



ALWAYS LEARNING TIME FOR DELTA AND LUNA

It's the time of year when kids have started back at school. The end of a summer that went by way too fast and the beginning of a new year full of friends, teachers and new learning adventures! As a child, I loved summer break, but I always enjoyed going back to school to see all my friends that I didn't hang out with during the summer and to meet my new teachers. The dolphins at DRC attend a year-round school. They keep in touch daily with classmates and teachers, and even have family involvement in their education.

Because our dolphins go to class every day, it is a big part of every trainer's job to make "Dolphin School" fun, interesting, and entertaining. When a dolphin calf



Luna's learning her "strut" behavior from trainer Kelly Jayne Rodriguez while volunteer Jenny Hall observes.

is born, instruction starts right away. From day one, our baby dolphins learn from one of their most important and influential teachers: their mothers. They learn to make sure their blowhole

clears the water surface. They learn navigation skills, including how to steer and stop while they swim. The basics of proper social etiquette and safety

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



Tursi's ready to chomp down on a capelin from her trainer, but she sometimes snacks on minnows in her lagoon, too.

Here at Dolphin Research Center we pride ourselves on the fact that we are an educational facility. We want guests to feel comfortable approaching any staff member to ask a question. We also love any opportunity to talk about our gray faced family members! Over the years we've realized that there are several "frequently asked questions" and we thought we would try to answer a few at once.

Q: Do dolphins eat the fish in the lagoons?

A: Occasionally we see dolphins minnow fishing or one might catch and carry a snapper around in his/her mouth, but for the most part they seem to prefer the restaurant quality fish that we provide. Also, our dolphins do not possess the expert hunting skills that their wild counterparts have acquired by spending up to five years learning from their mothers before going off on their own. Due to basic instinct, however, our dolphins will go after the slowest,

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BECOME PART OF THE ADVENTURE

Dolphin Research Center is a not-for-profit organization that conducts innovative research and education projects. We invite you to join our unique family by becoming a member of the Dolphin Society. As a member, your tax-deductible donation will help us provide the best environment and care humanly possible for the dolphins and sea lions who call DRC home. Your membership will also support our manatee rescue program and provide the educational programs that encourage our guests to become ambassadors for all marine animals and the environment we share. Annual memberships are available in several levels:

Individual (\$40 for adults, \$25 for full-time students with proof of enrollment) – receive a subscription to the *Dolphin Society* newsletter, our e-newsletter, a 10% discount on most gift shop items, free admission for one to DRC for one year, and one free guest pass.

Trio (\$70) – receive all the benefits of an individual membership plus free admission to DRC for up three people for one year.

Gray Cross (\$90) – receive all the benefits of the Trio membership plus a subscription to our quarterly *Gray Cross* newsletter and free admission to DRC for up to four people for one year.

Sponsor (\$150) – receive all the benefits of the Gray Cross membership plus the opportunity to sponsor a narrated session at DRC and admission for up to five people for one year.

Research Team (\$500) – receive all the benefits of the Sponsor membership plus receive a personal tour of the Research Tower (by appointment) and admission for up to six people for one year.

Memberships can be purchased via our website at www.dolphins.org, by phone (305) 289-1121 X229, or by mailing your check or credit card number to DRC, 58901 Overseas Highway, Grassy Key, FL 33050. Please note that memberships are not transferable and the member must present photo identification for admission.



JACKSONVILLE CELEBRATES JAX – A SURVIVOR’S TAIL

Over three and a half years ago, an orphaned dolphin was spotted in the St. John’s River near Jacksonville. Alone and injured by a probable shark attack, he would certainly have died had he not been rescued.

The people of Jacksonville took him into their hearts then, and he’s remained there ever since. Jax is a true survivor with a remarkable “tail” to share.

Dolphin Research Center invites you, your family, and your friends to join us on Thursday evening, October 7, 2010, in the Terrace Suite at EverBank Field in Jacksonville, FL, home of the Jacksonville Jaguars, for a benefit event to celebrate Jax. Representatives from Dolphin Research Center will update us on Jax’s tremendous progress with videos, slide shows and personal stories. The evening will also feature a benefit auction of artwork, custom hand-crafted fine jewelry, gifts, sports memorabilia, and many other items. Chef Tim Hoch of Levy Restaurants will present a delicious buffet dinner while we are entertained by some very talented local artists. The event is being hosted by three members of the DRC board, Joanne Zimmerman, treasurer, Bryan Barker, secretary, and Rhoda Stevenson, director, along with a local committee of fans of Jax and DRC.

Most everyone who knows Dolphin Research Center knows Jax. As a baby, Jax was rescued in March 2007. His ‘tail’ is a heart touching, amazing story of survival. Many people in downtown Jacksonville called officials to report an injured baby dolphin in the month prior to his rescue. Government officials



In this picture, you can not only see the physical reminders of Jax’s injuries, but also the sweet expression on his face and the calm joy in his eyes.

monitored the youngster for a few weeks and found he was always alone, and had evidence of some serious injuries, skin lesions and scars. The most startling thing about him was the fact that he was missing half of his dorsal fin, part of his right fluke and a portion of his right pectoral fin. It appeared he had experienced a close encounter with a shark, man-made dangers, or both – leaving him without his mother at a very young age. After being rescued and nursed back to health, veterinarians decided that he could not survive on his own in the open ocean and he came to live at DRC; his forever home.

Please join Dolphin Research Center and the people of Jacksonville as we celebrate and support Jax! Admission to this gala evening is \$50 and a table for eight can be reserved for \$400. Sponsorships are also available. Additional information and advance reservations can be made by calling Amy at 305-289-1121 extension 241 or on-line at www.dolphins.org. We would also like to reach out to those who would be willing to donate auction items for this event. All proceeds will benefit Jax’s continued care at Dolphin Research Center.

-Patrick Bogan

PERMITS, LICENSES, LAWS AND STANDARDS

– THE REGULATORY SIDE OF DRC



During a pre-inspection, C.J. Geotis (r) checks the vitamin cabinet while (l-r) Kathy Roberts, Mandy Rodriguez, and Gail Murray take note of his findings.

Think back to *Flipper* when a wild dolphin befriended a park ranger's sons. He showed up when they needed him, or responded to that *ah-ooga* sound maker they stuck under the water's surface. In the movie theater and on television, the dolphin was part of their family. Was that really possible? If you lived on the water near where dolphins frolicked, could you really have one of your own? Actually, yes.

Back in the 1950s and 60s, in addition to collecting dolphins for marine mammal parks and aquariums, Milton Santini, the founding father of caring for dolphins on Grassy Key, often obtained, boarded and trained dolphins for people, including celebrities like Hugh Downs. (Some of us who first visited back in those days pleaded with our parents for dolphins of our own, much like your child might beg for a puppy or a pony.) Keep in mind, that at the time that the first marine mammal park opened in 1938 (Marineland in St. Augustine, FL), the world's knowledge of dolphins and other marine mammals was comparatively sparse. In our relative ignorance we might have thought that "dolphins for anyone" was a fine idea. Increased knowledge over the years demonstrated instead that these fascinating animals

needed protection and oversight.

After the federal Animal Welfare Act (AWA) passed in 1966, the Secretary of Agriculture established minimum regulations and standards for the care and maintenance of certain regulated animals living in human care. However, marine mammals were not included under this act until an amendment was made in 1979. The

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), an agency under the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), outlines and enforces specific, strict, standards for the care and handling of marine mammals living in human care.

The Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), which was passed in 1972, provides for the overall conservation, protection and management of wild marine mammals found in waters under this country's jurisdiction.

The MMPA authorizes the taking of marine mammals from the wild only for scientific research studies, for public display, or to enhance the survival of the species. Permits are required for any of these "takes". Different federal agencies oversee different marine mammal species. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) covers manatees, dugongs, walruses, sea otters, and polar bears. Whales, dolphins, porpoises, seals and sea lions are all managed by National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), an agency of the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA). (It should be noted that no dolphins have been taken from the wild for public display in U.S. facilities in almost 25 years.)

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Adopt-A-Dolphin

You can sponsor your favorite dolphin or sea lion at DRC through our Adopt-A-Dolphin or Sea Lion program. Experience the warm feeling that comes with knowing that you are helping to provide for the care and feeding of your friend. Your tax-deductible donation for a membership will help us to fulfill our promise to provide the finest home humanly possible for our marine mammal family. Memberships are available in several levels:

E-Dolfriend (\$15) – receive an electronic membership that includes a subscription to our monthly e-newsletter and an e-mailed full-color certificate with your favorite dolphin or sea lion's picture and a biography about your friend you can print out at home.

Dolfriend (\$50) – receive a subscription to the *Dolphin Society* newsletter, our e-newsletter, a 10% discount on most gift shop items, a color certificate with your dolphin or sea lion's picture, a biography about your friend, free admission for two to DRC for one year, and one free guest pass.

Pod Pal (\$100) – receive all the benefits of a Dolfriend membership plus a subscription to our *Gray Cross* newsletter and free admission to DRC for up to four people for one year.

Parent (\$240) – Provide the ultimate support for your friend by pledging \$20 per month to sponsor one of their meals each month. You will receive all the benefits of a Pod Pal membership plus free admission for up to five people for one year and silver bucket stickers for your certificate to represent the meals you provided for your dolphin or sea lion friend.

Adopt-A-Dolphin or Sea Lion memberships make a great gift and can be purchased via our website at www.dolphins.org, by phone (305) 289-1121 X229, or by mailing your check or credit card number to DRC, 58901 Overseas Highway, Grassy Key, FL 33050. Please note that memberships are not transferable and the member must present photo identification for admission.

www.dolphins.org

Innerspace or cyberspace, the dolphins of Dolphin Research Center look forward to your visit.

Learning, from page 1

are other lessons. As with humans, learning styles vary with each individual calf as do rates of learning. Right now at Dolphin Research Center we are fascinated as we watch the educational evolution of the two newest members of our family, Delta and Luna.

A lot of what Delta and Luna do is a result of what they and their moms, Aleta and Pandora, are comfortable doing. We never ask any of our dolphin calves to do anything they aren't ready to try and we look for permission from their mothers. How do we know they are ready and interested and their moms are comfortable? We watch their behavior. Currently, Aleta and Pandora are ready for their babies to "come to class" with human friends. Not only do they allow them to wander over and play with us, they also actively go get them and bring them to the dock to interact throughout the day, both in and out of sessions. These little families amaze us on a daily basis.

Delta, who is going to be ten months old on September 22, takes after his father, Kibby, who is very carefree and laid back. Delta has really shown us that he is going to take his time and enjoy being a baby for as long as possible. For a good portion of Aleta and Delta's sessions, Delta swims around his lagoon and plays with objects on top of the water. Leaves and balls make great toys. His dad is big into toys, too. Delta occasionally stops by to see what Mom is doing at the dock, but it seems like he is just checking in as opposed to interested in joining the training.

Delta started consistently eating fish at about eight months old, which is around the time that Aleta started eating fish when she was a baby. He is also really good at sharing his food with the fish that live under the docks in the lagoons. It seems to be a game he likes to play where he chases them after they



Delta checks out the bubbles that trainer Jennifer Erb is blowing through the target pole.

take the piece of fish he spit out of his mouth.

Just like Aleta and Kibby, Delta can be pretty affectionate and loves getting back rubs from his trainers. He swims back and forth at the front of the dock so the trainers can rub his back.

One of the main training tools that we use at DRC to train behaviors is a target pole. It is a long PVC pipe with a small buoy ball attached to the end that is used to teach anything from waiting patiently at a dock at a specific spot to doing forward flips further out in the lagoon. We are at the stage with Delta where we use the target pole as a toy by blowing bubbles through the tube. Delta comes over to the pole, looks at the bubbles, and makes noises. This is helping us to attract his interest while also getting him really familiar with the target pole for his future training.

Luna, who turns eight months old on September 29, is showing us that not only did she get her parents'

(Pandora and A.J.) adorable looks but their brains as well. Both of them are innovative Einsteins in the own right, so it is not surprising that Luna has already made exceptional cognitive leaps. This little girl is quite impressive with how fast she has picked up behaviors and begun interacting with trainers and our guests! With help from her mom and her trainers, she has learned how to wave, spin in a circle, dive, and give backrubs, handshakes, and kisses.

Luna started to consistently eat fish when she was about four months old. Just like Delta, this was around the same age that her mom, Pandora, started eating fish. Once Luna started eating fish it seemed like she was on a roll with how much she began learning. We are currently training Luna to wait on a target pole. This will be an

important behavior once she is older because she can be polite and wait her turn when she is with other dolphins. When Luna is not doing behaviors on her own, she always watches Pandora, especially during interactive programs. Luna is so impressive with her rate of learning behaviors that she will probably participate in our dolphin programs in no time! Santini might have some competition for her current title of "teacher's pet".

Delta and Luna are showing so much progress at a rapid pace. It is amazing to see them absorb information like sponges and have fun at the same time. By the time this article goes to press, there is no telling what these two babies will be doing. For those of you who think being in school isn't a good time, come visit Dolphin Research Center. You might be surprised to see just how exciting learning can be!

-Jamie Stevens

In addition to requiring permits for takes, amendments made to the MMPA in 1994 further required that public display facilities must: offer education or conservation programs based on professionally recognized standards of the public display community; be open to the public on a regularly scheduled basis with access not limited by anything other than the charging of an admission fee; and be registered or hold a license under the Animal Welfare Act.

Dolphin Research Center annually renews our Exhibitor's License and we are subject to surprise inspections by APHIS officials at least once a year, but facilities can be inspected more frequently without prior notification. We are also an accredited member of the Alliance of Marine Mammal Parks and Aquariums (AMMPA) which follows the same, or stricter, guidelines than those set by the government. Members self-regulate and apply for reaccreditation every five years.

If this sounds like a complicated alphabet soup, believe us, it's an ongoing challenge to comply with all the regulations and maintain the high standards for animal care, handling, and habitat every single day.

Every staff member plays a part in maintaining DRC's high standards. However, Kathy Roberts, DRC's Vice President of Corporate Communications and Special Projects, is responsible for making sure that every i is dotted, every t crossed and that our operations consistently meet government regulations. "There are mounds of paperwork, extra committee work, and a thousand and one details involved to keep us in compliance," Kathy explains, illustrating her point by holding up a four-inch-thick notebook packed with policies, procedures and plans developed by DRC. Among the many requirements are: experienced employees; humane handling of animals; appropriate housing/habitat; appropriate social situations; adequate space; environmental quality; high food quality, thorough record keeping, a veterinary care program, and emergency

procedures.

The total picture involves more than daily operations. "We have to have a plan for what we will do to continue to care for the dolphins and sea lions in different emergency scenarios," says



C.J. Geotis and Kathy Roberts check out the Fish House where we prepare meals for the dolphins and sea lions during an IACCUC inspection.

Kathy. These could range from storm events to power failures and anything in between. "Most recently, the inspector called to ask what plans we'd made to protect the dolphins if the oil spill threatened their safety."

In addition to our Exhibitor's License for public display, Dolphin Research Center also maintains a separate research registration. We are one of the few U.S. facilities that hold both of these. While research registration may provide extra prestige, it also increases our requirements. One of these is that we must have an Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) that meets every six months. Kathy chairs this committee. The other members include DRC President and CEO Rita Irwin as the Institutional Official, Co-Founder and COO Mandy Rodriguez, Medical Director Pat Clough, Veterinarian of Record Dr. Mike Renner, local veterinarian Dr. Mike Dunn, and "unbiased" community representatives, C.J. Geotis and Brian Schmitt.

"IACUC reviews all of the current research projects; standard protocols; reviews if any serious complaints were received about the care of our dolphins, and a myriad of other details," according to Kathy.

A sub-committee also conducts a thorough site inspection, examining everything that an APHIS inspector

looks at to ensure compliance. "Prior to that, Gail Murray, DRC's Executive Coordinator, and I do our own pre-inspection," she adds. "We self-inspect a lot." In addition, any department whose work needs to be documented for the government has their own systems of checks and balances in place. "There are so many different areas, from water quality to transport plans, even down to the daily cleaning of Animal Care and Training bathrooms. Nothing can be skipped."

The meticulous attention to detail pays off in many ways. The most important and obvious benefit is the overall good health and well-being of the dolphins and sea lions. The APHIS inspector recently visited us in June. She spent the better part of an entire day going through the big IACUC book, reviewing medical records, checking the Fish House and Medical Lab, visiting the dolphin lagoons and, in general, investigating all of DRC with a very critical eye. We passed that inspection with flying colors!

"We've had no issues of non-compliance the last three times we've been inspected," Kathy happily reports. The most recent non-compliance issue, farther back, addressed research paperwork. "This led to us revamping the IACUC and overhauling our 'Big Book' of plans and procedures. We now update the book twice a year and the inspector is blown away by its thoroughness." It's been several years since DRC was "dinged" for issues with our old sea lion habitat. "We were able to tell them that we already had the plans to replace it with a new environment."

Dolphin Research Center is justifiably proud of the high standards we set, and our consistent performance in meeting not only our own standards, but also those required by the federal government. We always say that the health and well-being of the family pod is our top priority. Our record with the federal agencies that look out for dolphins and sea lions demonstrates conclusively that we not only talk the talk, we definitely walk the walk.

-Mary Stella

TIDBITS



A.J. always makes the crowd laugh when he shoots up from the water, shaking his head.

A.J.: A.J. enjoys showing off his signature crazy behavior lately. When he comes out of the water and shakes his head back and forth, everyone can hear the ‘slap, slap’ of his tongue going back and forth in his mouth! What a crazy guy.

Aleta: A mother’s influence is important, as Aleta continues to show. We’ve watched her take Delta with her into adjacent lagoons. She’s already getting him up to par on gating!

Calusa: As Calusa moves forward in her pregnancy, she is also moving forward with her size! Her favorite game of jumping through hula hoops has taken a new turn. Now the hula hoop stays around her tummy as she tries to squeeze through!

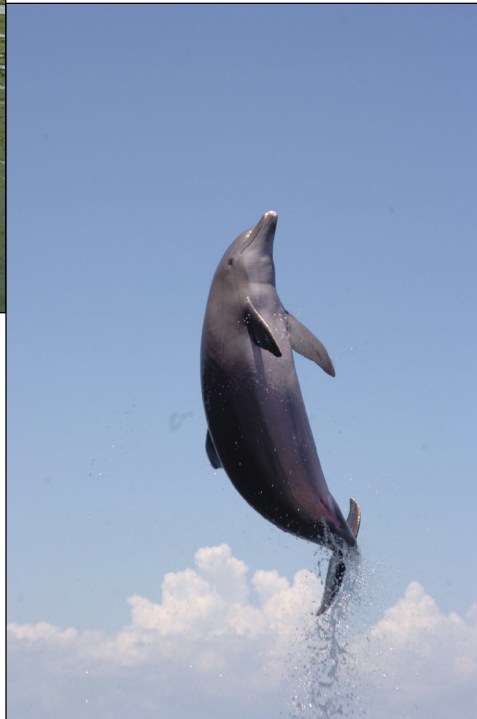
Cayo: Cayo is right behind her toddler mate Gypsi when it comes to learning the important husbandry behavior of voluntary watering. She now accepts a tube full of water. Go Cayo!

Delta: In addition to enjoying his

mom’s milk, Delta also likes it when we feed him some fish. The little guy finally discovered that it is more enjoyable to eat the small fish than it is to feed them to the snapper that swim in his lagoon.

Gypsi: Gypsi continues to make progress on husbandry behaviors by steadily increasing her water intake. Now her trainers are able to give her a full liter and a half!

Jax: Jax still has a great time with his buddy A.J. He copies all



When Rainbow breaches, he soars high in the sky and then smacks the water with his entire body.

the fun behaviors that A.J. does but that he has not yet learned. He ad libs breaches, just like A.J.’s, minus the big splash!

Karen: Trainers continue to work on Karen’s in-water behaviors. Watching her gracefully swim, it’s no wonder sea lions are nicknamed angels of the sea.

Kibby: Kibby loves wearing different types of hats. His trainer had a baseball cap that Kibby was a big fan of borrowing. Unfortunately, he took

a breath and when he exhaled, the cap flew off into the lagoon!

Luna: Luna is proving to be a little showstopper, just like her mother. She really seems to like meeting guests in the water and dashes over to get back rubs whenever she can.

Kilo: During the hot summer months, we saw Kilo take more naps on the stairs in the sea lion habitat. He also cools himself by placing his flippers in the water while he snoozes on the bottom step. Smart boy!

Merina: Merina is having fun as an expectant mom. She still does programs and shows the guests she is as beautiful as ever. She gracefully soars through the air on dives, which gives people a good look at her pretty, round belly.

Molly: Everybody knows that Molly likes bringing up scarves as presents and she’s taught Tursi to join the fun. After Molly shows up for the start of a session with a scarf, the next thing you know, Tursi pops up with one, too. Good teaching, Molly!



Doing a pretty dive gives Merina the opportunity to show off her pregnant body.

Pandora: Just about every day, Pandora teaches her daughter Luna new fun behaviors. She is such a great mom and allows her daughter to enjoy the spotlight, while she patiently waits with her trainer.

Pax: Pax has been working on his back flip with his trainer. He is progressing in small steps, using the target pole as a guide. He is so close that now all he has to do is bring his tail over to make a complete circle.

Rainbow: When it comes to being a crowd pleaser, Rainbow has the right stuff, especially on hot summer days. He soaks the audience as well as his trainers on the dock when he does his cannonball of a breach!

Renee: Renee is having fun with her trainers and Karen as she continues to learn new behaviors and then shows them off with pride. We think Kilo likes it too and lets Renee know by barking at her!

Sandy: You should see how Sandy amazes our guests when he flies out of the water for a back flip! He's over nine feet long. That's a lot of dolphin that whips around!

Santini: Santini is known to really enjoy guest interactions and sometimes

shows some favoritism towards a certain one. She kept bringing up leaves and mangrove pods to one guest during a program but sharing the presents with anyone else was not on her agenda.

Talon: Perhaps Talon is competing with Rainbow when he does his crowd splash. Guests in the Dolphin Encounter really get cooled off when he sends a wall of water their way!

Tanner: We recently introduced a white foam mat to Tanner and he's having fun with the new toy floating in his lagoon. You can often see him trying to grab it first before Kibby!

Theresa: Theresa has always chosen to do what she enjoys most at the moment whether it be waving, spinning, or another behavior. Recently she decided that dives were too plain, and that her flying forwards were just what the crowd wanted to see, so she did them instead.

Tursi: Pregnancy doesn't keep Tursi from doing *Dolphin Encounters*. We know when she really enjoys something because she always pops up at the dock screaming, and moves her lower jaw up and down. Our guests have been seeing lots of this screaming alligator!

Bottom Left: Theresa loves doing flying-forward tail walks!

Bottom Right: Sometimes Talon splashes so enthusiastically, we lose sight of him in the wall of water.

Top Right: It's pretty common for Tursi to pop up out of the water, screaming and clapping her jaw when she's super-pleased with herself.



-Erica Wisniewski



FAQ, from page 1
easiest and, often,
least nutritional
prey. When they
do catch a fish, it
is usually more for
sport, as they often
end up tossing
around like a
football!

Q: Do you ever
release the dolphins
or let them swim
outside the
perimeter fences?

A: It is actually
against the law for
us to release our
dolphins. Most
of the dolphins at
DRC were born at
DRC, others retired
here after long
careers at different
facilities, or were
rescued from the
wild and deemed
“non-releasable”. Therefore, as they
do not have, or have lost, the survival
skills needed to live in the wild, it would
be cruel to put them in that situation.
Dolphins, like other social mammals,
learn survival skills over many years,
primarily early in life, but continue
to perfect them as they mature into
adulthood. It would be like learning a
bit about camping at the age of five, not
practicing those skills, but then being
dropped off in the middle of a jungle as
an older adult with no assistance and
being expected to survive. Therefore,
we have committed to taking care of
our dolphins and sea lions and ensuring
their health and well being for the rest of
their lives.

Q: What do you do with the dolphins
during hurricanes?

A: This is probably the question we



Talon shows off the peduncle band on his tail that is part of our hurricane preparation.

get the most, and rightfully so. After
all, the Florida Keys are in a somewhat
vulnerable spot in hurricane season, and
at DRC we take this very seriously. We
work year round to plan for hurricane
season. If a storm forms, we monitor
the track of the storm for several days
to see what kinds of preparations are
needed. For example, we always
remove anything that would become
dangerous in strong winds (ropes,
toys, tarps, etc) and simply “batten
down the hatches”. We also have a
“stay behind” crew that remains at
DRC no matter what category storm is
approaching. The crew feeds and cares
for the dolphins and sea lions until right
before the storm hits and as soon as it
has passed. One thing we know about
our gray friends is that if they were to
get lost during a storm, they would
immediately go looking for people,
because they have grown up with
people as their friends and caregivers.
Knowing this, we also outfit each

sound, which will help us help them to
find their way home. In most cases, due
to most of our lagoons being anywhere
from 15-30 ft deep, the dolphins have a
safe depth to go to during a storm and
just hold their breath at the bottom for
extended periods of time.

So there you have it, a few of
our most popular questions. We would
love to know if there are any more
questions you have for us, so please
feel free to send them to education@dolphins.org. As said earlier, we love
to talk about our family. After all,
people like you are the reason we are
able to take such wonderful care of
our dolphins and sea lions; therefore
we enjoy sharing with you how we go
about doing this important job!

-Debbie Rose

dolphin with a
peduncle band.
These are bright
orange colored
neoprene bands
that safely
go around
the dolphin's
peduncle area
and will make it
easier for them
to be spotted if
they were lost
or disoriented in
the open ocean.
Additionally,
we have trained
the dolphins to
respond to a
pinger, which
is a device
that emits a
flat frequency
tone up to two
miles away.
The dolphins
associate this
sound with
familiar faces
and food and
and follow the

WHAT MARINE MAMMALS TEACH US

“BACK TO SCHOOL”

Here at DRC, we love the fact that we can learn life lessons from our dolphins. From patience to sharing and problem solving, we have observed the way dolphins handle these topics. For example, all of us can relate to the excitement and small amount of trepidation that come with going back to school. Our dolphins have taught us, as with everything in life, to take it all in stride.

Some of you might ask, “How do dolphins go to school?” The dolphins enter their classroom when learning a new behavior, or when brushing up on something they have not been asked to do in a while. When training something new, trainers at DRC are required

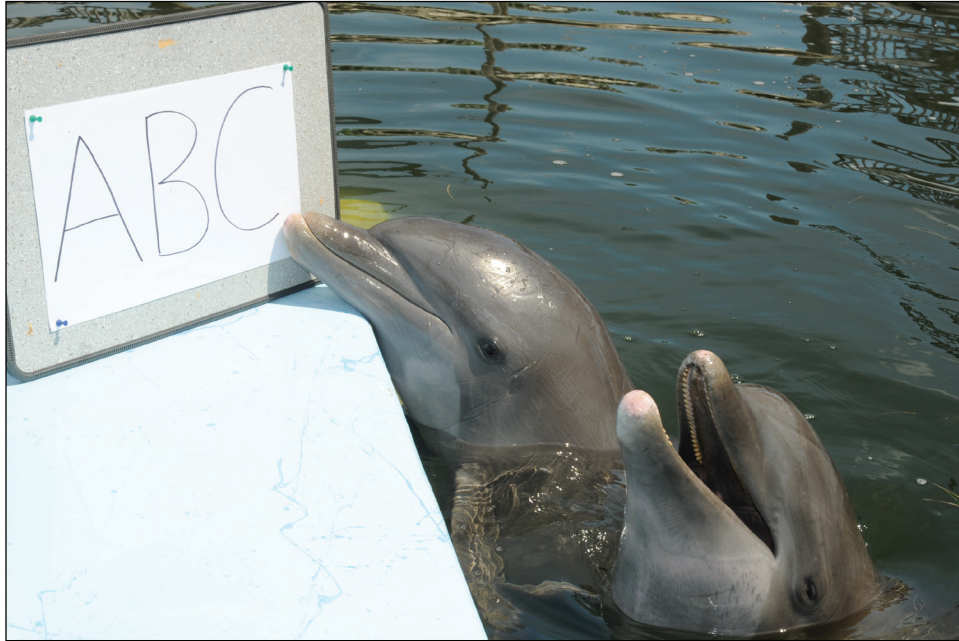
to first develop a behavior chain. This is a written, detailed plan for training a new behavior. These plans allow us to immediately know what to do next if a dolphin either makes a big leap forward in the process, or if they “get stuck” at a certain step. The dolphins get very excited during new training and if it is a “refresher course” they are equally jazzed because they receive reinforcement for re-learning things they already know. Since everything is trained through positive reinforcement, the process is always fun and entertaining for the dolphins which makes school a great place to be.

Dolphins, like people, have different learning capacities. That is what makes it interesting and exciting for trainers when we step down on the

dock. Prior to any new training, it’s an absolute must that we get to know the dolphin’s “dolphinsity”. This sets the dolphin and trainer up for success in any session. It helps a trainer know what is most fun and exciting for an individual dolphin and from what angle

to put forth a lot of energy into the session! Think about when you were in school. Remember how much more fun learning was when you had a fun, energetic teacher? The same goes for the dolphins. With Kibby, you really need to be enthusiastic in order to get

him excited. It’s not that Kibby doesn’t enjoy learning, his attention is just easily diverted to other things, such as the girls living in the next lagoon. Therefore, be prepared to run around, scream and yell, because that will make Kibby open up his eternally half closed eyes and really get excited. You can practically see the “light bulb” going on over his head when



Whether young like Tanner or more mature like Kibby (pictured l-r), the dolphins are always learning!

they should try teaching.

For example, Santini is known around DRC as “the teacher’s pet”. She is almost always the first one to show up at the dock, and when she sees a target pole in the trainer’s hand, she really gets excited. This is where Tina truly excels; learning and learning fast is her thing. She strives to impress not only the trainer, but the guests watching as well. The more people she has in her audience, the more excited she acts. Trainers can easily create a situation that sets her up for success by knowing that praise goes along way with this lady.

Kibby, on the other hand, has a slightly different approach. He is well known for being a true Keys resident—laid back and mellow. So when training a new behavior to Kibby, a trainer needs

he starts getting the behavior, and it is such a great feeling for both Kibby and the trainer.

These are just some of the lessons learned from these amazing and intelligent animals. Going to school can be fun and enjoyable for all parties involved. So those of you out there with kids who are a little apprehensive about starting school, just bring them by DRC and not only will they see just how great learning can be, but they will actually learn more about marine mammals and the environment. It’s a win-win situation!!!

-Debbie Rose

Ocean Notions



TIME FOR SCHOOL! TIME FOR SCHOOL!

Summer break is over and you've started school! The dolphins at Dolphin Research Center are on their way to school, too. Our dolphin family is always learning new games to stay happy and healthy. Dolphins are very smart and these games keep their brains thinking, and their bodies healthy.

Baby dolphins, called calves, go to class with their mothers to learn how to swim and make sounds under the water. When Delta and Luna were born they watched their mothers, Aleta and Pandora. Now that they are growing up, Delta and Luna are learning how to sit at the dock to play with their human friends, and to follow their moms when they show off for the guests.

Delta watched Aleta jump out of the water to do a dive and learned that if he moved his tail very fast, he could do a dive, too! Pandora is really good at doing a speed run, where she swims very fast on top of the water. Have you ever played "Simon Says"? Simon says, "Touch your toes!" Simon says, "Rub your belly!" Well, Luna and Pandora



Delta loves diving with his mom, Aleta.

played Simon Says and Luna learned how to do a speed run. Now it is one of her favorite games, and we love to watch!

Our dolphins have their own symbols, which act like name tags so they know which dock to sit at during class. You had to learn to read your name tag, and Delta and Luna had to learn what their symbols look like. Delta's name tag is in the shape of a

triangle; Luna's looks like a crescent moon. The trainers put the symbols into the water so the calves know where they're supposed to go. All of our dolphin family members have name tags: Tursi's is a Frisbee, Tanner has a star, and Cayo's is a heart.

No matter how big or small, all of the dolphins at DRC go to class to learn health care behaviors, games, and good manners. They also help teach visitors that trash in the ocean can hurt marine animals if they eat it, or get tangled in it. DRC dolphins show people how simple it is to recycle, which is an easy

way to help save their friends! Gypsi, Cayo, and Jax are learning how to recycle plastic bottles, and teaching their friends that it's easy and fun. You can recycle, too. Look on the bottom of your water bottle, pop can, or milk jug for the recycle triangle. If you see the triangle, recycle it, and help wild dolphins stay safe in their big ocean home!

-Courtney Dancer

Help Cayo recycle! Where the recycling triangle appears next to the picture of an item, draw a line from the recyclable item to the recycle bin. Help her put the remaining items in the garbage, and then draw a line from the trash to the trash can.





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DOLPHIN OF THE MONTH: JAX

If the dolphins of DRC could talk for sure they would all have a story to tell. But one of the most interesting stories that our staff would love to hear would be the amazing tale of Jax, and his heroic story of surviving a shark attack, going through rehabilitation, and eventually coming to live at DRC.

Looking at Jax today, as a happy, healthy little boy, it is almost impossible to imagine what he went through. Only the remnants of his scars suggest he is any different from the rest of our 4 year olds. He acts so normal in fact that his trainers often forget that he is different. I've even had guests come up and ask "what's wrong with that dolphin?" and I look down expecting to see a new injury or something abnormal and then end up saying, "Oh that's just Jax".

Jax arrived at DRC on January 8, 2008. He was estimated to be about two years old then and was a very cute, very short, very chunky little dolphin. Jax had to be acimated before he could go out to live in the lagoons



It's been over two and half years of pure joy since Jax joined the family.

with the other dolphins. While he was temporarily living in our medical pool, the trainers and other staff members had a great chance to bond with our new family member. Trainers did 24 hour watches, so we had Jax slumber parties. He came from Gulf World with his favorite toys, and of course, he got lots of new ones too. Jax had not received much training during his rehabilitation, so when he arrived he had lots to learn. This smart little guy picked up everything just like a sponge. Today he

knows almost as many behaviors as our other dolphins his age.

Jax spent his first few years at DRC living in the maternity pod with Cayo and Gypsi, who are close to his own age. Now he's learning to be a man by living in his new bachelor pod with A.J. Jax has really grown up these last few months. He really seems to enjoy A.J.'s company, as they spend hours flirting with the girls next door.

Jax is now the star of his own DVD! *Jax - A Survivor's Tail* was

produced in house by the DRC Visual Communications staff. It is a lovely tale of Jax's rescue, rehabilitation, and long journey to live at his permanent home at DRC. The story is narrated by Jax himself, with a little help from Linda Erb, Vice President of Animal Care and Training, and Jim Harre, Director of Information Technology. This heartwarming "tail" is sure to make any dolphin fan fall in love with Jax and his amazing story!

-Sarah Brignac