

## ***What Not to Wear: A Dolphin's Story***

Fashion emergencies are rarely life threatening, but a bad bathing suit almost turned deadly for a dolphin in Sarasota Bay.



Scrappy Dolphin, entangled in Sarasota Bay

[Dr. Randy Wells](#), Chicago Zoological Society's intrepid dolphin researcher and leader of the world's oldest dolphin research program, recently stumbled upon a most unexpected sight. He observed Scrappy, a 10-year-old [Atlantic bottlenose dolphin](#), swimming with something tangled around his body. Upon closer examination, researchers made an amazing discovery---Scrappy was wearing a Speedo! Dr. Wells worried about the effects the bathing suit might have on Scrappy's health (not to mention his self-esteem!). It seemed that the drag from the nylon suit could cut into the dolphins body at his flippers. So when it became clear that an unaided "de-brief" would not happen, Dr. Wells and his Chicago Zoological Society team, based at Mote Marine Laboratory, stepped in to take care of this real-life "Fashion Emergency."



Researchers surround Scrappy to help remove the bathing suit

Dr. Wells led 30 people on five boats out into the bay in search of Scrappy. They eventually got the dolphin out of the water and found that one of the Speedo leg holes had slipped over the dolphin's rostrum (nose) and had cut more than an inch into the base of each of his flippers. Dr. Wells and his group removed the bad bathing suit, gave the dolphin antibiotics, and released him back into the bay with a small tracking device. Since the rescue the research team has been checking up on Scrappy every day to make sure that he looks healthy (and appropriately naked), and he seems to be doing well.

Fashion jokes aside, this story illustrates the responsibility that we all have. Our actions directly affect the animals and natural areas around us. The things that we dump into the water here in Chicagoland can eventually make their way down the Mississippi into the Gulf of Mexico and Sarasota Bay!

So, keep sad Scrappy in mind before you go dumping anything into the water...

...or put on an overly tight bathing suit!



The offending garment: Scrappy's Speedo

#### More Info

- [Video of Scrappy Dolphin](#) sent from Mote Marine Laboratory(Large Windows Media file).



- [Dr. Wells' CZS Sarasota Bay Dolphin Project](#)
- Daily updates from Dr. Wells' groundbreaking [Franciscana dolphin research](#) off the coast of Argentina
- Brookfield Zoo's award-winning online feature: [Dolphins in Depth](#)