



## Turtle Rescue and Conservation



**SEA LIFE teams across the globe rescue and care for hundreds of injured and stranded turtles. Our SEA LIFE aquariums in Texas, Istanbul and Australia have dedicated rehabilitation facilities for rescued sea turtles. Many of these turtles fully recover and are released back to the wild, but others sadly need life-long care which many SEA LIFE aquariums are able to provide.**

**As well as sea turtles, SEA LIFE also leads important programs to protect freshwater turtles. Many of our aquariums are home to freshwater turtles and terrapins that have been released into the wild by pet owners and our German SEA LIFE centres lead a breeding programme for the European Pond turtle.**

### **Caring for injured and stranded turtles**

All 7 species of sea turtle have suffered huge population declines in the last 100 years. As well as the threat of egg-poaching, adult turtles face many threats from entanglement in fishing nets and plastic litter to injuries from boat propellers. SEA LIFE is working in many ways to help prevent some of these threats, but also to rescue and care for those that are unlucky enough to be harmed.

- SEA LIFE has a long history working with the rescue and care of injured, sick and stranded sea turtles and many of our SEA LIFE centres provide long-term homes for non-releasable turtles.
- In 2019 alone SEA LIFE rescued 29 sea turtles. Our aquariums in Europe, Asia, USA and Australasia have released 85 sea turtles over the last 5 years.
- Many rescued turtles suffer from 'cold shock' after finding themselves in water that is too cold for them (often from being blown off course by storms) or are suffering from human related injuries such as being hit by boats or tangled in fishing gear.
- Satellite tags are attached to the released turtles, so we can keep an eye on their progress and gather vital data on where they feed and nest.



### SEA LIFE Trust turtle conservation campaigns

- SEA LIFE has supported a global campaign called Team Turtle led by our registered charity partner, the SEA LIFE Trust. Thousands of SEA LIFE visitors have pledged to help turtles by donating to the trust or making changes at home to reduce the risk of plastic entering the oceans.
- The funds raised for the SEA LIFE Trust have helped support dozens of conservation projects including a trial of LED lights in a Pacific gillnet fishery to reduce the number of turtles that get caught up and drown in them. Initial results indicated that the number of turtles caught could be reduced by 60%.

### Re-introduction of the European pond turtle – SEA LIFE Speyer and Hannover, Germany

- SEA LIFE Speyer is supporting a 20 year project in partnership with NABU to re-introduce the native European Pond Turtle (*Emys orbicularis*) to the Rhine River.
- Once abundant in the Rhine, European pond turtle populations have declined dramatically due to habitat loss and pollution.
- Speyer has captive bred and cared for up to 100 hatchlings at a time prior to release to the wild and the released turtles have now produced their own offspring!
- The aim of the project is to resettle 500 European pond turtles in Rhineland-Palatinate by the end of 2020.

