INJURIES AND FIRST AID PROcedures FOR ENTANGLED WILDLIFE

The Olive Ridley Project Workshop
17 August 2014, Male, Maldives
OUTLINE

- Why Olive Ridleys?
- Injuries sustained
- What to do if you find an injured turtle
  - Entangled
  - Floating
- Basic First Aid Procedures
- Who to call?
- Injuries to other animals
WHY THE OLIVE RILDEY?

- Olive Ridley turtles are open ocean species
  - Little data on juveniles
- They are attracted to nets & flotsam as a source of food & shelter
- Make long migrations & nest in mass events
ARRIBADA (DECEMBER – APRIL)
TURTLE ENTANGLEMENT FIGURES

Turtle Entanglement

- NE-Monsoon 67%
- SW-Monsoon 33%

Species found Entangled

- 42% Chance of encountering turtles entangled
- 108 Turtles since 2011 minimum
- 67% Juveniles, 21% Female 5% Males
- January is peak month – 20 in January 2014.

Data courtesy of Olive Ridley Project and Marine Savers.
MINOR INJURIES FROM GHOST NETS
OLD INJURIES

© Velassaru Resort

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FLIPPER LACERATIONS

Photos © Marine Savers
NECK LACERATIONS

Photos © Marine Savers
DAMAGE TO CARAPACE

Photos © Marine Savers
PARTIAL/ FULL AMPUTATIONS

Photos © Marine Savers
SCAVENGING BY PREDATORS

Photos © Marine Savers
DEATH
BUOYANCY PROBLEMS

- Inability to dive
- May be due to stress, internal injury, dehydration, or trapped air
- Wait 5-10 minutes to let turtle relax
WHAT TO DO IF YOU FIND AN ENTANGLED TURTLE?

- Assess the situation: make sure it’s safe!
- If possible, pull the net using a stick or a hook. There may be sharp objects hidden inside. Wear gloves to reduce the risk of injury.
- The turtle can be cut free in the water or brought on board a boat or to shore.

Photo & Video © Marine Savers
RESCUING AN ENTANGLED TURTLE

- Place the turtle in a quiet, shaded area and keep cool, wet towels on its carapace and head.
- Minimize the amount of activity around the turtle!
- Assess the turtle’s injuries by examining the entire body and flippers.
- If the turtle appears strong and its injuries are superficial, attempt to release the turtle back into the water.
- Watch the turtle for a few moments to make sure it is diving properly.
RESCUE FROM BOAT
TRANSPORTING AN INJURED TURTLE
REMEMBER TO TAKE THE NET!
WHAT IF THE TURTLE IS INJURED?

- If there is bleeding, try putting pressure on the wound(s) with clean towels/bandages.
- If there is a wound at the shoulder, try to immobilize the flipper to prevent further damage.
- Covering the turtle’s eyes with a towel may help to calm it.
- DO NOT attempt medical procedures without advice/expertise!
ADVANCED FIRST AID PROCEDURES

- Contact your resort doctor for assistance! DO NOT attempt yourself!
- Wound cleaning with betadine or iodine
- Topical antibiotic creams
- Local anesthetic
- Suturing of wounds
WHAT IF THE TURTLE CANNOT DIVE?

- If the turtle is in distress, bring it back to the boat or shore safely.
- Check for signs of injury.
- Measure carapace length and weight. Often, floating turtles have old injuries.
- Keep turtle in quiet, shaded area & minimize activity.
- Dehydration: eyes may be sunken & turtle may be lethargic. Place fresh water to help hydrate.
- DO NOT attempt to feed the turtle as this can shock its system.

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WHO TO CONTACT?

- Contact 984-2001 (Four Seasons Kuda Huraa) or the Olive Ridley Project Facebook group for advice.
- DO NOT attempt to feed the turtle or administer medications without medical advice!
- Measure the turtle’s carapace length, and if possible take (or estimate) its weight. Submit info to www.oliveridleyproject.org
- Ensure that you keep the net and follow the protocol on www.oliveridleyproject.org to document the net samples
INJURIES TO OTHER ANIMALS
Thank-you!