



Formal Presentation Abstracts Friday, 15 November 2002



THE SUCCESS AND DEVELOPMENT OF PINNIPED INTERACTIVE PROGRAMS

Shelley Ballmann
Oceans of Fun

At Oceans of Fun we introduced our first interactive programs placing guests in direct contact with California sea lions and harbor seals in 1997. Five years later we are celebrating the success and enjoying the rewards of our training. By concentrating on the overall desensitization of each animal to novel stimuli and always reinforcing relaxed, focused behavior, we have found that our animals' comfort levels with behavioral training, husbandry and personal interaction has become remarkably secure. This heightened level of training has allowed us to confidently expand our interactive programs, which educate the public about pinnipeds, conservation and animal training. This paper will highlight our interactive programs, discuss training challenges and desensitization processes we are continuing to train with our animals.

VOLUNTARY TRAINING FOR A GENITAL BIOPSY IN A FEMALE DOLPHIN: *TURSIOPS TRUNCATUS*

Marcia Pereira, Iuri Ova, Luis Roque, Cosme Lima, Karina Massel,
Nono Romao, Geraldine Lacave, Ana Salbany
Mundo Aquatico S.A./Zoomarine

An abnormal mass was diagnosed in the genital area of a female *Tursiops truncatus*. Because of the likelihood of a viral infection and the possibility of the contagious spread of the disorder, a surgical biopsy was ordered. Various methods for conducting the biopsy were considered. Due to the calm, trusting nature of the animal and her advanced state of husbandry training, voluntary behavioral control was selected over physical restraint. It was felt that this approach offered the best chance of success, since a negative reaction to physical restraint might cause injury to the dolphin during the procedure.

With the authorization and support of the veterinary staff and park administration, training was begun. This effort included extensive desensitization, positive reinforcement and collection of surgical material. The objective of this training was to permit the animal to be suspended in the water, with her belly up and supported by the trainer's leg, for an extended period of time. Remaining calmly in this position would allow for the application of anesthetic, disinfection, manipulation of the genital area, and accomplishment of the actual biopsy.

Due to the cooperative effort between the veterinary and training staffs, the procedure was successfully carried out and fully documented via still photography and videotape.

