

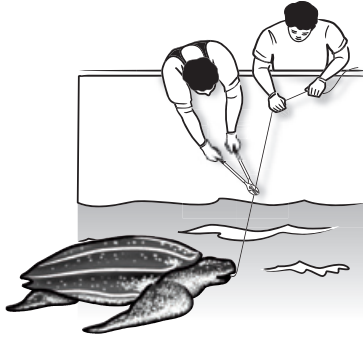
# Releasing hooked turtles



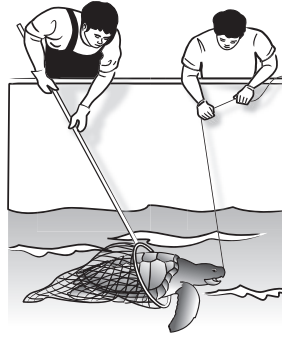
The bycatch of sea turtles by pelagic longlining is an issue of great concern.

*If a turtle is caught, the following steps should be taken to give it the best possible chance of survival.*

## Assess the turtle size, then release it or bring it onboard

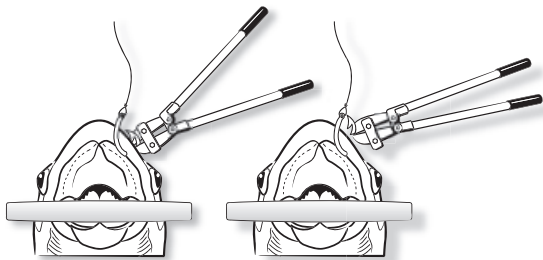


If the turtle is too large to bring on board, bring it as close to the boat as possible without putting too much strain on the line, then cut the line as close to the turtle as practical.

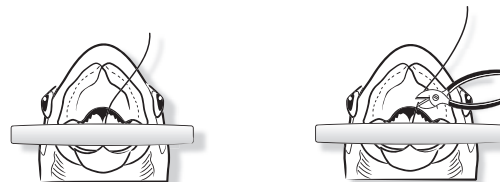


If the turtle is small, use a dip net to lift the animal on board. Don't use a gaff and don't pull on the line or grasp the eye sockets to bring the animal on board.

## Place a piece of wood in the turtle's mouth so it cannot bite, then cut the hook or line



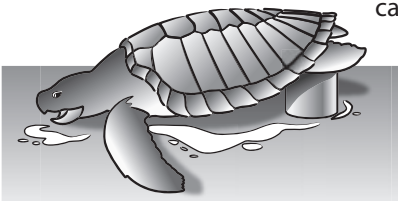
If the hook is in the mouth area, use bolt cutters to cut the barb before removing the hook.



If the hook is not visible, remove as much line as possible without pulling too hard, and cut the line as close to the turtle as practical.

## Assess the condition of the turtle before releasing it: depending on how lively it is, keep it onboard for a minimum of 4 hours, and up to 24 hours

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 and kept about 20 cm off the deck while it is recovering.



In all case, place the turtle in a secure shaded location of the boat. Cover the turtle's body with wet towels. Don't spray the turtle in the face with water or cover its nostrils with the towel.



## Carefully return the turtle to the water

Gently put the turtle in the water, head first, while the vessel is stopped and the engine is out of gear. Ensure the turtle is clear from the vessel before motoring off.



## Record the interaction in your logbook and inform your fisheries authorities

Identify the turtle species if possible, and record any tag number.

