



Coastal Georgia

Patch Program

Explore the unique & fragile environment of Coastal Georgia to learn about our beaches, marshes, maritime forests and marine life.

Brownies: Choose one activity (a-c/d) from each numbered section, & complete all bullet points

Juniors: Choose one activity (a - c/d) from each numbered section and complete all bullet points as well as two additional activities from any section

Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors: Choose two activities (a-c/d) from each numbered section and complete all bullet points, as well as one additional activity from any section

Troop leaders and program vendors, please use your discretion and knowledge of your audience to adjust these requirements as appropriate to best fit the needs of your girls.

- 1) **Go exploring:** Visit a place unique to the Georgia Coast and learn about how nature and mankind can change habitats.
 - a. The Beach
 - What is a wrack line? Research this phenomenon and explore it when you visit the beach.
 - Why is Little Tybee Island bigger than Tybee Island? Learn about erosion and accretion and how they “move” islands.
 - What is the intertidal zone? How is this created? Learn the difference between “mean” tides, seasonal tides, storm tides, etc.
 - b. The Dunes (Note: Help protect the dunes by NOT walking in them. Explore with your eyes only.)
 - Learn about the flora of the dunes; sea oats, panic grass, etc.
 - How do the dunes protect both animals and humans?
 - How are dunes threatened by people? Research ways & organizations that help and do your part to protect the dunes.
 - c. The Maritime Forest
 - Learn about the unique flora and fauna of our region, from Live Oak Trees and Spanish moss to alligators, deer, and sand gnats.

- How are we negatively impacting this biome? Learn about local challenges with deforestation, over-development, and environmental pollution from tourism.
- d. The Salt Marshes: The coast of Georgia contains 2/3rds of the USA's salt marshes!
- What is spartina? What is saw palmetto? How do salt marshes help protect the mainland from storms? How do salt marshes protect local animals, from aquatic to avian?
 - How can we help protect this unique and precious environment?
- 2) Our Friends the Sea Turtles: Only seven species of sea turtles remain and ALL of them are endangered. How can we as Girl Scouts help protect them?
- a. How has pollution impacted sea turtles? Research how trash bags, oil spills, and chemical pollution can negatively impact sea turtles.
 - b. What are turtle excluder devices? Turtles can easily become entangled in gill nets and fish traps used in commercial fishing. Learn about these devices that help turtles trapped in these nets and traps.
 - c. How does tourism impact the "nesting" of sea turtles around the world? Nesting beaches for sea turtles are being developed, threatening the global turtle population. Research this threat in more detail.
 - d. What can YOU do to help? There are many ways to help sea turtles such as using reusable shopping bags and straws to keep more plastic out of our landfills & oceans. Or when you're on the beach filling in any holes you dug or ones that you found! If you are staying on the beach then make sure to turn off your lights or convince others to turn theirs off or use red-filtered light! Use one of these examples or research then implement your own strategy!
- 3) Leave Only Footprints, Take Only Memories: Learn about some of the most commonly threatened marine life due to tourism.
- a. Seahorses: Learn about 1 of the 14 threatened species of seahorse. How has aquaria and tourism diminished the seahorse population?
 - b. Oysters, Whelks, Starfish & Sand Dollars: What kind of "feeders" are they? How do they contribute to their environment?
 - c. What YOU can do to help?
 - When is it safe to take one home? Learn how to identify a live marine organism from a dead one. These things are cool to have as souvenirs so make sure they aren't alive before you take one home. If you see someone pick up a live "shell" speak up!
 - Large numbers of marine organisms are taken out of the wild every year for various reasons (this includes sponges, coral, conch, and other marine species we haven't discussed). Help protect these animals by discouraging people buying from them as pets or as souvenirs.