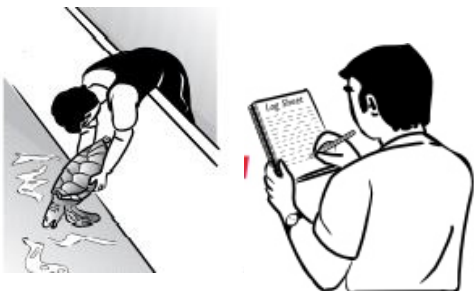


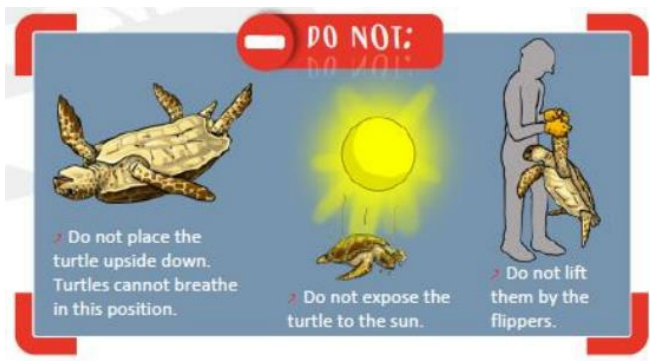
If a turtle become inactive, keep the rear flippers raised about 20 cm off the deck. Keep the turtle covered with wet cloth, in a shaded area until it recovers.



After the turtle recovers gently release it back to the water, then record the identified species.



Do not place turtles upside down on the deck or expose turtles to direct sunshine or lift turtles by their flippers.



Guidelines for gillnet fishing

If a turtle gets entangled in a gillnet, stop hauling the net, then gently take the turtle onboard with the net



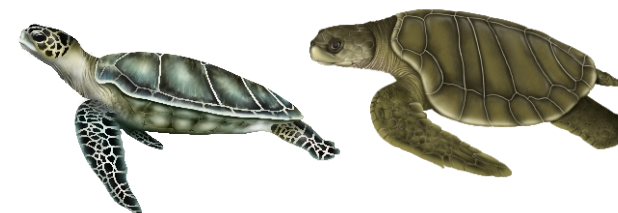
Once the turtle is safely onboard, cut the net with a net cutter to untangle the turtle. Then, gently release the turtle back to the water.



References

- Capricorn Marine Environmental Pty) LTD (CapMarine).2021. Best Practice Handling of SSI
- Indian Ocean Tuna Commission. 2018. Marine Turtle Identification Cards. Releasing hooked turtle, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and Secretariat for the Pacific Community
- National Marine Fisheries Service Southeast Fisheries Science Center. 2008. Revised 2010. Careful release protocols for sea turtle release with minimal injury. NOAA Technical Memorandum NMFS-SEFSC-580, 130 pp.
- Razzaque, S.A. 2020. Safe Handling & release for Gillnet Fisheries for Whale Shark, Manta & Devil Rays and Sea turtles. In: IOTC - 16th Working Party on Ecosystems and Bycatch. IOTC-2020-WPEB16-26_Rev1, Online
- Poisson, F., Vernet, A. L., Séret, B., Dagorn, L. 2014. Good practices to reduce the mortality of sharks and rays caught incidentally by tropical tuna purse seiners. EU FP7 project #210496 MADE, Deliverable 7.2., 30p.

International best practices for the safe handling and live release of sea turtles



Five species of sea turtle - loggerhead turtle, green turtle, hawksbill turtle, leatherback turtle and olive ridley turtle - are commonly found in Sri Lankan waters. Sea turtles are protected under Fauna and Flora Protection (Amendment), No.22 of 2009 and the Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Act, No 2 of 1996. Sea turtles are protected under Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora Agreement.

These guidelines have been prepared for Sri Lankan fishermen by the Fishing Operations Division of the Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources to promote international best practices for the safe handling and live release of sea turtles and in accordance with Indian Ocean Tuna Commission Resolution 12/04, on the conservation of sea turtles.

The species and condition upon release of every sea turtle caught must be recorded in the catch datasheet

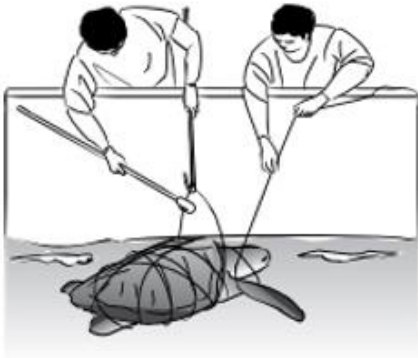


For further information or details please contact
Director General, Department of Fisheries and
Aquatic Resources (dg@fisheriesdept.gov.lk)

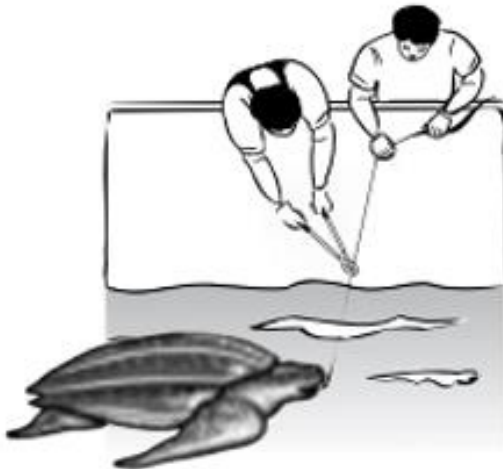
Guidelines for longline fishing

If the turtle cannot be lifted safely onboard

Remove the hook by using a long-handled 'pig tail' de-hooker. Use a long-handled line cutter to cut and untangle the line.



If it is not possible to de-hook the turtle, cut the line as close to the turtle as possible, using a long-handled line cutter.



If the turtle can be lifted safely onboard

Lift the turtle onboard by using a dip-net or an animal sling.



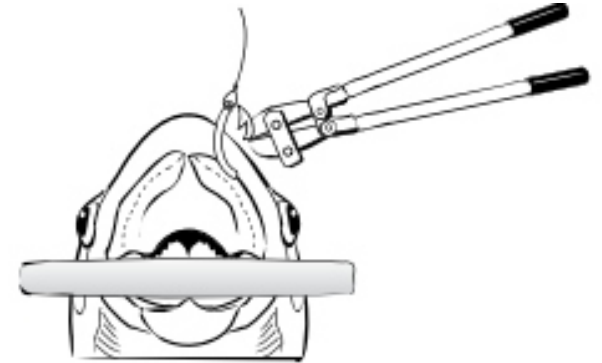
Once onboard, place the turtle in a car tire to keep it calm. Always hold the turtle by the side of the shell.



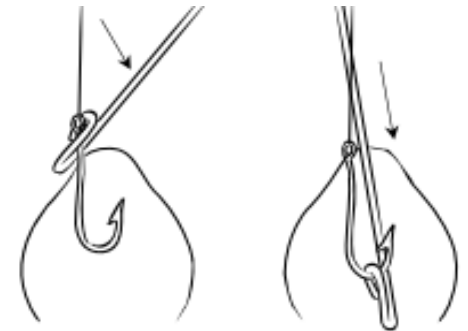
Open the mouth of the turtle using a piece of wood or a mouth gag.



Use a bolt cutter to cut the the hook, before removing the hook using pliers.



Use a short-handled de-hooker or deep-hooked de-hooker to remove the hook from inside the mouth or throat.



If the point of insertion of the hook is not clear, then cut the line as close to the hook as possible, using a line cutter

