Tamatoa was found by fishermen in Salt Run at Anastasia State Park. The fishermen and park workers noticed the sea turtle had a few “bumps” on it and took Tamatoa to the Sea Turtle Hospital at Whitney Laboratory.

At the Sea Turtle Hospital, we saw that the turtle had no serious health issues. The bumps were identified as fibropapilloma tumors. Once the turtle’s shell was cleaned off, a beautiful sunburst pattern was revealed. Green sea turtles typically have beautifully patterned shells, but this was especially pretty. The hospital staff decided to name the turtle “Tamatoa”, after the crab in Moana, because he was so “shiny”.

After a quick summer rehabilitation, Tamatoa was released home.