

ONE STOP AMI

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HOW AMI TURTLE WATCH PROTECTS A SEA TURTLE NEST

A 14-Page Coloring Guide to the Complete Beach Process



My Turtle Watch explorer name: _____

Independent educational book by One Stop AMI. Not produced by or affiliated with AMITW. Nest work is only for trained personnel operating under Florida marine-turtle permits.

1. Protecting AMI Since 1983



Anna Maria Island Turtle Watch & Shorebird Monitoring—AMITW—coordinates conservation along nine miles of Manatee County shoreline.

Staff and trained volunteers document sea turtle activity, protect nests, study shoreline habitat, educate the community, and share data with county, state, and federal conservation partners. Loggerheads make most local nests; green turtles also nest here.

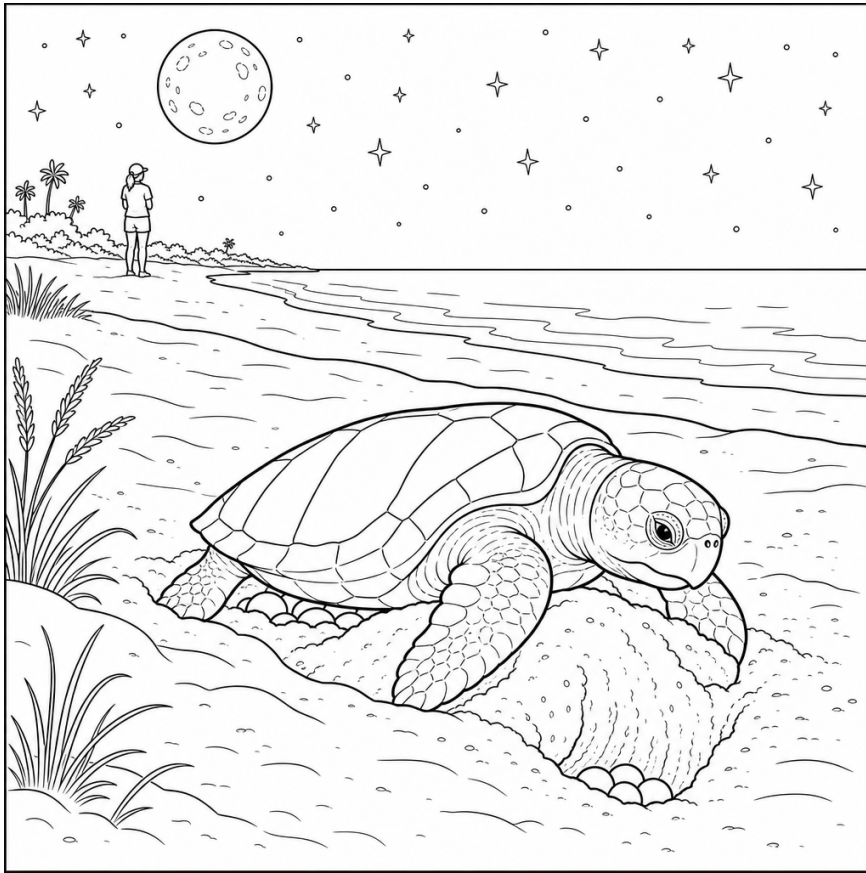
THE PROCESS

- ☐ Walk and ride assigned shoreline zones.
- ☐ Record turtle activity and nesting trends.
- ☐ Teach visitors how to share the beach.

TURTLE WATCH NOTE

Official AMITW history reported 20,831 turtle activities, 10,050 protected nests, and at least 452,373 hatchlings over more than four decades.

2. A Mother Turtle Nests at Night



A nesting turtle crawls above the high-tide line, chooses a place, and uses her rear flippers to dig a flask-shaped egg chamber.

She deposits a clutch of soft-shelled eggs, covers the chamber, packs and disguises the sand, then crawls back to the Gulf. If she comes ashore but returns without laying eggs, Turtle Watch records a false crawl.

THE PROCESS

- ☐ Crawl from the Gulf.
- ☐ Dig, lay, cover, and disguise.
- ☐ Return to the water on her own.

TURTLE WATCH NOTE

People should stay far behind her, remain quiet, use no flash or white light, and never touch her or her tracks.

3. Dawn Patrol Begins



Before beach traffic erases the clues, trained AMITW teams patrol assigned sections of Gulf and bayside shoreline.

They look for fresh adult crawl tracks, false crawls, new nests, hatchling tracks, erosion, flooding, predators, disorientation, injured wildlife, and problems around already marked nests.

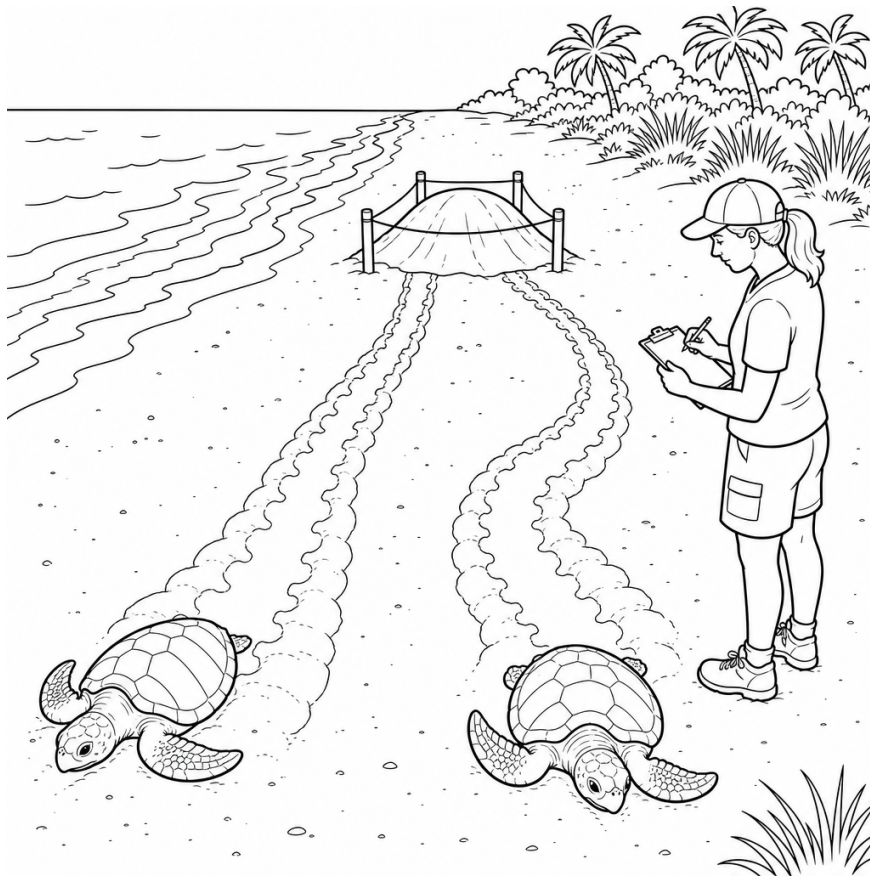
THE PROCESS

- ☐ Start early, often while the beach is quiet.
- ☐ Check the full assigned shoreline.
- ☐ Report urgent wildlife or safety concerns.

TURTLE WATCH NOTE

These activities are performed by trained staff and volunteers working under Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission marine-turtle permits.

4. Read the Tracks



The shape and direction of flipper marks help trained patrol members identify a turtle's crawl and see where she entered and left the beach.

The team studies disturbed sand for signs of body pits, thrown sand, and nest covering. Not every crawl contains eggs, so volunteers use training and permitted procedures rather than guessing.

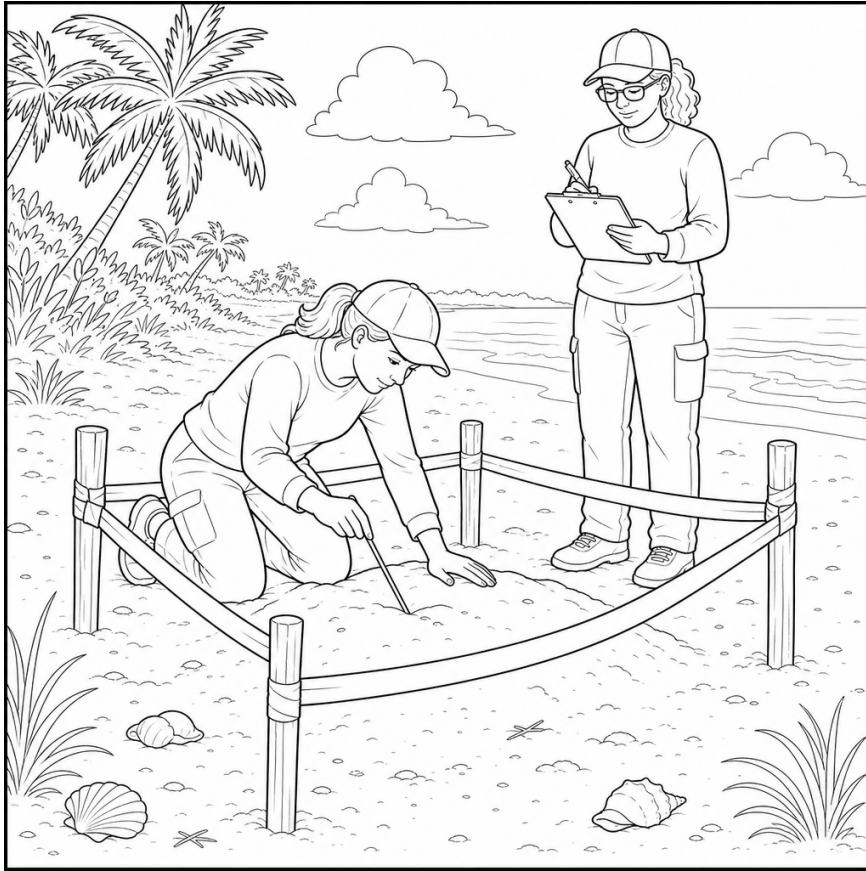
THE PROCESS

- ☐ Follow the incoming and outgoing crawl clues.
- ☐ Identify likely nesting activity.
- ☐ Record a nest or a false crawl.

TURTLE WATCH NOTE

Never walk over, smooth, dig into, or add objects to turtle tracks. They are valuable evidence until the patrol team has checked them.

5. Find and Mark the Egg Chamber



Only trained, permitted personnel may carefully locate the egg chamber and confirm that eggs are present.

Once confirmed, the nest is marked with stakes, tape, signs, and an identification number so beachgoers can keep away. A nest is moved only when authorized under permit and conservation rules—not simply because another place looks better.

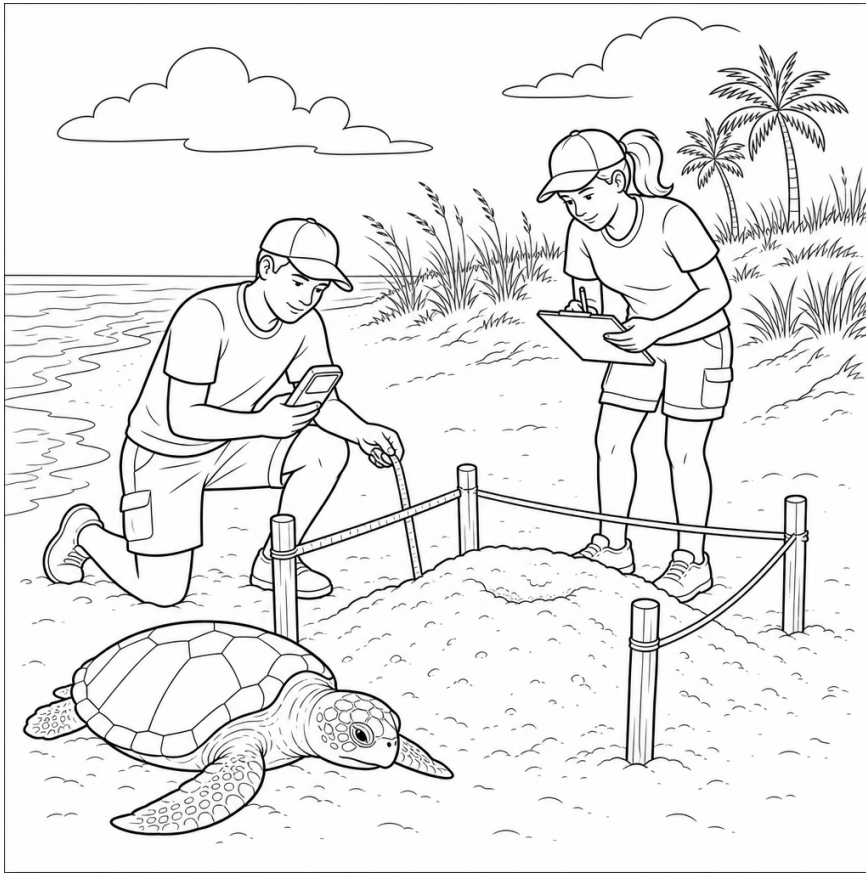
THE PROCESS

- ☐ Confirm the nest under permit.
- ☐ Create a visible protected area.
- ☐ Keep people and equipment outside the markers.

TURTLE WATCH NOTE

Children can help by admiring from outside the marked area and reminding grown-ups never to dig near a nest.

6. Measure, Map, and Record



AMITW records standardized information so one nest becomes part of a much larger conservation picture.

The team records details such as date, location, species evidence, nest or false-crawl status, and field observations. Measurements and location data help crews find the site again after wind, rain, tides, and footprints change the sand.

THE PROCESS

- ☐ Give the nest an identification record.
- ☐ Measure and map its location.
- ☐ Submit consistent monitoring data.

TURTLE WATCH NOTE

Long-term records help scientists see changes in nesting, hatch success, beach conditions, predation, and human impacts.

7. Check Every Day



A marked nest is not forgotten. Patrol teams inspect nest sites during their regular monitoring rounds.

They look for washed-out markers, high tides, erosion, storm damage, animal digging, human disturbance, hatchling tracks, or a depression that can signal movement below. Authorized teams repair protection and record changes.

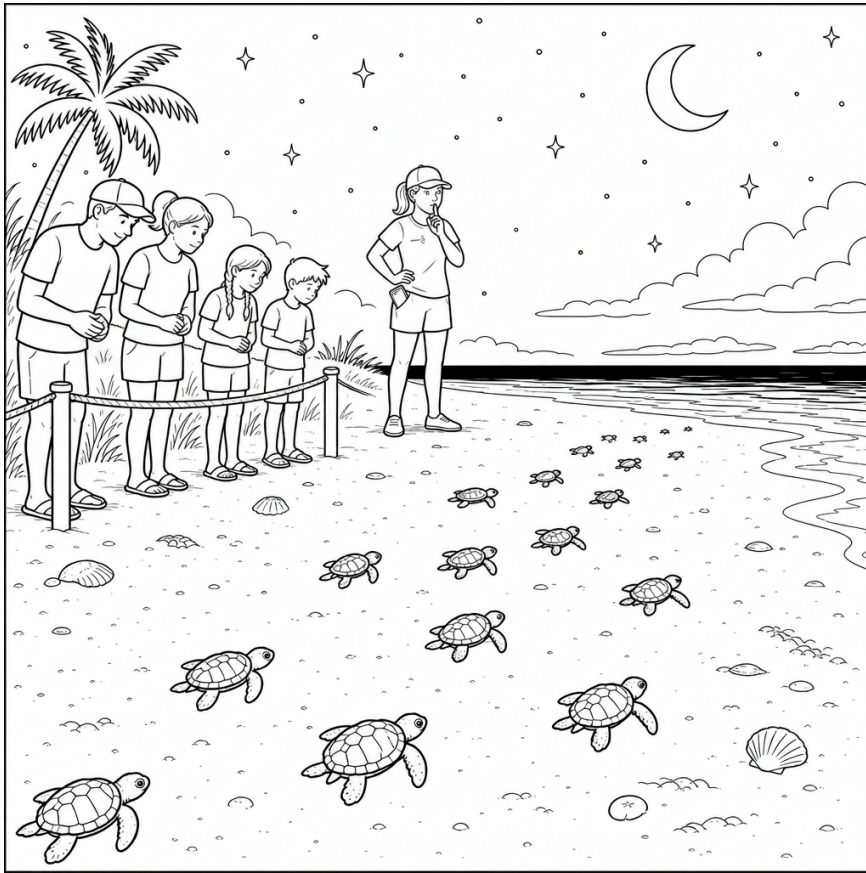
THE PROCESS

- ☐ Inspect markers and surrounding sand.
- ☐ Record weather, wildlife, or human impacts.
- ☐ Escalate problems under permit guidance.

TURTLE WATCH NOTE

Visitors should never straighten stakes, replace tape, cover exposed areas, or try to rescue a nest themselves—call AMITW or local authorities.

8. Watch for the Hatch



After developing beneath the sand, hatchlings usually emerge together and crawl toward the brightest open horizon over the Gulf.

Patrol teams look for tiny tracks, a lowered or collapsed area over the chamber, and evidence that hatchlings reached the water or became disoriented. They document what the beach tells them rather than opening the nest immediately.

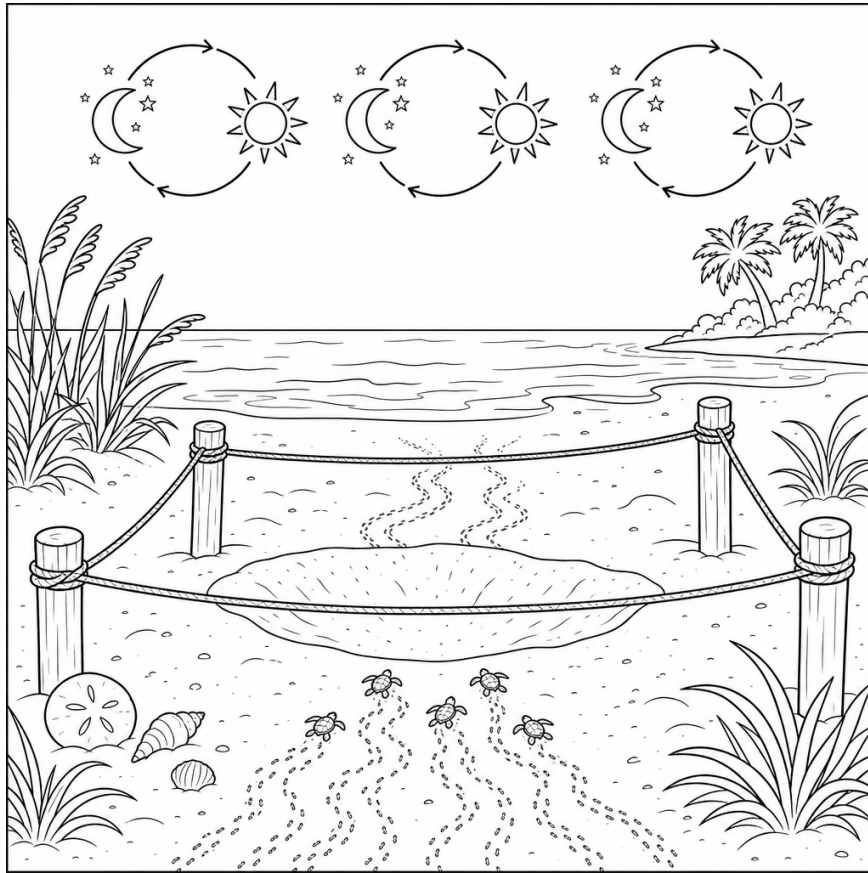
THE PROCESS

- ☐ Look for an emergence or hatchling tracks.
- ☐ Record direction and possible disorientation.
- ☐ Keep the route to the Gulf dark and clear.

TURTLE WATCH NOTE

Beach furniture, deep holes, sandcastles, litter, and artificial lights can block or mislead hatchlings.

9. Wait Before Opening the Nest



A nest is not excavated as soon as the first hatchlings appear. More hatchlings may still be climbing through the sand.

Under Florida monitoring protocols, permitted personnel generally wait at least 72 hours after the first documented emergence before conducting a post-hatch inventory. Timing can differ when permit guidance or unusual conditions require it.

THE PROCESS

- ☐ Document the first emergence.
- ☐ Allow remaining hatchlings time to emerge.
- ☐ Schedule the inventory under permit rules.

TURTLE WATCH NOTE

Families must never open a nest. Waiting protects hatchlings that may still be alive below the surface.

10. The Post-Hatch Nest Inventory



During the permitted inventory—often called an excavation—trained personnel carefully uncover the chamber and examine what remains.

They count empty eggshells, unhatched eggs, and live or dead hatchlings, then calculate hatching and emergence success. Any live hatchling is handled only by authorized personnel following permit instructions. The site is restored and monitoring materials are removed when work is complete.

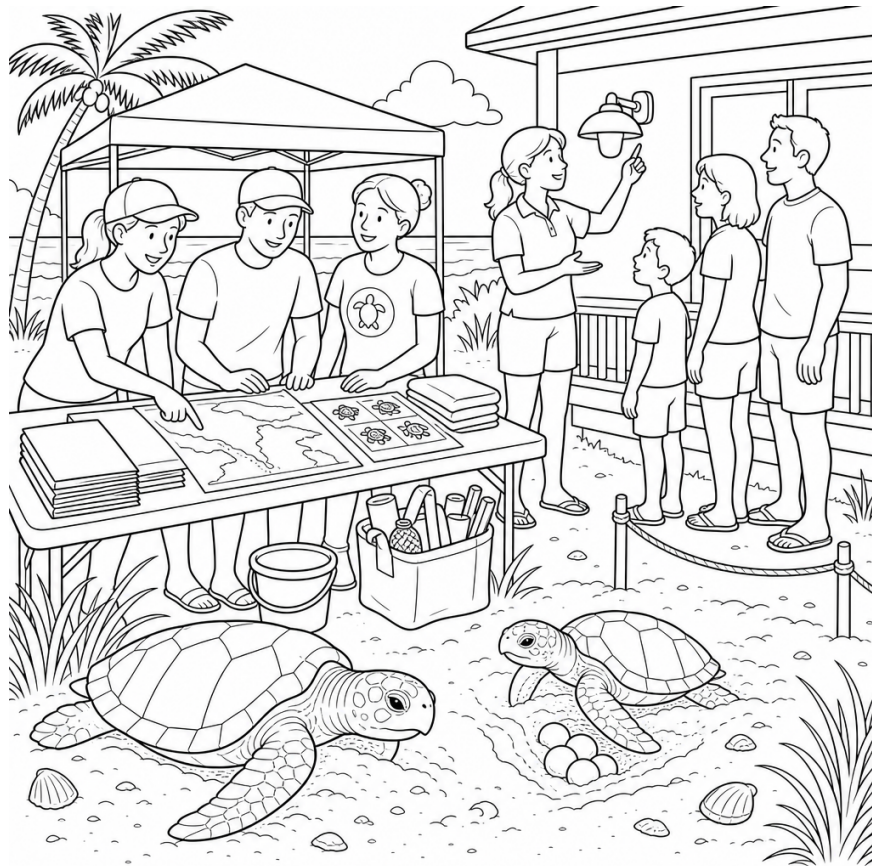
THE PROCESS

- ☐ Open the chamber carefully.
- ☐ Count and classify nest contents.
- ☐ Record results, restore the site, and close the record.

TURTLE WATCH NOTE

An inventory is scientific monitoring—not a public dig. Observers must remain where AMITW directs and never touch eggs, shells, sand, or hatchlings.

11. One Nest Becomes Useful Data



The nest record now connects the first crawl, daily checks, hatch evidence, and inventory results.

AMITW data supports sea turtle conservation with local, state, and federal partners. It helps reveal nesting trends and the effects of habitat change, predators, storms, lighting, obstacles, and other pressures.

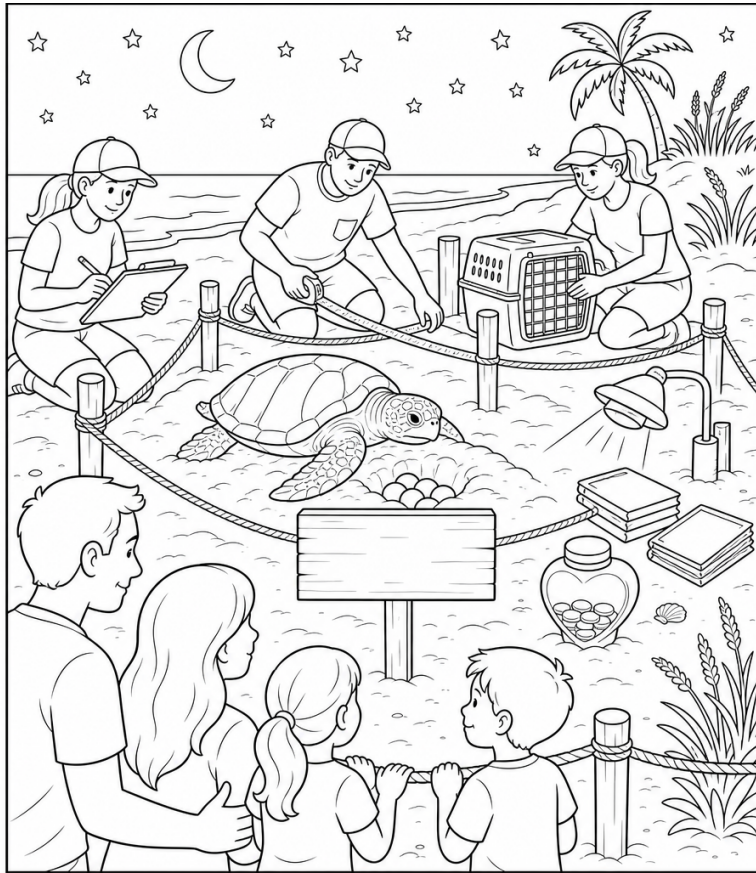
THE PROCESS

- ☐ Complete the nest record.
- ☐ Share required monitoring information.
- ☐ Use patterns to improve protection and education.

TURTLE WATCH NOTE

AMITW's mission is to conserve Anna Maria Island and surrounding waters for people, sea turtles, and shorebirds in partnership with the island community.

12. Donate or Symbolically Adopt a Nest



AMITW is a community-based 501(c)(3) conservation nonprofit supported by volunteers and donations.

General donations help purchase nesting supplies, transport sick or injured turtles and birds to rehabilitation, provide community outreach and educational materials, and support turtle-friendly lighting solutions and rental education.

THE PROCESS

- ☐ Donate: islandturtlewatch.com/donate/
- ☐ Adopt: islandturtlewatch.com/donate/adopt-a-nest/
- ☐ Always check the official page for current price and availability.

TURTLE WATCH NOTE

The Suzi L. Fox Adopt a Nest program is a symbolic adoption that funds educational outreach. It includes a certificate, nest notification, and a wooden plaque mailed after the season with nest information.

Nest Protector Certificate



This certificate proudly belongs to

Write your name above

**I learned how permitted Turtle Watch teams
find, mark, monitor, inventory, and protect nests.**

I promise to stay outside markers and leave turtles wild.

ADOPTION AVAILABILITY WHEN THIS BOOK WAS PREPARED

On August 25, 2026, the official AMITW page listed regular adoptions at \$149 and special-request adoptions at \$199, but 2026 adoptions were sold out. It said 2027 adoptions would open in October 2026. Prices and availability change—always check the official adoption page.

Facts checked against islandturtletwatch.com official About, Volunteer, Sea Turtle, Donate, and Suzi L. Fox Adopt a Nest pages on August 25, 2026.



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Island guides, wildlife facts, family activities, and more coloring fun.



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Thank you for exploring Anna Maria Island with us.