

Wayward turtle gets TLC from wildlife vets

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Wildlife vet Kerri Morgan prepares the green sea turtle for a CT scan.

A female green sea turtle is being cared for at the Massey University's Wildlife Health Center in New Zealand after being found on Otaki Beach.

The species of turtle is usually found in [tropical waters](#), with Australia's North Queensland coast its closest known habitat.

Wildlife vet Kerri Morgan says it appears the turtle became sick and was caught in a current. “It’s unusual for them to venture this far south,” she says. “The cold New Zealand water has given this turtle what we call ‘cold shock’, and we’re now doing what we can for her.

“She is used to being in water that is about 25 degrees Celsius, and our water is about 10 degrees colder than that. It has obviously been quite traumatic for her.”

The turtle was discovered by a member of the public and was initially treated at the Equine and Farm Veterinary Services in Otaki before being brought to the centre. Since then she has been kept in warm water and had a fluid drip put in to help administer fluids.

The turtle was put through the University’s [CT scanner](#) in an effort to diagnose what may be wrong with it. “There are a few things that could be wrong with her, including pneumonia or a viral infection, or she may have eaten something like a piece of plastic,” Ms. Morgan says.

“The CT results showed a fracture of her shell and [pneumonia](#), which may be caused by bacteria, [fungi](#) or parasites. Surgery to take a [biopsy](#) of her lungs is scheduled for Monday, which is tricky as we will need to cut a hole through her shell to access the lungs.”

The turtle appears to be adult; its shell is almost 70cm long and she weighs 27.7 kg. The green sea turtle can live for many decades.

Provided by Massey University

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