

DOLPHIN RESEARCH CENTER
58901 Overseas Highway
Grassy Key, FL 33050
www.dolphins.org
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Dolphin Research Center is a not-for-profit corporation specializing in education and research. DRC is a tax-exempt organization, and as such, all donations, monetary or otherwise, are tax deductible to the extent permitted by law.

How to Help an Injured Manatee

In Florida, you might be lucky enough to see a manatee swimming along the shoreline or resting in a quiet canal. Please don't give it food or water, get in the water with it or try to touch it. Take pictures and enjoy watching. Hopefully, you'll never see an injured or sick manatee, but if you do, please be prepared to help.

Manatee biologists from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) and organizations like Dolphin Research Center, respond to manatees in distress. However, usually people like you are the first to see a troubled animal. If a manatee appears to be hurt or ill, or if you see a baby alone, immediately call the FWC at 1-888-404-3922 (FWCC). On your cell phone, you can also press *FWC or #FWC. Be prepared to answer the following questions:

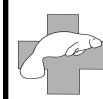
- What is the exact location of the manatee?
- Is the manatee alive or dead?
- How long have you been observing the manatee?
- What is the approximate length of the manatee?
- What is the location of the nearest public boat ramp?
- Is there a contact number where you can be reached for more information?

You might be asked additional questions. It might also be helpful if you take photos, even using the camera on your smart phone, particularly if the animal is obviously injured. FWC personnel will guide you during the call and may give you additional instructions.

Thank you for helping these precious, endangered animals!

MANATEE IN DISTRESS

1-888-404-FWCC



**DOLPHIN
RESEARCH
CENTER**



www.dolphins.org

Licensed Manatee Rescue Team for the Florida Keys

THANK YOU!

The Florida Keys are beautiful, but the salt water and hot sun are tough on equipment. Thank you for all you do to make sure that we have what we need to help the endangered Florida Manatee.

Wish List Items Needed

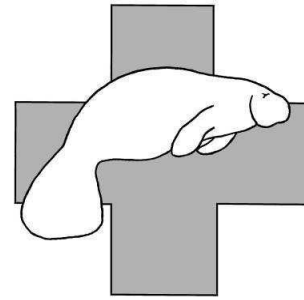
- Hoop Net - \$450
- Foam Pads (2) - \$520
- Waterproof Gear Bags (2) - \$200
- CPR Course (5 staff) - \$250
- Strap fins (2 pair) - \$150.00
- Net Bucket - \$1500.00
- Protective bladders to waterproof radios (6) - \$250.00

Animal rescue requires specialized equipment to not only increase our chances for success, but also to help us operate with the utmost safety for the team as well as the manatees.

We could not do these rescue missions without the generous assistance you provide.

You may donate money for these specific items, or make a general donation to the Dolphin Research Center Manatee Rescue Team.

For more information, contact the Membership Department at 305-289-1121, ext. 229, or email drc-mbr@dolphins.org!



The Gray Cross

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Manatee Team Rescues Pilgrim!

A few days before Thanksgiving, a young manatee had every reason to be grateful in Key Largo, even if he didn't realize it at the time. The little guy had been hit by a boat, which not only caused a gash in his skin, but also broke a rib and caused lung damage that allowed air to seep into his body cavity. When residents spotted him in the Pirates Cove area of Key Largo (Mile marker 98, Gulfside), his back was high out of the water and he was unable to submerge beneath the water's surface for very long.

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) contacted Dolphin Research Center (DRC) and asked us to send assessors to check out the small animal. A closer look at his injuries and behavior confirmed that he needed to be rescued. On Tuesday, November 20th, we found him at the end of a wide residential canal in the company of four or five larger manatees and many tarpon. Even though adults were present, the calf did not appear to be bonded to any of them. This led us to believe that his mother was nowhere around.

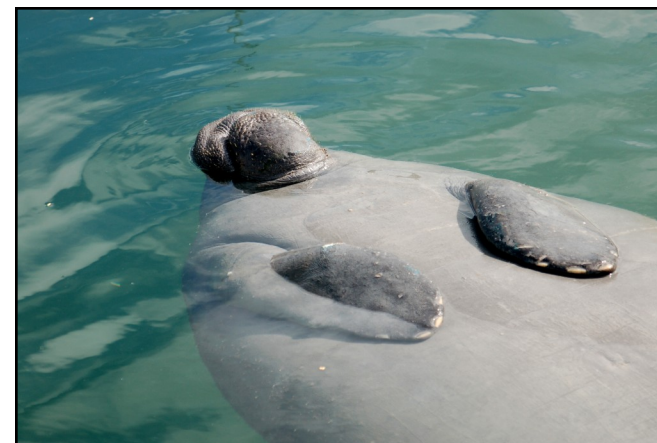
Joined by John Cassady and his team from the FWC Manatee Rescue and Research unit as well as Miami Seaquarium (MSQ)



DRC team members (in water) corralled Pilgrim, keeping him close to the dock while John Cassady of the FWC (on dock) deployed the hoop net. Dr. Maya Rodriguez from Miami Seaquarium (on dock) observed. (Photo by Nessa Collins)

Continued on page three

Manatee Fun Facts



Wrinkled skin, nails on their flippers, and large bodies are some of the traits manatees share with their relative the elephant! (Photo by Bette Zirkelbach)

There is so much more to manatees than meets the eye. These large marine mammals are very smart, live solitary lives, and have no natural predators. We thought you might enjoy learning more about these special ocean residents.

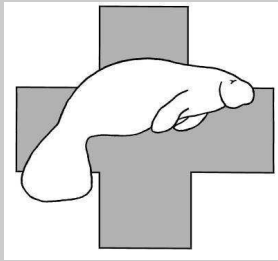
Manatees are herbivorous members of the family *Trichechidae*. They can be found along the western coast of Africa, the Eastern coasts of South America and the Southern United States, and in the Amazon River. The slow moving, gentle animals spend most of their time grazing water bottoms, eating grasses, algae and other aquatic plants.

Many manatee deaths are caused directly or indirectly by humans. Manatees easily get struck by watercrafts, crushed or drowned in flood control gates and canal locks. Adult manatees are so frequently wounded by boat propellers that scientists use the pattern of their scarring for identification purposes. They can also die from the effects of cold stress syndrome or the toxins in red tide — a harmful algae bloom.

Manatees are covered by the Marine Mammal Protection Act. They are also on the Endangered Species List and protected by the Florida Manatee Sanctuary Act. Large fines, penalties and even prison time await any human who harms, harasses or disturbs a manatee. There are believed to be only around 5,000 manatees that live in the waters that surround

Cont'd on page two





THE GRAY CROSS

Dolphin Research Center is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to a better understanding of marine mammals and the environment we share. DRC is home to a colony of dolphins and sea lions where we conduct innovative research and offer many interactive, educational programs. Beyond our lagoons, we are the only private organization in the Florida Keys licensed to respond to manatees in distress. We are actively involved in our community providing outreach presentations on a variety of conservation subjects.

The Gray Cross evolved from our work with stranded marine mammals. DRC's critical care program is world renowned. Our experience with dolphins, whales and sea lions is used to help the endangered Florida Manatee. DRC has also participated in rescue and release of endangered sea turtles.

As a not-for-profit organization, contributions to DRC are welcomed and tax deductible to the extent permitted by law. For more information, visit our website at www.dolphins.org, call (305) 289-1121 extension 229 or send an email to drc-mbr@dolphins.org.

Fun Facts from page one

Florida. Having so few makes it even more important to know as much as possible in order to protect them and educate others to encourage their conservation.

Manatees have been around more than 60 million years.

Scientists have been able to assess that manatees evolved from land animals, closely related to elephants.

Manatees are very big.

When born, manatees are three to four feet long and weigh about 65 pounds. Adults have been found that are 13 feet long and weigh over 3,500 pounds. The average size is 10 feet long and weighing 800 to 1200 pounds.

Manatees need warmth.

Despite the manatee's large size, there is very little fat on their body. Due to this, manatees do not do well in very cold waters. In fact, they are not able to survive in water below 60 degrees. Prolonged periods with water temperatures below 68 degrees can cause cold stress and lead to death. They are often found in waters near power plants due to the warmer outflow temperature.

Manatees breathe through their noses.

Manatees are mammals and breathe air through their noses at the surface. Their nostrils close tightly when submerged. They breath every few minutes when active or swimming, and every 10 to 15 minutes when resting. They are capable of exchanging 98% of their lungs' capacity in one breath. Their lungs are very large, and are also used for buoyancy control. The rushing sound of a deep exhaled breath sounds much like a snorkeler.

Manatees graze a lot.

Researchers have determined that manatees eat at least 60 different species of plants. On average, a manatee consumes 10 percent of their total weight a day. For a 1200 pound animal, that is approximately 120 pounds of food.

Manatees have skin like elephants.

The skin of a manatee is very thick and wrinkled, similar to that of an elephant. Many people often mistake young manatees for older ones due to their wrinkled skin but it is simply part of their overall anatomy.

Their flippers are important for survival.

Manatees use their flippers in the same ways that humans use their arms and hands.



This manatee didn't need to stick much of its head up out of the water in order to breathe. (Photo by Joe Stella)

Inside the flippers is a similar bone structure to a human arm and hand with five finger-like digits. The jointed bones help the manatee accomplish a variety of movements, including maneuvering in the water, grabbing food, and holding onto things. Each flipper has several elephant-like nails that allow them to easily grab. While a manatee can survive with a partially amputated flipper, that type of injury causes difficulty in their daily activities.

Manatees do not have free range of motion of their heads.

Research has shown that manatees only have six vertebrae in their necks which means they can't move their heads very far from side to side. They have to turn their entire body to see on either side.

Manatees are social animals.

While manatees are considered solitary and do not live in a group, they are very social animals and communicate quite often with each other. Through careful observation and research, it is believed that manatees use their senses to communicate. This includes taste, smell, touch, sight, and hearing. Manatees also vocalize in a variety of ways, including whistles, chirps, and squeaks. What may sound like nothing but noises to most people are very important forms of communication for these animals.

Manatees can live more than 60 years.

Manatees have no natural enemies. Many manatee mortalities are human related, occurring from collisions with watercrafts or entanglement in fishing line, rope and other human trash. The loss of habitat, caused by development, tourism, and pollution, is the most serious threat facing the manatee today.

By Nessa Collins

Pilgrim, cont'd from page one

veterinarian Dr. Maya Rodriguez and her staff, we attempted to lure the manatee, whom we dubbed Pilgrim because of the approaching holiday, closer to shore. Because of his smaller size, John thought he might be able to "scoop" him up with a hoop net.

Unfortunately, even though he was young, Pilgrim proved to be wily, and eluded the attempts to rescue him from land. Personnel boarded the rescue boat with DRC's Chief Operating Officer Mandy Rodriguez at the helm and began a game of cat and mouse or, in this case, man and manatee. While those of us on shore distracted the larger manatees, the crew tried to guide Pilgrim to an area of the canal where they could do a net set around him. Each time, he eluded our efforts and popped up elsewhere.

Finally, after several attempts, the team found him close to a sea wall. They deployed the net from land, effectively corralling Pilgrim. From that position, they gradually reduced the space in the net. While John handled the hoop net from land, DRC's Adam Keaton approached Pilgrim and encouraged him to swim into the net. Mandy, Adam, John and DRC's Dylan McNamara, Dean Corey, and Ted Due, then embraced the manatee and successfully pulled him onto land.

While Pilgrim rested on a comfortable foam pad, Dr. Rodriguez examined his injuries. She explained that he had at least one broken rib and confirmed the presence of air in his body cavity which increased his buoyancy. This made it difficult for him to stay underwater for very long. FWC personnel measured him and determined that he was 5'8" long. We estimated his weight at between 200 to 300 pounds and his age at around six months.

In no time at all, the little guy was loaded into Miami Seaquarium's van and transported to Miami for further examination, treatment and rehabilitation! The following day Dr. Rodriguez contacted DRC Medical Director Pat Clough and reported that x-rays had confirmed her on-scene



Dr. Maya Rodriguez examines Pilgrim while John looks on. (Photo by Nessa Collins)

diagnosis. She administered antibiotics to fight infection and a local pain reliever to ease his discomfort. She also told us that he was eating and even stealing lettuce from other resident manatees.

By her estimation, his injury was only a few days old. His feistiness is a good sign and we are all guardedly optimistic that he will make a full recovery and be released!

Pilgrim is fortunate for so many reasons, the first of which is that area residents saw him and called in a report. This put the entire process in motion so that he could be quickly rescued and is now receiving excellent care! We'll keep you posted about his progress. In the meantime, the adventure made for a Thanksgiving week that none of us will ever forget.

By Mary Stella



Yes! I would like to make a contribution to Dolphin Research Center's Manatee Rescue Team and their efforts to save an endangered species.

\$10 \$15 \$25 \$35 \$50 Other \$ _____

Donations can be mailed to DRC, 58901 Overseas Hwy, Grassy Key, FL 33050, made online at www.dolphins.org or faxed to (305) 743-7627. Thank you!

Name: _____

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City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Country: _____

Type of Payment: (Please make checks payable to Dolphin Research Center.)

Check (US Funds) Money Order (US Funds)

Credit Card: VISA MasterCard Discover Amex

Card # _____ - _____ - _____ Expires: ____ / ____

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For more information about the Gray Cross and Dolphin Research Center, call 305-289-1121 extension 229.

SC# NSC1212

