



PROTECT & RESPOND:

SAADIYAT WILDLIFE SAFETY AND REPORTING



ABOUT THIS GUIDE



Saadiyat Island is home to a unique and vibrant ecosystem, including marine mammals, sea turtles, and diverse coastal wildlife.

This guide has been created to empower community members with the skills to identify, respond to, and report wildlife sightings, strandings, and environmental emergencies.

By following the steps outlined here, you play a vital role in protecting these natural treasures and supporting conservation efforts led by the Environment Agency Abu Dhabi (EAD), the UAE Dolphin Project, the National Aquarium and Emirates Nature WWF.

Whether you are spotting dolphins, assisting stranded sea turtles, identifying red tides, or reporting disturbances like jet skis or litter, your actions can make a real difference in safeguarding Saadiyat's wildlife.

This guide serves as your step-by-step resource for understanding the challenges facing our marine ecosystems and taking meaningful action to protect them. Together, we can create a safer, healthier, and more sustainable future for Saadiyat's wildlife and habitats.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

HEALTH AND SAFETY

SAFETY.

Avoid taking unnecessary risks when responding to emergencies or interacting with wildlife. Do not touch things unless it's strictly necessary.

PROTECTION.

Use gloves, and other tools at your disposal.

DISTANCE.

Approach wildlife cautiously some animals, such as sea snakes, may be dangerous if mishandled.

HYDRATION.

Carry water, wear sunscreen, and use a hat to protect yourself from the sun. Stop if you start to feel dizzy.

DOUBLE CHECK.

Watch for slippery surfaces, sharp objects, or other hazards when walking near the shoreline.

REPORT.

If a situation feels unsafe, step back and report it immediately to the relevant authorities.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE.

Contact the appropriate authorities for severe environmental incidents (e.g., red tide incidents).



STRANDED TURTLES

Identification and Reporting

Sea turtles are among the most vulnerable marine species and often face challenges like entanglement, injuries from boat strikes, or sickness that lead to strandings. Knowing how to identify and respond to a stranded turtle is essential for its survival.

If you find a turtle on the beach that is neither a hatchling nor a nesting female, it is likely unwell and requires specialist care. Sick turtles often become lethargic, struggle to swim efficiently, and may have barnacles on their shells, which can weigh them down and slow them further.

This often leads to them washing ashore.

If the turtle is alive, it must be transported to a turtle rehabilitation center as soon as possible to increase its chances of survival. The nearest turtle rehabilitation facility to Saadiyat Island is **The National Aquarium in Abu Dhabi**.

By responding quickly and following the appropriate steps, you can significantly improve a stranded turtle's chances of survival and contribute to conservation efforts for these remarkable marine creatures!



STRANDED TURTLES

Identification and Reporting

The UAE's coastal waters are vital habitats for two main species of sea turtles: the **Green Sea Turtle** and the **Hawksbill Sea Turtle**. Both species play crucial roles in maintaining the health of marine ecosystems, but they face significant threats, such as habitat destruction, pollution, and accidental capture in fishing gear.

Green Sea Turtles

(Chelonia mydas)

The Green Sea Turtle is one of the largest sea turtles, named for the greenish tint of its body fat rather than its shell.

While their populations are relatively stable in some regions, they are listed as Endangered due to threats like habitat loss, poaching, and entanglement in fishing nets.

Key Identifying Features:

Size: Up to 1.5 meters and 250 kg.

Shell: Olive to brown, smooth.

Beak: Blunt.



Hawksbill Sea Turtles

(Eretmochelys imbricata)

The Hawksbill Sea Turtle is easily identified by its sharp, pointed beak and striking, patterned shell.

Sadly, Hawksbill turtles are Critically Endangered, mainly due to poaching for their shells, loss of nesting habitats, and accidental capture in fishing gear.

Key Identifying Features:

Size: Up to 1 meter and 80 kg.

Shell: Amber and brown, overlapping.

Beak: Sharp, pointed (Hawk-like).



STRANDED TURTLES

Identification and Reporting

Assess the Situation

Check for Signs of Life:

- Observe the turtle carefully to check for signs of life, such as movement or breathing.
- Look for visible wounds, bleeding, missing limbs, or signs of entanglement in fishing lines or nets.



Handle the Turtle Safely:

- If the turtle is alive, place it in a ventilated container (e.g., bucket, wooden crate, or cool box) that is large enough to allow it to rest in a normal position.



- Ensure the container is clean and free from objects the turtle could accidentally ingest.

STRANDED TURTLES

Identification and Reporting

Temporary Care

Keep the Turtle Hydrated:

- If the turtle can lift its head to breathe, you can gently pour fresh or seawater over its body. It does not need to be fully submerged.
- If no container is available, keep the turtle moist by covering it with wet towels. Avoid letting the turtle get too cold, and do not place it in air-conditioned areas while covered.



For Entangled Turtles:

- Do not attempt to remove fishing gear or other debris unless explicitly instructed by trained professionals. Premature removal can cause harm.

Avoid Treatment or Feeding:

- Do not try to feed the turtle or remove barnacles from its shell, as improper handling can injure the turtle or damage its shell.



STRANDED TURTLES

Identification and Reporting

Protect the Area

- Keep people, pets, and potential predators (like dogs or birds) away from the turtle to reduce stress.
- Ensure the turtle is not disturbed by unnecessary handling or noise.
- Document any jet skis or boats nearby that may have caused disturbance.



Document and Report

Take Photos and Notes:

- Document the turtle's condition by taking clear photos and recording any visible injuries, its size, and the exact location where it was found.

Contact the National Aquarium for Assistance:

- If possible, transport the turtle to **The National Aquarium Abu Dhabi** for rehabilitation.
- You can contact them at **02 418 6666** for guidance or to notify them of the situation.
- You can also take the turtle to a nearby hotel in Saadiyat. Most lifeguards at the hotels would know the protocol to follow with stranded turtles.

OH NO! YOU FOUND A STRANDED SEA TURTLE



TAKE PHOTOS FROM MULTIPLE ANGLES AND RECORD THE LOCATION

TINY HATCHLING
(<10 cm)

IS IT ALIVE?

YES

Is it actively crawling and moving its fins?

YES

Pick up the turtle and put it in the sea.

Put it in a container and arrange for it to go to **The National Aquarium**.



NO!

NOTE:

Document and report any jet skis or boats nearby that may have caused a disturbance!

REPORTING!

Report the condition and location! **Do not** move the turtle unless instructed.

Report the stranding to **The National Aquarium Abu Dhabi** 02 418 6666 for guidance or to notify them of the situation.

And

Notify the nearest hotel / beach club

SMALL JUVENILE
(<50 cm)

Report it to **The National Aquarium** as soon as possible and transport it to the nearest hotel or Beach club on Saadiyat.

If it is covered in barnacles, do not attempt to remove them!

Keep pets, people, and potential predators away.

Ensure the turtle is not disturbed by unnecessary handling or noise.

Ensure you handover the case before leaving the scene.

Do not try to feed the turtle or remove barnacles from its shell!

BEST PRACTICE (ADULTS):

- Use a container that is clean and free from objects!
- It should be large enough to allow it to rest in a normal position.
- If the turtle can lift its head to breathe, gently pour fresh or seawater over its body.
- No container? keep the turtle moist by covering it with a wet towel.

BIG ADULT
(>50 cm)

FIRST, REPORT IT IMMEDIATELY TO THE NATIONAL AQUARIUM AND NOTIFY THE SECURITY AT THE NEAREST HOTEL OR BEACH CLUB.

IS IT ALIVE?

YES

Place it in a ventilated container! Such as a bucket, wooden crate, or cool box if you have one.

IS THE TURTLE ENTANGLED?

NO

NO!

Report the condition and location! **Do not** move the turtle unless instructed.

YES

Do not attempt to remove any embedded fishing gear or other debris unless explicitly instructed by trained professionals!

Premature removal can do more harm

STRANDED SEA SNAKES

Identification and Reporting

Sea snakes are highly adapted marine reptiles found in warm, shallow waters, including the Arabian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman!

These waters provide important habitats for several species of sea snakes, such as the yellow-bellied sea snake (*Hydrophis platurus*)! Unlike land snakes, sea snakes have paddle-like tails for swimming and can stay underwater for extended periods, breathing air at the surface.

They play a vital role in marine ecosystems. By preying on small fish and eels, helping maintain balance in the food web. They also serve as prey for larger predators, contributing to the biodiversity of marine habitats.

Unfortunately, sea snakes face **threats** from habitat destruction, marine pollution, and accidental bycatch in fishing nets. And their presence on beaches after storms can lead to unnecessary fear and harm, emphasizing the importance of public awareness.

Although they are venomous, they're generally non-aggressive unless provoked! Therefore they require careful handling to protect both humans and wildlife.

Encounters with sea snakes are an opportunity to learn about their role in the ocean and contribute to marine conservation by reporting strandings or supporting protective measures.



STRANDED SEA SNAKES

Identification and Reporting

What should you do?

NEVER EVER PICK IT UP, EVEN IF IT LOOKS DEAD!



- Sea snakes are generally non-aggressive and only bite in self-defense. However, avoid approaching or touching the snake!
- Alert others nearby to stay back and observe from a safe distance.

- From a safe distance, check if the snake is alive, moving, or injured.
- Note any signs of distress or injuries.



- **Contact Yas SeaWorld Research & Rescue Center** emergency number at, **056 503 0060** to arrange a rescue mission.
- Provide detailed information, including the snake's location, its condition, and the surrounding environment.

- Do not attempt to move the snake!
- Mark a boundary around the snake to prevent people from accidentally disturbing it, using stones or sticks.
- Ensure pets and children stay away until authorities arrive.



UAE DOLPHIN PROJECT

Spotting and Reporting

Dolphins are among the most intelligent marine species and play a vital role in maintaining healthy ocean ecosystems. However, they face challenges like habitat degradation, entanglement, and pollution, which threaten their survival. Understanding their behavior and habitat needs is essential for ensuring their protection and conservation.

The **UAE Dolphin Project** is a non-profit research and conservation initiative aimed at understanding and protecting dolphins in the UAE's waters. It gathers data about dolphin populations, habitats, and behaviors while raising public awareness and promoting marine conservation efforts.

Why report Dolphin sightings?

Reporting dolphin sightings is crucial for understanding local populations and supporting their conservation. Each sighting helps researchers track movements and identify individuals. Dolphins are iconic predators at the top of the marine food chain and act as "ecological indicators," signaling issues like pollution, overfishing, or habitat degradation.

Monitoring them helps protect marine ecosystems and human interests, as we share the same food resources. Always report sightings, and include pictures or videos when possible!



MARINE ANIMALS

Distinctive Characteristics :

» INDIAN OCEAN HUMPBACK DOLPHIN:

or **Sousa plumbea**, is gray in color with a long slender beak, but clearly recognizable by the characteristic hump in front of the dorsal fin. The top of the fin may show white pigmentation, and their approximate max length 2.7m. They're usually found in shallow, coastal waters less than 100m deep.

» INDO-PACIFIC FINLESS PORPOISE:

or **Neophocaena phocaenoides**, is dark grey-black in color with no dorsal fin. Their total length is approximately 2m max, and they're generally found in shallow (<50m deep) coastal marine waters.

» INDO-PACIFIC BOTTLENOSE DOLPHIN:

or **Tursiops aduncus**, is grey in color with a falcate fin, sometimes a spotted belly is visible. They have a robust body with a medium length beak, and an approximate max length of 2.6m. Globally, it is found in scattered regions across warm temperate to tropical Indo-Pacific waters.

» DUGONG:

commonly known as **Sea Cow**, is brownish to dark gray with no dorsal fin, and can be mistaken for the finless porpoise! However, the nostrils, located at tip of the muzzle comes up first when surfaces, unlike in finless porpoises that surface with their back. Their approximate max length 3.3m and can weigh up to 500kg!



REPORTING PROTOCOL

BEACH SIGHTINGS

The different ways to spot a dolphin include:

- from a kayak
- from a boat
- from land
- from air



Dolphins may be foraging for food, socializing, playing, resting in shallow waters, or teaching young calves survival skills. Observing and reporting these behaviors provides valuable data to researchers, helping us understand their habits, social dynamics, and interactions with the environment.

REPORTING

- Walk along the shoreline and search for any dolphin activity on the horizon
- Videos are preferred but photos work just as well!
- Take note of the date, time, and approximate pinned location where a dolphin is sighted.
Example: (03/05/2024, 6:51 AM, Saadiyat Beach, 24.542132, 54.422360).
- Your report should also include the number of dolphins and the presence of calves, if applicable.
- Report directly on WhatsApp to Dr. Ada Natoli at **+971 56 671 7164**
- Attach your images/videos from documents, **not** from your gallery, to ensure the quality is not lost when sent on WhatsApp.

REPORTING PROTOCOL

(continued)

BEACH STRANDINGS

Dolphin strandings happen when dolphins are washed ashore or stuck in shallow waters due to illness, injury, or extreme weather. Immediate action is crucial to prevent dehydration or organ failure.

Follow the same WhatsApp reporting protocol with strandings, with the addition of contacting Yas SeaWorld Research & Rescue Center emergency number at **+971 56 503 0060** to arrange a rescue mission.



DEAD STRANDINGS

You may find dead marine mammals washed-ashore, such as whales, dolphins, or dugongs.

If the stranding is on the **beach** in an elevated location, follow the same WhatsApp reporting protocol. Make sure images, pinned location, and date/time are provided.

If the stranding is on the **shoreline**, the remnants need to be moved into a safer location up on the beach. Report your finding to the SeaWorld Research and Rescue Center, follow their instructions. If they ask you to move the body, make sure you:

- Use gloves, a mask, tarps, or sturdy containers to handle and transport safely.
- Mark the Location! Document the original placement of the stranding with photos and GPS coordinates for record-keeping.

RED TIDES

Identification and Reporting



Red tides are harmful algal blooms (HABs) caused by the rapid growth of certain algae, most commonly dinoflagellates. These blooms often occur in nutrient-rich coastal waters and are influenced by factors such as warm temperatures, sunlight, and ocean currents.

When a red tide occurs, it may discolor the water, ranging from **red to brown or green** shades. More importantly, some red tides produce harmful toxins that can

- Kill marine life
- Contaminate seafood
- Cause health risks to humans
- Deplete oxygen in the water

How to recognize a red tide:

Signs of a red tide include **discolored water, unusual fish deaths, or strong odors along the coastline**. If you observe these signs, promptly report them to local environmental authorities.

If a red tide is present, **DO NOT SWIM** in the affected waters, as the toxins can irritate the skin, eyes, and respiratory system. Prioritize safety and report any signs of red tide.

How to report:

If you observe a red tide, make sure to report it to the **Environment Agency Abu-Dhabi at 800-555**.



BEACH CLEANUPS

SAHIM:

Waste, especially when left unmanaged, poses serious threats to our environment, harming wildlife, polluting ecosystems, and endangering human health. To empower the community, the **SAHIM** initiative engages our communities in tackling waste pollution through action, awareness, and citizen science. By downloading the SAHIM app, you can directly report various types of litter you spot. This data feeds into the databases at the Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi, which can influence policymakers and scientists to conduct research and create new policies.

NURDLES

Nurdles are tiny plastic pellets that serve as raw materials for manufacturing plastic products, but they pose a significant environmental threat!

When spilled, nurdles can be mistaken for food by marine animals, leading to malnutrition and harm. They also absorb toxic pollutants, making them even more dangerous to ecosystems.

These nurdles are collected and documented to track their distribution, assess plastic pollution trends, identify sources, and support research and policy, this is done by uploading the data to **The Great Nurdle Hunt Initiative** (www.nurdlehunt.org.uk) and the **SAHIM** application.



REPORTING PROTOCOL

SAHIM application



Create a profile, then click on "Start a new clean-up".



Fill in the details of your clean-up session.



Start your cleanup! For each item you find, tap once on the category it belongs to.



You can report your nurdle findings directly on the SAHIM app.



List any additional waste items you found that don't fit into the available categories, then submit your report!

JET SKI'S

And Other Disturbances

Saadiyat is a designated protected area known for its pristine beaches and rich biodiversity, including critical habitats for sea turtles, dolphins, and other marine life. To preserve this delicate ecosystem, strict regulations are in place regarding motorized water sports and boating activities. These regulations aim to minimize disturbances, reduce the risk of harm to wildlife, and protect the natural beauty of the area.

Motorized activities, like **jet skis** and **boats**, disturb marine life with noise and vibrations that affect feeding, nesting, and migration! Propellers and waves can also damage seagrass beds and harm marine species!

To ensure the preservation of this delicate ecosystem, motorized water sports and boating are strictly prohibited within **2 km** of the beach!

The Environment Agency Abu Dhabi enforces these rules. Visitors and residents are encouraged to assist in conservation efforts by reporting any unauthorized activities within the restricted zone by documenting violations (e.g., photos or registration numbers) and calling **800-555**.

By following these guidelines and respecting the rules, you contribute to preserving Saadiyat's natural beauty and safeguarding the remarkable biodiversity that thrives in its waters!



SEA BIRDS

And other animals



Saadiyat Island is a sanctuary for a wide variety of wildlife, including seabirds, gazelles, and other species that thrive in its unique natural habitats. These animals play a vital role in maintaining the island's ecological balance, but they are vulnerable to threats such as entanglement in fishing lines, discarded waste, or other human-related activities.

If you encounter an entangled seabird or an injured animal on Saadiyat, it is crucial to act responsibly and follow proper procedures to avoid causing further harm.

First, observe the situation carefully from a safe distance. Do not attempt to handle, free, or move the animal unless you have specific training, as this could stress the animal or worsen its injuries. Take note of important details, such as the exact location, the type of animal, the nature of the injury or entanglement, and any visible threats in the area, such as fishing nets, litter, or other hazards. If possible, take photographs to assist in reporting the incident.

Report the situation immediately to the **Environment Agency Abu Dhabi Call Center at 800-555**. Provide them with all the relevant information you have collected so they can address the issue appropriately.



IMPORTANT CONTACTS

In case you encounter any injured, distressed, or entangled wildlife on Saadiyat Island, it's essential to have the right contacts at hand to report the incident promptly. **Below is a list of important numbers to call for assistance:**

| COMPANY | SCOPE | NUMBER |
|------------------------------------|--|--------------|
| Environment Agency Abu Dhabi | Red tides, illegal activities, stranded Marine and Terrestrial life. | 800-555 |
| Sea World | Marine strandings | 056 503 0060 |
| National Aquarium in Abu Dhabi | Stranded marine life (Sea Turtles, etc) | 02 418 6666 |
| The Dolphin Project Dr. Ada Natoli | The UAE Dolphin Project | 056 671 7164 |
| Emirates Nature WWF | General enquiries | 058 532 3400 |



