

# Rehabilitated sea turtle released in Florida Keys to join Tour de Turtles

July 15 2023

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"Marcia," a juvenile green sea turtle, swims through a wave, Friday, July 14, 2023, at Sombrero Beach in Marathon, Fla. "Marcia," named by her rescuers after being found off Marathon suffering from positive buoyancy disorder, was rehabilitated at the Keys-based Turtle Hospital and was fitted with a satellite-tracking transmitter and released off the Florida Keys Friday to participate in the Tour de Turtles, an online educational tracking program coordinated by the Sea Turtle Conservancy. Beginning Aug. 1, the initiative is to follow 12 sea turtles for three months. Credit: Andy Newman/Florida Keys News Bureau via AP

A juvenile green sea turtle rehabilitated at the Florida Keys-based [Turtle Hospital](#) was fitted with a satellite-tracking transmitter and released Friday to join an online race that follows long-distance migrations of sea turtles.

The [Tour de Turtles](#), now in its 16th year, is organized annually by the Sea Turtle Conservancy. Beginning Aug. 1, the group will track a dozen sea turtles released from beaches in Florida and several Caribbean islands.

"The Tour de Turtles is raising awareness about sea turtles and the threats to their survival," Sea Turtle Conservancy senior research biologist Dr. Dan Evans said. "We are also learning about where they're going, where they're finding food, and what the possible threats to those areas are."

The young green sea turtle named Marcia, who was found floating off the Middle Keys in March, suffered from positive buoyancy disorder. The condition leaves sea turtles unable to dive down for food. Causes include internal infection, gastrointestinal tract obstruction and spinal or lung injuries, sometimes caused by boat strikes.

Officials at the Turtle Hospital treated Marcia, who weighs about 50 pounds (23 kilograms), with [broad-spectrum antibiotics](#), fluids, vitamins and a diet of greens and mixed seafood.



Richie Moretti, center, watches as children get a close look at "Marcia," a juvenile green sea turtle, before the reptile was released off the Florida Keys, Friday, July 14, 2023, at Sombrero Beach in Marathon, Fla. "Marcia," named by her rescuers after being found off Marathon suffering from positive buoyancy disorder, was rehabilitated at the Keys-based Turtle Hospital and was fitted with a satellite-tracking transmitter Friday before being released to participate in the Tour de Turtles, an online educational tracking program coordinated by the Sea Turtle Conservancy. Beginning Aug. 1, the initiative is to follow 12 sea turtles for three months. Moretti founded the hospital in 1986. Credit: Andy Newman/Florida Keys News Bureau via AP





Bette Zirkelbach, left, and Richie Moretti, right, watch as "Marcia," a juvenile green sea turtle, is released off the Florida Keys, Friday, July 14, 2023, at Sombrero Beach in Marathon, Fla. "Marcia," named by her rescuers after being found off Marathon suffering from positive buoyancy disorder, was rehabilitated at the Keys-based Turtle Hospital and was fitted with a satellite-tracking transmitter and released Friday to participate in the Tour de Turtles, an online educational tracking program coordinated by the Sea Turtle Conservancy. Beginning Aug. 1, the initiative is to follow 12 sea turtles for three months. Credit: Andy Newman/Florida Keys News Bureau via AP

"It's really important to protect sea turtles like Marcia," Turtle Hospital general manager Bette Zirkelbach said. "This tracking and the information it brings to scientists through Tour de Turtles is going to help this species survive."

Green [sea turtles](#) are classified as "threatened" under the Endangered Species Act.

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