

RESCUE, REHABILITATE, RELEASE

# turtle first responder



Do you know what to do if you find a stranded turtle on the beach?



The AQWA Foundation and other wildlife rescue groups rely on the community to alert us to turtle strandings, as well as help with initial care and transport if we can't get there immediately.

AQWA is home to a purpose-built Turtle Pool designed for the rehabilitation of sick and injured turtles, until they can be released back to the wild. Our expert marine-qualified staff care for turtles in this facility daily and are always ready to help, even outside of business hours.

If you visit the beach often, familiarise yourself with these crucial steps to become a Turtle First Responder!

## STEP BY STEP GUIDE FOR TURTLE FIRST RESPONDERS

- Before taking any steps to assist, always make sure you are not putting yourself or anyone else in any danger.
- Please *do not* put the turtle back into the water. If a turtle reaches the point of washing up, it needs help and likely medical intervention. They could for example have an injured flipper; have swallowed plastic and are unable to swim properly; be experiencing cold shock; or are weak and exhausted from challenging weather conditions.
- If it's safe and you are able to assist, gently pick the turtle up, one hand either side of shell, head and flippers free to move.
- Place it on a damp towel in an open container or box. *Do not* fill the container with water - this could cause further issues for the turtle's temperature regulation.
- Do not cover the container or the animal. Ensure the turtle is free to move its head.
- Do not try to feed or provide water.
- If you caring for the turtle until a service can assist, ensure the environment is steady (not too hot or cold) and be mindful of pets or other animals.
- Contact a rescue service immediately - every minute is crucial once a turtle has reached the point of washing ashore.
- **AQWA - The Aquarium of Western Australia** (9am - 4pm): (08) 9447 7500
- **DBCA Wildcare Helpline** (7am - 8.30pm): (08) 9474 9055
- **WA Wildlife Helpline** - (08) 9417 7105

