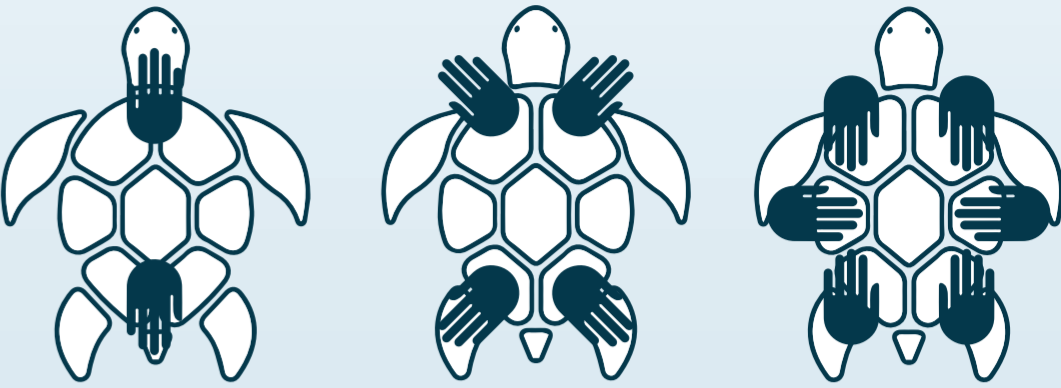


What to do if you suspect a sea turtle is sick or injured

Sea Turtles are listed as endangered and are a protected species nationally. Response is required and appropriate professionals need to be contacted.

Handling a Sea Turtle



Handling needs to be safe for both the turtle and the carer. Turtles can bite and have powerful front flippers so handle cautiously.

If necessary to handle a sea turtle, lift using the shell, distributing weight evenly using multiple people to complete the lift as needed.

It's best not to lift by the flippers. If you must lift using flippers, hold at the base of the flipper, not the tip and ensure someone is also lifting from the back of shell.

Transporting & Securing Sea Turtles

- If possible, secure turtle using harness or appropriate sized tub and consider transportation e.g. will not slide or be tipped over.
- Place in quiet, shaded area. Never leave the turtle in sun or a confined space (e.g. car boot).
- Keep animal moist (running water is not necessary) use damp towels to assist- unless transporting in an air-conditioned vehicle or in cold weather.
- Cover turtle's eyes with towel/cloth to reduce stress. Do not cover nostrils or mouth.

Beached Sea Turtles & Hatchlings

It is unusual for healthy turtles to beach themselves in South East Queensland, so if you find a beached turtle, look for any noticeable issues and follow the flow chart.



If you come across hatchlings only intervene if there are any noticeable issues or injuries. Inform 1300 130 372 of sighting, noting location.

Deceased Sea Turtles & Checking for Response

If you are unsure if a turtle is alive or dead, check for signs of life. You can do this by gently pulling on a flipper or touching the corner of the eye and looking for any reflex actions (flinching, retracting, blinking).

Deceased turtles can still provide a lot of useful information for conservation managers, so please note location (screenshot of map app if possible) and report incident to 1300 130 372.



YES

1. If it is easy and safe to do so, carefully retrieve sea turtle. Lift using shell, avoid lifting by flippers.
2. Place sea turtle on towel or soft surface. They do not need to be in water and can be transported dry.
3. Inspect turtle for injuries. Consult flow chart relevant to specific injury/illness.

NO

- Take photos and note location (if possible, screenshot your location on map app).
- Call 1300 130 372.

Boat Strike



Is sea turtle injured and able to be handled/transported?

NO

Boat strike is serious, sea turtle will require veterinary examination. Note location and report incident to 1300 130 372.

Buoyancy Issues



Does the sea turtle actually need assistance?

Turtles bask in the sun, on the shore or at the surface of the water. If startled, turtles take some time to establish normal buoyancy which can appear as though turtle has a floating problem.

Watch the turtle for a few minutes, if turtle remains stressed and unable to dive, it will require assistance.

YES

Refer to handling and transporting opposite. Note location (screenshot of map app if possible) and report incident to 1300 130 372.

Disease



Does the diseased sea turtle have visible tumours or show neurological issues, e.g. swimming in circles?

The use of gloves when handling is recommended.

Fishing Gear Ingestion



Has the sea turtle swallowed hook/lure and requires medical attention?

Never retrieve turtle by pulling in the line. If you can't retrieve, cut line close to the sea turtle but leave a small piece (approx. 1inch) trailing. Note location (screenshot of map app if possible) and report incident to 1300 130 372.

YES

Turtle needs medical help.

- Cut line to relieve pressure, tape end of line to turtle to prevent turtle swallowing rest of line. This will assist vet in removing ingested item.
- Refer to handling and securing opposite
- Note location (screenshot of map app if possible) and report incident to 1300 130 372.

NO

If you're confident turtle hasn't ingested fishing gear and there is no injury to turtle you can release, note location (screenshot of map app if possible) and report incident to 1300 130 372.

Fishing Gear Entanglement



Can you remove line without injury? Could you remove all of the line?

YES

Do not remove line if embedded in turtle's skin.

If line is only superficial, remove line carefully, ensuring no damage to turtle. Do not throw fishing gear back into environment.

If turtle has no injuries you can release it, note location (screenshot of map app if possible) and report incident to 1300 130 372.

If in doubt, leave line for removal by vet.

NO

Turtle needs medical help. Call 1300 130 372.

- Refer to handling and transporting opposite
- Note location (screenshot of map app if possible) and report incident to 1300 130 372.

If in doubt, call the QLD Government Wildlife Hotline on 1300 130 372