



## CLEARWATER MARINE AQUARIUM

# PRESS RELEASE

### Clearwater Marine Aquarium Set to Release Four Sea Turtles

- Sea turtles suffered fish hook ingestions, boat strikes, pneumonia and a virus

**Clearwater, FL (March 25, 2015)** – Clearwater Marine Aquarium (CMA), a marine life rescue center, has successfully rehabilitated four sea turtles and will be releasing all four back into their original waters this week. Three will be released on Honeymoon Island Thursday, March 26 at 10.30am. The fourth will be released on the East Coast of Florida.

Charger, a green sea turtle, was found in a St. Petersburg, Florida marina on April 13, 2014 thin, weak, covered in algae and deemed to be a victim of a boat strike. The wound started at the rear of his shell (both top and bottom) and traced approximately 1/3 up his body. The animal care team at CMA treated Charger so he was strong enough to swim full time in deep water while ensuring his shell would heal properly. Charger weighed under four pounds at intake and is now up to a healthy 10 pounds upon release.

Ricky Bobby was caught by a fisherman in Indian Rocks Beach on July 26, 2014. The Kemp's ridley sea turtle had ingested not one, but two fish hooks that caused a tear in his esophagus, which precluded him from being able to eat food. He thus received a nutritional supplement called Total Parenteral Nutrition (TPN) intravenously for two months until his esophagus healed enough for him to handle food intake. Ricky Bobby also exhibited shell (carapace) wounds, likely due to a boat strike. Both the esophagus and carapace have healed and Ricky Bobby is cleared for release.

Yoda, a Kemp's ridley sea turtle, was rescued by boaters near Clearwater Pass on November 9, 2014, found floating near the surface. Not showing interest in food, Yoda received saline tubings and fish gruel as a source of feedings. In addition to the nutritional issues, it was discovered Yoda had a slight case of pneumonia. Steady nutritional improvement and lungs that are now free of pneumonia give Yoda a clean bill of health.

California arrived at CMA on December 1, 2014 from the East Coast, where she will be released. This green sea turtle contracted the fibropapilloma virus, with tumors growing around her front and rear flippers and tail area. Following nutritional improvement and tumor removal, California is cleared for release.

Since 2010, CMA has provided medical care that enabled 370 sea turtles to be released back into their natural habitat. Duke Energy helps support Clearwater Marine Aquarium's sea turtle rescue and rehabilitation program.

#### **Turtle release details:**

-Media are invited to attend the release at Honeymoon Island. Please arrive by 10.30 am, March 26.

- Release location is right before the entrance to Honeymoon Island State Park. Turn right at the dirt road located just before the main entrance.

###

**Media Contacts:** Amy Binder, Clearwater Marine Aquarium, [abinder@cmaquarium.org](mailto:abinder@cmaquarium.org), 727.441.1790 x242

**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 rescue 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 any 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.

249 Windward Passage | Clearwater, FL 33767 | 727.441.1790 | 727.445.1139 f | SeeWinter.com

A Florida non-profit 501(c)(3) organization