



NOAA seeks information on pregnant dolphin found dead on Miramar Beach, Florida

Dolphin died after being shot in the lung

NOAA's Office of Law Enforcement is investigating the case involving a pregnant bottlenose dolphin found dead on Miramar Beach in Choctawhatchee Bay, Florida. A necropsy, or non-human autopsy, revealed the dolphin died of a gunshot wound. She was within weeks of giving birth.

Necropsy results showed the animal was shot on the upper right side, likely with a small caliber firearm. The bullet was discovered lodged in the dolphin's lung. It's possible the dolphin may have been shot 1-2 days before it was recovered.

NOAA officials seek information from anyone who may have details of this incident. Please call the NOAA Enforcement Hotline as soon as possible at [1-800-853-1964](tel:1-800-853-1964). Tips may be left anonymously.

The [Whale and Dolphin Conservation](#) is offering a \$2,500 reward for information leading to the identification, arrest and conviction of the person(s) responsible.

The numbers of violent incidents towards dolphins in the Northern Gulf appear to be increasing. Since 2002, at least 17 dolphins have stranded with gunshot wounds, with 70% of those occurring since 2010.

NOAA is also asking for the public's help in preventing associated future harm to dolphins by [not feeding or attempting to feed them](#). Dolphins that are fed by people learn to associate people with food and put themselves in dangerous situations when they approach people, boats, and fishing gear looking for food. Dolphins will even remove bait and catch directly from fishing gear and teach these behaviors to their young. These behaviors have resulted in an increase in [human violence](#) towards dolphins, including [retaliation by fishermen](#) frustrated by dolphins taking their bait and catch.

Harassing, harming, killing or feeding wild dolphins is prohibited under the [Marine Mammal Protection Act](#) of 1972. Violations can be prosecuted either civilly or criminally and are punishable by up to \$100,000 in fines and up to one year in jail per violation.

NOAA's mission is to understand and predict changes in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and to conserve and manage our coastal and marine resources.

****Photos of the dolphin are available upon request – please contact Allison Garrett at 727-330-0309 or via email, Allison.Garrett@noaa.gov***

On the web:

NOAA Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/>

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