



CLEARWATER MARINE
AQUARIUM™
MEDIA ALERT

Two Endangered Sea Turtles, Each Missing Flipper, to be Released by Clearwater Marine Aquarium

Turtles Rehabilitated After Fishing Gear Injuries

Clearwater, FL (Aug. 16, 2017) - Two rescued endangered Green sea turtles will be released back into the wild after rehabilitation at Clearwater Marine Aquarium (CMA). Both turtles, Urkel-O's and Eucalyptus, are sea turtles rescued by CMA after being harmed by fishing gear and both have a missing front right flipper. Urkel-O's flipper was amputated due to injury, while Eucalyptus was rescued with a healed amputation.

In May, Urkel-O's was found in Pasco County floating with fishing line entangling its front right flipper, causing it to be nearly fully detached. A fisherman brought the turtle to shore where it was picked up and transported to CMA by the Rescue Team for rehabilitation. The damage to its flipper was so severe it had to be removed. The turtle also had Fibropapilloma tumors, caused by a herpes-type virus, removed from its neck and flippers.

Eucalyptus, a juvenile Green sea turtle missing its front right flipper, was snagged by a fisherman's hook off Sand Key Fishing Pier in Pinellas County on Aug. 6. The fisherman removed the hook and brought the turtle to CMA for care. An assessment by CMA's veterinarian found no obvious wounds from the fishing hook, and its healed flipper was missing from an injury long ago.

Fishing equipment like monofilament fishing line and fishing hooks are very dangerous for turtles, especially trash in the ocean that isn't properly disposed. Turtles can get tangled in the line, causing flipper amputations, or they can swallow the line or hooks causing digestive problems.

"The rescue stories of these two turtles show us the importance of properly disposing our trash," says David Yates, CEO of Clearwater Marine Aquarium. *"Fishing lines and hooks are deadly to sea turtles and we are happy that our team was able to rescue, rehabilitate and release these two lucky survivors."*

Although both turtles are missing flippers, they can still live a full life and complete their migrations which can be hundreds of miles long. The turtles will be released on Thursday, August 17, 2017 at Honeymoon Island's Ranger Station at 11 a.m.

Additional Details:

- Release Date: Thursday, August 17, 2017
- Release will be held at Honeymoon Island Ranger Station at approximately 11 a.m.
- **The event is not open to the public. Please do not announce to public prior to release.**
- **Media can attend on a RSVP basis.** Contact: Julia Anderson: janderson@cmaquarium.org
- CMA will live broadcast the release on Facebook on the Clearwater Marine Aquarium page.
- Media will be provided still photography and video of the release upon request.

For further information, contact Julia Anderson at janderson@cmaquarium.org or 727.686.3499.

About Clearwater Marine Aquarium:

Clearwater Marine Aquarium (CMA) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit working marine rescue center dedicated to 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 an 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 any other aquarium in the world.

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

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