

Dolphin found dead, tail wrapped in fishing line



Jim Waymer, FLORIDA TODAY 2:13 p.m. EDT August 24, 2015



(Photo: Hubbs-SeaWorld Research Institute)

Rescuers found a young dead dolphin Monday in Cocoa Beach, with its tail wrapped in fishing line. So local dolphin rescuers are urging anglers to recycle fishing gear, rather than discard it.

"He had probably been entangled for a week or more," said Megan Stolen, a research scientist with the Hubbs-SeaWorld Research Institute in Melbourne Beach.

Hubbs rescuers had tracked the injured dolphin for about a week and had hoped to capture and treat it. But they found the 5-foot-long animal dead Monday morning in the Banana River, near the end of Bahama Boulevard. They estimate the dolphin was less than two years old.

Rescuers received a call from a kayaker who had seen the dolphin Sunday.

The animal's tail was tangled in a kind of braided line that Stolen said is much more damaging to dolphins than monofilament fishing line.

"It's extremely strong, because it's braided it works through the tissue differently than the monofilament line," Stolen said. "It sort of saws through the tissue instead of pulls through the tissue. It's more like a knife cut."

That gives the wound no time to heal.

Large barnacles had formed on the fishing line, Stolen said, weighing down the animal and indicating the gear had long been discarded.

Hubbs-SeaWorld also received reports of two other dead dolphins Sunday: one in Mosquito Lagoon at the Canaveral National Seashore and another on the beach side of Cocoa Beach.

"We've been having a lot of calls about dead calves being pushed by their moms," Stolen said.



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