



QUOIN ISLAND
TURTLE REHABILITATION CENTRE



Lifting a sea turtle

Do not lift a sea turtle unless: instructed by our staff/a trained stranding responder or in case of an emergency.

Moving a sick or injured sea turtle can harm both the turtle *and* the person trying to help. If done incorrectly, lifting the turtle can result in serious injuries or even have a deadly result for the sea turtle.

Sea turtles need to be lifted properly to ensure no further damage is caused. Fingers can pierce through the carapace (shell) or plastron (belly), and lifting up by the shell can puncture organs, causing lethal injuries.

Lifting a small sea turtle (up until approx. 50cm shell length):

- Pick up with both arms underneath the plastron, offering support. Do not pick up with hands, as this may cause your fingers to pierce through the shell/plastron on a sick/underweight sea turtle.
- Restrict front flipper movement by holding one flipper with hand and blocking other with arm (see top photo).

Lifting a medium sea turtle (up until approx. 80cm shell length):

- Always use a tarp (or stretcher) if possible. Slide tarp underneath sea turtle and lift with 2-4 people.
- If no tarp available, pick up with at least 2 people. Each person lifts from front flipper with one hand, as close to the shoulder as possible. Do not lift from tip or middle of flipper. Both individuals have second arm underneath belly for support. Do not use hands to pick up, as this may cause your fingers to pierce through their carapace/plastron on a sick/underweight sea turtle. Use your full arm (see middle photo).

Lifting a large sea turtle (80cm shell length and above):

- Always use a tarp (or stretcher) if possible. Slide tarp underneath sea turtle and lift with 4 people (see bottom photo).
- Only if no tarp available, pick up with at least 4 people. 2 people lift one front flipper each, as close to the shoulder joint you can get with both hands. Do not lift from tip or middle of flipper. 2 other people lift with arms underneath rear of belly for support. Do not use hands to pick up, as this may cause your fingers to pierce through their carapace/plastron on a sick/underweight sea turtle. Use your full arm.

Thank you for your help! We wouldn't be able to save sea turtles without you!

Please phone our centre directly if you have spotted a beached or floating sea turtle:

Turtle Rescue Hotline
0408 431 304

