

Home Islanders Aid Sea Turtles to Escape Nasty Fate



Four weeks ago, local resident Dennis Mokta and visiting family member Faris Westley came across several sea turtles badly entangled in a mess of discarded fishing nets. The fishing nets and the trapped turtles had been recently washed up on the shore of Nek Shah's pondok on South Island.

Dennis and Faris worked diligently to cut the nets and free the turtles and help them safely back into the water. They said they watched them swim back into the ocean.

Dennis and Faris described the turtles to be green sea turtles but there was also a "different" type of turtle in the nets. It was later identified as an olive ridley turtle that unlike the resident green turtle is only occasionally sighted in Cocos waters.



Dennis and Faris both reported their findings to Parks Australia. They also gave a printed copy of their pictures and agreed it would be good to share this story with the Cocos community. Well done and thank you Dennis and Faris!

** Entanglement in harmful marine debris can cause restricted mobility, starvation, infection, amputation, drowning and smothering in turtles, whales and sea birds. Fishing line debris, nets and ropes cut into the skin of whales and turtles, leading to infection or the slow and painful amputation of flippers, tails or flukes.*

The entanglement or ingestion of marine debris such as fishing nets has been listed as a key threatening process under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999.

Parks Australia and the Big Barge Art Company held an "Environmental Art" session in the recent September school holidays. Cocos kids were shown by Emma how to turn the rubbish into a resource and make a unique mobile to hang at home. Both the Home and West Islander kids produced some colourful works of art whilst taking home an important message about the dangers of rubbish to marine life in their own Cocos waters.

