What to do with a live stranded dugong:?

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Why do live dugongs strand?

Dependent calf separated from mother

Injured/ sick animal

Stranded by tide or storm surge



What to do when live dugong strands?

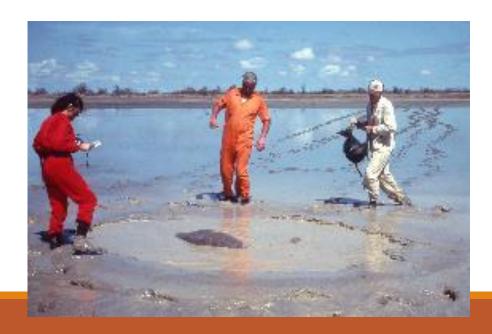
•Dependent calf separated from mother – will need milk, plant food and 24 hour care

Injured/ sick independent animal

Independent dugong stranded by

Return to sea as soon as possible or after period in holding pen or euthanase depending on condition





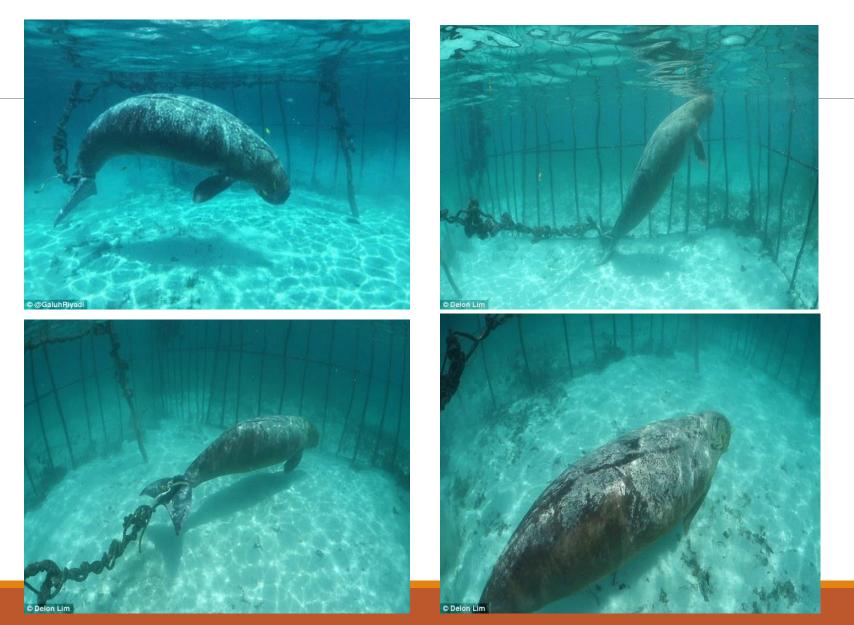
Dugongs are not ideal aquarium animals

Individuals may live in captivity for many years, but:

- Mortality rate often high
- Never bred in captivity despite opportunity at Toba
- Males and females may have to be separated (Sydney)
- May not grow properly (Gracie, Singapore)
- Very expensive: food and labour



Examples of cruelty to captive dugongs



The story of 'Pig'

•Stranded as 20 kg neonate in north Australia 1998

Moved 2000 km to Sea World, Gold Coast

•24 hour care from veterinarian for several months

Staged release to wild after 3.5 years

•Found in very poor condition 8 months later (lost 26% of body weight and beaten up)

Returned to captivity

Health gradually restored after fecal transplant

Transferred to Sydney Aquarium- never to be released

Separated from female due to violent behaviour



So what do you do with a live orphan dependent calf?

- **Euthanase**
- > Return to sea and hope it finds a lactating female dugong
 - mother
 - adoptive mother

Likely death sentence

Attempt to rear in captivity

- Locally
- Commercial facility



Policy appropriate to local situation required in advance of crisis – needs to be developed and advertised

Is it legal to keep a dugong in captivity in your country?



A stranded baby dugong can be an educational opportunity or a public relations disaster



QUESTIONS?

