

Washed-up sea snake rescued in New Zealand

24 April 2008

A highly venomous yellow-bellied sea snake that washed up on a New Zealand beach was recovering Thursday at an aquarium.

The snake was discovered Wednesday by Graeme Ramsey of Baylys Beach as he walked his dog on the sand, The Dominion Post reported. Ramsey identified the snake on the Internet and called police, who kept guard on the snake until it was picked up by rescuers.

New Zealand has no native snakes. A few sea snakes wash up every year, usually dead and occasionally sick. Sea snakes can grow up to 3 feet in length.

The snake was taken to Kelly Tarlton's Antarctic Encounter and Underwater World in Auckland. A.J. Christie, the curator, told The New Zealand Herald that the visitor will probably remain there through the New Zealand winter to recover its health and then be released.

"It's an amazing animal," Christie said. "I think he's going to be all right. He looks in good nick, he's actually putting up a good fight. The trick's not to get bitten."

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