 12, 2014
March 26, 2014
April 9, 2014
May 14, 2014

Calendar of Events



Apalachicola Seafood Festival
Nov 2013



Honorary Parade Turtles
Gene Pennock & Trish Petrie



Clean Up Day Nov 2013



St Vincent Island Map

- Sept 28, 2013 St. Joseph State Park Appreciation Day (information booth)
- Nov 2, 2013 Apalachicola Seafood Festival: Parade and Booth, Apalachicola FL
- Nov 15, 2013 St. Vincent Island Beach Clean Up Day
- Nov 20-24, 2013 Archery Hunt
- Dec 4-8, 2013 Sambar Hunt
- Jan 22-26, 2014 Primitive Weapon Hunt
- Feb 16, 2014 Supporters Annual Meeting: Buffer Reserve (Jack Rudloe, guest speaker)
- Mar 28, 2014 Open House on the Island

Annual Meeting.....

Please feel free to join us for our 2014 Annual meeting to be held at the Buffer Reserve in Port St. Joe, FL. The meeting includes a short business meeting, opportunity for membership renewal, new membership application processing, and special guest speaker, Jack Rudloe, Head of Operations at the Gulf Marine Specimens in Panacea, FL. Lunch will be served.

A great way to connect or reconnect with the St. Vincent Island Supporters and learn more about volunteer

opportunities.

If you cannot attend please feel free to contact us: supportstvin@hotmail.com.

The Supporters are always looking for new members. We invite you to consider participating in this important work to learn more about, preserve, and enjoy our unique island. We also have a variety of volunteer activities that may appeal to you. You can find details listed under "Want To Help? - Volunteer Jobs" on

the menu bar of the supporters website www.stvincentfriends.com

The membership application form can be accessed via "Want To Help? " Your membership entitles you to be our guest at the annual meeting, receive our quarterly newsletters, and receive advance notice of upcoming events. You get the satisfaction of knowing that you are part of a special group doing their part to protect our valuable natural assets.

Give membership as a gift to friends and family



.....Open House

Scheduled for March 28, 2014, this fun-filled event takes place on St. Vincent Island. There are a wide variety of events for all participants. Among them are exhibits, hikes, nature trails, music, historical narratives, photo opportunities, art exhibits and lunch for the first 100 visitors.

This is a terrific way to get a taste of the Island, share a wonderful experience with friends and family and enjoy the outdoors and nature.



St. Vincent Island: A Panhandle Barrier Island

St. Vincent Island is a barrier island on the Panhandle coast of Florida. It is an interesting and unusual island that has many unique features. For the next few newsletters, we will explore four aspects of the geomorphology of barrier islands and St. Vincent in particular:

- What are barrier islands?
- How are dune landscapes built?
- How do storms change barrier islands?
- How do differing dune types affect island recovery from storms?

Barrier islands are built up by the gradual accumulation of sand parallel to the interface of the coast and the sea. They are affected by supply of sand, tidal forces and wave action, all of which help frame the shape and size of the island. As their name implies, they serve as a buffer between the sea and the mainland. There are two main types of barrier islands, mesotidal and microtidal. Both types of barrier island are found along the Panhandle coastline.

Microtidal barrier islands are long and linear. Their shape is dominated, in large part, by



“There are two main types of barrier islands, mesotidal and microtidal”

that formed St. Vincent Island. In our next newsletter we will look at dune landscapes, how they are formed and how the dunes on St. Vincent affect the ecology of the island.

the action of waves. They generally occur in areas with low tides but high wave action. This type of barrier island is seen most frequently in the Gulf of Mexico. A nearby example of a microtidal barrier island is St. George Island

Mesotidal barrier islands are short, rounded, squat islands with protected concave interiors. They are often called ‘Drumstick ‘ islands. These islands are usually formed in areas with high tidal fluctuation but low wave action. Many of these barrier islands are found along the Atlantic shore line. An example of a mesotidal barrier island can be found off the South Carolina coast, at Bull Island.

See if you can decide which type of barrier island most closely approximates the shape and tidal action



Contributing Author : Carol Brown



Turtle Nest Adoptions

Thank you for your kindness and generosity!

- Don & Helene West
- John & Kristina Epstein (2 nests)
- John & Kristina Epstein (for Kerry & Robbie Hayes) (2 nests)
- John & Kristina Epstein (for Erin & Bill Hoffmeier) (2 nests)
- Melissa Jacoby (4 nests)
- Gary Boulware (for Debbie Coon)
- Kathy Hagman (for Taylor Cramer)
- William & Kay Fugagli
- Jan Pietrzyk
- Brad Smith (for Stephanie Woods)
- Ken & Patti Fox
- Robert & Susan Wolfe
- Dick Dandurand for Tyler, Clay, Drew, & "Pop Pop"
- Pat Tollefson

**Want to Adopt a nest next season?
Contact Us at 850-229-6735**

*“For it is in the giving
that we receive.”
St. Francis of Assisi*

*Makes a great and
meaningful gift!*



An Intern's Perspective of the Island

Expecting the Unexpected

Abby-Gayle Prieur

Almost anything can become routine. Most people have jobs in which they know exactly what to expect every day: pour a cup of coffee, check emails and attend the weekly meeting; most expect that nothing novel will happen that week. Though my internship became routine in a different way (tracking red wolves and checking traps instead of the office-based tasks), St. Vincent Island had a way of reminding me that what I was doing was never truly predictable.

In mid-July I started a three month stint as a biology intern. My job would be to help out with the red wolf program, turtle surveys, predator control, and anything else that would help promote wildlife populations on the island. In the beginning, everything was exciting. I was finally allowed the opportunity to apply the skills I learned in college to real world situations. I tracked the red wolf pair using radio telemetry and postulated on their night-time behavior to determine where to set out trail cameras. I helped patrol the beach checking turtle nest for signs of predation and hatch events. I walked miles of protected eagle nesting areas replacing damaged signs to warn visitors not to disturb our national bird. Usually these tasks would go exactly as planned but once in a while something unexpected would happen, making the word "routine" become inapplicable.

One morning in August, I set out to track the red wolves like I did most days when working on the refuge. Coming up to one of the crossroads on the island I heard the tell-tale "ping" of the male

wolf's radio collar. I stopped my truck and hopped out to get a better handle on which direction the wolf was in. Something out of the ordinary stopped me in my tracks, however. Over my shoulder I heard an assertive howl, the male wolf announcing his presence beneath the dense saw palmettos. This sound is something very few people have heard in the Southeast for over a century.



Abby on early morning turtle patrol

With my hands shaking from adrenaline, I realized how fortunate I was to be working at a place like St. Vincent where just as you get comfortable one of the most endangered canid species in the world hollers at you for waking him up.

Even a drive down the main road on St. Vincent can produce a story. When heading to pick up supplies at "the shop," I was forced to stop by a young, three foot alligator in the road. I inched up on it in my truck hoping that it would move out of the way on its own. The gator refused to budge however, so I stepped out of my truck thinking that maybe if I stomped around a bit it would be encouraged to move. Once again, the pesky gator stayed put, slowing the way to my destination. My gator wrangling skills not being up

to par, I grabbed a palm branch to push the animal out of the way. He was feisty however and went to hissing and biting at the branch instead of hissing off of the road. Finally after much persuasion he went on his way, but not without taking the most circuitous route under my truck to the other side of the road.

Most people who have been lucky enough to spend time on the island have memories like mine, a time when a short hike or jaunt down the beach turned into an unexpected adventure. I know I am privileged to have worked at St. Vincent and to have formed these memories. The island is a truly unique place where whatever effort you put into getting there and suffering the heat and bugs is paid back in experiences that not many other people can claim.

Bio

Abby-Gayle Prieur graduated in 2012 with a wildlife management degree from the University of Georgia. Since graduating she has interned with the Army Corps of Engineers and the National Park Service before arriving at St. Vincent National Wildlife Refuge. She aspires to work as a wildlife biologist for the US Fish and Wildlife Service after earning a master's degree.

Help Us Help the Environment

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Interested?

Contact: supportstvin@hotmail.com