



EVERYBODY LOVES A LITTLE VARIETY IN THEIR LIVES

Sandy, Rainbow, Talon, and Pax are DRC's resident "big boys", as we affectionately call them. These four males range in weight from about 500 pounds to 600 pounds, so you can see why we call them big boys! We have recently been doing a lot of new training with them that includes varying which docks they sit at during their sessions and doing in water work with them so they can participate in programs with our guests.

The boys have lived together for about three years now and it was pretty clear to us that they always stayed in the same pairs--Rainbow and Sandy, Talon and Pax. As trainers we always kept them in these pairings during sessions too, thinking that was the best. Recently we have

worked with the boys on trying out different docks in their sessions and which dolphin, if any, we pair them with. Although many people are wary about change, we have found that the dolphins enjoy this variety and it really helps enrich their relationships in their different groupings, both in and

out of sessions. Since they are getting to know each other better, they now seem less distracted



Photo by: Kathi Rogers

Whenever the big boys do a behavior in synchrony, it's an awesome demonstration of their power and athleticism.

See **Big Boys**, page 5

SOLDIER RIDE 2012: CHARLES EVANS DAY FOR THE WOUNDED WARRIOR PROJECT

Dolphin Research Center began the year with a very special event. The Wounded Warrior Project (WWP) adaptive cycling ride from Miami to Key West includes a stop at DRC for a dolphin swim and luncheon. The visit was made possible by the generous donation of the Charles Evans Foundation. Under the stewardship of Linda Munson, the endowment ensures that the Charles Evans Day for the Wounded Warrior Project is an annual event at



Photo by: Kara Pascucci

Kibby and a soldier from the Wounded Warrior Project share a tender moment in the Dolphin Encounter.

DRC. Many of the warriors have been wounded in mind, body or spirit. Reconnecting with nature through a dolphin experience hopefully helps pave the way for a healthy transition back to civilian life.

Upon arrival, the warriors and their support team received a hero's welcome from DRC staff, volunteers and visitors. The warm exchange set

See **Soldier Ride**, page 9

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 to 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.



DRC WRITES THE BOOK ON DOLPHIN COGNITION!

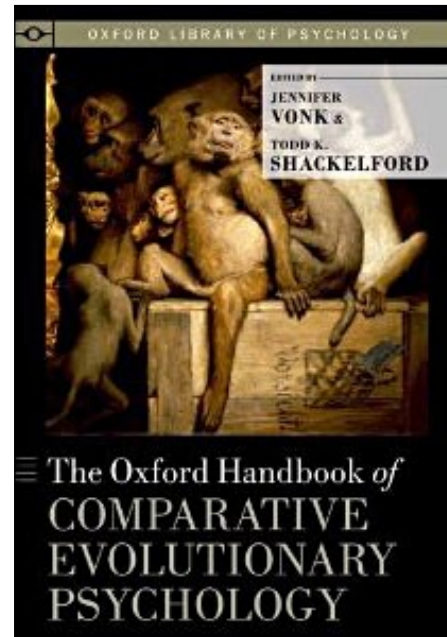
One of the most common questions we get at DRC is “How intelligent are dolphins?” Great question! To research the answer scientifically, though, we have to tweak it a little. First, instead of “How intelligent are dolphins?” we ask “How are dolphins intelligent?” Then we break that down even further. How do they think? How do they learn? How do they perform at a variety of “intelligent” behaviors like problem solving, imitation, understanding number, and so forth? Each research study builds a piece of this puzzle, with the idea of eventually fitting those pieces together to map the dolphin mind. Our goal is to figure out how dolphins think and learn, so we can share that information with our guests, members, and the scientific community.

In past newsletters, we’ve shared our successes at building some of these individual puzzle pieces – including our “Less” study, which showed that dolphins can mathematically compare quantities (published in the *Journal of Comparative Psychology*), our Object Permanence study, which explored what dolphins understand about hidden objects (published in the journal *Animal Cognition*) and our Blindfolded Imitation study, which showcased dolphins’ amazing imitation abilities in a

way that’s never before been seen in nonhuman animals (published in the *International Journal of Comparative Psychology*).

This month, we’d like to share a new success, not in terms of building individual puzzle pieces, but in terms of putting them altogether, and introducing a comprehensive map of dolphin cognition to the science world. In February, Oxford University Press published a new book entitled *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Evolutionary Psychology*. Each chapter in this book covers a different topic or group of animals written by an expert in that particular area. For example, when the editors selected the authors of the chapter on primate cognition, they went to the experts on primate cognition. And when they were looking for someone to write the chapter on cetacean cognition, much to our delight, they came to DRC.

This chapter, entitled “Cetacean Cognitive Specializations”, was a different kind of undertaking, allowing us (well, okay, forcing us!) to take a step back and look at our big picture. What DO we know about dolphin cognition? Where are the gaps in our knowledge? What needs to be done next? In the end, we organized dolphin cognition into



Dolphin Research Center is proud and excited to have contributed the chapter on cetacean cognition to this prestigious publication.

See **Oxford**, page 9

PARKING LOT BEAUTIFICATION PROJECT

LEAVE YOUR WADERS AT HOME

Pulling into our parking lot during rainy season last spring was a lot like pulling into Florida wetlands. The only thing missing was the tropical foliage. Instead this wetland setting was a dusty, barren lot. "Ponds" would fill with one heavy rain

and flood half of our parking lot. Ibis could be observed feeding on a variety of frog eggs and tadpoles that would inhabit the "ponds". As the water slowly dried up, my children took to rescuing the froglets from the receding water. As educational of an experience as it was for my children and as much as I love to observe ibis feeding, the shin deep water filling what were intended to be guest parking spaces was not a welcome sight.

Fast forward to late fall... Palm trees swaying in the tropical breezes casting shadows on the level walking surfaces, firecracker bushes bursting with vibrant red blooms, and blue ruellas, or Mexican petunia, reaching for the sun. Our parking lot now has curb appeal and drainage! Over 1200 pounds of fill later, we have an island oasis...minus the standing water of course. Parking spaces are clearly marked with yellow parking stops. The lot is beautifully framed with a variety of palm trees including sable palms, coconut palms and robellini palms. The front drainage swale is lined with age old coral rock giving an established feel to our



Photo by: Kathi Rogers

The enhancements to our parking lot are beautiful and functional, making our guests' experiences even more pleasant.

new look. Our beauty has leaked outside our perimeter gates into our parking lot giving passers-by and potential guests a hint of what they might expect when coming into the Dolphin Research Center. The dolphin statue even got a facelift, thanks to a beautification grant from the Greater Marathon Chamber of Commerce and the expertise of Grassy Painting. The mother and calf are now smiling crack-free with a fresh coat of paint, ready to welcome you. Our beautiful and functional new parking lot would not have been possible without help from our generous supporters. This project has been desired for years and it was our Board of Directors that realized how valuable enough parking and increased "curb appeal" are to DRC and our mission. The Board's initial donations got this project started and were matched by many of our Founder and Guardian Circle Members at the last Founders' Weekend event. Without this funding we would not have an "outside" that reflects the beauty we have "inside".

-Bette Zirkelbach

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.

MEMBERS' ONLY EVENT A HUGE SUCCESS!

Every year DRC holds a Members' Only Event which is our way of saying 'thank you' to those who help make it possible for us to continue our mission to Teach, Learn and Care for our marine mammal family and the environment we all share. Every year this event grows in number of guests and in the enthusiasm and enjoyment they bring to the day. This year was definitely no exception. We had 384 members spend the afternoon at DRC!

This year's event included a format change. Because of the expected increase in attendance, we expanded the time and began a couple hours earlier. This way everyone would have a chance to participate in all the activities. Also, instead of a large sit-down dinner, guests were treated to appetizers and soft drinks throughout the afternoon. This



Photo by: Samantha Pessolano
Senior Education Instructor Jennifer Powell (left) talks with guests about Jax and Talon.

made it a much more relaxed, less structured and more 'Keys' Style' event.

This year we were able to include an entire afternoon for members to get out on the boardwalks for up-close and personal time with the dolphins, trainers, and our education staff. Because of the extended event time, we were very happy to

accommodate smaller groups who could stay longer on the boardwalks seeing dolphins and enjoying detailed discussions with staff.

Even though we had a large number attend, we were also able to provide three narrated sessions, including a unique research session with Kilo.

There is nothing quite like having so many of our biggest fans on site at once and the dolphins definitely loved it! As you know, the more excited and participatory the guests, the more the dolphins interact and enjoy the attention. We would like to thank everyone who attended and made this event truly special and especially thank all members who make DRC possible!

-Patrick Bogan

WEDDING WITH SANTINI

November 11, 2011 (11/11/11) was not a day easy to forget, especially when you are getting married IN the Gulf of Mexico waters with a beautiful dolphin named Santini as the ring bearer.

When Terilynn Ross and Bill Adie, from Cape Coral, FL, contacted us and asked if they could get married at DRC in the water while participating in a *Dolphin Encounter*, there was no question that we would say yes. We have had other weddings at DRC, but none of them took place while in the water in one of our programs.

Date and time were coordinated and the private *Dolphin Encounter* was reserved. All that was left was finding someone to perform the marriage ceremony. That is when I received a call in my office. I'm a licensed notary public and, in Florida, notary publics can



Photo by: Kathi Rogers
Santini delivers the ring to Bill while bride Terilynn beams!

perform weddings. As a long time member of the DRC family, I felt privileged to be asked to participate in such a wonderful occasion and, of course, I said, "YES!"

On the wedding day, we donned wet suits as it was a bit cold and the couple entered the water to meet Santini. Tina was not only going to do the *Dolphin Encounter*, with them, but she also became the ring bearer. After Daniel, the trainer working with Santini,

had Terilynn and Bill ask her to show off a few behaviors as an introduction, I entered the water and started the ceremony.

After Terilynn and Bill said their vows, Santini brought each of them their rings. There was a lot of cheering from the audience, but I believe the most excited of all was Santini. She cheered with the rest of us and proceeded to conduct one of her most wonderful encounters. You could tell she was feeling the excitement and happiness that Terilynn and Bill experienced and wanted them to have a wedding they would never forget.

It was a great event for all involved, but most of all, one of our family members - Santini - was able to once again show how in tune our dolphins are with those around them.

-Nancy Turenne

Big Boys, from page 1

when sitting with each other during sessions and we see them swimming together in different groupings more often as well.

The boys currently have three different docks where they can sit for their sessions. In the past we always put Rainbow and Sandy at a dock together and then gave Pax and Talon each their own docks, located in close proximity to each other. Sometimes we also use the boardwalk and the rocks off the causeway for sessions. We have been working at changing things around for a few months and now the boys will work from any of the locations in the lagoons. This is exciting for the boys and is a break from their standard routine as they never know where we might ask them to show up. It's fun to watch these sessions because dolphins seem to be everywhere in the lagoon! With their impressive aerial behaviors, we love to have In-Tune sessions where we play music and watch the boys dive all over the lagoon!

In-water training with the boys helps get them ready to do programs such as *Dolphin Dip* and *Dolphin Encounter*. Rainbow and Sandy haven't participated in these programs with people in the water for years. Our lucky staff and volunteers were the guinea pigs for this training and the boys absolutely loved it. We found that Sandy didn't realize at first that he was supposed to focus on making new friends with our guests during these sessions and he remained very trainer focused instead. It wasn't long

before he understood that this was another fun way to meet new people! Rainbow has always been gregarious, so now both boys enjoy the *Dip* program on a regular basis. It is especially fun to watch them

refresher course of their own. It is so much fun doing these programs with the boys. They get so energized and really seem to enjoy meeting guests in a larger variety of ways.

Since we have seen how successful the big boys are when we put variety into their sessions, we have applied this training to all of our lagoons. The big boys' next door neighbors, A.J., Kibby, Tanner, and Jax, have also been working on sitting at different docks and with different dolphins. Just like the big boys, they have excelled at this new training. All of the dolphins in the front lagoon, Molly, Aleta, Santini, Merina, Flagler, Tursi, Gambit, Delta, Luna, and Louie, are benefiting from variety in their sessions as well. Like the fun game of musical chairs, they are all learning to sit with each other and we have even been able to gate groups of them into different lagoons for their sessions. The same can be said for Calusa, Pandora, Cayo, and Gypsi who recently moved in together. Both in and out of sessions, we see their relationships grow and expand.

We constantly learn from the dolphins and I think this is just another good lesson that we should all try to apply to our own lives. A little change and variety go a long way. Not only does it enrich our lives, but it also helps us to get to know the people in our world. Just like Dr. Suess said, "If you never did you should. These things are fun and fun is good."

-Jamie Stevens



Photo by: Kara Pascucci



Photo by: Samantha Pessolano

Top: Pax and Talon show off a spectacular tandem flip!
Bottom: Sandy and Rainbow enjoy working with their other friends, as well as with guests in the water, but they remain good buddies!

do imitations with people. They both get so excited to participate with guests in the water, screaming and honking with enthusiasm.

Pax and Talon are a little more accustomed to these programs. They have grown up doing both *Dolphin Dip* and *Dolphin Encounter* programs. Talon and Pax gave Rainbow and Sandy some pointers during their training and in turn, it provided them with a little

TIDBITS

A.J. - A.J. was recently inspired by a very kind DRC member. Miles away in Ocala, FL, a DRC staff member was stranded on the side of the road. The couple that ended up pulling over to help were A.J. parents! So A.J. is painting them a card to say thanks for coming to the rescue of another member of his family.

Aleta- On Christmas Day Aleta had a run-in with a seagull, literally. As she was going on a talking flying forward tail walk, she and the seagull collided. Both were bewildered, but just fine and after a moment they went their separate ways.

Calusa- Calusa has had a blast learning a new behavior called “retrieve same”. We show her something and then she goes into her lagoon to find a similar object. Her favorite item to bring back so far is a pair of sunglasses.

Cayo- Since moving into a different lagoon, Cayo has enjoyed her recent change of scenery and some time catching up with her big sisters Pandora and Calusa.

Delta- During an enrichment session Delta got creative with the hula hoops. As the first one was tossed out, he grabbed it with one of his flippers and began swimming upside down. He then went over to grab another hoop and put it on his other flipper. He continued to swim around the lagoon

showing off just how adept he is at swimming upside down with two hoops.

Flagler- One day after a session, we saw Flagler playing with a seashell and tossing it

to be marked with zinc oxide and contribute to the behavioral data we collect about babies.

Gypsi- Gypsi had fun with some new enrichment up in the front lagoon. A giant inflatable cube was donated to DRC and Gypsi had a blast spinning the trainers in circles and pushing them around.

Jax- Jax is always a big part of the Wounded Warrior Project when they visit DRC. The men and women who participate connect easily with Jax due to the wounds he received from the shark attack he sustained in the wild as a baby. Jax is a survivor, just like our brave troops. All are an inspiration.

Karen- We recently made some changes to the ‘furniture’ in the sea lion habit. The large “L” shaped



Photo by: Kathi Rogers

Top: Cayo (second from left) is getting reacquainted with her older sisters Calusa and Pandora (right) while Gypsi (left) makes new friends with them too. **Right:** Jax (right) and Tanner enjoyed swimming with soldiers from the Wounded Warrior Project.



Photo by: Katy Donegan

around the lagoon. His trainer encouraged him to bring it over to the dock, but Flagler dropped the shell instead. The trainer tried and tried to get the shell but Flagler thought it was more fun to watch the trainer’s efforts than to retrieve it himself. The dolphins like to train us too!

Gambit- Gambit has been impressing his trainers with all of the new medical behaviors he is learning. One of his favorites is to present his dorsal fin to his trainer. This is important so he can learn

dock was Karen’s favorite place to stretch out in the sun, but it was temporarily removed. She did not let that stop her sun bathing routine. Karen easily transitioned to taking naps on the other dock.

Kibby- Kibby has always been a big fan of toys. Recently he’s played with hula hoops on a regular basis. This is especially cute since his daughter Pandora

loves them so much.

Kilo- Kilo is having fun learning how to scratch his back when asked via a hand signal from the trainer. He picked it up quickly and it is now one of his favorite behaviors. Sea lions use their hind flippers to scratch an itch all the time, so he probably thought this was an 'easy A'.

Lina- Lina is enjoying being out on the full habitat! Her first time out, she stood on the steps for a few minutes, and then dove right in. She really enjoyed watching the dolphins swim by in the next lagoon and later followed her big buddy Kilo on a tour around the habitat.

Luna- Luna is a creative little girl. She had a blast one day playing with a ring in between sessions. She tossed it all around and then dove with it around her rostrum.

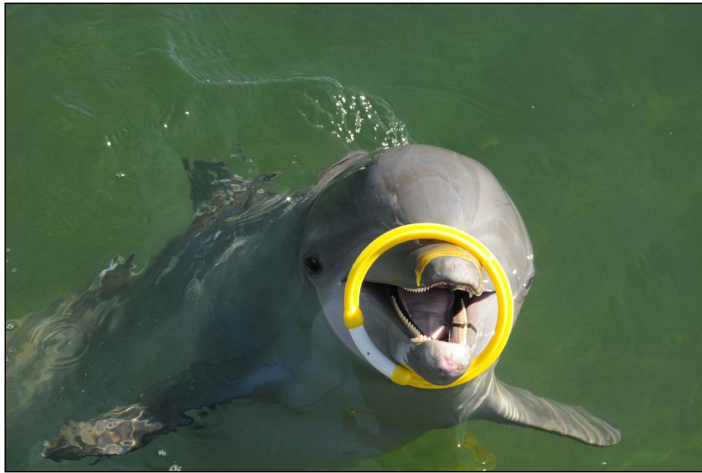
Louie- Louie has embraced DRC's conservation mission. He impressed his trainers when he brought up an old Gatorade bottle as a present. Prior to this, his trainer had asked him to recycle. So, later in the session, when the trainer asked for present, Louie remembered he should recycle!

Merina- An additional trainer is learning to work with Merina on her husbandry behaviors. Merina is a great instructor. She shows her new medical trainer how well she can do lay outs, tail holds, and mouth exams, and also allows us to brush her teeth.

Molly- Molly likes to dress up for all occasions, even for a

doctor visit. Recently she showed up for her medical session with a sea grape leaf on her flipper. As she was setting up, the leaf began to float away, so she retrieved it and brought it back to the dock. Properly dressed, she allowed her attendants to take a blood sample. Afterward, she took her leaf around the lagoon on a victory lap.

Pandora- Pandora has been showing her trainers how much she loves combination behaviors. She waits for the trainer to give all the



Top: Luna had a blast playing with a plastic ring.

Photo by: Samantha Pessolano

Right: Mocha and Pax enjoyed meeting each other on the dock.



Photo by: Peter Clark

signals, and then she takes off from the dock. She is extremely talented at this activity. One combo she enjoys the most is a laughing back tail walk.

Pax- Pax enjoyed meeting some of DRC's four legged friends. Mocha, a DRC staff member's dog, went right up to Pax and gave him big kisses. Pax, who is never shy, loved every minute of it.

Rainbow- We may see a new sport arise at DRC. Rainbow enjoyed diving and spinning with a

Kong toy that a member donated. Once the other boys saw how much fun he was having, they all joined in a game of 'Kongball'

Sandy- Sandy recently decided to make sure the trainers didn't slack in their target training skills. Sandy surprised them when he went to do his famous "giggling belly flop" but without the flop. The trainers brought out the target pole and helped him get the flop back. Mission accomplished.

Santini- Tina has been showing everyone that her mom's spirit is still around. We've watched her do the "Theresa dance" in the middle of the lagoon the past few days. She goes off and, with her head out of water, spins with abandon. Apparently, Tina doesn't get dizzy either

Talon- Lately, Talon has enjoyed participating in the *Dolphin Explorer* program. This research super star loves playing 'brain games'. His favorite game to show the guests is how many toys he can bring back at once.

Tanner- Tanner showed his appreciation to the men and women involved in the Wounded Warrior Project by giving them a very unique *Dolphin Encounter*. Instead of sitting at the front of the dock with his trainer, Tanner wanted

to hang out in the submerged tray with swimmers. He even brought them special presents.

Tursi- Tursi showed affection for one of our guests by going to get a present. Instead of picking up the first thing she saw, she swam over to the mangrove bush and picked a leaf off of a branch. Talk about thoughtful shopping!

-Marie Blanton

BE A GREAT ANIMAL CAREGIVER!

It's important to be a good animal caregiver if you have animals in your family. DRC has a big family that needs a lot of love and care! Learn how to take care of your furry, scaly or feathered friend. What food does he or she like to eat? We know the dolphins need good fish so they can be healthy and strong.

Part of taking care of an animal is keeping track of its condition. It's important to make sure the animals in your care are not injured or hurt. For example, along with looking to see if their eyes are bright and they are behaving normally, we look at the dolphins' bodies for cuts that need to be cleaned so they do not get infected. Always pay close attention to the way your animal friend looks and behaves. If something changes, it might mean they need a check-up.

Your animal friend should see an animal doctor (veterinarian) regularly. The veterinarian listens to the sound of the dolphins' lungs and heart just like your doctor does with you.

Friends play with each other and keep each other company. What is your favorite game? Your favorite toy? It's good to learn what your animal friend likes to do. Does it like to chase a ball or sit on your lap? Pax loves to play catch with his basketball. Talon likes to do math. Aleta enjoys it when she can laugh, wave her flippers and dive at the same time!

Do your homework! Being an animal caregiver is a big and serious job. It can be a lot of work! Sometimes people let their animals go after adopting them because they didn't realize how much work went into caring for them, how big they got or how long they lived. Lionfish are beautiful fish that some

people have in their aquariums. Many people do not realize that lionfish eat a lot and grow very big. Sometimes when that happens, the people put them back in the ocean. This is a BIG problem because lionfish only belong in a particular place. Now there are many lionfish where they are not supposed to live, and they are taking over other animals' homes!

Letting your animal go instead of finding it an appropriate new home with someone else could cause problems in the environment, and hurt the animal too. Many animals that live in human care no longer have the skills to survive in the wild so they might not be able to care for themselves. Make sure you learn what your animal needs, and be a responsible animal caregiver!

- Courtney Coburn

Do your homework! Match each animal to what it needs to be healthy. You may need to read about the animal, or do your homework on the Internet, so ask your mom and dad for help! Be a great animal caregiver!



Photo by: Lauren Pickard

We know that Pax enjoys playing with a ball, so we make sure to include one in his play times.

Soldier Ride, from page 1

the tone for the warriors' dolphin experiences.

After the warriors changed into wetsuits, they broke up into groups ready for their swim with the dolphins. The staff knows something that the soldiers don't yet know. The trainers will invite them into the dolphins' world, lift their spirits, and for a brief time help them forget about their personal circumstances. For the individual it's a rare and special experience - time slows down in a wonderful way. Watching the warriors begin their swim with tentative expressions on their faces that slowly change to sheer enjoyment is always a joy to behold. Warriors not cleared to get into the water participated in dockside encounters. Approximately 35 warriors enjoyed meeting the dolphins and learning about their world.

One of the most memorable moments (Weren't they all though!) that Linda Erb, DRC VP of Animal Care and Training, recalled occurred at her dock with Kibby and A.J. A female warrior who walked with a cane was unsure about, but determined to do, all

of the behaviors throughout the swim. The boys took her on a long dorsal pull, almost a figure eight, stopping at one point and then picking her up again. They did this BOTH times she did the dorsal pull. They seemed to be saying, "We know you can do this! We'll help you, see?" After the swim, the warrior was observed reflecting on her experience and, hopefully, her personal accomplishment.

A warrior shared in a media interview that he was a little apprehensive about getting into the water with the dolphins, but the dolphins were so friendly that within a minute that feeling went out the door!

Some of the warriors are still patients at Walter Reed Hospital and recovering from wounds experienced in Afghanistan and Iraq barely three months before meeting their dolphin friends. They returned to the hospital after the Soldier Ride. Their spirit is an example we can all learn from and meeting them created a memory we all tuck in our hearts.

During the luncheon, Steve Nardizzi, CEO and Executive Director of Wounded Warrior

Project presented a beautiful plaque to Rita Irwin, CEO and President of DRC. We are honored and very proud to work in partnership with WWP in such a special mission.

The support for our nation's heroes extends out into our community. Thank you to Tilden's Dive Shop for loaning wetsuits to the warriors, the Stuffed Pig, for the delicious lunch, Publix for utensils, paper goods and sodas, and the DRC volunteers for home-baked desserts. Local veterans and active duty military came to show their support. We also appreciate Monroe County Mayor Dave Rice, Marathon Vice-Mayor Dick Ramsay, Marathon Councilman Mike Cinque, Grace Parks of the Veteran's Council of Monroe County, and the numerous other local dignitaries and visitors who came out to DRC on that day.

The dolphins have touched the lives of the warriors in life affirming ways. Many of them will return to DRC to share that experience with their families through our WWP Military Dolfriend program. We feel privileged to share time with them as they heal.

-Joan Mehew

Oxford, from page 2

four big areas:

- concepts and memory
- physical cognition (e.g., understanding of objects, number, and space)
- social cognition (e.g., cooperation, imitation, understanding other minds)
- symbolic cognition (e.g., understanding pictures, symbols [like words], and syntax [word-order])

Taking all the research together, we demonstrated that dolphins possess a level of complex thinking largely on par with the great apes (but surpassing them in a few areas of social cognition,

and lagging behind in one area of physical cognition). We also explored possible evolutionary reasons for the expansion of the dolphin brain, and suggested directions for future research.

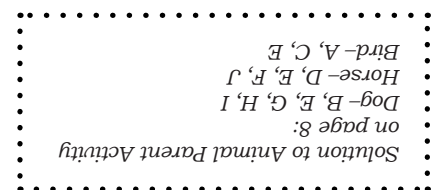
Of course, our map of dolphin cognition is still not complete. There are a lot of things we don't yet know. Our hope is that this "big picture" map can guide us and other researchers as we continue to study and learn about dolphin intelligence. Every new finding invites a connection to dolphins, which can inspire more care for the species and the environment in which they live.

The invitation to contribute

the cetacean cognition chapter to this Oxford Handbook is terrific recognition of the research endeavors at DRC. Thank you for taking that journey with us!

Reference: Jaakkola, K. (2012). Cetacean cognitive specializations. In J. Vonk & T. Shackelford (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Evolutionary Psychology* (chap. 9). New York: Oxford University Press.

-Kelly Jaakkola & Emily Guarino



WHAT MARINE MAMMALS TEACH US

Almost everyone has had the experience of starting a new job or being the new kid at school. For many of us, the first few days are awkward and, sometimes, a bit frightening. “Will they like me?” “Will I make any friends?” “Do I have something in my teeth?!” These are just some of the thoughts that run through our heads when we enter an unfamiliar social situation.

Dolphins also experience new social situations as they grow up. Sometimes it is their choice. Dolphins live in fission-fusion societies where they change their pod structure throughout their lives. This is similar to when people go to college or find new jobs. However, occasionally, a dolphin must join a new pod because they were very ill or injured in the wild and had to be rescued. This is like when a child must go to a new school because a parent had to be transferred for his or her job. While a dolphin might not worry about something stuck in their teeth during introductions, there are still those first few moments of awkwardness during the “getting to know you” stage!

This stage does not usually last all that long. We can learn about acceptance and friendship by observing our dolphins here at DRC as well as in the wild. For instance, even though Jax looked very different because of his injuries, he was readily accepted as a member of our flippered family by both dolphins and humans. The same has happened with one of the newest members of our family, Louie.

Louie has become quite the popular guy with guests and dolphins alike despite the fact that he has only lived at DRC for a year. We often see him playing with his friends Delta and Luna in the front lagoon. Louie also inspires and

amazes his human friends each day. He is a very quick learner and absolutely loves to show off any new behavior that he has mastered such as his adorable imitations. Louie has also gained many adoring fans and godparents through the



Photo by: Kathi Rogers
DRC iguanas like this one enjoy sun bathing in the mangrove bushes.

people who have decided to adopt this charming little guy!

Dolphins are also accepting of other species that look nothing like them! Humans are one example and, here at DRC, iguanas are another. Many of you have probably seen the iguanas that live on our grounds. These captivating reptiles are often the subject for many photos and conversations. Sometimes they even steal attention away from the dolphins during one of our presentations! Many times, visitors point and cheer when they see an iguana crawling along a boardwalk, even if Santini is doing her amazing flip right next to it!

That’s okay, though. Santini and our other dolphin family members don’t mind sharing the spotlight with iguanas every now and then. In fact, the dolphins are very accepting about sharing their home. When an iguana appears on a boardwalk or on a fence, the dolphins will sometimes watch them or invite them to play by splashing or vocalizing. Iguanas are excellent swimmers. Occasionally, one will jump into

a lagoon and the dolphins will escort them to the other side. The iguanas that you see at Dolphin Research Center are not native to the Florida Keys. They are from Central and South America as well as parts of Mexico. Iguanas were imported from those areas as exotic pets. Unfortunately, when they grew too large or became expensive to care for, people simply released them into the environment. Now, Green Iguanas can be found throughout southern Florida as well as here in the Keys. These reptiles are considered invasive species because they eat native plants and dig burrows which can destroy sidewalks, foundations, pathways, etc.

Green iguanas can grow to 6.5 feet (2m) and weigh 18lbs (8kg)! They can live quite a long time – even 20 years in human care. They are rapid reproducers which is why their population is difficult to control. Each nest has 20-70 eggs. Iguanas are primarily herbivores eating many types of plants, but they occasionally eat insects, small lizards or even bird eggs. Although they are not venomous, you should never attempt to touch a wild iguana. They have the ability to bite and can also defend themselves with painful whips of their long tails.

At Dolphin Research Center, we believe that it’s unfair to make an animal pay for what was a human mistake. Therefore, we do not cull the population of iguanas. In order to help reduce their numbers, we carefully trap or catch the iguanas and then bring them to a local veterinarian who neuters them. Then, we release them back on our grounds. This way, they do not continue to breed, but can live their lives delighting our dolphins and guests!

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SPOTLIGHT ON SANTINI

Santini, the ever beloved daughter of Theresa, continues to impress not only our guests but also our staff every day with her compassionate, energetic, and beautiful spirit.

Recently turned 25 last November, Santini currently lives in the large front lagoon with her sisters, Aleta and Merina, and her friend Molly. In addition to having her girlfriend-time, she also gets the chance to be a great role model to our youngest kids, Louie, Luna, Delta, Flagler, and Gambit! Tina, also affectionately known as Tina Bean, can be seen chatting it up with the guests at the front seawall or showing off her incredible athletic ability. She is such a superstar!

One of the traits that makes Santini so unique and special is her ability to adapt her energy level for special swims. Whether interacting with a small child with a disability, a couple getting married during the *Encounter*, or brave men and women from the Wounded Warrior Project, Santini has seen all this and more, and has made such a positive impact on so many individual lives. The look in her eyes when she has a person with special needs in her swim is one of comfort and compassion. She makes every guest feel special, and the trainers have complete trust in her, knowing that she gets it!

Recently she had the opportunity to help two people start a life together—in the water, a first for DRC. A couple actually had their wedding ceremony while swimming with Santini! She shared the newlyweds' first dance and first kiss from the swim tray in the front lagoon. Her high energy and constant enthusiasm made for a memorable experience that the couple will never forget! Later that

same day she brightened another individual's life with her charm. As the guest, who was suffering from a terminal illness, entered the water,



Santini shows off her unique side by lying upside down and smiling up at everyone.
Photo by: Samantha Pessolano

Santini's demeanor immediately changed to a relaxed and calm state. Tina went right over to the woman and made sure she felt loved. She allowed the woman to cuddle all over her, giving her lots of extra kisses. Watching Santini interact with her human friends throughout those two programs was truly amazing. She gave nothing less than 100% to each

individual, yet made sure to cater to their needs by adapting her energy and behavior accordingly. Whether getting super excited for a unique celebration or being calm when a guest needed some extra TLC, Santini seems to read us like a book and provides a beautiful chapter for everyone!

Many of our staff and guests look at Santini and see her mother, Theresa, in her. Whether her courageous spirit, contagious energy, or compassionate heart, Tina brings out so many qualities that her mother portrayed. We often see Tina spinning around in the middle of the lagoon just like Theresa would do. In her swim programs she resembles T-Bear with her crazy splash fights and silly spit fights, sometimes looking identical to her mom. We are sure that Theresa is looking down with pride, happy that her spirit lives on in her very special daughter, Santini!

-Erica Wisniewski

SPRING INTO CONSERVATION

DRC has been making a lot of GREEN efforts in the New Year. Many staff and volunteers participated in the E-waste/Hazardous Collection Day by turning in old CDs, batteries, paint cans, remotes, etc. We are also being very mindful about unplugging our appliances when not in use and we have been invited to a few community events to teach others about the effects of pollution and the importance of using eco-friendly or plant-based products.

As we move into the warmer months, we will continue to help clean-up the oceans by hosting our Bi-Annual Tom's Harbor Bridge Clean-Up. You can also Spring into Conservation with DRC by:

- Taking part in your local park/beach clean-up
- Start a carpool at work or school
- Turn the lights off when you leave a room
- Bring re-useable bags with you to the grocery store
- Buy organic and earth friendly products to keep toxins out of the ocean

Every little bit counts and every little bit can make a difference!

-Courtney Coburn



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When a dolphin moves in from another location or is born into our pod, they have a forever home here at DRC. We can emulate this in our own lives with the animals we adopt as companions. We always need to make sure we are ready to provide that animal with life-long care, and if we become unable to, we need to make every effort to find that pet a new home. Releasing any type of pet into the environment is never an option as the animal may not survive and if it does, it may destroy the local ecology.

So next time you go to school, work, or a social event, take with you what the dolphins have taught us. Walk up to someone who is new and introduce yourself to them! It may seem a bit awkward at first, but remember how our dolphin family first greeted Jax and Louie. Also remember that someday, YOU could be the new arrival. Through patience and acceptance, we can turn what initially may be a challenging introduction into a life-long friendship!

References: http://www.sms.si.edu/irlspec/iguana_iguana.htm
<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/in528>

-Noelle Belden

VOLUNTEER UPDATE: JAN-FEB 2012

The New Year brought a fresh group of volunteers for the winter. On January 2nd, we welcomed six interns and one resource pool volunteer for Orientation and another three interns on January 9th. Luckily, returning volunteer Natsumi Iwata was here to welcome them and help Volunteer Resources Assistant Dawn Aldieri with their training.



Photo by: Kathi Rogers
Volunteers literally "pitch in" and help remove sea grass from the lagoons.

As is rather typical on Grassy Key, the New Year blew in with some strong north winds and chilly weather which allowed our new recruits to get a quick lesson in cleaning sea grass from the back lagoons. Kibby, Jax, A.J., and Tanner watched as volunteers mastered the art of "scoop, pile, pitch and dump". Meanwhile, others helped carry our avian family indoors for the cold snap.

When temperature is the issue, regardless of high winds, the birds spend their indoor time in the VR building with us. The Avian Care Committee purchased new and larger evacuation cages this past year. It is so much more comfortable for the birds as each cage has multiple perches and more room to move around. Additionally, due to the cage design, it is much easier to change their food and water.

January also brought the return of our winter season volunteers. It is always a delight to welcome these familiar, smiling faces and helping hands. Many of our seasonal volunteers have been with us for more than five years. We now have the extra hands to continue with dubbing the media department's boxes of VHS tapes to DVDs. So far, we have reduced six of our big hurricane containers into one notebook.

As always...A very BIG thank you to all of our volunteers!

-Becky Rhodes