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# Rescued turtle released after rehab

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A loggerhead turtle found stranded on an Umdloti beach in January was successfully released back into the ocean on April 25.

Nicknamed 'J' by her carers, the female turtle was one of two released that day, both missing their right front flippers. She had been taken to the South African Association for Marine Biological Research (SAAMBR) at uShaka Marine World for observation and treatment.

The cause of her missing flipper is unknown, as the wound was fully healed. Radiographs and blood tests were conducted by clinical veterinarian Dr Caryl Cox, and J was treated with antibiotics and supportive care.

"This turtle responded quickly to treatment and soon started swimming strongly and feeding," said SAAMBR spokesperson Nikhiel Singh.

Although initial blood tests showed abnormalities, these resolved as her condition improved.

"In the early stages, she struggled to dive, but we moved her to pools of



'J' was fitted with a tag that uses acoustic signals to send data to the scientists. Photo: SAAMBR.

different depths, and she soon adjusted," Singh said.

J was fitted with an acoustic tag, which records data when the turtle passes an underwater receiver. Unlike satellite tags, the data is not real-time but can be tracked for up to 10 years.

Timothy Smith, an aquarist at SAAMBR, said J was in surprisingly good condition.

"She was really quite healthy - just needed some love and attention. She recovered quickly."

Following the January 22 rescue, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife marine ecologist

Santosh Bachoo urged the public not to return stranded turtles to the sea.

"It's important to contact the beach manager, lifeguards, or KZN Marine Strandings Network," he said.

"A turtle might be sick or unable to swim and could require urgent medical assistance."

For marine animal strandings, including birds, contact the KZN Stranding Network number on 031 328 8222 (office hours) or 031 328 8060 (after hours).