

# Japanese turtle to get prosthetic limbs

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AFP/HO/File – A loggerhead sea turtle. A Japanese conservation group said Monday it plans to fit prosthetic front limbs ...

TOKYO (AFP) – A Japanese conservation group said Monday it plans to fit prosthetic front limbs to a sea turtle injured in what marine scientists believe was a shark attack.

"We need to pay special attention as the forelimbs will have to be strong enough to (allow her) to climb up a beach," Erika Akai, a researcher at the non-profit Sea Turtle Association of Japan, told AFP.

"She should eventually be able to lay eggs on a beach."

The injured loggerhead sea turtle, with a 74-centimetre (30-inch) long shell, was named Yu after being rescued off southwestern Japan following a suspected shark attack last summer, Akai said.

The animal was placed in an aquarium in western Tokushima prefecture.

"Since we cannot release her like this, because her swimming capability is only at 60 percent of that of a healthy turtle, we decided to make prosthetic fins for her," said Akai, adding that the project would start in May.

The association has set up a fund and asked Japan's largest prosthetic limb maker in western Osaka prefecture to make the artificial fins.

"We are fully aware that it will be a difficult challenge," said a spokeswoman for the company, Kawamura Gishi Co. "But we were moved by the passion of the association and decided to take part in the project."