



Media Advisory

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 17, 2015

NOAA Law Enforcement seeking tips on severely injured dolphin in John's Pass, Florida

Experts concerned this animal was illegally fed

NOAA's Office of Law Enforcement seeks tips on a bottlenose dolphin in Madeira Beach (John's Pass), suffering from severe boat propeller wounds to its back and tail. The agency is looking for information from anyone who witnessed suspicious activity around the animal, such as people feeding or chasing it.

A known animal to local researchers, the injured dolphin was first reported to the St. Petersburg Police Department last week. The animal may have been illegally fed leading to its current injuries, which are so severe that veterinarians and researchers consider them life threatening.

NOAA and the Clearwater Marine Aquarium are monitoring the dolphin's condition. Experts ask boaters not to feed this animal and to maintain a safe distance of at least 50 yards away to prevent further stress and harm.

The health and welfare of wild dolphins is severely compromised when [humans feed them](#) and closely interact with them. Human-fed dolphins change their normal wild behavior and run a greater risk of being injured by boats, becoming entangled in fishing gear, or ingesting dangerous items such as fishing hooks and contaminated food.

Not only is interacting with wild dolphins dangerous for their health, it's against the law. Feeding and harassing wild marine mammals is illegal under the [Marine Mammal Protection Act](#), and can result in severe penalties with fines up to \$20,000 and one year in jail for the most serious violations.

Please call NOAA's law enforcement hotline at 1-800-853-1964 to report any known suspicious activity that might have led to the animal's current condition. Tips may be left anonymously.

To report any dead or injured marine mammal please call 1-877-WHALE-HELP (1-877-942-5343) or use our [smart phone app](#) Dolphin and Whale 911.

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