



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

continued on page 42



Have Fun Learning About Mammals



by Kelley Anne Mc Gee

continued from page 37

work that goes on here is off limits to visitors, the medical care, feeding and general care of the mammals can be appreciated by the live monitors placed throughout the Center. The staff points out that it's in the best interest of the mammals that minimal contact with humans takes place, because whenever possible these mammals are released back into their natural habitat.

The Center also offers interesting off-site, educational programs throughout the year to places such as schools. Arrangements for this should be made in advance.

In addition, the Center sponsors two major fundraisers annually, Swim for the Dolphins in July and Harbor Seal 5K (Race) in October. Fun celebrations take place afterwards for participants that may include anything from awards and giveaways, to DJ and musical entertainment, tee-shirts, raffles, refreshments and food. A fee is required to participate in the events, and money raised goes to the Center and

toward the care, feeding and medical needs of the mammals.

Also, if interested, you can adopt a seal. For a small fee, you are given a photo of your seal along with a history of the mammal. Your donation goes towards the injured or sick seal's medical needs,

Day in 1982. The seal suffered from pneumonia, emaciation, and a broken jaw. A tag on her flipper revealed she had been born on Sable Island, just south of Nova Scotia.

Experts deemed her health as critical, the situation hopeless, and doubted she would make it. But thanks to the folks at the Center, she survived and went on to have a good life.

The Center is open year-round at various hours, weekends in the off-season, and daily during summer. It's best to call ahead for hours of operation. Admission to the Center is free, but donations, which help to keep the place operating and the priceless work going on to continue, are very much appreciated and gladly accepted. Typical donation recommended is at least a \$1.00 per person. There's free parking on site.

For additional information on the Marine Mammal Stranding Center of Brigantine, please call 609-266-0538 or visit website: www.mmsc.org.



care and feeding.

The gift shop offers a nice variety of knickknacks, books, jewelry, stuffed mammals, and clothing including tee shirts and is the non-profit center's main source of income. A popular symbol on many of the gift shop items is Cupid the seal, who was rescued off New Jersey's waters on Long Beach Island the day before Valentine's

Hot Summer Deals
Call for Details!

STINGRAY® Boats

Visit Our Showrooms • Demo Rides Available



195LR/LS/LX A perfect fit...



210cs/cx Cute cuddy...



220DR Your own Bed & Breakfast...



240cs Fun that lasts all day!



250LR Measure of a great boat...



250cr Room for everyone

262 East Montauk Hwy
Hampton Bays NY
631-728-9200
www.SpellmansMarine.com
Family Owned & Operated by
3 Generations of Spellmans Since 1958

Spellmans Marine
Serving All of Long Island
With 2 Great Locations!

at Al Grover's Marina
500 S. Main St • Freeport, NY
516-771-7020
www.AlGroversMarine.com
Family Owned & Operated by
3 Generations of Grovers Since 1949