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## SeaWorld rescuers free dolphin calf from fishing gear

Jim Waymer, FLORIDA TODAY 11:08 a.m. EST November 26, 2014



Rescuers holds a bottlenose dolphin calf recently captured, treated and released in Mosquito Lagoon. (Photo: For FLORIDA TODAY)

The tangled plot of this dolphin tale has a happy ending.

Hubbs-SeaWorld Research Institute biologists last week saw a five-foot dolphin calf with fishing gear wrapped around its dorsal fin.

But even the site of humans swarming around her baby could not break the strong marine mammal mother-daughter bond. Mamma swam back and forth about 50 to 100 yards away.

"She just waited outside the net," said Wendy Noke Durden, research scientist with Hubbs. "She was not particularly angry. She just waited, just kind of paced."

Worried mothers do that.

Meanwhile, crimson-red blood streamed from the daughter dolphin's dorsal fin. The injury had limited the calf's ability to surface regularly.

A rescue team removed the fishing gear from the dolphin's dorsal fin and performed an in-water exam of the animal before releasing it.

For the calf, the prognosis is good.

"The calf was in pretty good shape and rejoined mom immediately," Noke Durden said. "We're very hopeful. We see no reason why that calf won't have a long, happy life."

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The public is encouraged to report sick, injured, dead or entangled marine mammals by contacting our Wildlife Alert Hotline at 888-404-3922 or NOAA's Southeast Region Stranding Network at 1-877-942-5343.