

RESULTS OF THE MEDICAL TRAINING AND THE DIFFERENT INTERACTIONS CARRIED OUT ON A GROUP OF 6 CALIFORNIA SEA LIONS

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NAUSICAA, the French National Sea Life Center, aims to give the public at large a better awareness of the sustainable use of the oceans. The permanent exhibition, devoted to the discovery of life under the sea and its exploration, each year welcomes more than 800,000 visitors through its doors. In May 1998, NAUSICAA opened a new area to the public, illustrating the nature reserves, the tools necessary for the preservation of biodiversity. In the Sea Lion area, the visitor can discover, on the wooden decks, and in the underwater glass tunnel, an environment completely natural and alive, reconstructed to imitate the California coast. The 1000 cubic meters of sea water, animated by a wave machine, is populated by six male California sea lions, aged from 2 to 5 years old. For the past year, the trainers, who are also new to this type of work, have aimed at developing a medical training program. As a result of this training alone, the animals have gained confidence and trust in their trainers. It has also developed in each of them, a greater curiosity for many other activities, as well as created a better facility for learning. During the summer of 1999, an interactive program, assisted by the use of games, was introduced. A behavioral study was undertaken so as to monitor the different types of the sea lion's activities. According to their different characters, specific games were carried out, tested, and improved. The first significant observation seems to be not only of a better trainer/animal relationship but also of the diminishing of stereotypical behavior and aggressiveness.

STRETCHING TOWARDS NEW HORIZONS: PEOPLE HELPING DOLPHINS...DOLPHINS HELPING PEOPLE

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People Helping Dolphins: As we move rapidly towards the new millennium, it is amazing to look back at how far we've come in caring for marine mammals. Medical and husbandry care is better than ever, and improving daily through the training of voluntary behaviors where our cetacean friends cooperate with their trainers. We will present the story of Cindy, a female Atlantic bottlenose dolphin, and her unusual musculature and scoliosis due to metabolic abnormalities. The focus is not on her specific medical care, but on some of the voluntary and cooperative therapeutic techniques DRC has utilized to improve her mobility and quality of life. Dolphins Helping People: In May of 1999, DRC embarked on a journey long dreamed about, finally fulfilled. We began a series of dolphin interactive sessions working with Vietnam veterans with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The sessions were led by a psychologist/therapist (a veteran himself), and the connection with DRC and the dolphins was through Mandy Rodriguez (a Vietnam veteran). Although an intensely personal journey, we have the participants permission to share it with you. Their hope, and ours, is that this type of work can be continued so that other veterans have the opportunity for this experience.

A BEHAVIORAL COMPARISON OF TWO FEMALE CALIFORNIA SEA LION'S MOTHERING SKILLS

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On June 29th and July 1st, 1999, two California sea lion pups were born at Oceans of Fun. Our two mothers, Sport and Makaia, are mother and daughter themselves. The first pup was born to Makaia, a six-year-old inexperienced female. The second pup was the third successful birth for Sport, a 17-year-old female. The extreme differences in mothering techniques were immediate and created many opportunities for our staff in raising two healthy pups. Although Makaia had been reared successfully and experienced Sport's extremely strong maternal instincts, Makaia's reactions to nurturing her own pup have been very mixed. Keeping both mother and pup healthy and bonded has been our first priority but has created many interesting challenges for pup/mother introductions, colony socialization, and behavioral training.