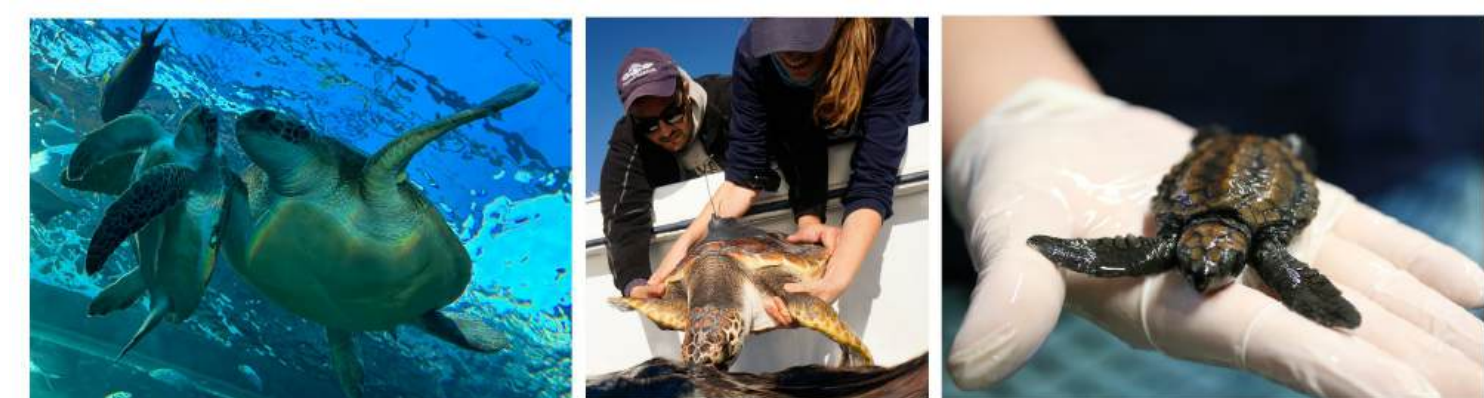




Two Oceans Aquarium
FOUNDATION

Turtle Tales

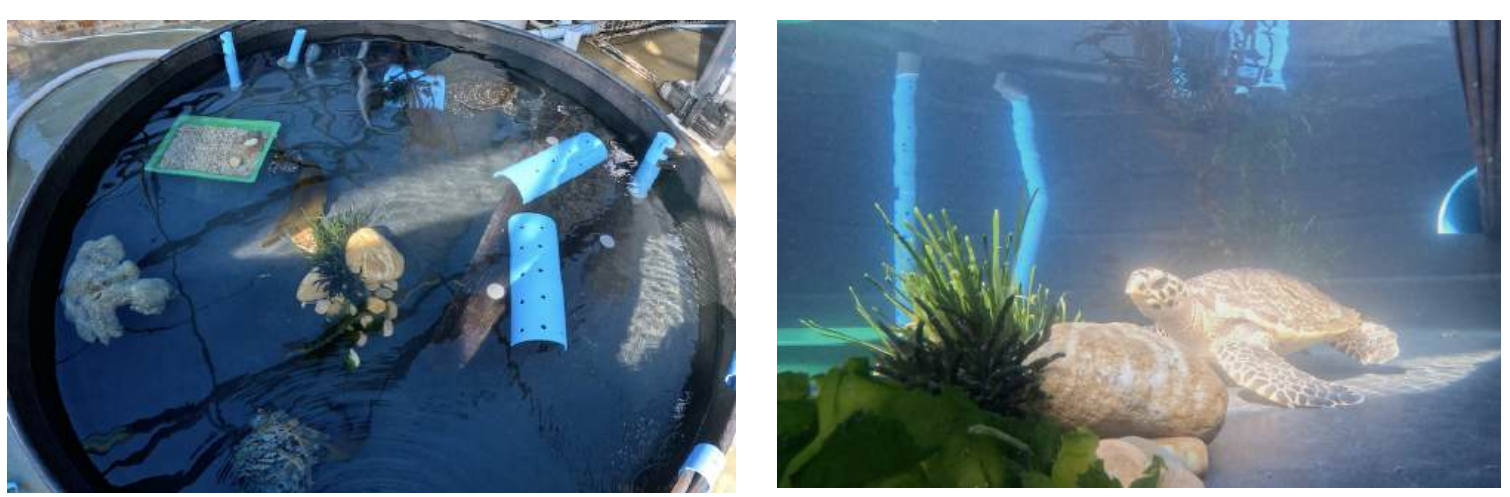
Our **Turtle Conservation Centre** is turtle-y busy, caring for loggerhead hatchlings and sub-adult green, hawksbill, and loggerhead turtles. Keep reading for some flipper-tastic news!

Aquamarine's special enrichment

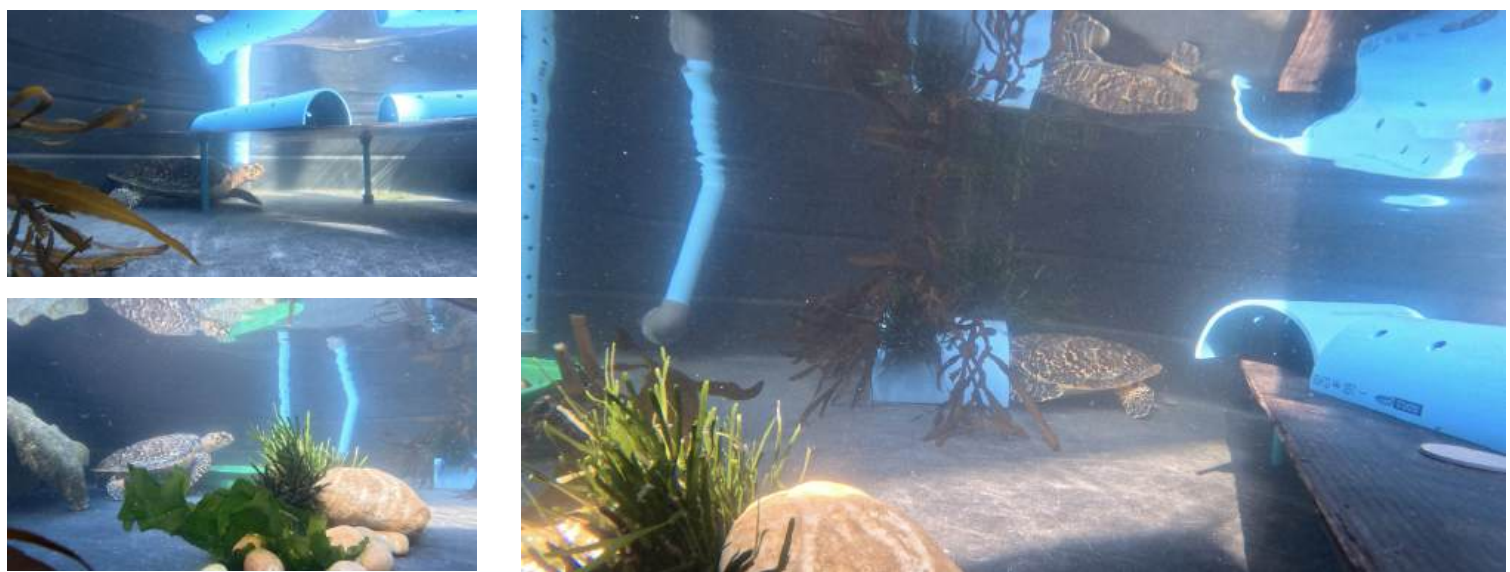
Aquamarine is one of the hawksbill turtles currently undergoing rehabilitation at our **Turtle Conservation Centre**. When she was rescued on 2 April 2026 in Strand, she was covered in algae and had a severe wound on her left shoulder. In the last few months, she has made **encouraging progress!**



Aquamarine's temporary housing recently got an upgrade when our turtle team added some new caves, rocks, seagrass, and sargassum! This is a form of environmental enrichment; modifying Aquamarine's habitat helps to stimulate her natural instincts and encourage the wild behaviours typical of her species.



Hawksbill turtles like Aquamarine usually live in and around tropical coral reefs, where they play a crucial role in maintaining ecosystem health. The addition of various "caves", rocks, and other environmental elements encourages Aquamarine's hawkie behaviour - resting in caves, foraging for sponges, and staying camouflaged in the sargassum.



Aquamarine appeared to enjoy having so many sheltered resting spots as she moved from place to place throughout the day, demonstrating the power of tailoring each turtle's rehabilitation to their species' natural behaviours.

Meet turtle volunteer, Tonya Harvey

How did you get into turtle volunteering?

I was looking for a way to give back when I heard an advert on the radio for the **Two Oceans Aquarium's volunteer course**. I signed up and spent the first few weeks as a Front of House volunteer, engaging with the visitors and sharing my new knowledge with them.

Then, I attended a talk by the Turtle Conservation Centre team. I found it absolutely fascinating and knew I wanted to become more involved. I signed up for the behind-the-scenes training, and shortly afterwards, the **mass hatchling stranding of 2024** occurred. I jumped at the opportunity to work with the turtle team and spent as much time as possible helping to care for the stranded hatchlings.

What began as a search for a meaningful volunteer opportunity has since become a weekly commitment and a cause that I am deeply passionate about. Being part of the turtles' rehabilitation journey continues to be incredibly rewarding.



What is your day job?

I am a business partner at a software solutions company where I have worked since graduating from university.

What has surprised you about turtles?

One of the most unexpected discoveries has been that each turtle has its own unique personality, character, and quirks. Some are calm and relaxed, while others are feisty, curious, or stubborn. I have also been amazed to learn about the important role turtles play in maintaining healthy ocean ecosystems. They help control prey populations, support the health of seagrass beds, and contribute to nutrient cycling, all of which are essential for thriving marine environments. Learning how long they can hold their breath and the **vast distances they travel** across the oceans has given me a whole new appreciation for these remarkable animals.

However, the most surprising, and heartbreaking, lesson has been the extent of the plastic pollution they are exposed to. Volunteering at the Turtle Conservation Centre has given me a firsthand view of the impact plastic has on these animals. I've seen the amount of plastic that some fortunate turtles manage to excrete during rehabilitation, and I've also witnessed the devastating reality for those that cannot. Seeing the consequences up close has been a powerful eye-opener and has reinforced the importance of reducing plastic pollution and protecting our oceans for future generations.



Why do you care?

I feel most grounded, inspired, and energised when I am near the ocean. It is a place that continually reminds me of the delicate balance of our natural world and the vital role our ocean plays in sustaining life on Earth. Sea turtles, in particular, fascinate me because they serve as a powerful connection between the ocean and the land, highlighting the interconnectedness of our ecosystems. Over the years, seeing the growing amount of plastic pollution on the beaches I regularly visit has made the environmental challenges facing our oceans impossible to ignore.

These experiences have strengthened my commitment to protecting marine environments and wildlife. I believe that meaningful change begins with education and community awareness, helping people understand the risks that plastic pollution poses to our oceans, wildlife, and ultimately our own future.

What is your volunteering highlight?

There have been many memorable moments during my volunteering journey, but one experience stands out above the rest: Being the "Turtle Uber". Having the opportunity to transport rescued turtles to Somerset West for their **CT scans** is both a privilege and a responsibility.

Being entrusted with the safe journey of these incredible animals and contributing, even in a small way, to their journey back to the ocean remains one of the most rewarding and unforgettable aspects of my volunteering experience.



Stay in the loop with our turtles!

Turtle Tales is a regular mailer from the **Turtle Conservation Centre**, packed with tons of turtle news, information, and fun! If you want to be a part of our turtle community, this is the space for you.

[Sign up here](#)