

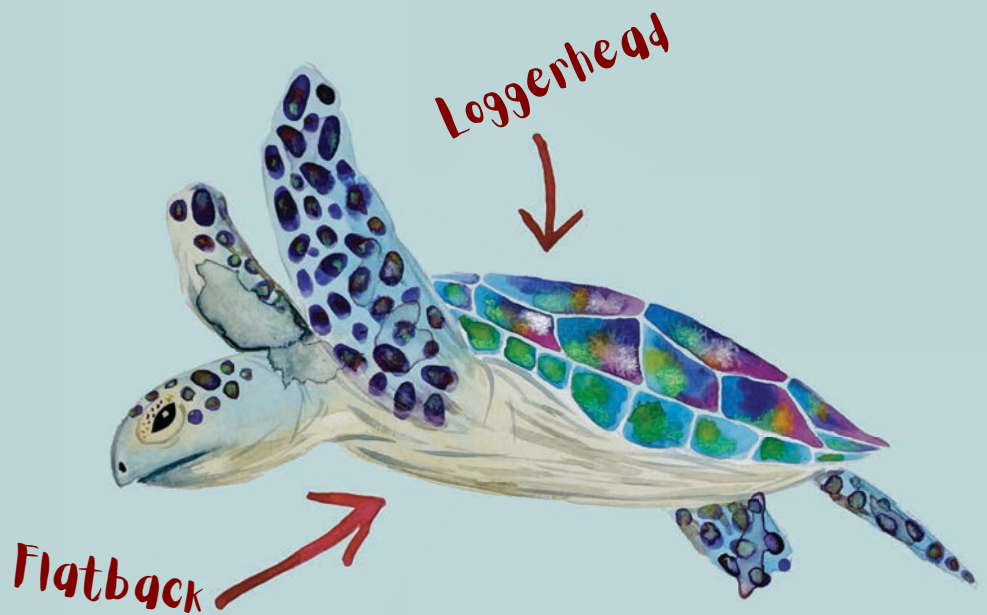
Iluka

The Hybrid Hatchling



Written & Illustrated by Kirsty Esson

Based on a true story.



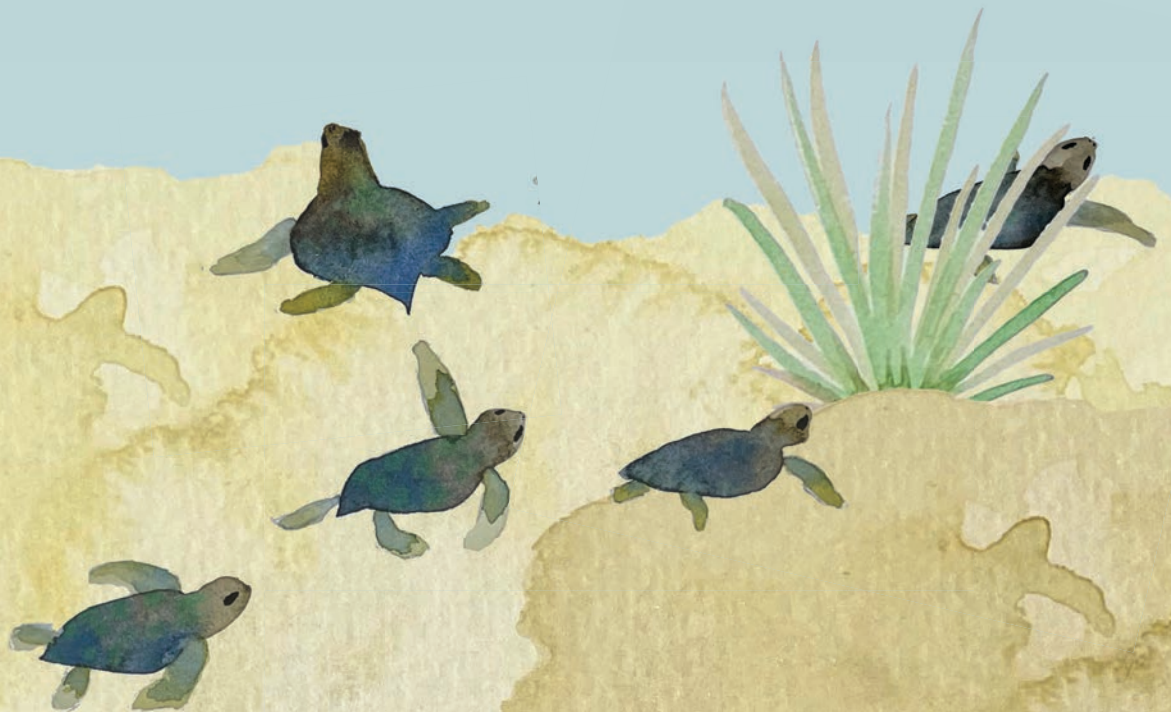
When Iluka hatched, he looked different to all the other turtles, and he wasn't sure what type of turtle he could be.

When he was just a tiny turtle he came to live at SEA LIFE Sunshine Coast.



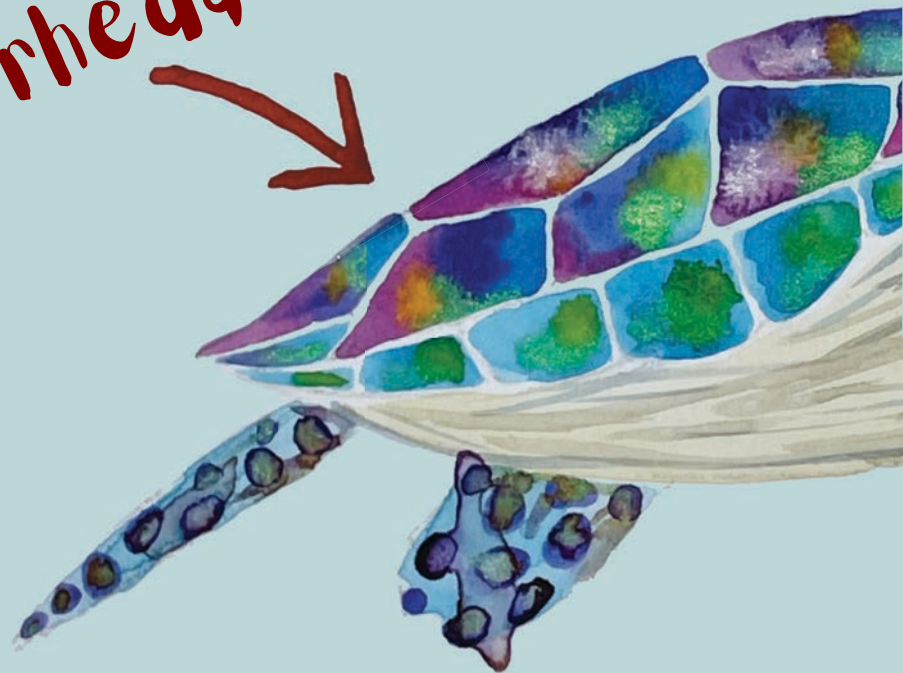
He weighed just 43 grams!
They called him Iluka which
means 'by the sea' in the
Bundjalung language.

Iluka loved his name.

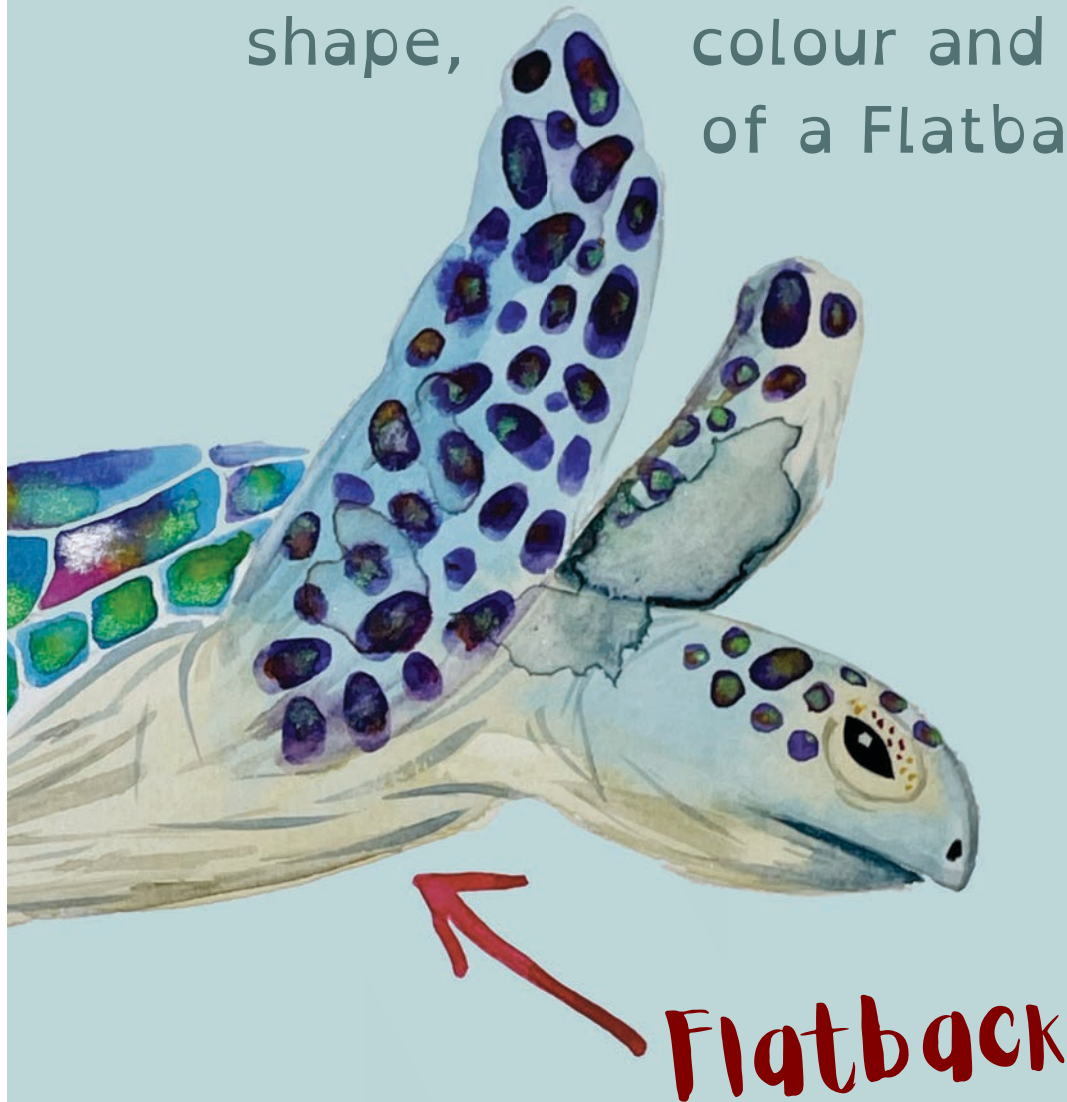


The team at SEA LIFE Sunshine Coast was working with the Queensland Government Department of Environment and Science on a research project and because Iluka was a unique turtle, he was going to help them – he was a hybrid!

Loggerhead



It was discovered he had the carapace (shell) colour and head of a Loggerhead Turtle, however, his underside had the shape, colour and texture of a Flatback Turtle!




Iluka was proud that he could help the aquarists understand and protect other unique hybrid turtle hatchlings just like him.





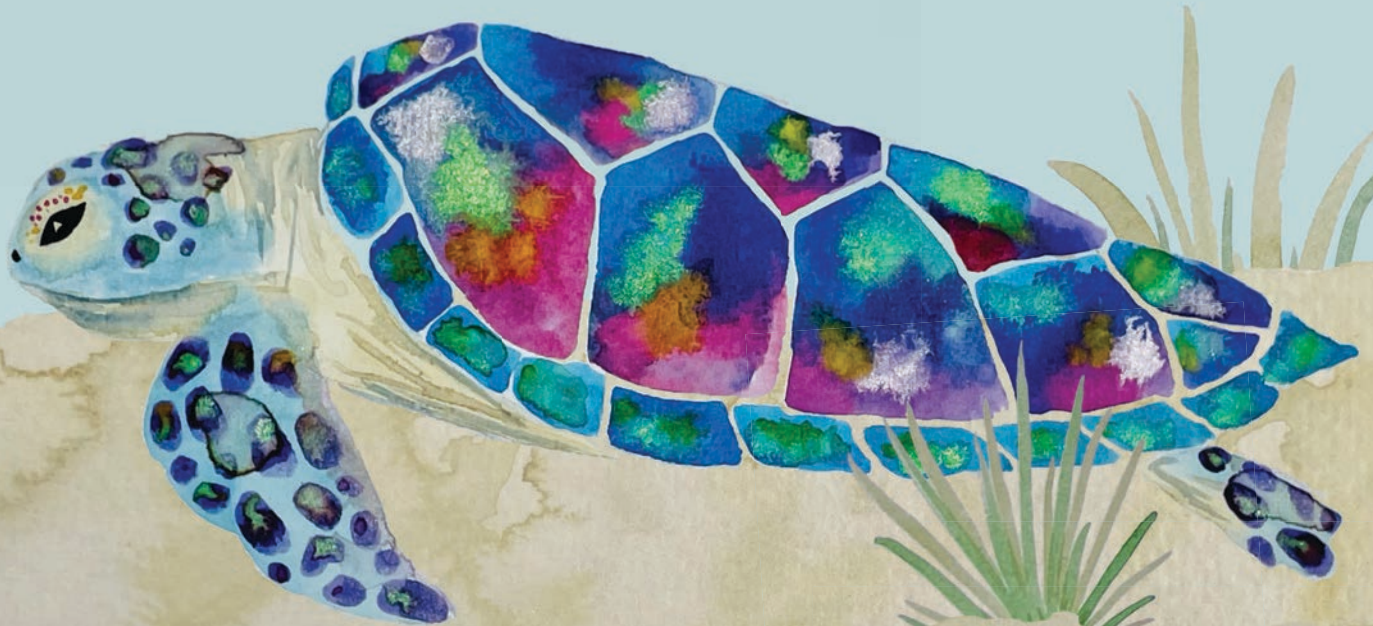
Turtle hatchlings face a lot of dangers in the wild, their habitats are lost as cities grow along the coast and there are predators and even humans that threaten them, so it can be very hard to stay safe. As baby turtles hatch and begin to explore, pollution can make it hard to find food, and they can even get caught up in things like plastic bags and fishing nets.

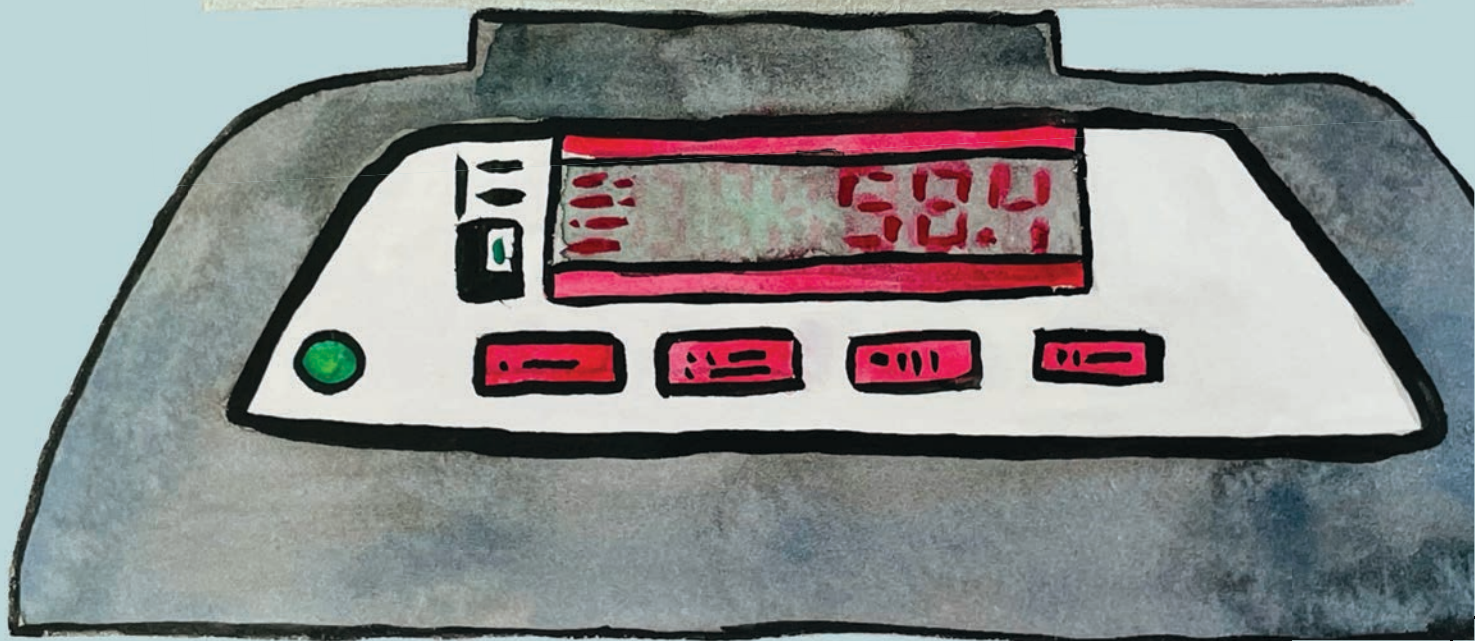




The Sunshine Coast
Welcomes You

Iluka stayed at SEA LIFE Sunshine Coast for one year. The team there helped him grow big and strong. He was very cheeky, and he LOVED his food!







They monitored his growth patterns, which included regular weighing, measuring, and gathering photos. They took notes on changes in his shape and colour.

Whilst Iluka loved his time with his friends at SEA LIFE Sunshine Coast, he was soon ready to head back out into the ocean.



Iluka didn't rush it; he took his
time on the beach as all his
friends said goodbye.



After about five minutes a
wave came in and he was
able to ride the tide out
into the ocean.





Iluka is now back in the ocean, and he is proud to be such a unique turtle, as that is what makes him special!





On World Wildlife Day, 3rd March 2021, Iluka was taken to Mon Repos Turtle Centre near Bundaberg where he was released off the beach. Iluka was microchipped, tagged and genetically sampled before his successful release.



Iluka at SEA LIFE Sunshine Coast





Aquarist Brittany helped look after Iluka during his stay at SEA LIFE Sunshine Coast



All profits from the sale of this book will be donated to registered charity the SEA LIFE Trust, which will in turn put the funds to use on conservation campaigns, scientific research & inspiring education - all in the name of these majestic sea creatures who are facing very real threats in the wild.

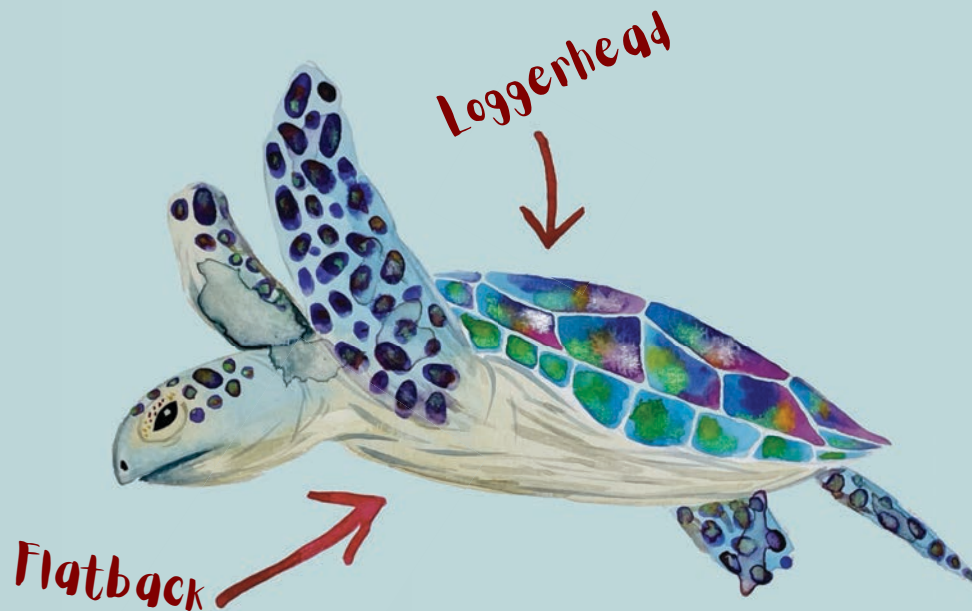
For more information visit: www.visitsealife.com/sunshine-coast

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@Kirsty_esson_art



Based on a true story

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