

DOLPHIN RESEARCH CENTER
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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.

OCD, cont'd from Page One

behavior around our big sea cow friends. We ask if they would ever put their family pet's food and water bowls in the middle of the highway. Of course not, because it isn't safe. We can compare that to manatees coming in closer to docks and boats if people offer them lettuce or water. The lightbulbs go off!

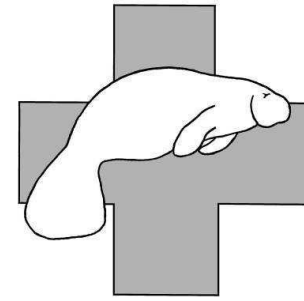
It's wonderful to experience the students completely engaged, asking and answering questions. They're fascinated by the replicas of manatee skulls that show how manatees continually form new teeth in the backs of their jaws and the lines move forward to replace teeth at the front that are ground down by the pounds of vegetation the animal consumes each day.

The majority of students go out on boats with their families. When they look at photos and hear about manatees that have been hit by vessels, you can see them make the connection about why it's important to obey slow speed zones and be aware of their surroundings when on the water.

We play a game where each student wraps a rubber band around the fingers of one hand and then has to try to remove it without using their other hand or moving their fingers. After all, a manatee doesn't have fingers to pull off fishing line if it gets wrapped around a flipper. This helps them understand that we humans need to be sure not to let discarded line or any marine debris get into the marine environment.

Before each session ends, the students tell us things that they've learned about manatees. They share about what they can now do to help protect them too. As the youngsters talk about not feeding or watering, paying attention on the water, and being more careful about marine debris, we tell them that they are now manatee heroes who will go out to protect the big marine mammals with whom we share the Florida Keys!

- Mary Stella



The Gray Cross

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Gulliver's Story

When our team rescues a manatee, we never know what fate has in store for it. We hope for a full recovery and release followed by a long life with no further injuries. Every once in a while, the animal swims back into our lives and we report back on seeing a healthy, long lost friend. These are happy reunions. Then there are sad encounters where we are called in to assist an individual we've already rescued. Some animals, like repeat entanglers Bonnie and Scott, we keep on our radar. Others blindsides us when we meet again.

On January 6th, 2016, Plantation Key residents called the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) about a manatee in distress. It was beached on a shallow area of a canal and obviously needed help. The FWC reached out to Dolphin Research Center, the Licensed Manatee Rescue Team for the Florida Keys, to assist. Our Medical Coordinator, Tanya Manchester, hurried 30 miles north with a stretcher. On the scene, she worked with several FWC officers to secure the injured manatee. They then ran his Passive Integrated Transponder (PIT) tag and found that there was already a history with this specific manatee. His name was Gulliver and DRC rescued him nearly two decades ago.



Gulliver waits for the transport truck on his second rescue. Keeping him company is Keys resident Brad Bryan. (Photo by Tanya Manchester)

Gulliver, cont'd Page Two

Reaching Young Minds about Manatees



Students visit the Manatee booth at Ocean Celebration Day for a presentation given by DRC staff member Mary Stella. (Photo by Kaylee Turner)

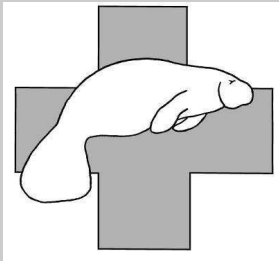
Every year, Dolphin Research Center welcomes hundreds of students in grades three and five to Ocean Celebration Day. This fun, exciting day features exhibits and activities presented by DRC staff, as well as by numerous other environmental and animal organizations. Coordinated by the DRC Education Department, Ocean Celebration Day is a wonderful opportunity to teach young people more about the Florida Keys environment, marine life, and the important role that they can play in conservation efforts.

Among the activities presented by DRC is the Manatee Awareness booth. The display shows numerous photographs of manatees which help us point out physical features and other characteristics. We also include pictures of injured animals, including those that the DRC Manatee Rescue Team has helped. While pretty much all of the students have seen manatees alive in the canals and waterways around their homes, not all of them are aware of the risks these animals face and the injuries that can incur.

We begin each presentation by asking students if they've ever seen a manatee and pretty much all of them raise their hands. Then comes the tricky question of, "Have any of you ever given food or water to a manatee?" Usually at least a couple of them say yes, and we have our first opportunity to talk to them about what is and isn't good

OCD, cont'd on Page Four





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.

Gulliver, cont'd from Page One

Being reintroduced to Gulliver was a blast from the past for Medical Director, Pat Clough and DRC's co-founder and Chief Operating Officer, Mandy Rodriguez. The juvenile manatee was first rescued in 1999 when it was found lying on its side, with a slight bulge. The assessors correctly identified that Gulliver suffered from pneumothorax – a compromised lung that fills the cavity with air. This injury, caused by a boat strike or other blunt trauma, creates buoyancy issues that inhibit the manatee from diving below the surface of the water to forage or avoid boats. Mandy led the team in the rescue and Gulliver was transported to Miami Seaquarium for treatment.

Gulliver survived, was successfully rehabilitated, and then released in 2003. He was only seen one other time by DRC assessors in 2004 when Pat identified him via his freeze brand. At that time, all signs pointed to him doing well.

As the years went by, we held onto Gulliver's story and photos in our record books and wished him well as he experienced a second chance at life.

Unfortunately, this year his story took a turn for the worse. Gulliver was so weak that Tanya and others on the scene maneuvered

him into the stretcher with little resistance – something rarely possible with an animal so large. He was not feisty. He did not thrash around. He only mildly struggled.

It was determined that he suffered from a serious lung infection and his condition was much more serious than the first case. Severely emaciated, his ribs were fractured, loose bone fragments had penetrated the lung and his spinal column vertebrae were shattered. Unfortunately, on that dark, January night, Gulliver was far too incapacitated. Despite the rescuers best attempts to help him, he passed away within an hour of being loaded into the transport truck.

Sadly, Gulliver is not the only manatee that has suffered repeat injuries. We see it all the time with serial entanglers and new boat strikes on old friends. We do everything we can and want the public to care about these animals. In Gulliver's case, medical intervention nearly 20 years ago gave him the opportunity to live well into adulthood. It's bittersweet that he was given a second chance only to have it cut short by the same misfortune that he once overcame.

It's not Gulliver's fault. As wild animals, manatees have only one goal: survival. They need to eat, drink, rest, and

Gulliver, cont'd on Page Three



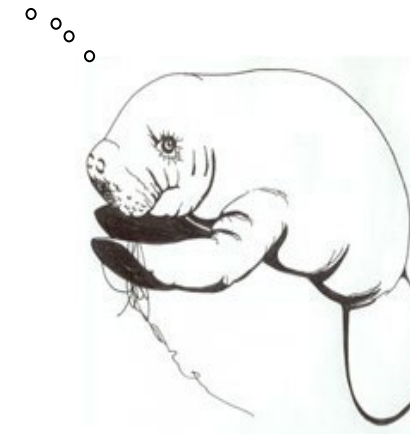
After Gulliver's first rescue, he was successfully rehabilitated at Miami Seaquarium. (Photo by Miami Seaquarium staff)

Gulliver, cont'd from Page Two

mate all while living in an environment that is not as carefully taken care of as it should be. There is an overflow of marine debris, many boaters do not obey speed zones, and sadly some people think of manatees as nuisances. In memory of Gulliver, please share his story so that others may learn to be more cognizant of how their actions impact marine mammals and the environment. While we cannot prevent every death, as individuals we can practice good habits to give manatees the longest, fullest, lives possible.

- Vanessa Collins

Thank you
for caring!



If You See an Injured Manatee

If you see an injured, entangled or sick manatee, please do not attempt to assist it on your own. Instead, immediately call the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) at 1-888-404-FWCC (3922). 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.

Even if you aren't sure that the manatee is in trouble, go ahead and make the call. It's better to be sure. FWCC personnel will guide you during the call and may give you additional instructions. Members of the public are on the front line of helping these precious, endangered animals and your efforts are very much appreciated!

On behalf of our manatee friends—thank you!

- 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!

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

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