



# Have Fun Learning About Mammals



by Kelley Anne Mc Gee

If you have an appreciation for or curiosity about nature and marine life such as dolphins, seals, whales and turtles, then you'll want to make a stop here. Located on Brigantine Blvd. in Brigantine, the Marine Mammal Stranding Center got its start in 1978 through a small group of volunteers under the direction of Robert Schoelkopf. He continues to guide the Center today with his wife, Sheila Dean, a small, dedicated staff and large group of volunteers.

Over the years, the non-profit center has helped more than 2,500 stranded whales, dolphins, seals and sea turtles. The Center was originally located at Gardner's Basin in the inlet section of Atlantic City before finding its permanent home on the barrier island of Brigantine, which borders coastal New Jersey's largest wildlife refuge. The Center's main

goal is to assist mammals in distress and then release them back to the wild.

The Center offers a sea life educational center, museum and gift shop. Here you can see life-sized replicas of marine mammals and fish all stranded in New Jersey's waters, learn through educational dis-



*Marine Mammal Stranding Center, Brigantine, NJ*

plays about the plight of mammals that ingest ocean debris, or see marine mammal bones such as those of a sperm whale's jaw bone, dolphin spinal column, skulls, vertebrae and rib bones of small and large whales through the Please Touch Display. During summer, a special observation tank is set up outside to view unique and local fish common to New Jer-

sey's waters.

Also during the summer, the Center offers special programs for children and families such as guided beach walks, where you'll learn all about New Jersey sea life, see mock strandings of dolphins and learn what to do to help one should you ever encounter such a situation. Or you can visit the Wetlands Institute where you can learn all about sea turtles and get the chance to actually see some.

Although the really important and valuable

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