

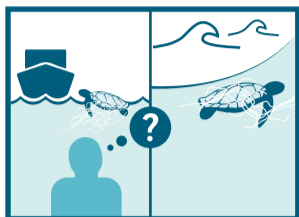
# Finding an Entangled Turtle

A step-by-step guide on what to do when you find an entangled sea turtle in the Maldives



**OLIVE RIDLEY PROJECT**

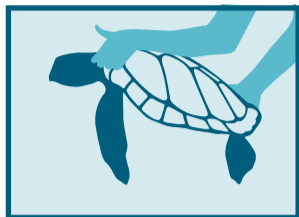
1



**Stop, think and assess the situation.**

If the turtle is in the water, carefully retrieve it onto boat or dry land.

2



Place one hand on the shell area behind the head (or over each shoulder if two people) and the other hand between the back flippers above the tail to lift the turtle.

3



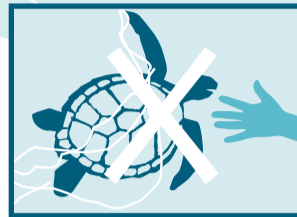
Lift the debris along with the turtle, so that it does not weigh the turtle down. **DO NOT** pick it up by the debris.

4



If the debris is attached to the reef, use a knife to cut it loose.

5



Be careful to keep fingers away from their beak, their bite is very painful!

Once in a dry, ideally shaded, area, keep the turtle flat on its bottom shell. **NEVER** place the turtle on its back. Clear objects near the turtle so it does not injure itself.

Photograph/video the turtle including from above, both sides of its head, its injuries and the debris.

Carefully remove the debris from the turtle. **DO NOT** remove anything that is cutting deep into its skin or coming out of the turtle's tail or mouth: these might be very deep inside the turtle so leave them for the veterinary surgeon to remove.

Call/WhatsApp/Viber ORP's 24/7 sea turtle veterinary hotline **Maldives 955 2205** to consult our Veterinary Team who will do a video assessment of the situation and give further instructions.

Assess the injuries:

Is the turtle badly injured?

NO

YES

1

If the turtle has no deep wounds and is moving actively, the Veterinary Team might ask you to prepare for release.

2

To release the turtle, carefully pick it up by the front and back of the top shell: place one hand over the shoulder of one flipper behind the head and the other hand between the back flippers above the tail. **DO NOT** pick up sea turtles by flippers, the head or the tail.

3

Lower the turtle gently into the sea. Let go of both hands simultaneously. **DO NOT** push or throw the turtle into the water. If on the beach, the turtle can be released on the sand near the water line.

4

After release, watch carefully to observe if the turtle can swim and dive.

Can the turtle dive?

NO

If it is struggling to swim or dive, retrieve the turtle back onto the boat or beach.

YES

1

Successful release!

2

If you have not already called ORP's hotline **Maldives 955 2205**, do so now to report the incident and share the data.

3

Take the marine debris to the closest waste management facility.

Call/WhatsApp/Viber ORP's 24/7 Sea Turtle Veterinary Team hotline Maldives 955 2205 for assessment and further instructions.

1

Place the turtle in a quiet shaded area away from people.

2

Only cover the shell with a wet towel if the turtle is in the sun, not if it is in the shade. **DO NOT** cover the head.

3

Record data: carapace (shell) length and width, GPS coordinates and injuries sustained.

4

Follow instructions from ORP's Veterinary Team.

5

## Transfer the turtle to the Rescue Centre

If the turtle needs veterinary assistance, it has to be transported to the Marine Turtle Rescue Centre in Baa Atoll. The Veterinary Team will provide instructions and coordinate the transfer.

A transportation box of appropriate dimensions will be needed for the transport. The Veterinary Team will give you details about the box requirements.

Place the turtle on a dry towel in the transport box. **DO NOT** add any other items to the box. **DO NOT** cover the turtle with a towel.