



## SUMMARY OF THE WORKSHOP ON RESCUE CENTERS Riccione, 21-23 February 2013

### Introduction

In February 2013 a workshop on the organization, function and purpose of rehabilitation/emergency centres of sea turtles and on protocols of interventions not only on sea turtles but also on cetaceans was held in Riccione (RN), Italy for the NETCET project.

The agenda of lectures was :

#### 21<sup>st</sup> February

- *Simulation of the recovery and hospitalization of marine turtle in distress*  
(Cetacea Foundation staff)

#### 22<sup>nd</sup> February

- *Overview of national guidelines for the recovery of sea turtles, regional networks and implementation issues*  
(speaker: Sauro Pari-Cetacea Foundation)
- *Overview of European regulations and bio safety management*  
(speaker: Lisa Poppi- University of Padua)
- *Structure and function of the rehabilitation centre of the Cetacean Foundation: rescue and education*  
(speaker: Valeria Angelini-Cetacea Foundation)
- *Beyond individual rehabilitation: how a rescue centre can contribute to sea turtle conservation at population level*  
(speaker: Paolo Casale-WWF Italy)
- *Plant system maintenance*  
(speakers: Mario Angelini-Cetacea Foundation)



- *Data collection and the annual statement of recovery of sea turtles in Emilia Romagna and Marche regions*  
(speaker: Valeria Angelini- Cetacea Foundation)
- *Veterinary protocols and equipments of rescue centre*  
(speaker: Giordano Nardini- Cetacea Foundation)
- *Diagnostic ultrasound in turtles: technical and diagnostic capabilities*  
(speaker: Prof. Mauro Delogu- University of Bologna)
- *Preliminary data on the influenza viruses circulation in Mediterranean's sea cetaceans*  
(speaker: Prof. Mauro Delogu - University of Bologna)
- *Veterinary Centre for Sea Turtles of Bari University : reference point of rescue centres in Southern Italy*  
(speaker: Prof. Antonio di Bello- University of Bari)
- *Equipment for first aid on stranded cetaceans*  
(speaker: Cinzia Centelleghè- University of Padua)

## 23<sup>rd</sup> February

*Visit to the Marine Research Centre, to the steamer for sea environmental monitoring DAFNE and museum of navigation in Cesenatico*

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A brief summary of the most important information emerging in the course is provided here below.

## 1. REGIONAL NETWORKS FOR THE CONSERVATION OF MARINE TURTLES

### ***Guidelines for the recovery, rescue, custody and management of Sea Turtles in Italy***

The Italian Ministry for the Environment (MATTEM), having the responsibility of the State for the protection of wildlife, according to D. L. n. 300 of 1999, initiated the coordination of protection of



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sea turtles at the national level. The first act was the drawing up of guidelines whose purpose is to: establish behavioural norms and techniques of rescue, handling and recovery of live specimens and dead sea turtles; define the requirements and procedures for the authorization of organizations operating; provide technical guidance for monitoring activities, including data collection procedures, methods of marking and use of the database. It was subsequently prepared a protocol for the preparation of the National Action Plan for the Conservation of Sea Turtles (PATMA) which, in addition to identifying the implementation procedures of the Guidelines defines a coordination between all institutions in the field, for the preparation of the Action Plan. Following were initiated meetings with the Regions in order to establish networks of coordination at regional level. *"The regions, in order to perform their skills of protection and coordination of activities related to the conservation of sea turtles, can be a coordination network that includes all parties involved"*. The first Region in which is formed a network is the Sardinia. In 2011 Marche Region and then in 2012 Emilia Romagna Region formed a network for sea turtles conservation. The ubiquity of networks, the constant meetings between the parties involved, with the consequent gradual overcoming of communication mistakes and misunderstanding, the adoption of a shared regulation are bringing those involved to act with more effectiveness. There are several critical points : to improve the relationship with the fishermen, create a coordination with neighbouring, improve logistic connections between network points. If the creation of networks was relatively easy, the same can't be said for the continuation of their life. The regional networks are coordinated by an executive team consisting of delegates of the signatory institutions. The executive team shall draw up and approve the regulations, prepares the annual financial statements of the network and find the financial resources. While the good functioning of the network leads to an increase in intervention and therefore costs, public finances are decreased.

So you need to raise fund through fund raising initiatives as educational activities, private supplies, events, merchandise and many sponsor. For example the release of sea turtles into the sea, after care and rehabilitation, is done mainly in the summer. The release of sea turtles, after care and rehabilitation, is done mainly in the summer. This allows to engage the public in order to spread the need for conservation of the species and to collect donations.

The establishment of local or regional networks makes the intervention on sea turtles is more effective, empower the public administration and allow a greater extent of the problem of conservation among the citizens. The formation of these local and regional network is the main thing to do to ensure a continuity of action of rescue centres.

## 1. PURPOSE OF A REHABILITATION/EMERGENCY CENTER

The recovery of one or more specimens does not directly affect the preservation of endangered species. The function of the rehabilitation/emergency centres is to local monitoring, the dissemination of the culture of the conservation of endangered species through the knowledge of Threatened Species, the creation of networks with all stakeholders, public and private, that operate locally and divulgation and environmental education.



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## 2. STRUCTURE AND MANAGEMENT OF REHABILITATION CENTER

The structure of the recovery/emergency centre should be related to local needs, both from the operational point of view that as size.

It's very important that for the management of the centre there are as responsible a veterinarian, a biologist and the volunteers that help carry out the activities.

It's also important that for the continuity of management of the centre realize forms of self-reliance to facilitate.

## 3. BASIC EQUIPMENT IN THE REHABILITATION AND EMERGENCY CENTERS

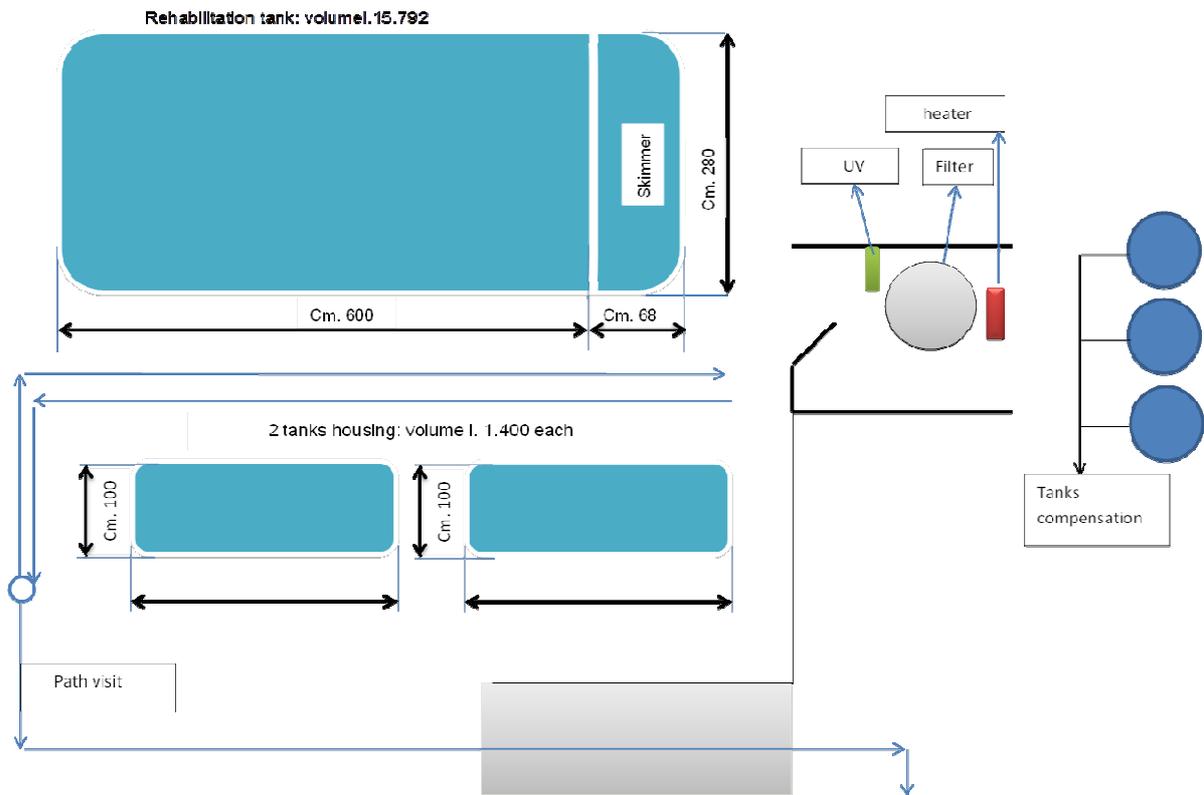
The kind of equipment depends on the level of the centre:

First aid centre. Minimum equipment: a room to contain at least one tank housing for recovery a sea turtle for up to 24-48 hours, a table for veterinary visits, running water, drain pit, one stretcher to transport the turtles and if possible, a scales.

Rehabilitation centre. Zone of hospitalization isolated from the public, a maintenance zone visible to the public, a quarantine tank, a room for the preparation of food, an infirmary and a warehouse. The tanks must have the UV, filters and heater. The rehabilitation tank may be replaced by area at the sea fenced and safe.

Below an example of scheme of water system:





#### 4. PROTOCOLS OF ACTION ABOUT THE RESCUE OF ANIMALS IN DISTRESS

The protocols proposed in the workshop are those designed from Cetacea Foundation experience and from the Regional Networks of Emilia Romagna and Marche.

Below an example of protocol of acceptance to the centre of first aid for sea turtle:

##### 1. Case of stranding

When a specimen of sea turtle is recovered after a stranding and delivered to the first aid centre must be carried out the following actions:

- make sure that the coast guard has been advised if has not been itself to deliver the specimen
- ensure that the recovery centre reference has been warned if it does not, call it and describe the condition of the animal in order to receive instructions on its stabilization or if the severity of the condition so requires, to arrange transfer to the rescue centre.
- If the sea turtle is stable, place it in a suitable container in a quiet place, and heated in the winter; initially did not put water in the container and fill in the record card with its biometric measurements and take a picture of the animal.
- If the animal does not present any particular problems breathing and has a certain vitality, pour



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fresh water into the container to keep the wet the animal's body but that there is no possibility of immersion in water of his nostrils.

- If the animal is stranding in the winter in a state of hypothermia, put it in a warm place, pouring warm water into the container with a quantity, however, that does not exceed the level of its nostrils; put clothes on the carapace in order to raise the body temperature. Only on veterinary purposes, inoculated subcutaneously liquids' s hydration.

## **2. Recovery case at sea in nets or found with hooks**

When a specimen of sea turtle is recovered after being caught in nets or found with hooks and delivered to the first aid centre must be carried out the following actions:

- make sure that the coast guard has been advised if has not been itself to deliver the specimen.
- ensure that the recovery centre reference has been warned if it does not, call it and describe the condition of the animal in order to receive instructions on its stabilization or if the severity of the condition so requires, to arrange transfer to the rescue centre.
- If the animal is stable, place it in a suitable container in a quiet place, and heated in the winter, so that the turtle inclined position angle of 30° to the floor with his head down so that to purge any residual water in its lungs if the animal has been in the nets for a long time. Do not put water into the container and fill in the record card with its biometric measurements and take a picture of the animal.
- If the animal has fishing lines that come from the mouth or anus don't pull them out but tie them to a support perpendicular to the opening to avoid or ingestion of fishing line or other falls within the body.

## **3. Case of the recovery of animals with bleeding wounds**

When a specimen of sea turtle is recovered after being found with open wounds or bleeding and delivered to the first aid centre must be carried out the following actions:

- make sure that the coast guard has been advised if has not been itself to deliver the specimen.
- ensure that the recovery centre reference has been warned if it does not, call it and describe the condition of the animal in order to receive instructions on its stabilization or if the severity of the condition so requires, to arrange transfer to the rescue centre.
- If the wound is bleeding with gauze gently dab the exposed, place the turtle in a container without water and provide for its transfer to the rehabilitation centre.

