

Rescue a Sea Turtle



**New England
Aquarium**

Protecting the blue planet

Materials:

- Stuffed animal
- Box
- Towel
- Band-Aids
- Thermometer
- Paper & Pencil
- Ruler or measuring tape

Optional:

- Label sticker
- Stethoscope

As you may have learned from our Facebook live today, it's a lot of work to take care of sick sea turtles. Follow along with these steps to learn more about how we care for our sick turtles and how you can practice at home!

Print and fill in or copy this chart to a piece of paper to help monitor your stuffed animals progress.

Make this chart for your animal and fill it in as you follow along below!

Type of Animal	
ID Number	
Length	
Width	
Temperature	
Heartbeats/min	
Food	

Step 1:

Volunteers walk their local beaches looking for stranded or hurt turtles to bring back the aquarium.

Practice at home: Set up your stuffed animals around a room and see if you can find one who needs help.



Step 2:

We carefully and safely transport them back to the aquarium using banana boxes and towels to help support them.

Practice at home: Can you find a box or build something to bring your stuffed animal back to your home hospital?



Step 3:

We make sure we have all our supplies ready to help the turtles as quickly as possible.

Practice at home: Build a supply kit to make sure you have all the supplies needed to help your stuffed animal. Create any supplies you might need.



Step 4:

We place each turtle on a towel donut to help them breath while the doctor helps them.

Practice at home: Set up a towel so your animal has a safe and comfortable place to breath while getting help.



The towel donut! These are a staple at every sea turtle rescue station. A rolled-up towel like this is a comfortable place for turtles to rest during their exam. It's soft, their flippers can hang over the sides and assistants can gently yet firmly grip the sides of the turtle's shell so they don't flap themselves right off the table. Here's an example of a work station ready for a new patient.

Step 5:

We give each turtle an ID number to keep all of their medical needs together.

Practice at home: See if you can gently place a sticker or label on your stuffed animal. We also measure each turtle to see how wide and long they are. Can you measure your turtle and write down their dimensions? Use the chart above to record your information



Step 6:

Next, we check the turtle for any cuts, scrapes, or bruises. We use honey as a natural antiseptic to help their cuts heal.

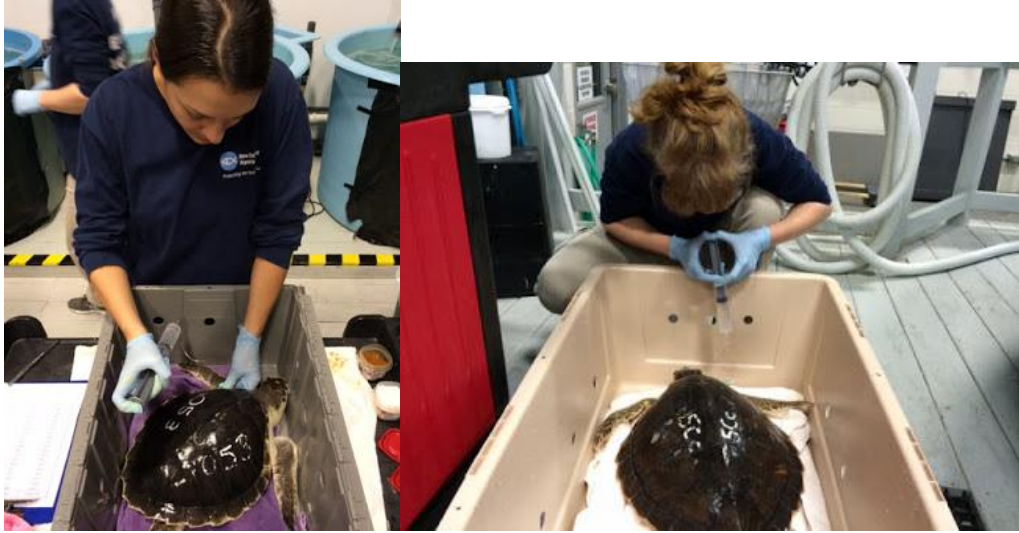
Practice at home: Look over your stuffed animal's body to see if they need any band aids.



Step 7:

Turtle's often come in dehydrated and very tired. Sometimes we used a syringe to make sure the turtles get enough fluids.

Practice at home: Make sure your stuffed animal gets lots of water and rest.



Each turtle is given a dose of fluids

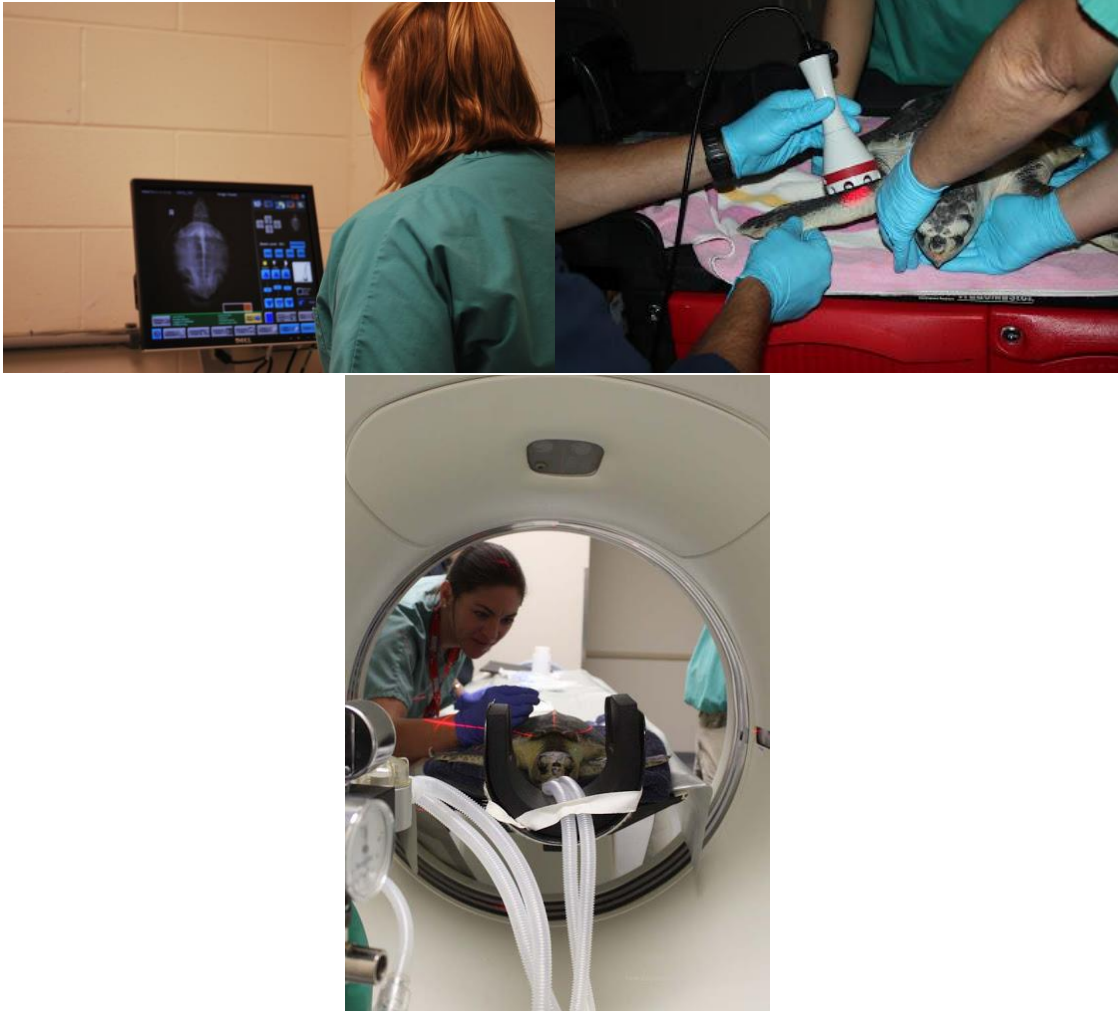
Step 8: Turtles that are very sick can have a very slow heartbeat, especially if they are cold. When they arrive at the aquarium sometimes it can be as slow as 1 beat per minute.

Practice at home: Can you listen to your stuffed animal's heart beat and time how often you hear it. Can you compare that to how often you can hear your own? You can use a stethoscope to hear it or put your hand on your chest and feel how often it beats. Please let your grown up help you find your heart beat.



Step 9: Sometimes the turtles need special procedures to help them feel better. They can get x-rays, ultrasounds, CT scans, laser treatments, or even acupuncture.

Practice at home: Pretend to give these tests to your stuffed animal to check on their insides.



Step 10: Turtles that need to be rescued usually swim in cold water for a while. Since these animals are cold blooded their body temperature is whatever temperature the water or air they are in is. This can make their internal temperature very very cold. We need to slowly warm the turtle bodies back up. This can be done by using an incubator.

Practice at home: Can you wrap your stuffed animals gently in blankets to make sure they are warm?



Step 11: Once our turtles start to feel better, we need to make sure they will do well back on their own. We watch our turtle swim to make sure they are strong enough and that they can find food for themselves.

Practice at home: Can you monitor your stuff animals progress to see if they are well enough to be released back into the wild.



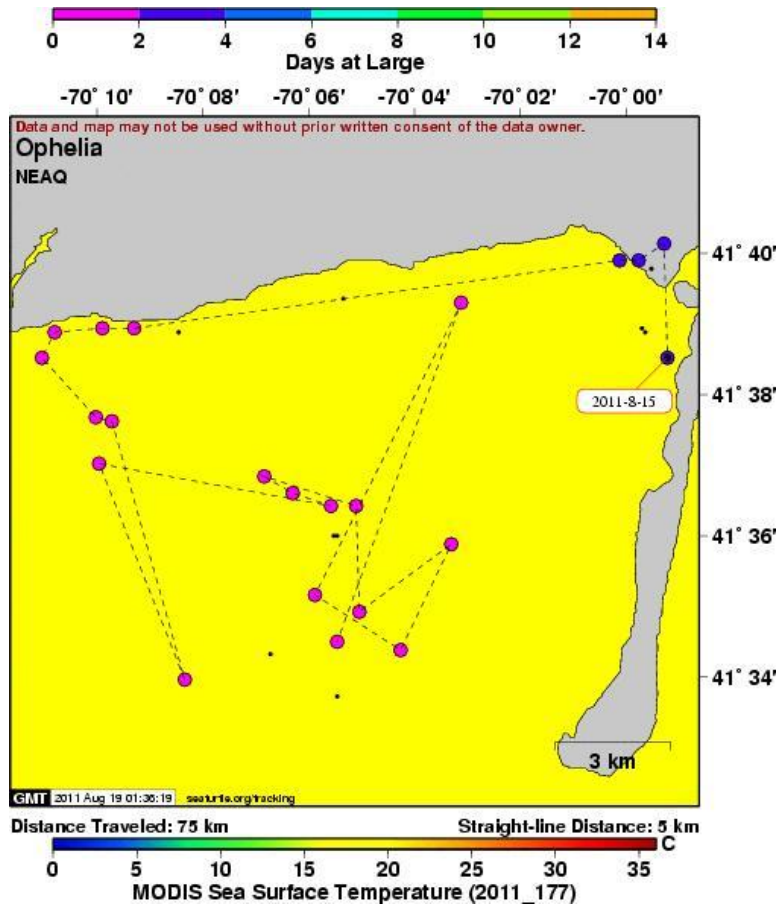


Practice at home: What do you think a sea turtle likes to eat? How much does a turtle need to eat in a day? Can you look at our rescue blog to find out? <http://rescue.neaq.org/>

Step 11: Once the turtles are healthy, we release them back to the ocean. If it is warm enough, we can release them along the beaches of places like Cape Cod. Sometimes we get help with flights transporting them to warmer waters down south. Each turtle also gets a tag so they can be identified if they ever get sick again. Sometimes we can follow these tags and watch our turtle's journeys by satellite.

Practice at home: Please check out <http://seaturtle.org/tracking/> to track some of our turtles' progress.





The above map shows where 'Ophelia' has traveled since her release. She still seems to be in the area around Monomoy. You can follow her progress as well as adopt her [here](#).