

## An Integrated Volunteer Functions Inventory for Sea Turtle Conservation Towards Effective Conservation Education Programs

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### Abstract

Sea turtles deal with numerous threats given that they are essential to marine ecosystems and economy. Volunteer-led conservation initiatives have played a major role in stabilizing numerous populations through conservation education programs. To improve sea turtle conservation results and the welfare of the local population, volunteers are essential in data gathering, poacher deterrent and most importantly public education. Despite their widespread appeal and the potential advantages of volunteer initiatives, not much research has been done on volunteers in the field of conservation specifically on sea turtle volunteers. There is a huge knowledge gap about the identity or sources of motivation of the sea turtle volunteers, which makes more focused recruitment tactics rather challenging. The current Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) has six main motives for volunteering (i.e. values, understanding, ego enhancement, career, social and ego protective). The creation of an Integrated Volunteer Functions Inventory (IVFI) has the potential to maximize volunteer involvement and enhance the effectiveness of sea turtle conservation education programs and can be a guideline for the marketing development to improve their organization to attract more volunteer participation, thereby guaranteeing their long-term viability. Qualitative methods were employed to gain in-depth insights through focus group discussions (FGD). The FGD aimed to explore volunteer perceptions of sea turtle egg trade, ecotourism development, and tourism authority influence. Insights gained were crucial for identifying themes that contributed to developing IVFI. Themes derived from the FGD were directly linked to research questions, ensuring alignment and relevance.

**Keywords:** volunteering; volunteer-led conservations; volunteer functions inventory; sea turtle conservation education; focus group discussion