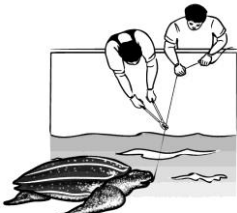
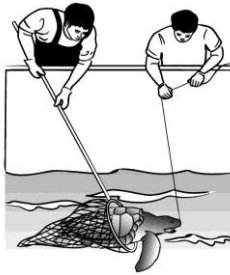
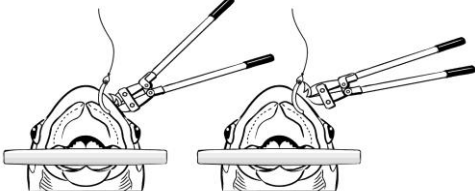







WCPFC Guidelines for the Handling of Sea Turtles

If a turtle is caught, the following steps should be taken to give it the best possible chance of survival. Operators of longline fishing vessels should follow Steps A to E if a sea turtle becomes hooked, and Steps A, C, D and E if it is entangled. If a sea turtle becomes entangled in a purse seine net, then operators should stop net roll as soon as the turtle comes out of the water, disentangle the turtle without injuring it and before resuming the net roll, then follow Steps A, C, D and E.

A	Assess the turtle's size: release the turtle if it is too big to handle safely, otherwise bring it on board without damaging it further	
 <p>If the turtle is too large to bring on board, stop the vessel and bring the turtle as close to the boat as possible without putting too much strain on the line. This is especially important if the turtle is hooked rather than entangled. Cut the line as close to the hook as practical and remove tangled line from before the turtle swims away.</p>		 <p>If the turtle is small then ideally use a dip net to lift the turtle on board. When bringing the animal on board, do not damage it further by lifting it using the hooked line or gaffing its body.</p>
B	Once the turtle is on board, place a piece of wood in the turtle's mouth so it cannot bite, then cut the hook or line	
 <p>If the hook is in the mouth, use a de-hooker to remove the hook from the turtle.</p> <p>Using a bolt cutter to remove the barb of the hook before removing the hook itself can reduce the chance of damaging the turtle during de-hooking.</p>		 <p>If the insertion point of the hook is not visible, remove as much line as possible without pulling too hard on the hook itself, and cut the line as close to the hook as practical.</p>
C	Assess the condition of the turtle before releasing it. When the turtle has recovered its strength, gently and promptly release it to the water. Resuscitation treatments may be applied to animals in bad condition.	
 <p>If the turtle is sluggish or not active when lifted on board, it may have water in its lungs. In this case the rear flippers should be raised about 20cm off the deck while it is recovering.</p>		 <p>If practicable, place the turtle in a secure shaded location of the boat and cover its body with wet towels. Do not spray the turtle in the face with water or cover its nostrils with the towel.</p>
D	Carefully return the turtle to the water	
<p>Gently put the turtle in the water head first, after slowing down or stopping the fishing vessel. Ensure that the turtle is clear of the vessel before motoring off.</p>		E Record the interaction in your logbook and inform your fisheries department
		<p>Identify and record the turtle species, if possible, and record any tag numbers.</p> 

HANDLING OF TURTLES ENTANGLED BY LONGLINE GEAR

The point of this guidance is to encourage removal of as much line as possible before the turtle is free to swim away.

Visually assess whether the turtle is **hooked or entangled**. If it is entangled then the following steps should be followed, depending on whether the turtle is **dead or alive**. Note that it may be difficult to tell if the turtle is dead or alive when it is still in the water.

(1) Turtle looks dead and is too big to bring onboard:

If the turtle is too **big** to bring onboard, cut loose as much of the tangled lines as possible using a line cutter.

(2) Turtle is alive but too big to bring onboard:

Visually assess if the turtle is:

- A) Entangled only: use the line cutter to cut off the tangled lines in the water.
- B) Entangled and hooked externally: remove the hook if possible and then use the line cutter to cut off the tangled lines in the water.
- C) Entangled and hooked internally: follow the established procedure for handling a hooked turtle.
- D) Entangled turtle (heavily entangled): a gaff may be used to restrain the turtle by the tangled lines. Use the line cutter to cut off the tangled lines in the water, taking care not to cut the lines that are used to control the turtle before other lines have been cut and removed. More than one person may be required to assist, in order to prevent the turtle swimming away while still tangled.

(3) Turtle is small enough to be brought onboard:

If the turtle is **alive** then established guidelines should be applied (comatose handling, revival, and release). If it is **dead**, it should be brought on board to be measured and identified.