

Media Release:

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‘Floater’ returning to the open sea

A young hawksbill turtle that was rescued by the Royal Australian Navy *HMAS Broome* in mid-December, has been nursed back to health by Darwin’s Ark Animal Hospital and will be released back into its ocean-home this Sunday.

Northern Territory Parks and Wildlife Officer Ray Chatto said the young turtle was located off Cape Wessel in North East Arnhem Land.

“The Navy personnel found the turtle floating on the surface, trapped in a ball of ghost net,” Mr Chatto said.

“When they cut the hawksbill free they found that it was a ‘floater’, meaning it was unable to dive, so they contacted the Northern Territory Parks and Wildlife Service.

“We then transported it to the Ark Animal Hospital where it’s been cared for and rehabilitated for release back into the sea.

“The sex of the turtle is unknown but the shell length of only 60cm indicates it is a juvenile but reasonably close to maturity.”

Ark Animal Hospital Wildlife Rescue Co-ordinator Lisa Hansen said the turtle had ingested plastic and developed pneumonia.

“We have a salt water pool at the Animal Hospital to accommodate sea turtles, and have been giving this turtle antibiotic injections to enable it to recover and swim again,” Ms Hansen said.

“When turtles are trapped at the surface like this they suffer exhaustion and sunburn trying to dive back underwater.”

The turtle will be picked up by Northern Territory Parks and Wildlife Officers on Sunday morning and taken to the Naval Base where the *HMAS Broome* will release it back into the ocean where it was originally found.

Mr Chatto said the turtle will be tagged in case it is found again, so its movements and growth can be recorded.

If anyone finds sick or injured native wildlife they should contact Wildlife Rescue Darwin on 0409 090 840.

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Media Note – for more information contact Ray Chatto on 8920 9260, Lisa Hansen on 8932 9738 or Kelly Cooper, Defence Public Affairs on 0411 885 994

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