

Stranded Dolphin Released in Leeville, LA

On Wednesday, June 21, 2006, the IMMS stranding team participated in the rescue of a stranded dolphin in Leeville, LA, just south of Golden Meadow and west of Grand Isle, LA. The rescue was a collaborative three-party effort involving the Texas Marine Mammal Stranding Network (TMMSN) from Galveston, TX, the Audubon Institute's Louisiana Marine Mammal & Sea Turtle Rescue Program from New Orleans, LA and the Institute for Marine Mammal Studies (IMMS) from Gulfport, MS. The day before, IMMS had received a call from the Regional Stranding Coordinator of National Marine Fisheries Service regarding a dolphin that was reportedly stuck in a levee which was in the process of being drained by the Army Corps of Engineers. Apparently when the Army Corps had "leveed off" this approximately 75-acre area, a young dolphin got stuck in the extremely shallow and muddy water and was unable to swim out.

When the stranding team members arrived at the scene, they realized that the only way to access the area was with an airboat. Fortunately, the gracious people at Marsh Masters, a nearby business, donated their time and three of their airboats to the rescue effort. The rescuers worked all morning to get the dolphin and when they did, they found an approximately 200 pound, four year-old female Atlantic bottlenose dolphin that appeared to be in good shape. There were no cuts or skin lesions, and the animal was a healthy weight for its length. The marine mammal biologist drew blood from the animal for a health evaluation and placed a tag on its dorsal fin for identification purposes. In that way if the dolphin stranded again, she would be recognized immediately as an animal that had previously stranded and received attention. The stranding team then carried the dolphin over to the other side of the levee, where the Gulf of Mexico could easily be accessed, and released it into the water where they had seen other dolphins earlier that day. Another successful rescue operation completed!