



A young vet got her dream job after she moved to a tropical paradise island to run a hospital for turtles. Dr Claire Lomas, 25, felt she had 'little hope' when she applied for the job at the Coco Palm Dhuni Kolhu in the Maldives March 2017 while working at a more traditional veterinary practice. But Claire's dream quickly turned to reality when she was interviewed for the role – before flying out to take out her new position August 2017.

Ever since, Claire, from Rhos-on-Sea, North Wales, spends her days caring for injured or sick turtles who have been recovered from 'ghost gear' – abandoned fishing nets dumped in the ocean.

Claire said, "When I saw the advert for the job in Maldives it was an absolute dream that combined all of my passions; veterinary medicine, conservation and marine life – a job I never knew existed. I applied with great enthusiasm but little hope. I was absolutely elated to be interviewed and in the end was given the opportunity of a lifetime. I find it so rewarding to be able to release the turtles back to the ocean. There have been some memorable cases that came in very injured and sick, but with time and treatment became really healthy strong turtles. It's incredible to feel like you've made a difference in that turtles life and been a small part of the bigger task of turtle conservation. The abandoned nets are a huge problem in our oceans and we help the turtles that are victims to these nets. They are often missing flippers or require amputations from the damage caused by the nets, as they just keep swimming against the nets as they try to escape which deeply wounds them."

'TURTLE'-Y awesome!

Claire, who has been living and working in the Maldives for 18 months said that life in the tiny island nation is a world away from that in the UK.

She has so far saved around 80 turtles and provides surgery to those who become seriously injured after being caught up in abandoned fishing nets.

She said, "Life here is completely different to anything I've ever experienced. It's a whole other world compared to the UK. From the veterinary side, it's wonderful to be able to treat wild animals and release them back to the ocean when they are healthy. Sometimes I miss things we take for granted in the UK, like coffee shops and going out to see a movie. However, I wouldn't swap that for the ability to just jump in the ocean at any point and living barefoot. Then there are unique parts of living here, for example I have to take a seaplane to the capital if I need to visit the bank." *Story Trender*

