



CLEARWATER MARINE AQUARIUM

MEDIA ALERT

Clearwater Marine Aquarium Rescues and Releases Leatherback Sea Turtle

Clearwater, FL (May 1, 2015) - Clearwater Marine Aquarium joined forces with the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office to rescue a leatherback sea turtle today, believed to be 400-500 pounds. The sea turtle was found a mile and a half west of Clearwater Pass with the rope of a crab trap looped around its neck. The buoy was still attached to the trap and as the massive turtle attempted to dive down, the rope continued to tighten around its neck. The crab trap was also tangled around its right front flipper.

Rescuers were able to successfully disentangle the crab trap while keeping the turtle in the water and subsequently set it free. Clearwater Marine Aquarium's stranding team assessed the animal's health, got approximate length and weight, and released it. The leatherback sea turtle is the largest of all living turtles.

If you encounter a sea turtle or any marine life that seems to be in distress, immediately contact Clearwater Marine Aquarium's Emergency Stranding Hotline at 727-441-1790 Ext. 1.

Video of the leatherback attached to the crab trap's buoy can be seen here: <https://youtu.be/g6L5rEAMgvg>.

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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 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.

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