

Practice Turtle-Friendly Snorkeling

Friends of Virgin Islands National Park



Tips to create a healthy and enjoyable experience for swimmers and sea turtles:

- ✿ Maintain a distance of at least 6-10 feet. Social distance yourself from the turtles.
- ✿ If they come towards you, move away to maintain distance.
- ✿ Do not chase or follow them.
- ✿ Never circle around in a group and block the turtle's ability to surface. *Remember they need to breathe air just like us!*
- ✿ Use reef-safe sunscreen. Harmful chemicals found in non-reef safe sunscreen can be harmful to marine life and corals. Apply sunscreen at least 30 minutes prior to going in the water. Opt to wear rash guards or UV shirts instead.
- ✿ Excessive human interaction can lead to stress, which can cause a turtle to alter its natural behavior (swimming, foraging, resting, breathing).
- ✿ Stress can lead to disease such as fibropapilloma tumors that can develop on the soft tissue around their flippers and eyes.
- ✿ Refrain from taking close up pictures or selfies with turtles.
- ✿ Mind your flippers when you are snorkeling; no excessive kicking.

All three species of sea turtles found in the USVI are endangered or critically endangered.

Following respectful precautions while swimming with turtles will aid in the protection and recovery of these amazing animals.



Did you know that riding, touching or harassing a sea turtle is a federal offense?

It's against the law!

