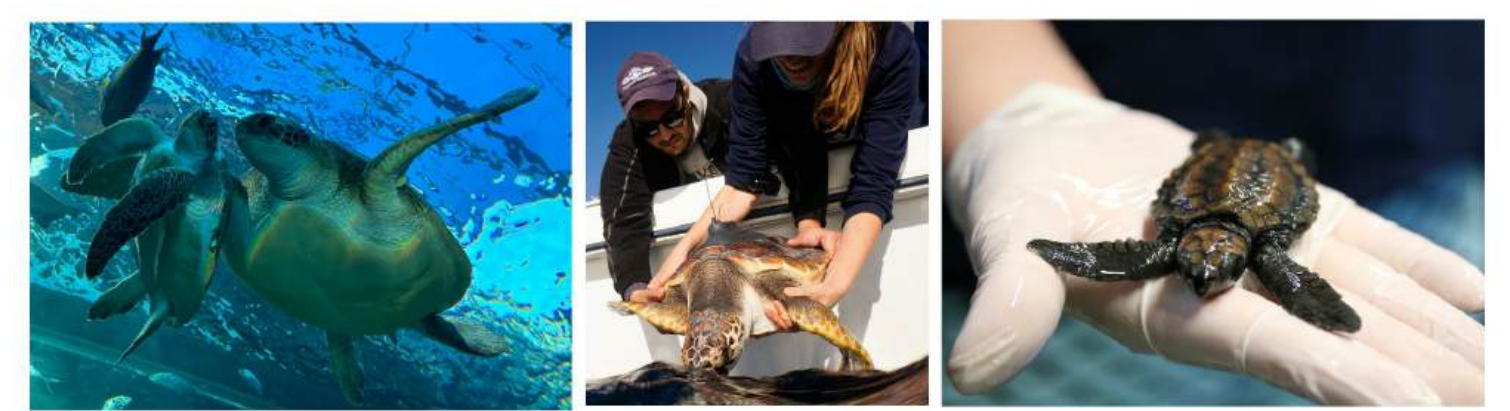




Turtle Tales

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!

Welcome to loggerhead preschool

The “loggie preschool” is a new enrichment that our Turtle Conservation Centre has introduced for the loggerhead hatchlings undergoing rehabilitation. Most of the hatchlings spend their rehabilitation in smaller housing that is appropriate for their size and age. However, our veterinarian, Dr Bernice, felt they could benefit from having more space to practise their swimming and strengthen their muscles before release.



The larger pool also doubles as an enrichment space, giving the hatchlings a new environment to explore, complete with rocks, sargassum, and a tunnel. This will hopefully help prepare them for the ocean environment they’ll encounter after release.

At the moment, four hatchlings at a time get a turn in the “loggie preschool”, spending one to two days in the larger pool before making way for the next group. So far, they’re responding very positively!



Meet big mamma Pearl

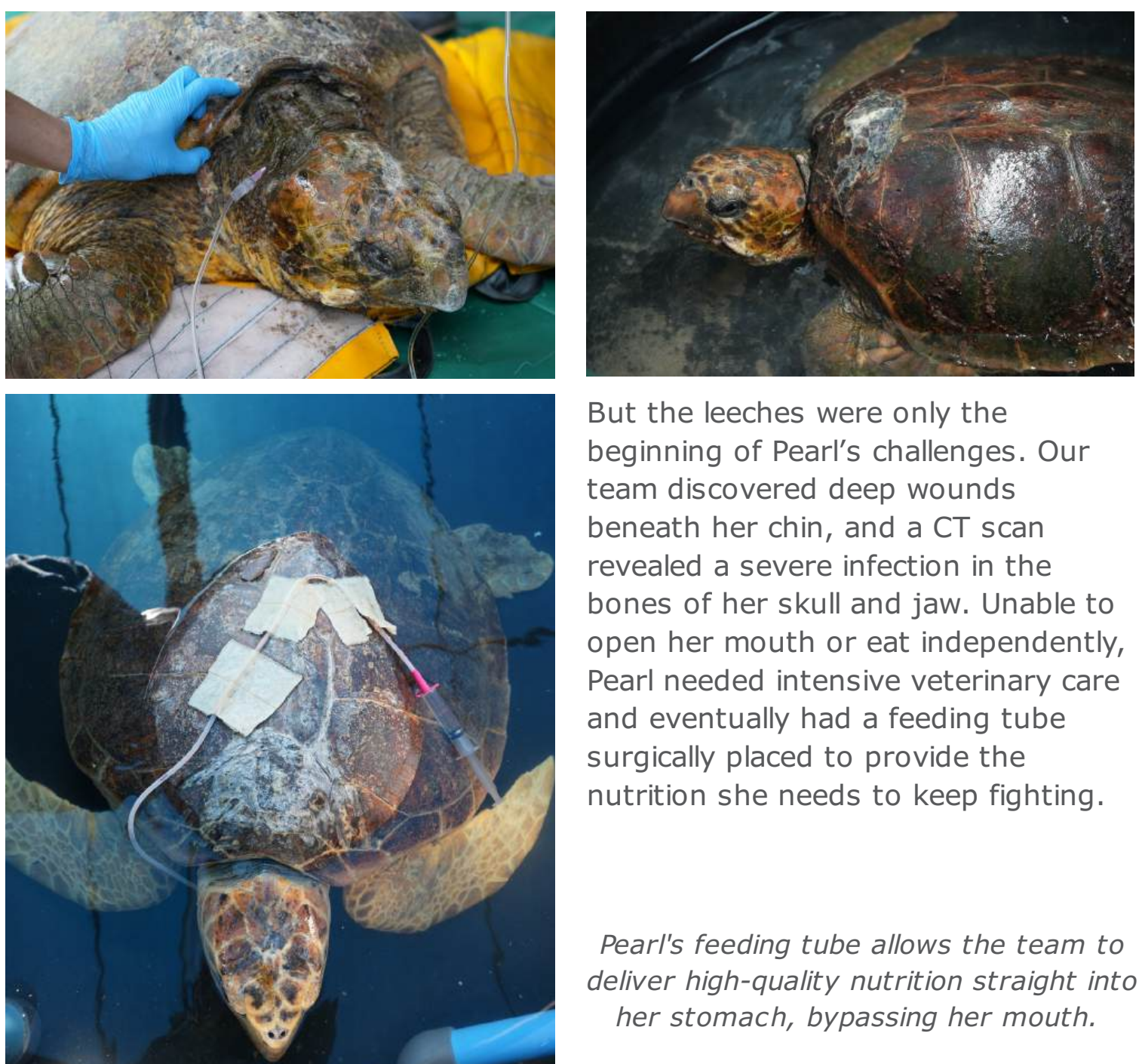
When **Pearl** arrived at our Turtle Conservation Centre in March, this 68kg loggerhead turtle was fighting for her life. Rescued from Witsand’s main beach, she was extremely weak, dehydrated, wounded, and covered in thousands of marine leeches that had left her critically anaemic.

We are hugely grateful for the efforts of her rescuers, Jason, Tertia, Luton, and Gerswin from the **Lower Breede River Conservancy Trust**. As trained members of the Turtle Rescue Network, the team knew exactly



When Pearl arrived at the **Turtle Conservation Centre**, Dr Bernice oversaw her first reponse care, including IV fluids, vitamins, antibiotics, and the painstaking removal of thousands of leeches and their eggs.

The leeches had taken a severe toll. A healthy wild loggerhead can have a hematocrit (the percentage of red blood cells in the blood) of up to 48%; Pearl’s was just 5%, leaving her critically anaemic. Over two weeks, the turtle team removed the leeches and their eggs, while supportive care and nutrition helped Pearl’s blood levels slowly begin to recover.



But the leeches were only the beginning of Pearl’s challenges. Our team discovered deep wounds beneath her chin, and a CT scan revealed a severe infection in the bones of her skull and jaw. Unable to open her mouth or eat independently, Pearl needed intensive veterinary care and eventually had a feeding tube surgically placed to provide the nutrition she needs to keep fighting.

Pearl’s feeding tube allows the team to deliver high-quality nutrition straight into her stomach, bypassing her mouth.

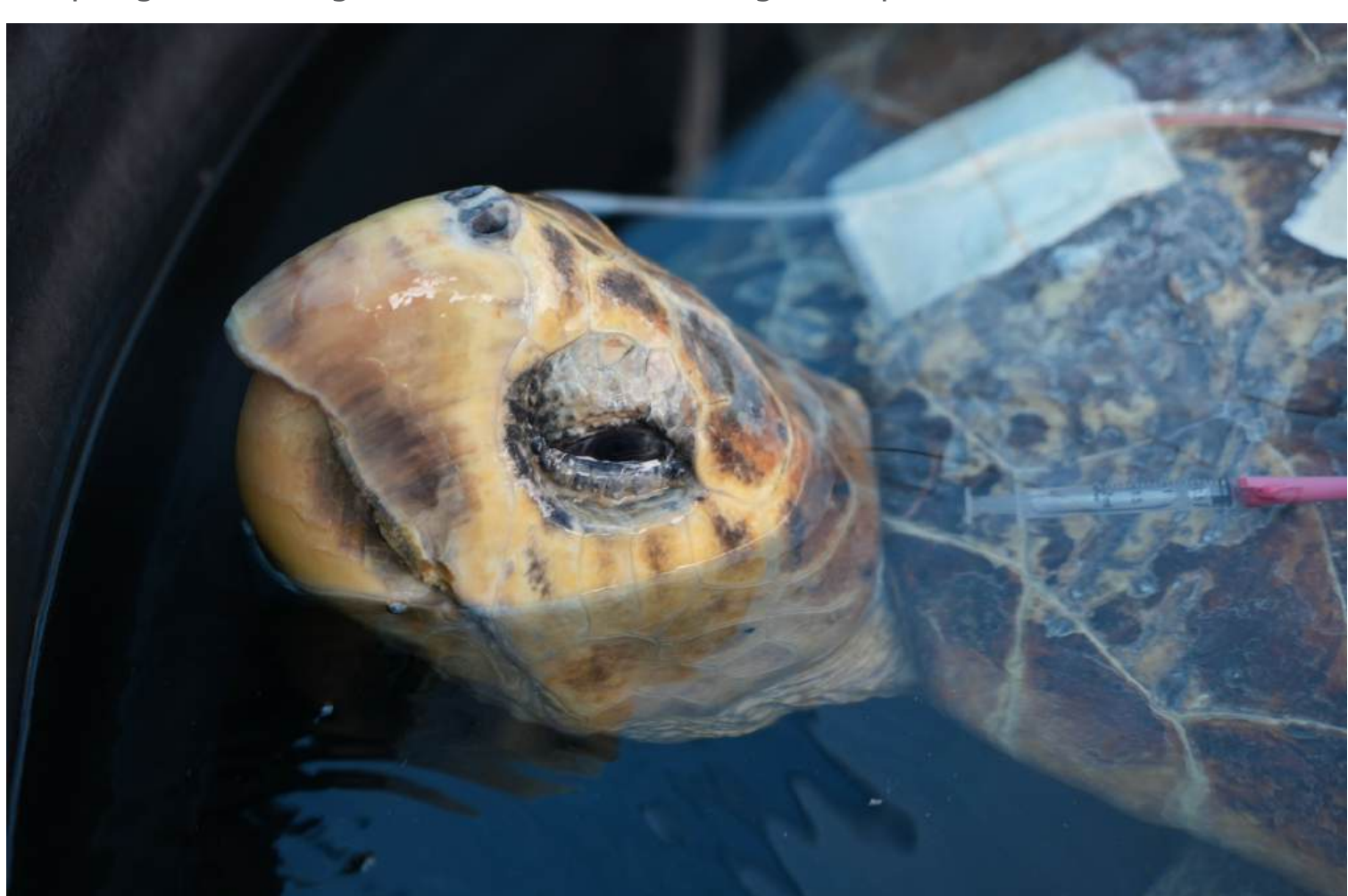
Today, **Pearl continues to battle** this stubborn bone infection, as well as an infection in her lungs, sinuses, and ear. Her prognosis remains guarded, but there are precious signs of progress: Her wounds have healed remarkably well, she is more alert and responsive, and she is even trying hard to open her mouth when the team offers her small pieces of protein.



Tracy, our awesome Turtle Rescue Network Coordinator, holding Pearl’s head while Dr Bernice puts honey on her wounds.

Pearl still has a long road ahead, with stronger days and weaker days. Our team continues to provide her with the best possible care, celebrating every small win and holding out hope that this gentle, inquisitive turtle will eventually beat her infections.

As an adult female loggerhead, Pearl’s recovery could mean far more than the survival of one turtle. If she can one day return to the ocean and lay healthy clutches of eggs, she could contribute hundreds or even thousands of offspring to future generations of her endangered species.



For big mamma Pearl, every small step towards recovery is worth fighting for.

[Read mamma Pearl’s full story](#) [Support Pearl’s rehabilitation here](#)

Green season is here

From September onwards, our turtle team starts preparing for the “**green season**”. Just as turtle hatchlings tend to strand more frequently at certain times of the year, we see a similar pattern among subadult turtles. In fact, just this week, our Turtle Rescue Network rescued two subadult hawksbill turtles in Struisbaai and Betty’s Bay.

This time of year has been dubbed “green season” because most of the subadult turtles that strand are green turtles, although any turtle species can wash ashore and need help.



Stella, one of the green turtles who stranded during green season. She was successfully rehabilitated and **released in November 2025**.

How can you help?

Unlike hatchling season, when it’s almost guaranteed that someone will find a turtle or two while walking on the beach, green season is unpredictable. It’s difficult to know when or where a subadult turtle might strand, which is why having eyes on our beaches is so important.

From September onwards, we need beachgoers along the Western Cape coast to know what to do if they come across a stranded turtle. **Remember: turtles do not voluntarily come ashore in the Western Cape. If you find one on the beach, it needs our help.**

- Here’s what to do if you find a stranded turtle:**
- Do not put the turtle back in the water, and do not leave it unattended.
 - Phone our **Turtle Rescue Network Hotline on 083 300 1663** immediately. Our Turtle Rescue Network Coordinator will talk you through what to do and help get the turtle safely to your nearest Turtle Rescue Network point. From there, the turtle will be transported to our Turtle Conservation Centre for rehabilitation.

[Learn more about green season](#)

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](#)