



CLEARWATER MARINE AQUARIUM

PRESS RELEASE

Clearwater Marine Aquarium to Release Sea Turtles Cheetah and Elektra February 2 at Sandpearl Resort

Clearwater, FL (February 1, 2016) – Clearwater Marine Aquarium (CMA), a marine life rescue center, will be releasing two sea turtles back to the Gulf of Mexico tomorrow, February 2, 2015.

Aptly named, Cheetah's recovery at CMA was rather speedy. The Kemp's ridley turtle arrived at CMA only last week on January 26, 2016. Cheetah was one of the nearly 30 turtles rescued by CMA that week that were cold-stunned. As with the other recently recovered turtles, Cheetah was deeply affected by the cooler water temperatures, causing his circulatory system to slow. With a clean bill of health from CMA veterinarian, Dr. Shelly Marquardt, Cheetah has fully recovered and is ready to return to the gulf.

Elektra, a young green sea turtle, was rescued by the CMA Stranding Team on June 17, 2015. Caught in a gill net, the turtle was discovered with pink tumors on its body. Upon arrival at CMA, it was concluded that Elektra had the Fibropapilloma virus, a highly contagious condition commonly found in green sea turtles. At CMA, these tumors are typically treated multiple times with a laser before the turtle is clear. In Elektra's case, the tumors were cleared in a single surgery. With no tumors emerging post-operation, Elektra is cleared for release.

For CMA, these speedy recoveries are not only a testament to the hard work of the turtle team, but also a financial relief for the aquarium. The average cost of rehabilitation for one sea turtle at CMA is \$300 a day; quick turnarounds allow the team to help more turtles. To join Duke Energy in support of CMA's efforts to rescue, rehabilitate, and release sea turtles, please visit www.seewinter.com.

Turtle release details:

- Media and the public are invited to attend the release on Clearwater Beach at Sandpearl Resort. Please arrive by 10.30 am, February 2.
- Media should inform the Sandpearl Resort valet they are covering the Clearwater Marine Aquarium turtle release.

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About Clearwater Marine Aquarium:

Clearwater Marine Aquarium (CMA) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit working marine rescue center dedicated to preserving our marine life and environment while inspiring the human spirit through leadership in education, research, rescue, rehabilitation and release. CMA is home to rescued dolphins, sea turtles, river otters, stingrays, nurse sharks and more. Winter the dolphin's story of survival, after injury that caused her to lose her tail, has impacted millions of people around the world. A major motion picture, *Dolphin Tale*, highlighted her life story in 2011. The sequel, *Dolphin Tale 2*, was released in September 2014 and features the incredible story of Hope, a young resident dolphin of CMA. The mission and potential to change people's lives differentiates Clearwater Marine Aquarium from every other aquarium in the world.

WE BELIEVE in preserving our marine life and environment while inspiring the human spirit through leadership in education, research, rescue, rehabilitation, and release.

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