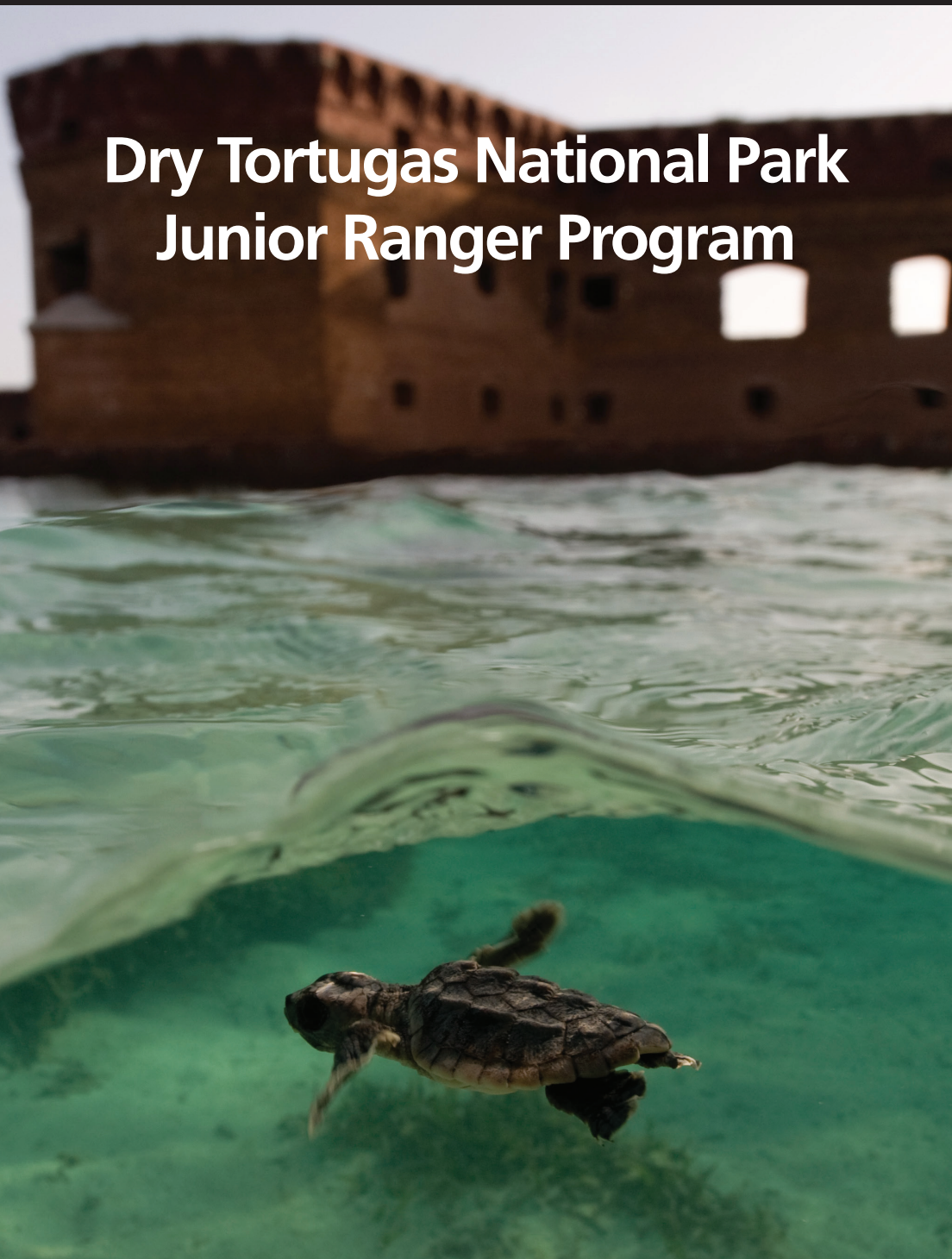
Junior Ranger

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

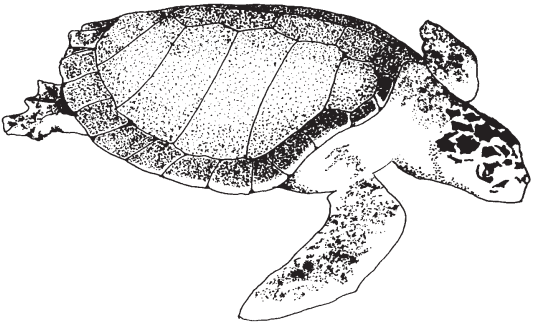
Dry Tortugas National Park

Dry Tortugas National Park Junior Ranger Program



Welcome to the Park!

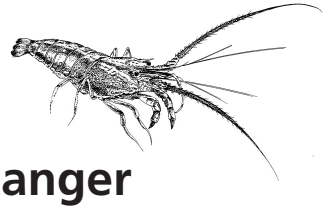
Have you ever wondered where the name "Dry Tortugas" came from?
Spanish Explorer Ponce de Leon discovered these islands in 1513 only 20 years after Christopher Columbus discovered the Americas. Ponce de Leon was so impressed with the abundant wildlife in the area, that he named these islands "Las Tortugas" (Spanish for "the turtles"). There were large sea turtles everywhere! Years later, "Dry" was added to the name to warn people that fresh drinking water was scarce on these islands.



A Special Place

Dry Tortugas National Park is a special for many reasons. The 100-square-mile park contains:

- A pristine subtropical ecosystem including the third largest coral reef in the world
- Historic Fort Jefferson - one of the largest coastal forts ever built
- Important populations of wildlife, including fish, sea turtles, birds, coral, lobsters, and many others
- Some of our countries greatest submerged cultural resources, including more than 300 historic shipwrecks
- An important resting spot for migrating birds
- Two historic lighthouses

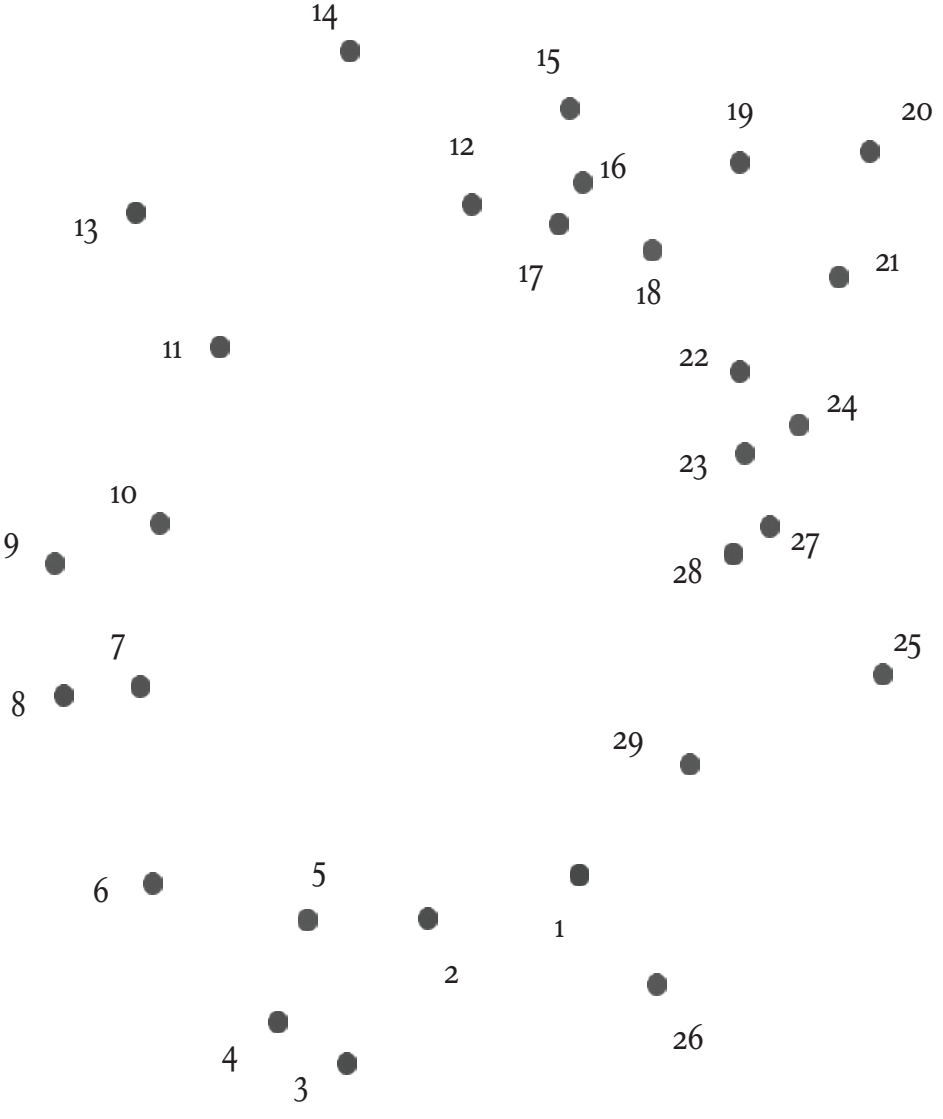


How to Become a Junior Ranger

It's simple and fun! As you explore the park, fill out this handbook. When you are finished, bring it to the Bookstore.

Who Am I?

Connect the dots to find out.

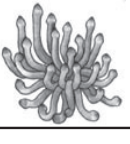


*Hint:

As an adult, I weigh 300-500 pounds.

Scavenger Hunt Bingo

Dry Tortugas National Park is home to many different plants, animals, and important historic artifacts. Circle each item below that you find. Find five items in a line (up, down, across, or diagonally) to score a BINGO!

Bakery	Coral	Crab	Dr. Mudd's Cell	Frigate Bird
Conch	Tree	Jellyfish	Shot Furnace	Snapper
Seagrass	Bush Key		Cannon	Barracks
Shark	Chapel	Musket	Barracuda	
Gull		Sea Star	Anemone 	Gunpowder Magazine

Busy Crossroads

The Dry Tortugas are located at a busy crossroads. Like an underwater highway, the Gulf Stream carries warm water, ships, and marine life by the Tortugas.

- Mark the Gulf Stream on your map by drawing a line from the Yucatan (in Mexico) to the Bahamas

Large ships pass the Tortugas everyday.

- Draw the shipping lanes from New York to the southern tip of Florida. Next, connect the southern tip of Florida with New Orleans

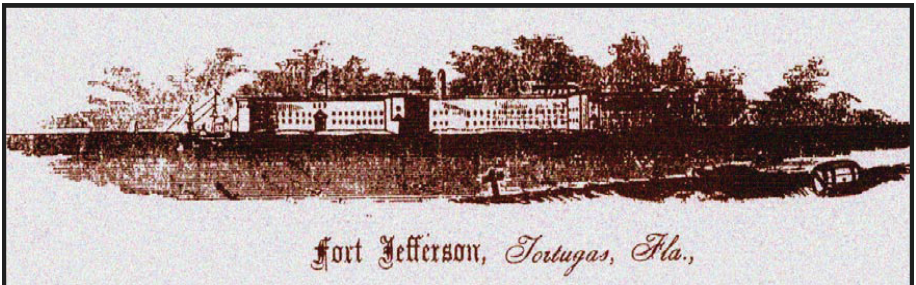
The Tortugas are a welcome sight for migrating birds.

- Connect North America with winter nesting areas in South America

- Is YOUR home on this map?

Letter Home

Imagine yourself stationed at Fort Jefferson in 1864...
How would you describe life at the Fort?



Fort Jefferson, Tortugas, Fla.,

November 1, 1864

Dear Family:

I am working in the bakery at Fort Jefferson. A prisoner recently complained that our bread is a mixture of _____ , _____ , _____ and _____ .

There are nearly 2,000 people living on this remote island. Importing enough fresh fruit and vegetables for so many people is very difficult. Many of us have painful bleeding gums caused by _____.

Getting enough drinking water is another serious problem. The fort has _____ cisterns that can hold _____ gallons of water. Unfortunately many of these cisterns _____ allowing sea water to _____ in. Most of our drinking water is now ruined.

The fort is surrounded by beautiful water and coral reefs. Fishing and swimming are our favorite hobbies. Coral is made of tiny living animals called polyps. We are very careful not to touch or stand on coral because it is very _____ .

Signed,

Dry Tortugas National Park

Junior Ranger Pledge:

As a Junior Ranger, I _____(your name)_____,

promise to help protect

Dry Tortugas National Park,

my community, and the Earth

by being an active and responsible

steward of the environment.

STAMP

_____

Junior Ranger Signature

_____

Park Ranger Signature

Cut along the dotted line to remove your certificate from the book.