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## **THE LIVING PLANET AQUARIUM ASSISTS IN SEA TURTLE RESCUE EFFORTS**

*Rescued Green Sea Turtle calls Utah home*

**July 27, 2010 Sandy, UT** --- A rescued sea turtle has recently joined The Living Planet Aquarium family. The 40lb Green Sea Turtle was severely bitten by a large shark and then hit by a boat, and shortly thereafter was rescued by The Turtle Hospital in Florida. It has a large semi-circular wound (approx 12 inches in diameter) on its right side. After a year of care it is still unable to fully submerge and therefore would not survive in the wild on its own, causing it to be non-releasable. In order to assist the turtle with buoyancy, custom made lead weights have been applied to its shell with marine epoxy and Velcro. All turtles float differently and at different angles, therefore the appropriate weight is placed on the back and sides of the shell. Currently, the turtle requires 304 grams of weight in order to dive and swim comfortably. The marine epoxy which holds the weight to its carapace will last 6 months to a year. The weight will eventually fall off and need to be re-applied. More weight will need to be added as the years pass and the turtle grows larger. "Boat-strike sea turtles often survive the strike but end up unable to submerge afterwards despite the best care possible." said Andy Allison, Curator of Animals. "A floating turtle in the wild would have trouble getting enough food, and would eventually be hit by another boat or wash up on shore."

The Turtle Hospital is expecting to receive many more injured turtles this summer due to the recent BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. By making a home for the turtle at The Living Planet Aquarium, more room will be made at the Hospital, allowing for the rehabilitation of more turtles. "Since each of the 7 species of sea turtles is threatened or endangered, every turtle counts." Allison said. "By opening up space at the Turtle Hospital now, we may help them save 5 or 6 more this year."

*-more-*

The Green Sea Turtle is listed as Endangered (in danger of extinction within the foreseeable future) under the U.S. Federal Endangered Species Act, and listed as Endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources. The greatest threat to survival is from the commercial harvest for eggs and food. Other Green Sea Turtle parts are used for leather and small turtles are sometimes stuffed for curios. Incidental catch in commercial shrimp trawling is an increasing source of mortality.

Beginning July 28, the Green Sea Turtle will be on display in the Ocean Explorer Gallery at The Living Planet Aquarium in Sandy.

More information about The Living Planet Aquarium is available online at [www.thelivingplanet.com](http://www.thelivingplanet.com) or by calling (801) 355-FISH (3474).

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