

Ruffles the Rescued Seahorse Found by Tourists at Beach

Clearwater Marine Aquarium caring for seahorse impacted by storm

CLEARWATER, FL (Oct. 12, 2018) – Clearwater Marine Aquarium (CMA) rescued and is rehabilitating a female lined seahorse, named Ruffles, after she was found washed up on Belleair Beach by a beachgoer. CMA suspects the rough waves following Hurricane Michael impacted the small seahorse.

Lou Banholzer found Ruffles on Thurs., Oct. 11 while looking for shark teeth in Belleair Beach, FL. Banholzer and his wife have been vacationing in Florida for 14 years from their Indianapolis home. Banholzer noted there were more shells than usual along the shoreline after Hurricane Michael ripped through the Gulf of Mexico the day prior. While searching for shark teeth, Banholzer noticed something moving on the sand ahead of him. As he approached, he discovered a tiny seahorse with seaweed wrapped around it. Banholzer says he knew the seahorse was in distress, as it was 15 – 20 feet inland from the shoreline. He promptly placed it in a container of water and called the CMA rescue team for help. Banholzer’s grandchildren love to visit Winter and Hope at Clearwater Marine Aquarium when they join him on vacation, so he knew all about CMA’s rescue, rehabilitation and release efforts.

“It’s remarkable that along the 26 miles of Pinellas county beaches, Ruffles was found just in time to be saved and her rescuers knew who to call,” says David Yates, CEO. “The odds of this happening are almost zero. It’s our honor to rescue, rehabilitate and soon release such a fragile and essential creature.”

CMA has drawn international attention for its seahorse rescue efforts, including the famous rescue, rehab and release of [Cheeto the lucky seahorse](#), watched by millions around the world. Cheeto was followed by the rescue, rehab and release of Funyun and Frito.

CMA staff is monitoring Ruffles and she will be released soon. Visit Ruffles at Clearwater Marine Aquarium or check her out on the [Ruffles Cam](#).

Media Information:

- CMA staff available for interviews upon request.
- The Ruffles cam is live on CMA’s website: seewinter.com/ruffles-seahorse-webcam
- [Click here](#) to download video.
- 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.