

# Update of Cajun

On October 18, 2006, the IMMS stranding team traveled to Grand Terre, LA to respond to a call from the National Marine Fisheries Service agency (NMFS) reporting a live stranded Atlantic bottlenose dolphin. After an initial examination of the dolphin, the team decided to bring the animal back to Gulfport, MS for veterinary care and rehabilitation. During the rehabilitation process the young male dolphin received several rounds of antibiotics, regular blood draws, x-rays, ultrasounds, and other medical tests. Over a period of approximately eight months he regained his strength and health and started to gain some weight.



When it was time to name him, IMMS decided to hold a local contest among the general public, including school aged children along the Mississippi Gulf Coast. The name "Cajun" was chosen from the suggestions since he was rescued from Louisiana.

During his rehabilitation, Cajun needed stimulation and enrichment, so IMMS staff members and volunteers came to the facility to make new toys with which he could interact.

After Cajun was deemed non-releasable by NMFS, IMMS staff began his training with some basic behaviors including tactile or touching, stationing (which is when the animal will position themselves in front of the person who is feeding them), and opening his mouth. These behaviors were important for him to learn so that the staff could examine him on a daily basis.

When Cajun discontinued all of his medications it was time to find a permanent home for him. After nine and a half long months of rehabilitation, it was decided that he would travel to Gulf World Marine Park, located in Panama City Beach, Florida to live. His pool mates include rough toothed dolphins that are around the same age as Cajun and were also stranded and rehabilitated. He seems to be doing very well with his new pool mates. He has gained some weight and is eating regularly.

