

18<sup>th</sup> of July 2009

My name is Naomi and I work at Dolphin Academy as a photographer.

Before I started as a photographer I worked as a Scuba instructor at Animal Encounters and as a Sea lion trainer.

The first time I heard about the stranded Pilot whale, I was at work. My first thought was “what can I do to help?” I already had experience with Sting rays, sharks, turtles and sea lions, but a Pilot whale is a whole different story.

Thursday evening, I went to the location of the whale to ask one of my colleagues if I could help. One of our colleagues had made a schedule with who, when and how late they needed people to observe the Pilot whale. They needed professionals and volunteers, so I signed in for the next morning.

Some of my colleagues had been helping since the beginning and helped 24/7, so they didn't get much sleep. I respect them so much. To me it's an honor that I'm experiencing this and that I'm a part of the whole operation. We must not forget that we're dealing with a wild animal and that we don't do this every day, so this is very instructive for me.

I now know that some things can stop the clock of life and that there are other things in life that are more important. For example, I didn't have any time to do my laundry and it's becoming a very big pile now, but that's okay. Now this animal is more important than anything else.

What really had a big impact on me was that he didn't want to eat anything this Saturday morning. Therefore we had to capture him and give him medication, water and food. Once we captured him he didn't look well, he had a severe infection on his tail.

Thanks to today's technology we could send the pictures that we took, to the United States. George Kieffer, Marine (biologist, Chair of SCCN )and Dolf van der Giessen (veterinarian Animal Care) decided to give him another medication after calling and discussing with supportive veterinarian Tom Reidarson.(Specialist in mammals)

When they were going to give the medication, Dolf said that he might go into a septic shock and that there was a possibility that he might die in our arms or a few hours later. This news hit me very hard and I will never forget that moment for the rest of my life. It's a wild animal but you don't want this to happen to any animal. Animal lovers will understand what I'm saying.

We are very thankful that it's going very good with him now and we're hoping for the best; that he will survive and that we can set him free in the wild again.

In my opinion SCCN did a very good job and they are very professional. Also all of the volunteers did (and are still doing) a very good job! We couldn't have managed without them and without George.

George is the driving force for all those who are helping. He remains calm, detailed and professional all the while showing how much he cares for the whale.

No matter how tired we are, he motivates us to want to do more. His spirit is truly what this whole adventure is about. Caring and selflessness!

I hope that this will make people think twice about what we have and that we're truly blessed in life. We have to help each other out, we need to look out for the world and everything that's on it and lives in it.

This has been one of the most extraordinary events in my life. It will truly be one that has taught me a life lesson. For that, I'm grateful to have been allowed to be part in saving the whale.

Thank you for giving me this opportunity.

With the warmest regards,

Naomi

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